



## **Bakalářská práce**

# **Working with articles in the textbooks of English for different age groups**

*Studijní program:*

B0114A300068 Anglický jazyk se zaměřením  
na vzdělávání

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## Zadání bakalářské práce

# Working with articles in the textbooks of English for different age groups

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### Zásady pro vypracování:

Cílem bakalářské práce je zmapovat způsoby, jakými se pracuje se členy ve čtyřech typech učebnic anglického jazyka: 1. učebnice angličtiny pro 1. stupeň základních škol, 2. učebnice angličtiny pro 2. stupeň základních škol, 3. učebnice angličtiny pro střední školy, 4. učebnice angličtiny pro jazykové školy/pro dospělé.

V teoretické části budou popsány členy jako gramatický jev anglického jazyka na pozadí češtiny a budou představeny možnosti práce se členy ve výuce dle různých výukových metod a přístupů stejně tak pro různé fáze nábvyku dle charakteristik práce s danými věkovými skupinami.

V praktické části dojde k analýze učebnic a k jejich vzájemnému srovnání. Výsledkem bude vztažení výuky členů v angličtině k věku žáka dle analyzovaných učebnic. Analýza bude metodologicky založena na evaluačním protokolu a komparaci zjištěných dat.

*Rozsah grafických prací:*

*Rozsah pracovní zprávy:*

*Forma zpracování práce:*

*Jazyk práce:*

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Zohrabi, M. (2011, 09). Coursebook Development and Evaluation for English for General Purposes Course. English Language Teaching

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## **Poděkování**

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## **Anotace**

Bakalářská práce „Práce se členy v učebnicích anglického jazyka pro různé věkové kategorie“ se zaměřuje na způsoby výuky členů v různých věkových kategoriích – konkrétně se jedná o žáky 1. a 2. stupně základní školy, studenty středních škol a poslední věkovou kategorií jsou dospělí/samouci. Teoretická část práce nejprve poskytuje základní informace o členech jako gramatickém jevu. Dále se věnuje přístupům k výuce gramatiky, charakteristice všech zmíněných věkových kategorií a nabízí pro ně doporučení pro výuku gramatiky, respektive členů. Poslední dvě kapitoly se věnují zdrojům a materiálům pro výuku – jak tištěným, tak elektronickým, a metodám hodnocení těchto materiálů. Praktická část analyzuje a porovnává čtyři vybrané učebnice nakladatelství Klett pomocí hodnotícího protokolu. Cílem analýzy je zjistit podobnosti a rozdíly v prezentaci, procvičování a podpoře produkce členů napříč vybranými učebnicemi.

## **Klíčová slova**

určitý člen, neurčitý člen, deduktivní přístup, induktivní přístup, PPP model, učebnice, materiály pro výuku, hodnotící protokol

## **Abstract**

The bachelor thesis "Working with articles in the textbooks of English for different age groups" focuses on the ways of teaching articles in various age categories, specifically learners in primary and lower secondary school, secondary school students, and adults/self-taught learners. The theoretical part of the thesis provides basic information about articles as a grammatical phenomenon, discusses approaches to teaching grammar, characterizes the mentioned age categories, and offers implications for teaching grammar to them. The last two chapters are devoted to resources and materials for teaching, both printed and electronic, and methods for evaluating these materials. The practical part analyses and compares four selected textbooks published by Klett using a checklist. The aim of the analysis is to identify similarities and differences in the presentation, practice, and fostering production of articles across the selected textbooks.

## **Keywords**

definite article, indefinite article, zero article, deductive approach, inductive approach, PPP teaching model, textbook, materials for teaching, evaluation methods, checklist



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## **List of abbreviations**

CLL - Community Language Learning

EFL – English as a foreign language

ESL – English as a second language

PPP – Presentation – Practice – Production

RVP – Rámcový vzdělávací program/Framework Curriculum



## Introduction

English language learners face many challenges when it comes to mastering the use of articles. This grammatical phenomenon is difficult to understand, and for Czech students especially since their native language does not have articles. The aim of this bachelor thesis is to map the ways of working with articles in four types of English language textbooks, including textbooks for primary school, lower secondary school, secondary school, and English textbooks for adults/self-taught learners to find out similarities and differences in the approaches to teaching this particular part of the language system.

The theoretical part of the thesis provides an overview of articles as a grammatical phenomenon in English language, including their definition and classification. Then it discusses different approaches to teaching articles, including the historical development of teaching grammar, as well as deductive and inductive teaching approaches followed by recommendations for teaching specifically articles. Next chapter provides insights into the characteristics of learners in primary school, lower secondary school, secondary school, and adults, along with implications for teaching grammar (articles included) to these specific age groups. Resources and materials for teaching grammar, including printed and electronic materials, will also be explored, as well as evaluation methods that can be used to assess these materials, and the checklist will be described in more detail since it is a crucial part of the practical part, i.e. the research carried out is based on the checklists as a tool for textbook evaluation.

