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# **GRAMMAR GAMES IN ELT**

**Diplomová práce**

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## Prohlášení

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

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## ABSTRACT

This diploma thesis deals with the topic of grammar and grammar games in English language teaching (ELT). Description of grammar, development of its methodology and different approaches to grammar are included in the theoretical part as well as grammar games, their purpose, advantages and planning. The main focus of the practical part is a collection of nine grammar games and activities and questionnaires regarding these games from the learners' and teacher's point of view. Results of the questionnaire aimed at students of English at UPOL are also presented in a scope of the practical part.

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# INTRODUCTION

When I look back at the times when I was studying English at lower secondary school I have to admit that I always loved when our English teacher prepared some unusual or special activity or a game for us. These memories were the first flash of inspiration for me. As a student of English at university and a future teacher of English I consider really important to know how to include and apply different activities into the lessons so I decided to dedicate my master project to grammar games.

First, theoretical part consists of two main chapters. The first chapter is more general – it describes grammar, its function, methods and approaches to grammar. It includes also an outline of the position of grammar in language teaching which was in the history often discussed and there are still different opinions on it. The second chapter of the theoretical part deals with games in language teaching. Regarding the games, teacher firstly has to know what the purpose of using them is and then consider many factors which influence its progress. To sum up, teacher's preparation for using a game in the lesson should be well-planned and games should be meaningful. Games bring many advantages but also some disadvantages into the lesson which are also presented in the theoretical part. And finally, the role of the teacher and learners is described as well as a brief division of the games observed by different authors.

The main focus of the practical part is a collection of grammar games that were used in practice and then evaluated. In total, there are nine different games and activities with common grammatical issue – irregular verbs and the past simple tense. Finally, the aim of the last chapter is to find out how useful and enjoyable the grammar games were according to the pupils and the observing teacher. The results of pupils' questionnaire are showed in the graphs. The very last part of the practical part reports the attitude of university students of English towards grammar teaching and games. The main objective is to describe this issue from the point of view of future teachers of English because their perspective can be different from the way they were taught at lower secondary school.

# THEORETICAL PART

Theoretical part consists of two main chapters: *Grammar and its function* and *Games in language teaching*. The main aim is to give a complete view of grammar and its development, methods and approaches. Further, to describe the issue of language games in detail and provide the basis for the practical part.

## 1 GRAMMAR AND ITS FUNCTION

### 1.1 What is grammar?

There are many ways how to define the concept of grammar. For example Thornbury (2001, p.1) uses definition from Longman's *Active Study Dictionary* in which grammar is described as the rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences. Also Bruder and Paulston (1976, p. 13) give a similar definition of grammar; it is described as "*the possible forms and arrangements of words in phrases and sentences.*"

Harmer (2007, p. 32) concludes that to be proficient in grammar means to know how the grammatical elements can be tied together to form the chains of words.

Thornbury (1999, p.1) then mentions that "*grammar is partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language.*" It is also suggested that grammar is closely connected with syntax and morphology and finally, we can express a particular meaning by grammar. Grammar can be regarded from the different perspectives – for example as spoken and written grammar (both have its typical features). Woods (1995, p. 5) claims that grammar can be understood as a set of rules, school subject or an approach to a language analysis. Grammar can be also observed as prescriptive or descriptive. Prescriptive grammar is traditional but nowadays quite old-fashioned because it does not describe language as it is actually used (as descriptive grammar which emphasizes that language is permanently changing). There are other ways how to see grammar, for example Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar or Halliday's functional-systematic grammar. Grammar can be seen as rules, form or resources as well. (Thornbury, 1999)

Grammar brings certain order to the language teaching. Thornbury (1999, p. 14) adds (and demonstrates it on given examples) that the lack of grammar can cause a kind of ambiguity.

McGarry (2012, online) draws a distinction between the grammar of literacy (mainly connected with the coherence in writing) and grammar of common usage (which is related to grammar in everyday speech). Sometimes there is a conflict between these two grammatical approaches and what is appropriate in the grammar of common usage can be totally inappropriate in the grammar of literacy.

According to Penny Ur (1988, p.4), grammar can be defined by manipulating and combining words so that longer units of meaning can be formed. She also mentions that knowledge of grammar is essential for learning any language.

Woods (1995, p. 2) indicates that authors tried to describe grammar already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and they divided it into four main parts – orthography, etymology, syntax and prosody. Grammar was observed mainly as a means to make use of words and some authors also included “writing system” into grammar. The history of grammar development is more described in the next chapter.

## **1.2 History of grammar teaching**

Nowadays, English is most widely spoken foreign language but it was not like that before and the history of teaching English passed through many stages of development. New approaches were promoted and different authors came with new methods. Now we can look at grammar from different points of view and the choice of grammatical methods is really wide. Initial stage of teaching grammar proceeded from the same procedure Latin was taught at school. That means learning a language through grammatical rules and mainly translation. Speaking played a secondary role. Till the 19th century, an approach to language teaching was quite rigid. Central method was so called grammar-translation method which is more described in chapter concerning methodology. (Woods, 1995; Richards and Rodgers, 2001)

Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.7) describe that later on, in the 19th century Reform Movement against grammar-translation method was established. This movement was launched because of the need for new methods and approaches. Many innovations in language teaching occurred and oral proficiency was supported. Some authors were inspired by the way children use to learn a native language (first language acquisition) and many of them also considered teaching language in a context as very important. A big progress came with establishing phonetics because it helped to understand how speech process works. In 1886, IPA (The International Phonetic Association) was established and among other things, one of its aims was to upgrade the way of language teaching. An inductive approach to teaching grammar started to be more and more significant.

Linguist Henry Sweet defined the progress of methods in language teaching. He suggested four main steps of development (Richards and Rodgers, 2001):

1. Selecting of what should be taught
2. Defining the limits of the subject matter
3. Describing the process regarding the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)
4. Arranging materials from simple to more complicated

Richard and Rogers (2001, p. 10) conclude that *“reformers in the late nineteenth century shared many beliefs about the principles on which a new approach to teaching foreign languages should be based.”*

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, new researches concerning language teaching were carried out. Linguists in the USA pointed out that there is not just one method that could warrant really good results and direct method which was so popular in Europe was criticised. In the 1920s and 1930s, so called British approach to teaching English was developed and a basis of audiolingualism and oral approach theory was set. From 1960s on, many new methods and approaches arose and each of them was specific by its goal, the way language is taught, different teaching techniques *etc.* The productive stage of developing methods and approaches was from the 1950s – 1980s. Many new methods as well as approaches emerged during that period of time and teachers were aware of the fact that the choice of suitable method is essential for high-quality language teaching (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

## **1.2.1 Grammar and methodology**

When teaching grammar, it is essential to know the methods that can be used in the classroom. According to Larsen-Freeman (2000, p. IX) “*A knowledge of methods is part of the knowledge base of teaching.*”

Techniques and principles in language teaching are more described in Larsen-Freeman and Anderson’s book (1986) where their aim was mainly to set a list of different language teaching methods for the teachers. They stressed that the methods of practices change in time. They described the case when teachers were for many years told that they should not use a native language of the pupils in the lessons and also translation was criticized. “*The motivation for this advice was to maximize students’ opportunities to use the language they were studying.*” (1986, p. 4)

On the other hand, Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 10) claim that in some situations it would be more efficient to use learners’ native language and it is also suggested that such a big adherence to the target language makes language teaching isolationist and the teachers and students are not able to create a connection between languages.

## **1.2.2 Development of grammar methods**

Grammar methodology underwent many changes in the history. Here is an overview of the most significant methods:

### **1. Grammar translation method**

This method is sometimes called “classical” and was widely used till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to this method, the main purpose of learning a foreign language is reading proficiency (to read classical literature) and intellectual growth. The rules of grammar and drill were the essential part of teaching. It was based on the translation from target language to learner’s first language and vice versa. This method is mainly connected with grammatical type of language syllabus. (Woods, 1995; Larsen-Freeman, 2000)

## **2. Direct method**

The direct or natural method was invented at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the core of this method was active and spontaneous use of language in the classroom and spoken language (only target language was permitted). So it was in opposition to the grammar-translation method and its focus on written language. The supporters of natural method believed in analogy between first and second language acquisition. There was also quite big focus on pronunciation and grammar. But Woods (1995, p. 62) adds that *“its approach to grammar, however, was not at all systematic.”* Some authors even claimed that using only the direct method in the lesson was counterproductive. A significant prejudice against using mother tongue in language teaching was created with expansion of the direct method. And this prejudice remained in existence for many years after. (Harmer, 2007, p. 64)

## **3. Oral approach**

Oral approach was also oriented towards the spoken language but it was more systematic. Sentence patterns for main grammatical structures were formed to help the learners. Woods (1995, p. 63) explains that the main purpose of these structures was *“to provide a context to help the learners”*. Organisation of the lesson according to the oral approach would be like this: presentation – practice – consolidation – testing – free stage.

## **4. Audio-lingual method**

Audio-lingualism was invented largely in North America. The supporters of this method saw the core in the behaviourist approach to learning which means that language is understood as a kind of behaviour. This method was based on repetitive drills (or pattern-practice drills) and memorization which was boring for the learners even though it was quite effective. In the late 1950s, Noam Chomsky disproved that language is behaviour; he claimed that language is *„an innate human capacity”* (Thornbury, 1999, p. 21)

## **5. Communicative approach**

In the 1970s, Communicative Language Teaching (or CLT) was developed. The most important component of this approach was the use of language; grammar was moved away from the centre of a language-learning course (even though it still remained as a part of the language syllabus). Another progress was the fact that language was not used out of context so the learning was more effective. (Woods, 1995, p. 64)

Thornbury (1999, p. 22) mentions there were some extreme followers of CLT who totally rejected grammar rules and instruction and stayed against grammar-based syllabuses because they believed in natural acquisition of language.

## **1.3 Grammar in language teaching**

The role of grammar in language teaching was observed and discussed by many authors. But nowadays teachers at primary and secondary schools cannot avoid teaching grammar because it is included in language curriculum and syllabus. Also the course books are partly based on grammar – pupils start with easy basic issues and the level of difficulty rises with the age.

### **1.3.1 Grammar and language syllabus**

By syllabus we mean what is to be taught in the course, basically its outline which is usually also integrated in the course book. Ur (1991, p. 177) describes that syllabus is a sort of ordered document which includes the content, specification of the learners and its objectives. There are different types of language syllabus. In connection with grammar, we can mention for example grammatical or grammatical-lexical syllabus which is very common. But contemporary course books are mainly based on mixed or “multi-strand” syllabus. This kind of syllabus is based on combination of different aspects of language. It includes specification of different tasks and topics, grammar and vocabulary (Ur, 1991, p. 178). Teachers might have different attitudes to the importance of the syllabus in the lessons.

Grammar has been the core of language syllabus for many years because it was essential to understand grammar concepts and categories such as verbs, nouns, adverbs etc. Even from the 1970s when the CLA was presented, grammar still maintained its position in language teaching – it was a part of so-called structural syllabus. Later on, other kinds of syllabus were invented and grammar was not such a distinctive feature anymore because linguists did not consider grammar so important for practical use of language (which became more and more important). (Woods, 1995)

### **1.3.2 Grammar teaching procedure**

Woods (1995, p. 33) claims that grammar was the core of language teaching till 1970s when the communicative approach was presented. After this point grammar was considered to be very unfashionable and some teachers promoted that students do not need grammar to communicate in second language. But this conviction was disproved soon after.

After thorough research of grammar, we can conclude that it is somehow organized. Penny Ur (1988, p.7) suggested four basic stages: *presentation, isolation and explanation, practice and test*. The first stage of presentation helps us to perceive the grammatical structure and it is connected with the short-term memory. Teachers usually use a story or a dialogue in which new grammar is used and presented as a pattern for another practice. In the second stage, the main aim is to make the grammatical structure clear in order that the learners can understand it. The third - practice stage contains a set of exercises and the knowledge is transferred from the short-term to the long-term memory. The possibilities of different exercises are huge. The last stage, which is called “test”, is aimed to provide feedback for the teacher and also for the learners. (Ur, 1988)

Harmer (2007, p. 64) also describes similarly the procedure of teaching grammar as presentation, practice and production. This procedure is understood by Harmer as a variation of audiolingualism. Firstly, the grammar is presented or the situation is somehow introduced. Then learners practise given grammar issue by different reproduction techniques; finally the last stage of production comes.

Harmer (2007, p. 225) emphasizes that “*good grammar rules should exhibit simplicity, truth, clarity, and relevance*”. And this statement should be applicable for any grammatical issue because learners might be confused if the grammar rules were too complicated or unclear (especially with the grammar rules in L2).