The practical part will be based on analysis of four chosen chapters in textbooks for different age groups. The textbooks are published by Klett and are chosen because it is a well-established publisher and they offer a wide range of textbooks for different age groups, which is essential for purposes of the thesis. Methodologically the research will be based on the checklists and comparison of the findings. The aim of the analysis is to identify similarities and differences in the approaches to teaching articles and in the presentation, practice, and production stages across the selected textbooks in terms of articles.





# 1. Definition of the article in English grammar

The articles *a* and *the* are some of the most common words in English and simultaneously are difficult to explain. They belong to function words next to, for instance, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and conjunctions (Boers 2021). According to Thornbury (2009, p.16), they precede substantives and are part of the word class of determiners. Other central determiners are words e.g. *this, that, other, each, no* (Quirk et al. 1985, p.254). Articles together with nouns, they form a noun phrase (p.245). Three types of articles can be distinguished - definite article (*the*), indefinite article (*a, an*) and zero article. Articles are used to express the definiteness or indefiniteness of nouns (p.253).

They are essential for English speakers to understand the situation. They serve to make it clear what the speakers are trying to specify. For example:

*Could we meet at a park at 11 a.m.?*

- park is not specified yet; it is any park

*Could we meet at the park at 11 a.m.?*

- the speaker and listener know which park they are talking about; it is a shared understanding ("Articles" 2022)

When using the article, many circumstances matter for the speaker to correctly recognize which article to use. It mainly depends on whether the noun is countable or uncountable and whether we want to express specific or general information. If it is a case of a specific expression, it depends whether it is definite or indefinite (Gillett c2023).

## 1.1. Definite article

The definite article has the form *the*, which is used for both singular and plural nouns. The pronunciation of the article varies depending on the sound with which the noun begins. If the noun begins with a consonant, then *the* has the pronunciation of /ðə/. The second pronunciation, /ði/, is used in the case when the word begins with a vowel (Dušková et al. 2006, p. 46). The following sentences explain the issue.



Examples of the pronunciation /ðə/:

- *I have read the book twice.*
- *My friend was the first one to arrive.*
- *The kid likes to play games.*

Examples of the pronunciation /ði/:

- *I liked the ending of the book.*
- *She described the apple very accurately.*
- *The employees of Black Harvest company were given more vacation days.*  
(“The Britannica Dictionary” 2023)

Pronunciation also depends on whether it is a weak or strong form, which means that the pronunciation changes depending on the context. The strong form, more emphasized pronunciation /ði:/ occurs only in some examples, especially in slow reading, dictation, contrastive use or sentence stress (Roach 2009, cited in Weisser “Strong & Weak Forms” 2005).

From its origin, the definite article is a demonstrative pronoun and sometimes retains its demonstrative meaning, for instance, in a sentence:

- *Could you please pass me the cup?*

The definite article can be applied in different situations. It is used when the situation or context implies the noun is specified. For example, a situation may arise when someone asks: “*Can you please close the window?*”. The context implies that only one window is open, which gives the noun definiteness, hence the definite article (Dušková et al. 2006, p.47).

Another use of the definite article occurs when the noun is unique, which means it is a person or object that exists in only one representative in a given time and area. This rule also applies to 3rd degree of adjectives – superlative form (e.g. *the luckiest person*), ordinal numerals (e.g. *the third runner*), only and the same (*on the same evening*) (Dušková et al. 2006. p.47).

The definite article the is used to denote a representative of an entire species. The exceptions are the expressions “man” and “woman”. They are written without the article when used in this sense i.e. to refer to an entire species.



E. g. *The salamander is an amphibian* (ibid, p.47) .

A relative clause, a participle, or an attribute with "of" can specify the noun. When these factors specify a noun, the definite article is used.

Examples: *the boy who lives in Liberec, the crying baby, the study of political science* (ibid, p.48)

The definite article precedes substantivized adjectives. For instance, *the rich* = rich people, *the young* = young people. The definite article is used in the names of rivers, seas, oceans and ships - e.g. *the Elbe, the Black Sea, the Atlantic*, and in the names of mountain ranges - e.g. *the Dolomites* (Dušková et al. 2006, pp. 48, 54).

When using the definite article *the* with plural nouns, it is usually used to refer to specific, particular things or people that are already known to the speaker and the listener. For example, *the dogs in the park* refers to specific dogs that are in the park and are already known to the listener (Downing and Locke, 2006, p.419).