### **1.3.3 Overt and covert grammar teaching**

In connection with different grammar methods, Thornbury (1999, p. 23) presents another two perspectives on grammar teaching: covert and overt. Covert grammar teaching means that grammar questions emerge from the context, for example when practising communicative activities. Overt grammar teaching is more traditional. It means to teach a grammar syllabus, explain grammatical issues by a set of rules etc.

## **1.4 Approaches to grammar teaching**

There are many approaches teacher can choose from but it is always important to select the one which is in accordance with learner’s abilities, age and experience. And there are other factors influencing the choice of suitable approach, for example the relationship between the teacher and learners (which is essential in communicative approach). It is also known that adherence to just one approach leads to the fact that learners are not motivated to study so it is best to use the combination of more approaches in the lessons. Approach is in comparison with method more theoretical and it is directly connected with aim. Method then gives a teacher possibility to apply particular approach in practice.

### **1.4.1 Deductive and inductive approach**

Deductive and inductive approaches are two basic perspectives on how to teach grammar. It is mainly associated with the presentation stage when teacher wants to present the learners a new grammatical topic.

Deductive (or rule-driven learning) approach is more traditional. Teacher gives the learners an explanation of chosen grammar issue and then provides its examples. This approach is more “comfortable” for the teacher, it gives the learners a clear explanation and it is not so time-consuming in comparison with inductive approach. But its opponents argue that learners are not active and motivated. Especially younger learners could be discouraged if the lesson started with grammar presentation. Demonstration is more memorable for them than just an explanation. Another problem may be insufficient meta-language which is needed for grammar explanation. (Thornbury, 1999 p. 30)

Inductive approach (or rule-discovery learning) results from learner’s need to look for patterns in the language that should be a sign of every good learner. Woods (1995, p. 77) adds that learner “*attends to the form in a particular way, constantly analysing, categorizing and synthesizing.*” Learner is not just absorbing the information but also trying to find how the language works. Inductive approach is based on learner’s involvement in figuring out grammar rules of particular grammatical topic. So basically teacher gives the learners examples and they create the rules out of them.

This approach is inspired by the way how the native language is learned and acquired. Thornbury (1999, p. 49) explains that “*induction, or learning through experience, is seen as the “natural” route to learning.*” As deductive approach, also this approach has its pros and cons. Inductive approach is more natural so the rules of grammar are more memorable for the pupils. It increases learner’s motivation and autonomy. On the other hand, teacher has to plan his lesson more carefully and there may be some pupils for whom this may not be a convenient approach.

Also Jim Scrivener (1994, p. 114) mentions two possible approaches to grammar. Deductive approach is described as “PPP” which is an abbreviation for presentation, practice and production. According to this approach, language is divided into “*manageable bite-sized chunks*” and then one by one taught by a teacher. It is logically arranged so the learners begin with easier grammatical patterns and then the difficulty rises gradually. In the inductive approach, learners are taught in the way that they are exposed to a large amount of language. It is based on students’ intelligence, experience and ability to analyse. Scrivener concludes that there are many teachers who use both methods in their language teaching.

## **1.5 Usage of mother tongue in grammar teaching**

What is right balance between mother tongue (or the first language - L1) and the second language (L2) has been a disputable and also quite controversial issue for many years. Generally, usage of L1 in the classroom had its supporters but also many opponents. Some authors (for example L. Sauvieur, M. Berlitz) even declared that English only should be used in the classroom (see chapter Grammar methods – Direct method). But these opinions were later on considered quite unfortunate because it led to the situation when learners were confused, bored and non-understanding.

There are both advantages and disadvantages of using mother tongue and it is up to the teacher to find out the balance between them. Mother tongue should not be avoided because it shapes the way we see and think about different things. It was found out that translating from L2 to L1 (which is also called code-switching) is a natural kind of behaviour of language learner who always consciously or subconsciously compares both languages. There are also other advantages; it is sometimes easier for the teacher to use mother tongue to explain some complex grammar or problems. It can as well contribute to fluent discussion and students can notice the differences between both languages so they are aware of the fact that every language is unique and works differently. Teacher can deal with diverse translation activities. But of course usage of L1 in the lessons should be measured and careful. We should also always adjust the teaching to learners (their age, abilities, *etc.*) (Harmer, 2007, p. 133-134).

## **2 GAMES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

According to Harmer (2007, p. 210), “*grammar can be introduced in a number of ways*” and one of them are games.

### **2.1 What is a game?**

Game can be described as a play which is governed by a set of rules. Games bring certain kind of experience and for that reason information is easier to remember. Some authors describe that games bring a meaningful communication to the lessons. Moreover, they can focus on all the four basic skills (speaking, reading, writing and listening) and they can be used for learners of any age.

The games are often used at the beginning of the lesson as a “warm-up” activity or at the end of the lesson when there’s time to left. On the other hand, Uberman (1998, online) claims that it is right to use the game at any stage of the lesson. Also Betteridge, Buckby and Wright (1983, p. 1) indicate that the stage of the teaching sequence is not deciding factor for the choice of the game.

### **2.2 Factors influencing the choice of the game**

Although games are not limited by age, teacher must always consider the appropriateness of the chosen game. It is also known that younger learners are more likely to enjoy playing the games but some teenagers are not willing to play them at all. Uberman also (1998, online) suggests that not every game is suitable for all students considering their age. Except for age, teacher has to think about the language level, interests and educational background of the pupils.

Also Lengeling and Malarcher (1997, online) describe factors influencing the choice of suitable language game. Except the things mentioned above, they add classroom space, noise, materials which are necessary for the game and time. The game should be related to the topic taught in the lesson as well and it should be well-integrated in the schedule.

Another point is that the learners have to be convinced that games are useful for them. If they consider the game unnecessary, the result will be unsatisfactory.

Before the final decision of choosing the game, a teacher should be aware of many other facts like duration of the preparation, possibility of realization, time we need for completion, particular group of learners, and willingness of the participators. Every game has its principles and the language skills are improved mainly by repetition. Consideration of time is very important – we need time for preparation and for the game itself. Teacher should have some spare time because something unexpected can happen during the activity and we are not always able to say how much time the learners will need to complete the task. This is not usually problem of experienced teachers who know their students.

When choosing a good game for the lesson, teacher should take into consideration the proportion of luck in a game. It should not be the most important factor but on the other hand it brings a kind of excitement into the game. (Rixon, 1981)

Betteridge *et al.* (1983, p. 4) put emphasis on challenge in implementation of the game. They even call it the “*essential ingredient*” of a game because when the powers of learner are “*appealed*” then he/she is motivated to think and speak. It is also crucial that the learners are absolutely familiarized with the game they are asked to play. Generally, teachers are advised to illustrate at least a part of the game or write instructions on the blackboard so that the learners can see it. Chaos and disillusionment should not be the result of teacher’s effort.

One of the most significant factors influencing the whole course of the game or activity is learners’ motivation. Harmer (2007, p. 98) emphasizes that “*for most fields of learning motivation is essential to success*”. Motivation is an abstract concept which is quite difficult to define. Ur (1991, p. 274) suggests that motivated learners can be described as eager or disposed to put their effort in the activity. According to her, motivation is closely connected with achievement (or success) and it is teacher’s role to strengthen learners’ motivation in the lesson.

Ur (1988, p. 15) also states that the interest then arises from motivation and it is also very important for successful activity. Learners without interest are bored so they cannot concentrate and

this situation can lead to disciplinary problems. On the other hand, attentive learners are eager to put their effort in the activity which leads to success.

### **2.3 The purpose of the games**

Many people would say that games are just for amusement but in fact it is not true. They can function as a very meaningful practice of language. Betteridge *et al.* (1983, p. 1) explain how important games in language learning can be and mention that games give the learners encouragement to continue in their study which is essential. Additionally, “*many games provide repeated use of language form and its frequent use during a limited period of time*”. (Betteridge *et al.*, 1983, p. 1)

The main reason of grammar game is to integrate practice of grammar in a motivating way. One of the most usual features of a game is the competition between the players. Although some games are based more on cooperation than on competition which is also important to develop.

Games are connected with “relaxed” atmosphere and even the shy students have opportunity to express themselves more than in ordinary school activities. Uberman (1998, online) nicely concludes that games “*encourage, entertain, teach and promote fluency*”.

### **2.4 Advantages and disadvantages of using games**

Rinvoluceri (1984, p. 4) indicates that games usually do not require a lot of preparation and they are highly effective at the same time. He comes up with a few advantages of using grammar games in the lessons. The first one is that “*the students have to take individual responsibility for what they think the grammar is about*” (1984, p. 4). It is also a great opportunity for the teacher to find out what his/her students learned in the lesson without excessive attention. The students are not aware of the fact that they learn grammar and do serious work. The last advantage is that everybody in the classroom is intensively involved in the activity.

Bob Obee (1999, p.6) describes in a few points why it is good to use games:

- to provide purposeful contexts in which to use language
- to stimulate interaction
- to promote variety of attentional focus in classroom activity
- to engender enthusiasm
- because games are fun

Games have not got just advantages but also some disadvantages which can be for example an increased level of noise in the classroom, long time for preparation or too much time for the game itself. Games can make the pupils distracted and sometimes a teacher might have problems to choose a suitable game for the learners (considering their age and abilities).

## **2.5 Information gap**

Information gap is nowadays widely used term and one of the essential features of meaningful communication. It is not meaningful when the teacher asks the questions in the situation when s/he already knows the answer. It also leads to the fact that learners are not motivated to participate in the activity and speak. (Betteridge *et al.*, 1983, p. 2)

Rees (2003, online) describes that information gap is usually between two students and gives the learners a reason to communicate. It is very suitable either for pair work or small group work and it can be connected with learners' experience, opinion or knowledge. Teachers often use different cards that provide a learner particular information that s/he should know. He also concludes that the main purpose of the information gap is meaningful communication.

According to Penny Ur (1988, p. 21) information gap does not have to be included in every communication situation (for example greetings, jokes *etc.*) but she also considers it important. She adds that the main idea of information gap is to create "*a feeling of purpose, challenge and authenticity which improve learner interest.*" (1988, p. 21)

## **2.6 Planning**

### **2.6.1 Classroom organization**

The role of the classroom organization is not inconsiderable. The ideal situation is when the classroom is arranged to contribute to working in pairs or groups. But with some games we can just use the traditional arrangement of the desks. When pupils want to work in the groups, they can simply turn their chairs so they sit with other group mates around one desk. Sometimes there is uneven number of the students in the classroom but it is not such a big problem. Pair work can be done either with two or three students (Walcyn-Jones, 2000).

### **2.6.2 The role of the teacher**

Teacher can have many roles in the class and the most difficult task is to find balance between them, extremes are not considered to be good in any case. Woods (1995, p.69) distinguishes three main areas of teacher's position: controlling role, non-intervention role and managerial role. Teacher can then act as an informant, organiser, manager, security provider, responder *etc.* Moreover, it is teacher's responsibility to overall organize the course and encourage learners. Teacher can have also different roles when playing a game, in some games teacher's role is to be a leader who dominates the class; sometimes s/he is just monitoring the class.

According to Peter Walcyn-Jones (2000, p. VI), teacher should be mainly a coordinator of the classroom activity. She/he has also other responsibilities as preparing the materials, instructing (clearly) the students and finally evaluating pupils' work. It is obvious that during the activity teacher is observing the pupils and trying to monitor them.

Klippel (1984, p.8) explains that in some activities teacher can decide to join the pupils. Sometimes it is even necessary to take part in the activity – for example in a case of pair work when there is an odd number of pupils. Generally, in many games even number of pupils is required. Teacher's participation during the activity can be also contributive because the “distance” between the teacher and learners can be decreased.

When joining the pupils, teacher should be still in a role of a supervisor and should correct them which might be a bit problematic because teacher is not able to observe the performance of several students at the same time. Moreover, not all games and activities can be played with the participation of the teacher.

Klippel (1984, p. 8) also suggests that a teacher should not correct pupils' errors and mistakes too frequently because it could be frustrating for them and it could disrupt pupils' conversation. It is better to help the pupils when they ask for help (for example during the activity or game). Correction of mistakes is mainly influenced by the type of exercise or task. If the exercise is success-oriented, teacher should correct the mistakes. If it is focused on communication it is not so requisite. Teacher can for example make notes of pupil's mistakes during speaking activity on a piece of paper and then mention them when the activity is over. Pupils can realize the mistakes they did and it is also a kind of feedback for them. Betteridge *et al.* (1983, p.6) even claim that the teacher "*should never interrupt a game which is flowing successfully in order to correct a mistake in language use.*"

Finally, the role of the teacher is also determined by the method used in the classroom. Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 23) indicate that in some methods, teacher is a person that cannot be omitted and the course of the lesson is hugely dependent on him as a main source of knowledge and organization (for example in the classical Audiolingualism). On the other hand, there are methods in which the role of the teacher is quite insignificant and teacher's initiative is limited.

### 2.6.3 The role of the learners

Not only a teacher has a certain role. Also learners are significant if not the most important participants of language learning. Learner's contribution in the learning process is partly influenced by the approach which teacher supports. For example inductive approach instigates more activity in the learner than the deductive one. We can observe learner roles from many points of view. It can be for example according to the type of activities learner is involved in, influence on other learners in the classroom, on the basis of the organization of the classroom etc. Learner can be seen as a processor, performer, initiator, problem solver *etc.* (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

Different methods perceive the role of the learner differently. For example audiolingualism was quite criticised because it neglected the learner and his abilities. Richards and Rogers (1986, p. 23) claim that "*newer methodologies customarily exhibit more concern for learner roles and for variation among learners.*" Linguists turned their attention more to learner's responsibility for the course of the lesson and the result of their work and effort. Learners should be also monitoring their progress and co-operate with their classmates. Teacher is not the only source of learning; pupils can learn from their own mistakes and enrich themselves by their classmates (especially when doing a pair work or group work). The older pupils are, more independent they should be. This statement should be applied for all the activities which are dealt with in the lesson (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

## 2.7 Division of games

Rixon (1981, p. 1) states that “*the most obvious way of classifying games from a language teacher’s point of view is according to the language they practise.*” So we can talk about listening games, spelling games, games for practising vocabulary, games concerning a structure or a function, and so on.

Then we can divide them according to different criteria, for example:

I. **According to their general character and spirit:** True and false games, Guessing and speculating games, Memory games, etc. (Betteridge *et al.*, 1983, p. 4). And there are also other types of games and activities:

- **COMMUNICATION GAMES WITH PICTURES**

Using pictures can be very useful for different communication activities. That includes for example “describe and draw” activities, in which one student describes a picture and his/her partner has to draw it. We can also use this type of game as a group work or activity. Sometimes teachers use pictures as a basis of creative writing. (Harmer, 2007, p.178)

- **CARD GAMES**

The teacher has many possibilities concerning the card games. It is usually used for a pair work because for that purpose, cards are ideal. Harmer (2007, p.180) suggests: “*A simple vocabulary game can be played in which students have cards with pictures on one side and words on the other.*” Also Lengeling and Malarcher (1997, online) emphasize how useful game cards can be. They call them “index cards” and can contain words, sentences or pictures. Another advantage is that they can be used for any level of English.

- **BOARD GAMES**

There are many games that can be played with the usage of the board. One of the examples is a game called noughts and crosses (or Tic-tac-toe). It can be performed as a pair-work or a teacher can divide the class into two groups, each group has a half of the board and their task is to fill up their side of the board with as many words as possible (according to certain instructions).

- **PSYCHOLOGY GAMES**

Betteridge *et al.* (1983, p. 37) define psychology games which are connected with the way how human mind works and also learners' senses and perception.

- **OTHER GAMES**

Obee (1999, p. 7) distinguishes also racing games, deduction games, puzzle solving, question games etc.

**II. According to form of class organization:** Pair work, group work, class work and individual work (Betteridge *et al.*, 1983, p. 5).

(Note: The pair and group work games are very important for oral practice.)

- **PAIR WORK**

The biggest advantage of pair work is its easiness and speed of organization. It is recommended for practicing intensive listening and speaking. If we consider some discipline problems, pair work is not as complicated as for example group work. (Betteridge *et al.*, 1983, p. 5) Harmer (2007, p. 168) points out that when creating a pair work, teacher should take into consideration some facts, for example friendship between pupils who should work together, streaming of the students which is based on assumption that there are learners of different levels (weaker and stronger). The easiest but not guaranteed way to make pairs is by chance.

- **GROUP WORK**

Group work is ideal for four to six players. Betteridge *et al.* (1983, p.5) add that “*membership of groups should be constant for the sake of goodwill and efficiency.*” To sum up, the choice of particular learners is essential and we should consider all the strategies. The teacher usually chose groups according to ability of individual learners (so that means a personal choice). Some educators also think that it is rational to have a leader of the group but on the contrary it is proved that students are able to co-operate even without this leader. In any case, teacher should go from group to group and observe and evaluate its work and results. Harmer (2007, p. 171) suggests that the arrangement and number of students in the group can be changed during the activity.

Harmer (2007, p. 173) also describes some problems that might occur during pair or group work. Very common problem is that some of the pairs/groups finish their work earlier than others. Teacher should be ready to deal with such a situation. Another big problem could be the group composition which might not be suitable.

- **THE WHOLE-CLASS ACTIVITY**

Activities that involve all the pupils in the class can be called the “whole-class activities”. Harmer (2007, p. 161) points out that the whole-class grouping can function as a bond between the students and it is easier for the teacher to control the class. A good example of this activity is “finding partners” or bingo.

### **III. According to the role of the teacher:**

Betteridge *et al.* (1983, p. 4) distinguish language activities according to the teacher's role or activity: *controlled, guided and free activities*. Free activities do not require teacher's guidance and control. On the contrary, controlled activities (as it is clear from its name) are dependent on the teacher.

### **IV. According to the type of activity:**

Walcyn-Jones (2000) focuses on grammar games and group them into eleven sections according to the type of learners' activity: *Find someone activities, Bingo activities, Jigsaw reading activities, Asking and answering questions activities, Information-gap activities, Find the differences activities, Questionnaires and surveys, Giving and receiving instructions, Board and card games etc.*

Other divisions are possible, for example Mario Rinvolucri in his book *Grammar Games* (1984) divides games into five big sections – Competitive games, Collaborative sentence-making games, Awareness activities, Grammar through drama and the last section is called Miscellany.

Jim Scrivener (1994, p. 123) mentions that grammar practice activities and games are focused on particular grammatical items and gives and examples of different grammar activities: grammar quiz, split sentences, sentences from pictures, memory test, picture dictation, miming an action and growing stories.

# PRACTICAL PART

The main output of the practical part was to compile a collection of grammar games and activities suitable for particular grammar topic, to practise them in the classroom and describe their realization and survey among the pupils.

A questionnaire for observing teacher and trainee students at Department of English at Palacký University are also included in the practical part. The main purpose of these questionnaires was to investigate the general view of grammar games in language teaching.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. Do pupils enjoy playing grammar games in the classroom?
2. Do pupils consider grammar games useful?
3. What is an attitude of the observing teacher towards chosen activities and games?
4. Does she consider them suitable for the pupils?
5. Were the chosen grammar games convenient concerning the age and abilities of the pupils?
6. Were the games interesting and motivating for the pupils?
7. What is an opinion of university English students on grammar games in ELT?
8. How often and when would they use the games in the lesson?
9. Do they consider the games useful and motivating?
10. What is their opinion on suitability of school environment for playing games?

## **3 COLLECTION OF GAMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTISING GRAMMAR**

One of the main outcomes was to compile a collection of grammar games and activities. It was focused on the grammar of past simple (affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences) and irregular verbs because they represent an important part in learning English and they are also essential for another progress. Moreover, irregular verbs are grammatical phenomenon that is not a part of Czech grammar so it could be difficult to understand for learners.

The games and activities were of different character, for example warm-up, communicative and entertaining activities. The aim was also to choose the activities which were interesting for pupils. It was supposed beforehand that the pupils had to learn the verb forms by heart (from the table at the end of the course book).

Success of the particular activities was evaluated from the different points of view - from the point of view of the author, pupils and the observing teacher (who is the English teacher of the class). This arrangement was supposed to guarantee that the assessment is not subjective.

### **3.1 Profile of the class**

The pupils of the seventh grade at Slovanské gymnázium Olomouc were chosen to practise the grammar activities, most of them were at the age of 12 or 13. Slovanské gymnázium Olomouc is a school with a long-time tradition. It was founded in 1867 and nowadays it is one of the most prestigious grammar schools in the Czech Republic.

It was expected that the knowledge level of the pupils is higher than in the same grade at primary school as it is a selective school. The number of students in the class was 18 and there were a few observation lessons with them before the practice. The teacher used a course book by Tom Hutchinson - *Project 3* in the lessons and also different supportive activities and methods. *Project 3* is widely used at Czech schools but it would not be enough creative for the students to work only with the course book without using any other activities.

*Project 3* coursebook is a convenient example of multi-strand syllabus. The table of contents contains a few parts: unit topic, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, communication and skills and finally a culture and across the curriculum part. Then if we look specifically on grammar part we can observe that grammar is nicely organized; the first units concern basic grammar issues as present simple and continuous, past simple, regular and irregular verbs and gradually learners are exposed to more difficult grammar issues as present perfect tense or modal verbs (must, mustn't, don't have to).

The games and activities of this thesis were practised during 3 lessons (45 minutes each) and after each lesson the pupils were given a short questionnaire to fill in. The aim of this questionnaire was to find out if the pupils liked the activity and if they consider it useful (more in chapter 4). All the practised activities were connected with the current topic in the lessons so it did not disrupt the course of the whole subject.

Conditions for playing the games were suitable – pupils were willing to play and there was enough space for the group work and the whole-class activities in the classroom. The games were not demanding concerning the time for preparation and there was no need for technical devices.

## **3.2 Chosen games**

1. Irregular Verbs King
2. Irregular Verbs Bingo
3. Find who...
4. Broken sentences
5. Irregular Verbs Crossword
6. Two truths and a lie
7. Sort Yourselfs Out!
8. Act it out!
9. Noughts and crosses

### 3.2.1 Irregular Verbs King

**Grammar practised:** irregular verbs

**Level:** A1

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Materials:** none

**Source of the game:** none

**Aim:** to practise irregular verbs by means of competition

**Classroom organization:** the whole class activity

---

#### **Description:**

This is kind of an easy and quick warm-up activity so it is good to use it at the beginning of the lesson. Firstly, all pupils are standing up at the desks. The teacher says the basic form of irregular verbs to a pair of pupils. The one who is faster to say the past simple and participle stays stand up. The slower one sits down. Then the competition continues till there is just one winner. The only important thing is that teacher has to know the list of irregular verbs that pupils learnt (in this case the irregular verbs from the back cover of the course book will be used).

#### **My assessment:**

This activity was really fast but children liked it (especially the competitive pupils). Maybe it would be good to do the second round to practise the verbs more and give pupils a second chance. Because in this case, half of the class had just one chance and then they only had to observe their classmates competing so it could have been boring for them.

This game should be always positive so the teacher is trying to find the best or the most assiduous student in the class – not the worst one. It would be humiliating for the pupils if the worse students were standing and the better ones were observing them.

According to the questionnaire, this was an activity after which most of the pupils were aware of the fact that they were practising grammar (in comparison with other activities) – it was caused by the fact that they had to say directly the forms of irregular verbs. As we discussed in chapter 2.7, this activity can be described as a competitive game and activity which is completely controlled by the teacher. On the whole, I consider this game successful and motivating for the pupils.

### 3.2.2 Irregular Verbs Bingo

**Grammar practised:** irregular verbs

**Level:** A1 - A2

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Materials:** Bingo cards, pen/pencil

**Source of the game:** [www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

([www.cambridge.org/grammarandbeyond/grammar-practice-activities/2013/03/irregular-past-tense-bingo](http://www.cambridge.org/grammarandbeyond/grammar-practice-activities/2013/03/irregular-past-tense-bingo))

**Aim:** to practise irregular verbs

**Classroom organization:** the whole class activity

---

#### **Description:**

Bingo is a very well-known game with many variations (teachers usually use it to practise new vocabulary). This one is focused on the irregular verb forms (either past simple or past participle). The teacher can pass out the bingo cards (See figure 1) or pupils can draw their own table with 9 spaces on a piece of paper. Then a teacher writes 15 verbs on the blackboard and students choose nine of them and write their base form down into the table.

Finally, when pupils are ready teacher calls out past tense (or past participle) form of chosen verbs and pupils cross it if they have the particular verb. One can win by having 3 verbs in a row – diagonally (see figure 1).

#### **My assessment:**

Pupils have already known how to play bingo but they did not know this particular variation. They liked it but it was probably too easy for them so they were not so motivated to play because more difficult tasks make learners more active and interested in the task. Another very distinctive feature of this game was a big proportion of luck. Pupils could argue that it is not fair to win because you do not need much knowledge.

Only half of the pupils thought that this game is also helping them to practise irregular verbs – even though it was obvious because if they did not know them they would not be able to win the game. It is always good to do a short “post-activity” which means to check if they really have the verbs in a row. The winner can tell the class what verbs s/he has and also say the past simple form (or present perfect if we want to practise it).

Generally, this game can function as a very good time-filler (even though it was not the primary purpose in this case) or an activity at the end of the lesson – as a reward for learners in the case they like it. Bingo game can be also easily adapted for younger learners. Teacher can for example use cards with the pictures (or numbers, symbols) and then ask the pupils if they have the particular picture on the card. Then they can stick the table into their exercise books.

Bingo can be classified as a guessing game (See chapter 2.7) and it is not demanding concerning the classroom organization – it can be played in any conditions. The role of the teacher is mainly managerial and controlling (more in chapter 2.6.2).

*Irregular verbs BINGO!*

<del>draw</del>	<del>do</del>	<del>sit</del>
bite	fly	hide
eat	keep	run

Figure 1 Bingo card for pupils

### 3.2.3 Find Someone Who...

**Grammar practised:** past simple questions

**Level:** A1 - A2

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Materials:** one completion sheet per student

**Source of the game:** Grammar Games (Mario Rinvolucri, 1984, p. 35)

**Aim:** to practise forming questions in past simple tense

**Classroom organization:** the whole class activity

---

#### **Description:**

This activity is focused on speaking and forming questions in the past simple tense. Each student is given a completion sheet (see figure 2) and has to walk around the classroom and ask other classmates if they “did something”. When pupils find this person, they write it down into the table. They can ask the teacher as well. The aim is to have as many names as possible. After the activity teacher asks students the questions concerning the sentences in the table.

#### **My assessment:**

This kind of activity is really good and effective because there is an information gap (see chapter 2.5) and everybody in the class is working. This game is a typical example of the whole class activity as we discussed in chapter 2.7. A teacher has to think about the sentences properly so it is not too easy for the pupils to find out the names of their classmates. If the sentences are too easy, then the activity is not meaningful and learners are not motivated to ask (e.g. because they already know the answer).

Intensity of noise in the class is a small disadvantage so the teacher has to control the class all the time. But when practising this activity, the level of noise was not so high so I did not have to reprimand the pupils. I was just monitoring them so they knew they have to work properly.

Pupils were very active and they quite enjoyed the questions - especially the funny ones. That was also the reason I have chosen them because it is good when they can have fun and it can help them to remember better the pattern of the question.

There was a small recapitulation at the end of the activity; I asked more about the things on the list. For example: “*Did you find somebody who went skiing this winter?*” And if the answer was positive I tried to make sure if it is really true. Another possibility for the post-activity is to ask the pupils what interesting they found out. They can start their statements like: “*I was surprised that X...*” or “*I did not know that Y...*”

This activity is more dynamic when the learners do not know one another. So it can be played as an initial get-together game (even for the adult learners if the task is adapted to them). It is also good that it can be modified for the different grammar topics. We can practise for example present simple, past simple, present perfect, can, have *etc...* To sum up, this activity can function as a great means to tighten up pupils and enable them to get to know their classmates better.

When looking at pupils’ questionnaire, it was found out that some of the students (approximately 1/3) were not sure if they improved their grammar. This result was quite expected considering the age of the pupils. This game can be described as a “free activity” according to the role of the teacher (see chapter 2.7) and it is aimed at communication.

Completion sheet for pupils:

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Find a person who...</i>
	went skiing this winter
	went camping last summer
	had an operation during childhood
	met a famous person
	flew on a plane last year
	used a computer today
	met Santa Claus last year ☺

Figure 2 Completion sheet: Find someone who

### 3.2.4 Broken sentences

**Grammar practised:** past simple

**Level:** A1 - A2

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials:** pieces of paper with 9 sentences (18 pieces)

**Source of the game:** Grammar Games and activities (Peter Watcyn-Jones, p. 47)

**Aim:** to practise clauses of purpose in the past

**Classroom organization:** the whole class activity

---

**Description:**

The class is divided into halves. Then everybody is given a piece of paper with half of the sentence (either red or blue). The task is to find the second part of the sentence.

1.	I had to get a taxi home	because I missed the last bus.
2.	I drank two glasses of water	because I was very thirsty.
3.	I ate a large meal	because I was very hungry.
4.	I didn't marry him	because I didn't love him enough.
5.	I was late for work	because my car broke down.
6.	I switched on the central heating	because the room was cold.
7.	I couldn't get in	because I lost my keys.
8.	I didn't phone Julie	because I forgot.
9.	I had to use my credit card	because I didn't have enough money on me.

Figure 3 Completion sheet: Broken sentences

**My assessment:**

Pupils were surprisingly very quick in this activity. It was more focused on reading comprehension than on grammar. After the activity we read the sentences together and pupils tried to translate them which functioned as a post-activity. Not many students thought that they can use past simple better after this activity even though they liked it (more in chapter 4).

What should be always considered before the activity is the fact that there is only one option when subordinate clause corresponds with the main clause and also a number of pupils. In this case there was not fortunately an odd numbers of pupils but two students were absent so I had to take away one sentence. The post-activity when pupils read their sentences and translated them was quite short and not really meaningful. It would be better to give the pupils more time to work with the sentences. They could for example think up more “excuses” because all the sentences were clauses of purpose – see figure 3.

If the class is too big for playing this game or the pupils are not as competent as in this case, teacher can divide the class into halves and play it in two parts (division of particular cards should be done carefully so the clauses are fitting). Teacher should also control the level of noise which can be quite high during this activity.

On the whole, there are many factors that might unfavourably influence the progress of this game (see chapter 2.2) but in spite of the fact that I did not know the pupils well I managed to choose quite suitable sentences.

### 3.2.5 Irregular Verbs Crossword

**Grammar practised:** irregular verbs

**Level:** A1 - A2

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Materials:** a piece of paper with the crossword

**Source of the game:** none

**Aim:** to practise irregular verbs

**Classroom organization:** individual work

---

#### Description:

The task of the pupils is to fill in the crossword (see figure 4) with the past simple form of irregular verbs. This activity can be used in many ways –during the lesson, at the end of the lesson when there is some time left or it can be done as homework.

CROSSWORD:

Fill in the past simple of these verbs:

1. break
2. drink
3. bring
4. fall
5. build
6. cost
7. think

And the solution is:

*I love \_\_\_\_\_!*

1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										
6.										
7.										

Figure 4 Crossword

#### My assessment:

The majority of the students liked this activity and considered it useful. They were very apt to fill the crossword and to find the solution. We did a small post-activity. Pupils were supposed to write the words on the blackboard so we could check if the spelling is correct. Pupils were really fast, I would expect longer duration.

### **3.2.6 Two truths and a lie**

**Grammar practised:** past simple

**Level:** A2

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials:** paper, pen/pencil

**Source of the game:** none

**Aim:** to practise past simple by asking and answering the questions

**Classroom organization:** Pair work

---

#### **Description:**

Firstly, children have to write down three sentences concerning what they did sometime in the past – two true sentences and one lie (all in past simple). Then they work in pairs, show their sentences to each other and ask the questions. After a few minutes (5-8) they decide which sentence is a lie. It is helpful when the teacher writes an example on the blackboard first.

#### **My assessment:**

This game can function as a great ice-breaker. Almost all the pupils liked this game and found it useful but there were huge differences between the pairs - some pupils were not able to communicate together. Maybe if I knew the pupils better, I would manage the pair work in a different way. I have been observing the pairs and some of them were communicating, exploring and working effectively. On the other hand, there were pairs (especially girls) who did not know what to ask, how to ask and I had to help them and challenge them.

The observing teacher also really like this game but we agreed on the fact that it would be better to use it with older students (8th/9th grade). Older students can use their imagination better so they would probably enjoy this game more. It can be also played as a group work (but only in the small groups). Pair work-variation was in the case of 7th graders better. At the end of the activity, it is good to ask the students if they found out was statement was false and they can also tell others what it was (more imagination pupils use, more funny it is). A variation on this game – “Two truths and one wish” can be also played with older students.

It was really good that this game developed pupils’ communication skills and they could learn something new about each other at the same time. Therefore, this game can be labelled as communication and guessing game (see chapter 2.7).

### 3.2.7 Sort yourselves out!

**Grammar practised:** past simple tense

**Level:** A1- A2

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials:** pieces of paper with sentences

**Source of the game:** The Grammar Activity Book (Bob Obee, p. 37)

**Aim:** to practise the form of past simple sentences and questions

**Classroom organization:** group work

---

#### **Description:**

The class is divided into two teams. Each team has one captain and the name of the group. The teacher gives the captains the cards (the cards form always one sentence). When the game is started, pupils can look at the cards and have to line themselves up as quickly as possible and make a correct sentence. Teacher knows that they finished the activity when they are holding the cards above their heads (see figure 5). The team who is faster is given one point but the teacher should always decide whether the sentence is correct. The team which has more points at the end is the winner.

#### **Sentences:**

Who did you go out last night with?

We had no time to study because we came late.

He wrote her many nice letters last year.

He was very sorry to hear about it.

I told my best friend to visit me.

#### **My assessment:**

This was unexpectedly one of the most successful activities. Pupils made two teams (boys and girls) and were very eager to compete. The names of the teams were written on the blackboard so pupils could see how many points they had. The sentences were enough difficult so it took some time to put it together. To think up the sentences was the most difficult task for me because it should have been challenging for the learners.

The observing teacher advised me to think up quite difficult sentences because the pupils were really good, especially some of them were at a really high level of English. For the next time, it would be better to give them some time limit (e.g. 30 seconds) at the beginning when explaining the rules (for the case that they cannot solve the sentences). Generally, I was very satisfied with this activity and I really appreciate that it can be modified for different learners' levels. We can use very simple sentences with beginners and so on.

This game is quite demanding concerning the preparation. Firstly, a teacher has to decide what sentences are suitable for the learners. Secondly, the cards with particular words must be prepared which is quite time-consuming. So if the sentence is composed from 10 words and there are two teams, 20 cards must be printed/written and cut. Teacher should be also careful not to lose the cards because no word can be missing.

This game can be classified as competitive as well as collaborative (see chapter 2.2) and it is also an example of group work where the number of the groups can be changed.



4 If they are right, they win the round; if not, say *no* and the race continues until one team has sorted itself into a correct sentence. The team that wins the most rounds is the winner.

Figure 5 The Grammar Activity Book (Bob Obee, 1999, p. 37)

### 3.2.8 Act it out! (Pantomime)

**Grammar practised:** past tense

**Level:** A1 - A2

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials:** strips of paper with sentences that should be acted out

**Source of the game:** none

**Aims:** to perform in front of the class, to practise past simple questions

**Classroom organization:** the whole class activity

---

#### **Description:**

One student is chosen to go in front of the classroom. He/she is given (or draw) a piece of paper with a sentence (see figure 6) and has to act the sentence out. The rest of the class is guessing what was written on that piece of paper.

YOU:

- Caught a butterfly
- Saw a ghost
- Sang opera
- Drank a bottle of beer
- Played tennis
- Burnt dinner
- Rode a bike
- Wrote a letter
- Broke your leg
- Won the lottery
- Cut your hand

Figure 6 Pantomime

**My assessment:**

This activity is more focused on entertainment than on practising grammar but students have to know irregular verbs to understand the meaning of the sentence. I would include this activity at the end of the lesson because it makes the pupils a bit distracted. It is a great game to loosen tense atmosphere or shyness in the classroom. Therefore this game is an example of an activity with advantages as well as disadvantages (see chapter 2.4).

It is up to the teacher how to choose the pupils who will perform. I did it in a way that the pupil who performed always chose another person to come in front of the black board. The sentences could be more difficult by specifying them more.

Possible problem could occur if the pupils are too shy to perform the mimes for the whole class. If this happens, teacher can just tell the pupils to perform in pair or group firstly and then in front of the class. Some pupils are not so inventive and might have problems with this task. In this case teacher can help them or give them some motivation. During the practice there was only one girl who did not know how to perform the sentence. Another option is to let them choose another piece of paper.

The advantage or lesson of this activity can be the fact that pupils see how important gestures and facial expressions are in communication.

### 3.2.9 Noughts and crosses (Tic-tac-toe)

**Grammar practised:** past tense

**Level:** A1 - A2

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials:** Tic-tac-toe card with the verbs (7x7)

**Source of the game:** RINVOLUCRI, M. *Grammar Games*. Cambridge: CUP, 1984 (p.13)

**Aim:** to practise past simple and irregular verbs

**Classroom organization:** Pair work

---

#### **Description:**

“Noughts and crosses” is a well-known paper-and-pencil game for two players. The aim of this game is to have four noughts or crosses in a row either horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Task of the pupils is to make sentences in past simple tense with the verbs given. Teacher should make sure that pupils know the rules of the game at the beginning.

Rules:

1. Sentence in past simple only
2. Mistake = you missed your turn
3. 4noughts/crosses in a row =winner

#### **My assessment:**

This game was a great combination of logical game and grammar practice. Moreover, pupils did not practise only grammatical structure but also communication. There was nobody in the class who did not like this game but just half of them thought that they can use past simple better after this activity.

But what I maybe failed to do were clear instructions before the cards for the students were dealt and pupils paid attention. After dealing the game cards, pupils were not able to concentrate on the rules. For the next time, I would write the basic rules at the blackboard (see Rules 1.-3.).

When the game started I was observing the learners. Some of them were more excited and also faster than others. I had spare cards for those who were quicker so they could play more games (so it is better to prepare more cards than the number of students or students can draw their own table into the exercise book. Some of the pupils had problems to think up the sentence so I helped them but that was just an exception.

According to the role of the teacher, this game can be classified as free (see chapter 2.7). Noughts and crosses can be also played as a group work – teacher can divide the class into halves and they compete together. It is ideal to have a smart board in the classroom for this variation of the game.

I consider this game as very successful. At the end, pupils were so involved in the activity that I could not stop them, which was a good sign according to the observing teacher.

be	tell	win	build	keep	say	wear
eat	write	wake	take	steal	sing	know
hear	leave	make	lose	buy	have	tell
sit	swim	teach	mean	bite	cut	drink
give	get	put	smell	fight	think	take
lose	Spend	be	begin	feel	put	sell
know	fly	ring	sell	grow	pay	sing

Figure 7 Tic-tac-toe card for learners

## 4 EVALUATION OF PRACTICAL PART

The aim of this chapter of the practical part is to evaluate the results of three different questionnaires – questionnaire for the pupils of Slovanské gymnázium Olomouc, the observing teacher, and finally a questionnaire for the students of Palacký University Olomouc.

### 4.1 Analysis of pupils' questionnaire in percentages

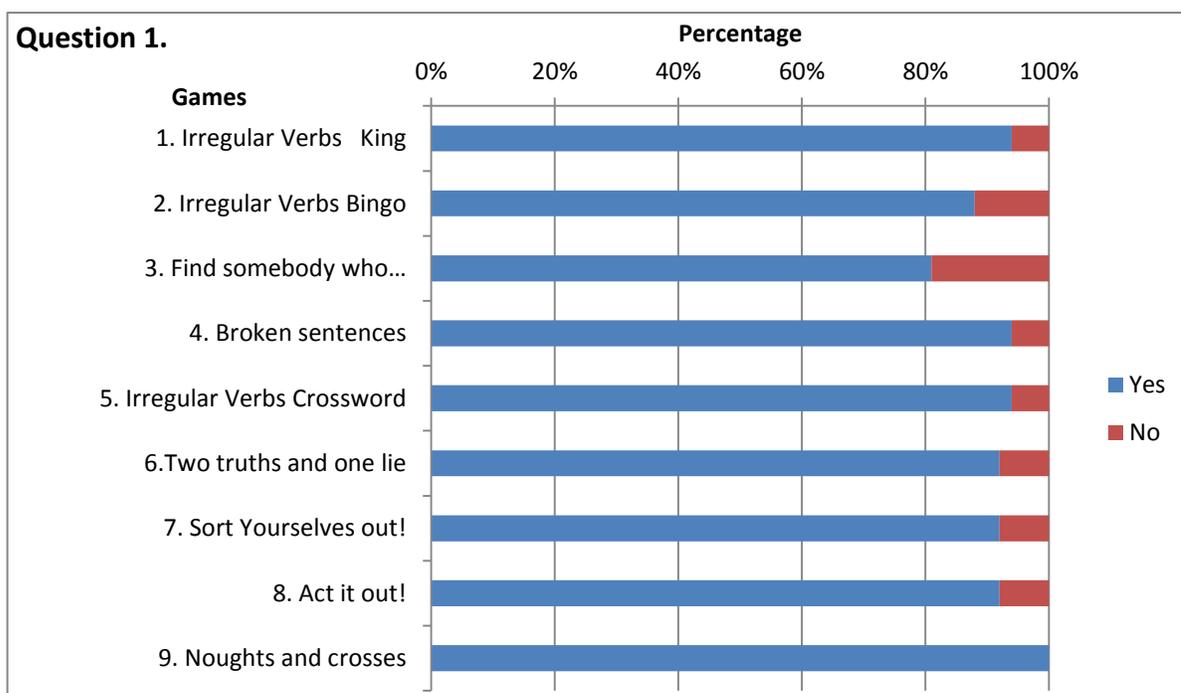


Figure 8 Answers to question 1 - Questionnaire for pupils

#### Question n. 1: Did you like this game/activity?

The main aim of the first question was to find out how much pupils liked the games. As it can be seen from the table, game *Noughts and crosses* was the most successful among pupils – all of them liked it (100 %). The observing teacher also concluded that this game was very enjoyable and she would like to use it with her students. Overall all the games were very successful, the lowest limit was 81 % (activity *Find somebody who...*). Another game which gained less than 90 % was *Bingo*. This result might have been expected because this game was not really stimulating and pupils could not really influence its progress. It was nothing new, therefore attractive. The results of the rest of the games were high – between 92-94 %. In total, there was no big fluctuation and the choice of the games was proved to be suitable considering the age, abilities and interest of the pupils.

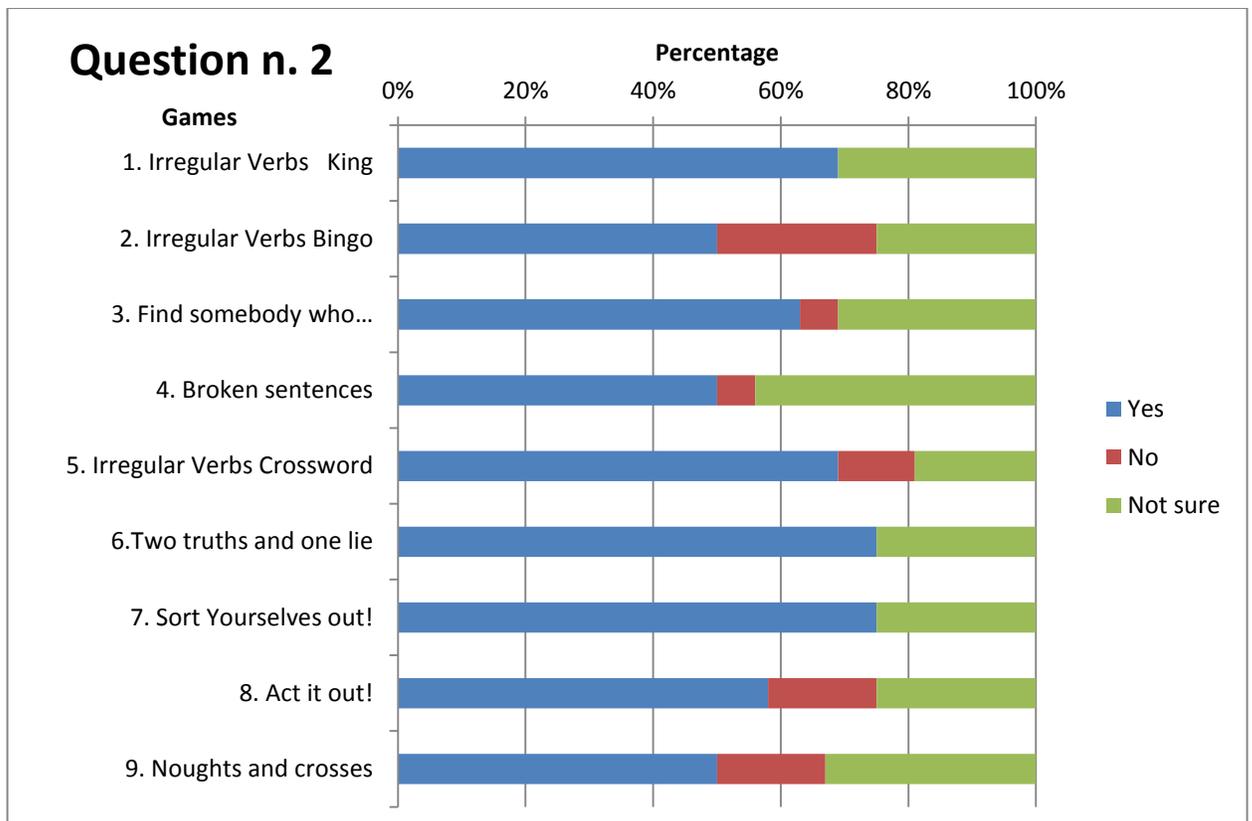


Figure 9 Answers to question 2 - Questionnaire for pupils

### Question 2: Do you think that you can use irregular verbs and past simple tense better after this activity?

The pupils were given two separate questions – the first one concerning irregular verbs and the second one past simple but the results were the same so you can see them in one graph. The results were also more diverse in comparison with the first question. There were three games with no negative answer – *Irregular Verbs King*, *Two truths and one lie* and *Sort Yourself out!*. These activities were the most useful according to the pupils and also very enjoyable (see figure 8). The most favourite activity – *Noughts and crosses* was not considered so useful, only 50 % of them thought that they can use irregular verbs and past simple better after the activity. The worst result can be seen with the game called *Irregular Verbs Bingo*. Half of the students did not consider it useful and 25 % of them were not sure about it. Also activity *Broken sentences* had quite bad results. The rest of the games were considered to be useful by the students. The observing teacher claimed that the pupils at this age are not really able to evaluate how useful the games are because they are too young to realise it.

## 4.2 Analysis of observing teacher's questionnaire

The observing teacher was present during the realization of all activities and I discussed the games and activities with her when preparing them. It was a great help for me because she knew her pupils well – their knowledge, nature, interests, *etc.* She is also very experienced in teaching so that was very helpful as well.

She considered more or less all the performed activities useful and appreciated that pupils could try something “unusual” with somebody unknown for them in the lesson. After the preparation and practice stage, she was given a short evaluation questionnaire with open-ended questions. She also commented on particular games and told me what could have been done better.

### **Question n. 1: Do you think that the chosen activities were suitable for pupils?**

She thinks that the chosen activities were perfectly suitable for pupils of secondary school. She also mentioned that pupils at Slovanské gymnázium Olomouc are really good and hard-working and their English is on high level so it could influence the whole progress of the games.

### **Question n.2: Were they convenient concerning the age and abilities of the pupils?**

She thinks that they were all convenient and she mainly appreciated that they developed pupils' ability to cooperate and communicate with one another. She thinks that it is really important for the students to strengthen their relationship and games are a good means for that. Pupils did not have problems with any of the games.

### **Question n.3: Were they sufficiently interesting and motivating?**

According to her, they were definitely motivating; students enjoyed playing them and did not ignore them. There were of course tiny differences between the activities but generally pupils were interested in all the activities. The results of pupils' interest can be seen in figure 9.

### **Question n.4: Would you use some of the activities in your future teaching?**

She said that she will use all of the activities in the future (hopefully). She has already used some of them in her classes – for example Bingo, Find who... But not applied for this particular grammar issue. She mainly liked the game Noughts and crosses and Two truths and one lie.

**Question n.5: Is there time for similar activities (which are not included in the course book) within ordinary lesson?**

In her opinion there is often time to do these activities, they do not have to take so much time and can be used within different grammar issues. She claimed that it would be boring for the students if she only used the exercises from the course book and it is important to liven up the lessons.

**Question n.6: Do you think that the activities were helpful for the pupils?**

She thinks that they were really helpful. She also added that pupils of this age do not really realize the purpose and usefulness of the games in language teaching; they enjoy the game but are not aware of the fact that they are practising grammar.

On the whole, she gave me a very positive feedback. She summed up the whole project as very motivating and contributive.

### **4.3 Analysis of questionnaire for students of English at Palacký University**

This questionnaire was arranged for the students who study English at Department of English at Palacký University of Olomouc. The answers were collected during March 2015. The aim of the first part of the questionnaire was to find out what was the position of games when they were pupils at lower-secondary school. The second goal was to find out if they want to become an English teacher after graduating from university and if so what attitude to using games at school they would have (when and how often they would use the games). The second part consisted of a table with ten concepts regarding grammar in language learning, including games in language teaching and their role, position of learners and teachers.

#### **The first part: Respondents' characteristics**

The total number of respondents was 40 and the first two questions were concerning their past experience with grammar games and English lessons at lower secondary school. Only approximately half of the respondents' English teachers (47,5 %) used grammar games in English lessons but most of the respondents (85 %) enjoyed the lessons. According to the questionnaire, all of them would like to become a teacher of English. In that case, they would use games with their pupils (100 %). Answers to the question how often they would use the games were diverse: 35 % of the respondents would use them once a week, 50 % would use them more than once a week and finally 15 % would use the games in every lesson. The last question regarded the stage of the lesson when a game should be used. More than half of the respondents (65 %) believed that it does not matter in what stage of the lesson game should be used; 35 % of the the respondents considered beginning of the lesson as the most suitable for a language game.

#### **The second part: Respondents' answers in percentages**

In this part, respondents were given ten concepts and they had to decide what their attitude towards them is; they had to choose from five options: strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree and strongly disagree. Questions were of different character, either positive or negative but they possessed the same element – grammar and games in English lessons.

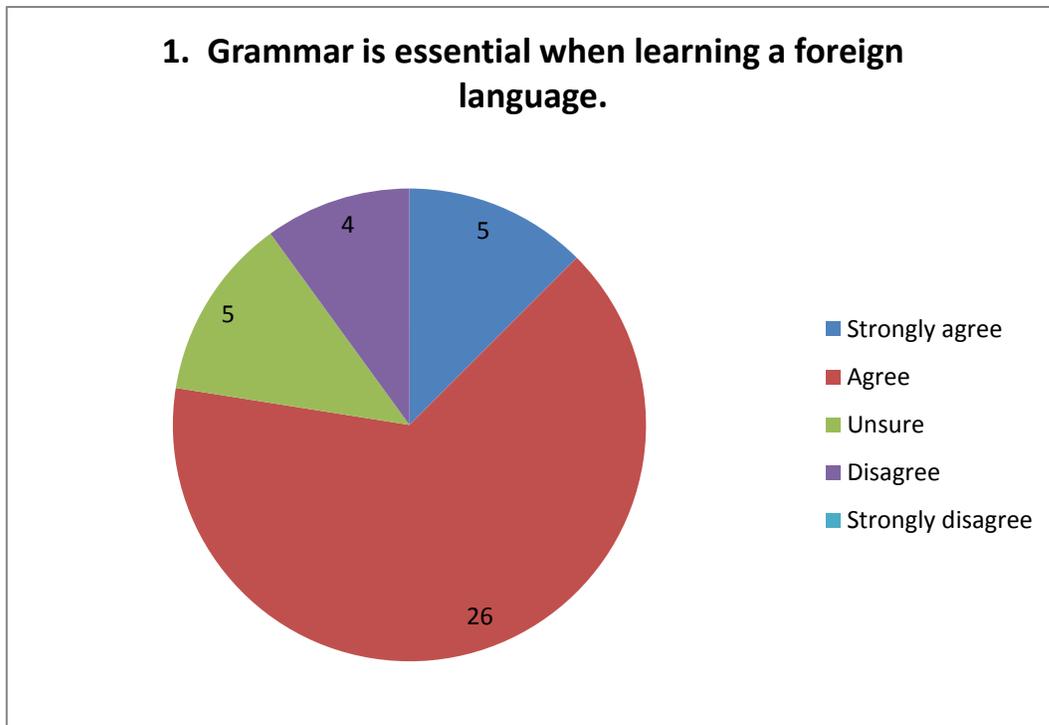


Figure 10 Answers to q. 1 - Questionnaire for university students

Majority of the respondents agreed (or strongly agreed) that grammar is essential when learning a foreign language. It might have been caused by the fact that Czech teachers are used to grammar in English lessons and it is also a part of the course book syllabus. The results could be also influenced by the way respondents were taught at school. Only a few of the respondents were not sure about this question and it was quite surprising that some of the respondents answered negatively (4 respondents out of 40).

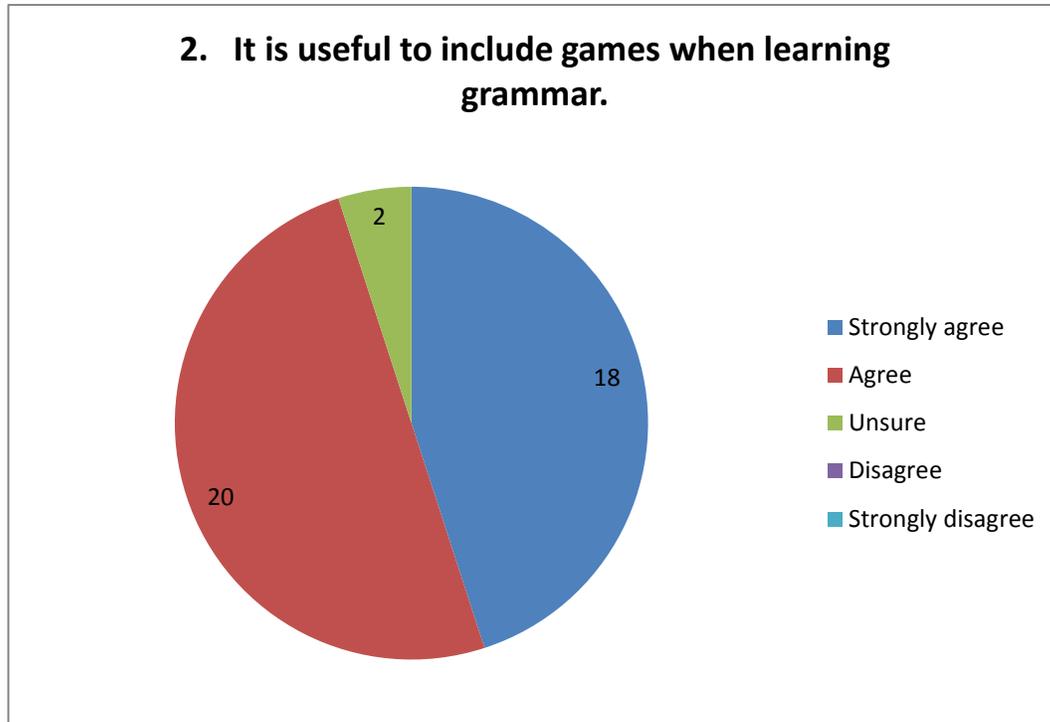


Figure 11 Answers to q. 2 - Questionnaire for university students

The results coming from this graph are rather evident – respondents agreed on the fact that it is useful to include games into grammar teaching. Only 5 % of the people questioned were not sure about this question and there was nobody who would disagree with the fact that games are useful when learning grammar. To sum up, university students of English are likely to try new methods and activities with the pupils because they consider them very useful. If we compare the results with the answer of the observing teacher we can conclude that it is the same.

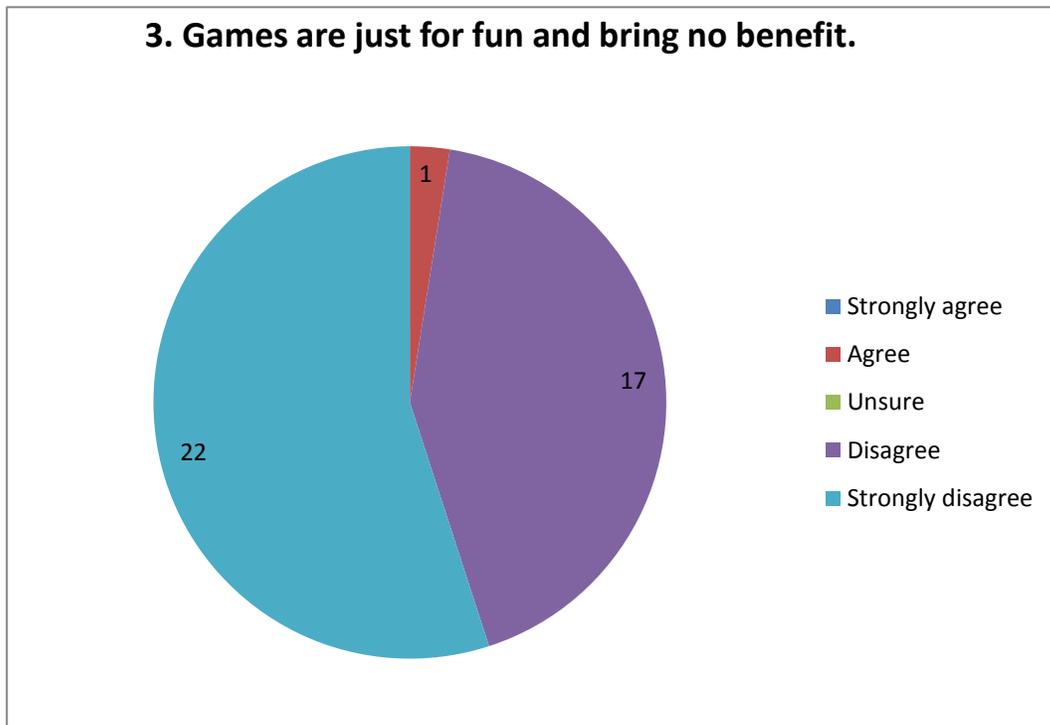


Figure 12 Answers to q. 3 - Questionnaire for university students

This question was designed as a “critique” of the games in general and claimed that they are just for fun, without any benefit. Out of all the respondents, there was just one person who agreed on this statement. The rest of those who filled in the questionnaire either disagreed or strongly disagreed. As it is discussed in theoretical part (chapter 2.4), games in language teaching have got many advantages and we cannot identify them just with fun even though they are enjoyable for the pupils. In conclusion, language games have got many other functions.

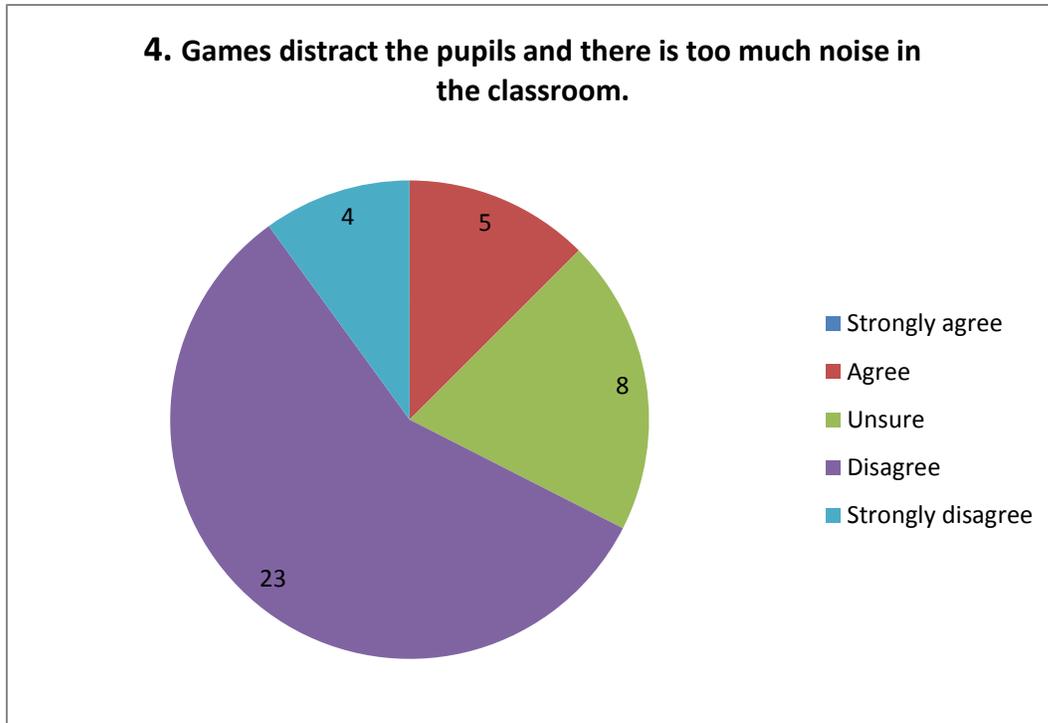


Figure 13 Answers to q. 4 - Questionnaire for university students

The aim of the fourth question of the research was to find out if the students think that games are distracting for the pupils and cause too much noise. The results coming from this question were quite surprising. About half of the respondents disagreed with the claim that games distract the pupils and cause too much noise, 20 % of the respondents were not sure about it and 12,5 % of them agreed. The fact is that to a certain extent almost all the games cause some noise and it is upon a teacher to control it. But it was also found out that the games motivate pupils so they make the pupils rather concentrated than distracted.

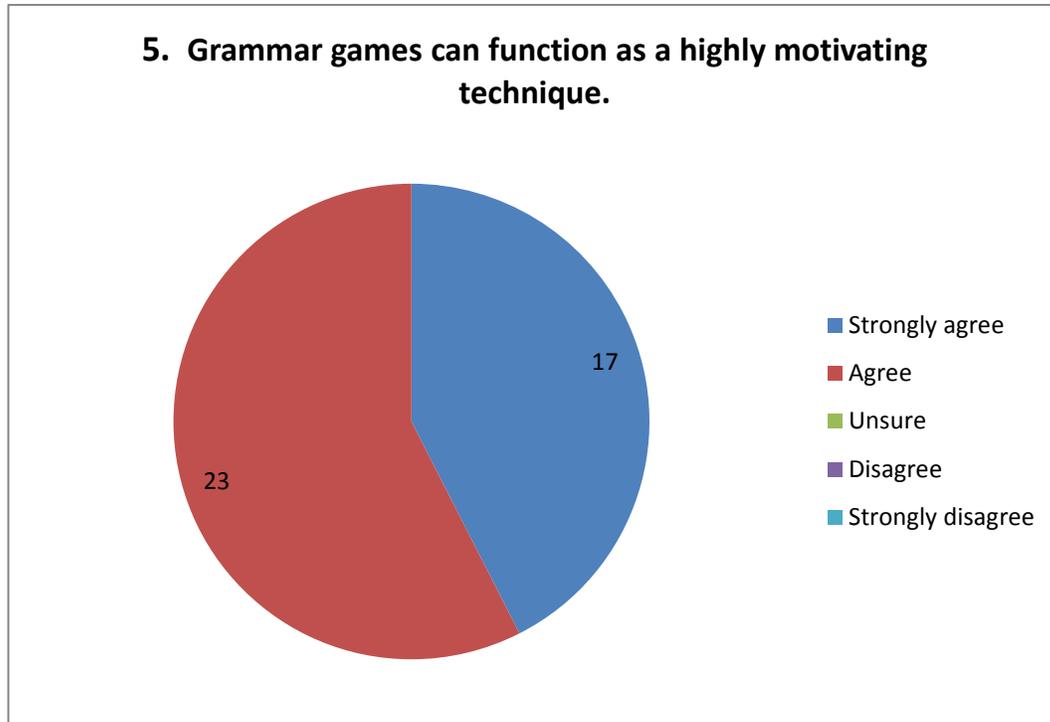


Figure 14 Answers to q. 5 - Questionnaire for university students

It is clear from the graph that the respondents unanimously agreed on the fact that grammar games are highly stimulating concerning the motivation of the pupils (57,5 % of the respondents agreed and 42,5 % strongly agreed). As we discussed it in the theoretical part (chapter 2.2), the role of motivation is very important in the lessons and games in general can enhance it.

The result of this question would be more valuable if the age of the learners was mentioned in the question because it is a factor which is quite significant and it was not considered in this case.

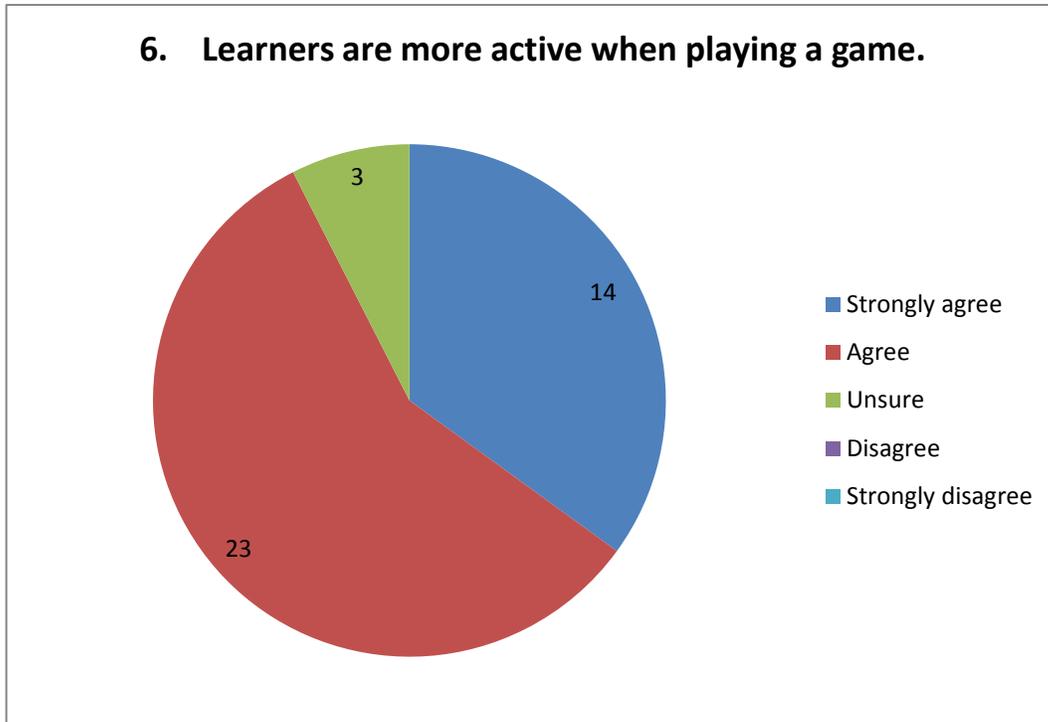


Figure 15 Answers to q. 6 - Questionnaire for university students

The main objective of this question was to find out if the learners are more active when playing a game. This question is partly connected with the previous one because it was proved that when the learners are motivated they are also more active; motivation is closely linked to achievement (see chapter 2.2). The results are quite clear – majority of the respondents agreed on this statement, 35 % of the respondents even strongly agreed with the fact that learners are more active. Only 7,5 % of the respondents were not sure about it and there was nobody who would disagree with this concept.

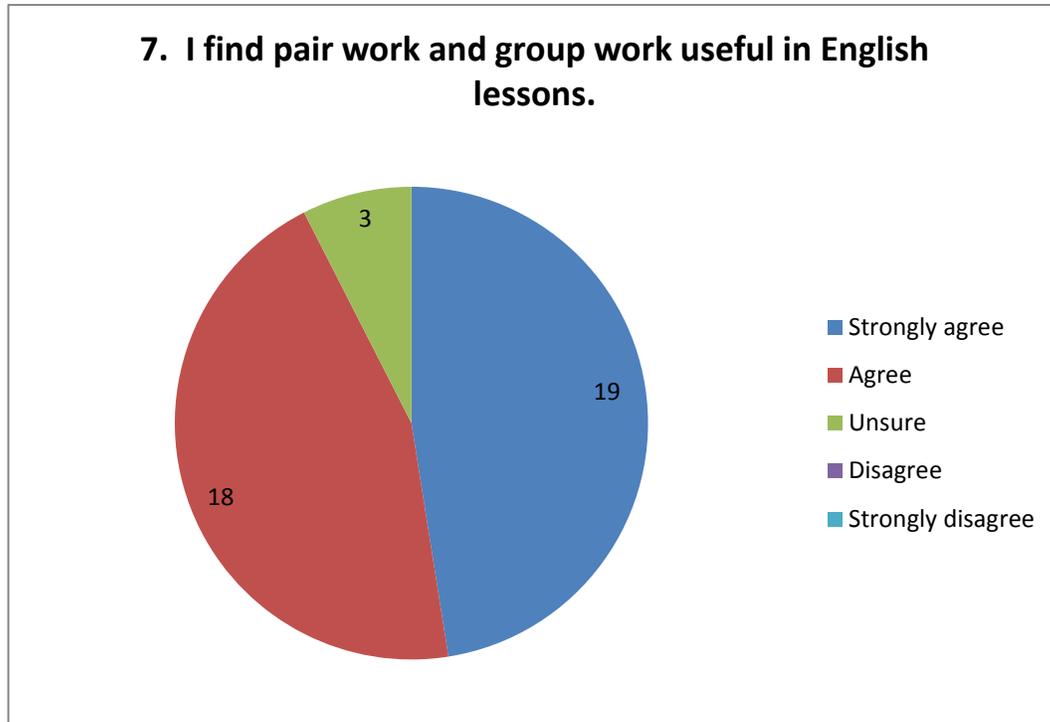


Figure 16 Answers to q. 7 - Questionnaire for university students

The seventh question of the research was aimed at pair work and group work in the lessons. Most of the respondents found pair work and group work in English lessons useful: 47,5 % of the respondents strongly agreed, 45 % agreed. Only 7, 5 % of them were not sure about it. An issue of classroom organisation is rather important and pair/group work is a good means of effective activity of learners (see chapter 2.7). The results of this question might have been influenced by the age of the respondents – younger teachers are more likely to use different activities concerning the classroom organization.

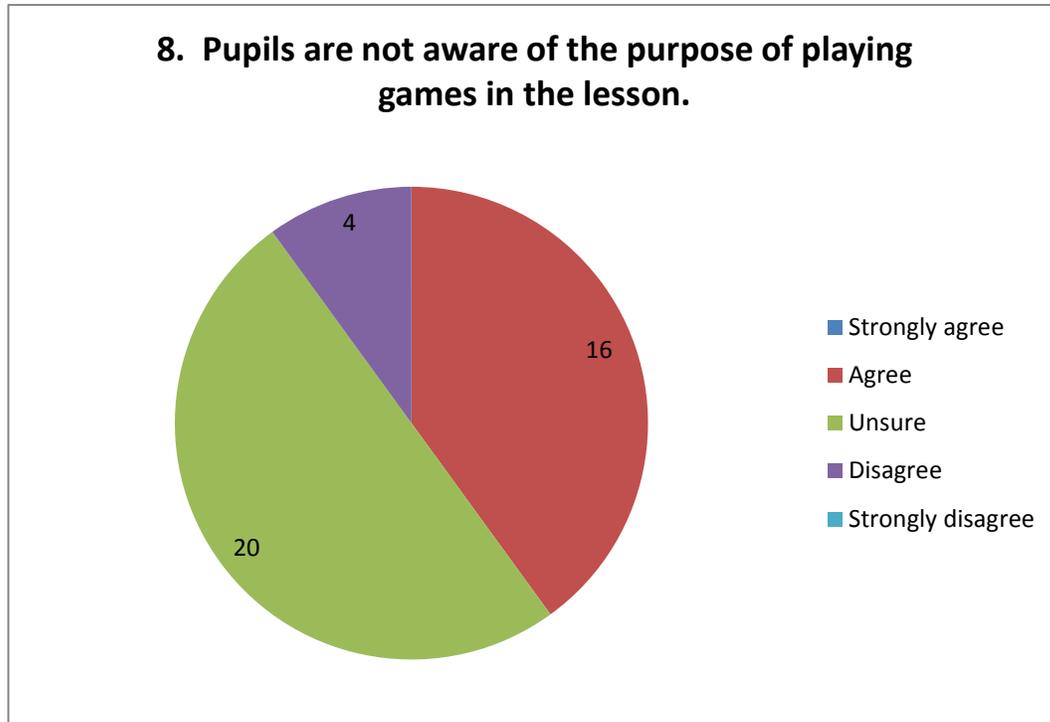


Figure 17 Answers to q. 8 - Questionnaire for university students

The question if pupils are not aware of the purpose of playing games in the lesson was relatively hard to decide and half of the people questioned (exactly 50 %) did not know if to agree or disagree. Less than half of the respondents (40 %) agreed with this idea and a few respondents disagreed. The fact that pupils are not aware of the purpose of the games was proved mainly by the results of the pupils' questionnaire – pupils did not consider some of the games very useful for them.

An observing teacher advocated that until certain age, pupils do not realize the purpose of playing games in the lesson so their answers might not be objective.

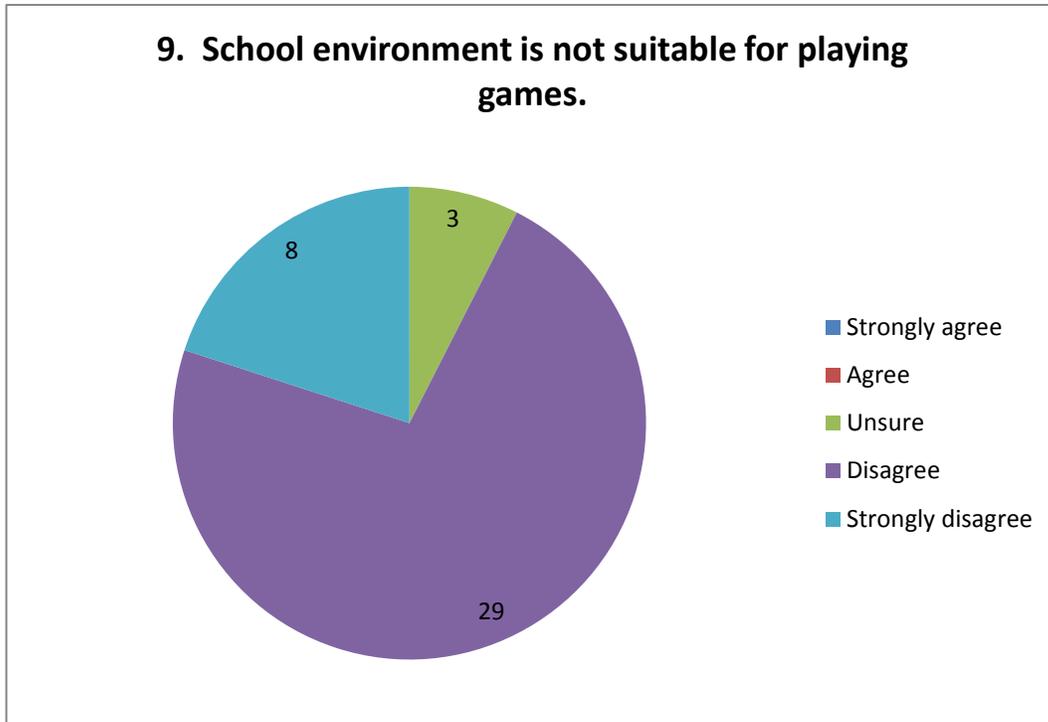


Figure 18 Answers to q. 9 - Questionnaire for university students

The aim of this question was to find out if the school environment is or is not suitable for playing games. The result was quite clear – respondents consider school environment convenient for playing games. Only a few respondents were not sure about it. The assumption is that the respondents had already some experience with teaching (because of the teaching practice) and they had an opportunity to try different activities with their students.

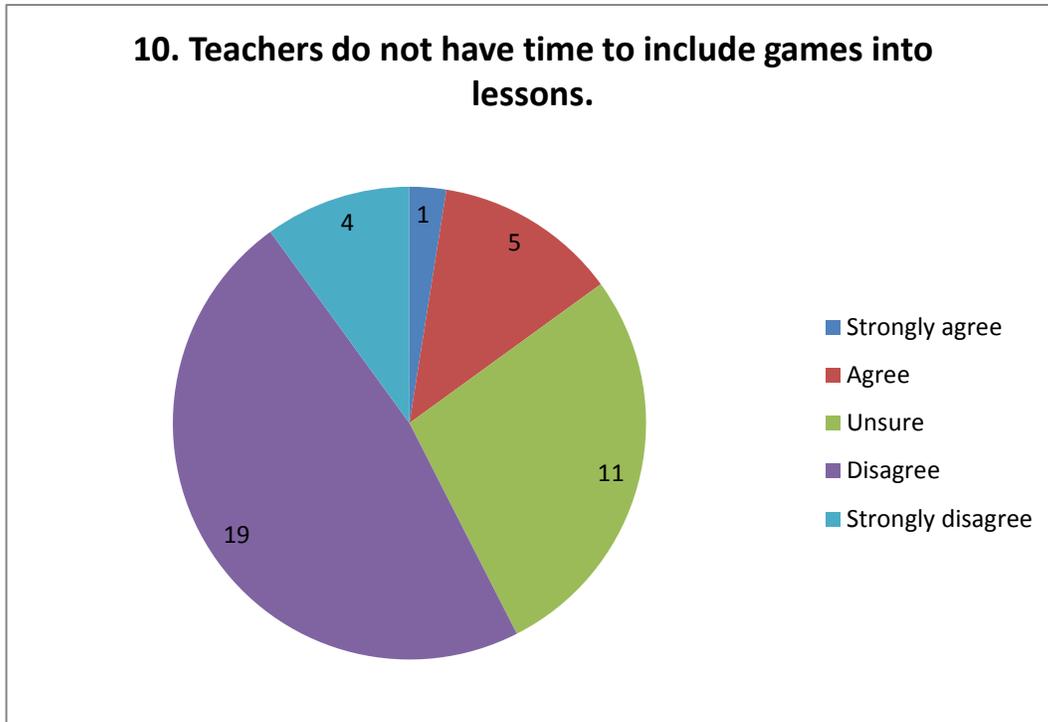


Figure 19 Answers to q. 10 - Questionnaire for university students

The main objective of the last question was to find out whether teachers have time for games in the lessons. As it can be seen from the graph, responses were very diverse. It might be difficult to decide whether teachers have time for the games in the lessons without longer teaching practice and experience. About half of the respondents think that there is time to include the games into the lesson and it was also confirmed by the observing teacher who emphasized that there is always time for a game or activity (see chapter 4.2). 15 % of the respondents stated that teachers do not have time for the games and 27,5 % of the respondents were not sure about it.

## 4.4 Final Evaluation

All the practised activities would be suitable for the pupils at levels A1-A2, some of them were easier than others but majority of them can be modified either for different level or different grammar issue. The aim was also to make some output or provide a follow-up activity after the game because the whole process should be somehow complex and pupils should realize what the purpose of the game was and that it was not just for fun. Because younger learners usually consider game to be funny but not educative.

Pupils at Slovanské gymnázium Olomouc cooperated and got involved in all activities and there were no behavioural problems or factors that would disturb the lesson. But it must not be forgotten that the games were not instructed by their English teacher so they could not have behaved as usually.

Game “Two truths and one lie” was little bit difficult for some pupils and some games were not so engaging or challenging for them – “Bingo”, “Broken sentences”. But the results of the pupils’ questionnaire were generally very positive.

Observing English teacher pointed out that most of the games were really good because they supported pupils’ cooperation, mutual communication and good relationship in the class which is very important and sometimes overlooked by the teachers. Games are also beneficial because they can bring a meaningful practice instead of drill which is boring for the pupils.

What was interesting for me as a mentor was pupils’ shyness when they had to communicate with their classmates of different gender. For example in “Find someone who” two groups of pupils were formed in the class – the group of girls and boys. It was not an obstacle in that case but it was proved that a teacher can observe something unexpected when using different games in the lesson.

What emerged from the questionnaire for the pupils was a fact that they do not really realize that the games or activities are useful for them. They consider grammar learning and “playing a game” as two different things. But it does not mean that a teacher should not use the activities in the lesson because they can be very motivating and revive interest in English as a whole. The observing teacher also suggested that there is often time to do some “extra” activity because it does not have to take a lot of time and it is challenging for the pupils to do something different than what they are used to do.

# CONCLUSION

The diploma thesis is focused on grammar games in English language teaching at lower-secondary school. The main aim of the theoretical part was to outline the history of grammar teaching, describe grammar methodology with particular grammar methods and different approaches towards grammar. Secondly, it included the chapter concerning games in language teaching because there are many things teacher has to consider before choosing the game. This chapter also gave a detailed description of different factors that influence the progress of the game. To summarize, it was suggested that games in language teaching must be well-planned but it was also showed that they bring about many advantages. One of the targets was also to specify division of the games according to different criteria and authors.

The main output of the practical part was the collection of nine language games aimed at grammar of irregular verbs and the past simple tense. These games were practised with one class of pupils at Slovanské gymnázium Olomouc and then described and analysed. Further, pupils and observing teacher were given the questionnaires that should have helped to answer the research questions. It was found out that pupils really enjoyed playing grammar games in the English lesson. The answers to the question if they consider the games useful were not so clear but we should take into consideration their age and ability to evaluate the usefulness of the games. The observing teacher summed up that all the games were suitable, motivating and useful for the pupils.

The next part of the practical part dealt with the results of the questionnaire which was aimed at the students of Department of English at Palacký University. This questionnaire was more extensive and the analysis of its results showed the view on grammar and grammar games from the perspective of future teachers of English (all of the respondents would like to become an English teacher). It was found out that they consider grammar essential for language learning. The answers concerning the use of the games in the lessons were also very positive – all of them would use them and more than half of the respondents would use them more than once a week which is quite surprising.

One of the research questions asked about the suitability of the school environment for playing games. According to the questionnaire, the school environment is perfectly convenient for language games. The results concerning the time for the games in the lessons were quite diverse and some of the respondents indicated that a teacher has not time for these activities.

To summarize, the results of the questionnaire showed that the grammar games have its role in language teaching but it must be mentioned that the practical part has its imperfections. The time for the games practice was quite short so the feedback of the pupils might not be so objective. Another fact is that there was a limited number of pupils in the classroom and pupils at grammar school were supposed to be more skillful than pupils of the same age at lower-secondary school. The questionnaire for the university students suggested that they consider games in ELT important but they still do not have enough experience and practice as teachers.

Finally, I hope that this work can demonstrate that grammar games should not be avoided and they have a positive contribution to language teaching.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Questionnaire for pupils:

<b>GAME/ ACTIVITY</b>	<i>Did you like this activity? (circle)</i>	<i>Do you think that you are able to use the past tense better now? (circle)</i>	<i>Do you think that you are able to use the irregular verbs better now? (circle)</i>
1. Irregular Verbs King	YES      NO	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW
2. Irregular Verbs Bingo	YES      NO	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW
3. Find somebody who	YES      NO	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW
4. Broken sentences	YES      NO	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW
5. Irregular Verbs Crossword	YES      NO	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW
6. Two truths and one lie	YES      NO	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW
7. Sort Yourselfs out!	YES      NO	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW
8. Act it out!	YES      NO	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW
9. Noughts and crosses	YES      NO	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW	YES/ NO/ I DON'T KNOW

**Appendix 2:** Evaluation questionnaire for the teacher:

1. Do you think that the chosen activities were suitable for pupils?
2. Were they convenient concerning the age and abilities of the pupils?
3. Were they sufficiently interesting and motivating?
4. Would you use some of the activities in your future teaching?
5. Is there time for similar activities (which are not included in the course book) within ordinary lesson?
6. Do you think that the activities were helpful for the pupils?
7. If you have any comment please write it down:

### **Appendix 3: Questionnaire for the students of English at Palacký University:**

#### **Questionnaire: GRAMMAR GAMES IN ELT**

This questionnaire is intended to collect data about teaching grammar and grammar games in ELT which is the topic of my Master Thesis. It is primarily aimed at the students of English department at Faculty of Education as future teachers of English.

Thank you for your time, I'm very grateful for your filling out this questionnaire.

*Tereza Kouřilová*

---

**Did your teacher at lower secondary school use grammar games in English lessons?**

YES      NO

**Did you enjoy English lessons?**

YES      NO

**Would you like to become a teacher of English?**

YES      NO

**If so, will you use games with your pupils?**

YES      NO

**How often would you use them?**

ONCE A WEEK              MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK              IN EVERY LESSON

**At what stage of the lesson would you use a language game?**

BEGINNING              MIDDLE              END              IT DOESN'T MATTER

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>1. Grammar is essential when learning a foreign language.</b>					
<b>2. It is useful to include games when learning grammar.</b>					
<b>3. Games are just for fun and bring no benefit.</b>					
<b>4. Games distract the pupils and there is too much noise in the classroom.</b>					
<b>5. Grammar games can function as a highly motivating technique.</b>					
<b>6. Learners are more active when playing a game.</b>					
<b>7. I find pair work and group work useful in English lessons.</b>					
<b>8. Pupils are not aware of the purpose of playing games in the lesson.</b>					
<b>9. School environment is not suitable for playing games.</b>					
<b>10. Teachers do not have time to include games into lessons.</b>					

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# RESUMÉ

Diplomová práce pojednává o gramatických hrách v hodinách anglického jazyka. V teoretické části byl vysvětlen koncept gramatiky, popsán její vývoj, metody a přístupy ke gramatice, které se s vývojem výuky cizích jazyků měnily. Hlavní náplní praktické části práce bylo vytvořit sbírku her, které by měly sloužit k procvičení gramatiky na 2. stupni ZŠ (případně odpovídajícího ročníku osmiletého gymnázia). Následně byly vyhodnoceny dotazníky od studentů, kteří se účastnili vybraných her, dohlížející učitelky a studentů Katedry AJ na UPOL. Všechny komponenty praktické části tak daly ucelený pohled na použití her ve výuce.

# ANOTACE

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<b>Název práce:</b>	Gramatické hry v hodinách anglického jazyka
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	Grammar games in ELT
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Diplomová práce se zabývá gramatickými hrami v hodinách anglického jazyka. Hlavním cílem práce bylo vytvořit sbírku gramatických her, které slouží k procvičení minulého času a nepravidelných sloves na 2. stupni ZŠ. Praktická část také obsahuje vyhodnocení dotazníků, které byly určeny pro příslušné žáky, dohlížející učitelku a studenty Katedry anglického jazyka UPOL. V teoretické části je blíže popsán pohled na gramatiku a hry v jazykové výuce.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	gramatika, hry, jazyk, výuka, anglický jazyk, metoda, přístup, učitel, žák
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	The diploma thesis deals with grammar games in English language teaching. The main output of the thesis was to compile a collection of grammar games for practising irregular verbs and past simple tense at lower-secondary school. Evaluation of the questionnaires for the pupils, observing teacher and students of English at UPOL are also included in the practical part. The main objective of the theoretical part is to describe grammar and games in language teaching.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	grammar, games, language, teaching, English, method, approach, teacher, learning, learner
<b>Přílohy vázané v práci:</b>	4 přílohy
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	64 s.
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	AJ