## 1.2. Indefinite article

The indefinite article has the form *a, an*. This form is only valid for singular, it has no form for plural. The indefinite article *a* is pronounced /ə/ and precedes a noun that begins with a pronounced consonant (e. g. *a dog*). If the noun begins with a pronounced vowel (e. g. *an apple*), the form *an*, pronounced as /ən/, should be used. The strong form is usually used in slower speech and for special emphasis. Article *a* is pronounced /ei/ and *an* as /æən/ in the strong form. *A, an* have their origin in the numeral *one*. In some bindings, it also occurs in this original meaning, e.g. *a hundred, a thousand crowns*. In some cases, it is better to use *any* or occasionally *one* instead of *a, an*. For instance, the sentence: "*A farmer can increase his income twice as much by increasing his production in a year.*" can be written with the same meaning as "*Any farmer can increase his income twice as much by increasing his production in one year.*" (Quirk et al. 1985, p.141).

The indefinite article is used to introduce new, specific information that is not yet known and appears in context for the first time. When it is mentioned



more than once, then the definite article *the* is used.

Example: *A dog was playing with a ball in our garden. He likes the garden. The dog is my best friend.*

Furthermore, the indefinite article is used when the noun phrase does not refer to anyone or anything specific. It means that it indicates a representative of the species but is not intended to be an individual (Biber et al. 1999, p.260). For example, "*I need a pencil*" does not refer to any specific pencil but rather any pencil that is available.

Dušková et. al (2006, p. 50) adds a distinction between the generic use of the definite article ("*The salamander is an amphibian*") and the indefinite article ("*An island is a land, which is surrounded by water*"). The difference is that the definite article designates a representative of the class as its typical representative with its characteristics. When the indefinite article is used, the emphasis is on the arbitrariness of choice. That is, any member can represent the entire class.

The indefinite article *a, an* is also used before the nominal part of the predicate, which is expressed by a noun. It appears most often after the verbs *be* and *become*. In Czech, it is expressed by the 1st (nominal) or 7th case (instrumental).

Example: *He is a doctor. She has become a reporter.* (Dušková et. al 2006, p. 50)

Downing and Locke (2006, pp.409-410) list their situations, in which the indefinite article is used. These are:

Phrases: *to have a bath, to have a look, to have a rest, to have a smoke, to have a swim, to have a talk, to take a walk, to get a move on, to give a push*

After the word *such* (e. g. *such a shame*)

There are collocations expressing a minimal amount of a substance or something that is unspecific. These collocations are built with an indefinite article, a noun expressing smallness or shape, followed by *of* - *a bit of (advice), a piece of (paper), a drop of (blood), a pinch of (salt), a slice of (bread)*.

Similar to collocations that express minimum quantities, some types of containers express the weight and number of, for instance, food and drink. The indefinite



article precedes the conjunction of the noun (container type) + of - *a bottle of (water), a cup of (coffee), a packet of (biscuits), a tin of (soup), a carton of (cream), a pack of (juice)* (Downing and Locke 2006, pp. 409-410).

### 1.3. Zero article

In English grammar there exist substantives that are not preceded by any article and it is a case of zero article. The zero article is used with uncountable and plural countable nouns. When using zero article in phrases, these phrases often indicate non-specific or general references (Biber et al. 1999, p.261). There are many situations where this type of article is used. Dušková et. al describes several of them. They are numerically classified and explained through examples below.

1) If the noun is determined by another sentence means: possessive pronoun, possessive case (genitive), demonstrative pronoun, interrogative pronoun, indefinite pronoun.

Examples: *her* brother – possessive pronoun

my husband's job – possessive case

*Those* are my friends. – demonstrative pronoun

*Whose* notebook is this? – interrogative pronoun

You can do *anything*. – indefinite pronoun

2) Uncountable nouns when not specified

Uncountable nouns are those that cannot be counted. They always have the same shape. Most of them are in the singular form. Uncountable names include nouns of substance (e.g. *iron, water*), collective names (e.g. *money, hair*) and abstract concepts (e.g. *importance, culture*). If they are not specified (e.g., by an attribute with of or a relative clause), they are referred to generally. In this situation, they are used without the article (e.g. *Iron is important raw material.*). If they are specified, the definite article is used (e.g. *the coal that is imported.*). Names of sciences and languages - as abstract names - also fall under this group. They are used without the article (e.g. *Czech is a complex language. He does not like biology.*).





3) days of the week, months, seasons of the year, holidays

Examples: *on Monday, in summer, in July, during Easter*

4) regular daily meals – *breakfast, lunch, dinner*

5) names of diseases – e.g. *pneumonia, chickenpox, diarrhoea*

6) names of games (including sports) – e.g. *football, skating, diving, chess*

In cases 3 to 6 also applies, if the noun is specified, the definite article is used.

Examples: *The Tuesday after the holidays was full of surprises.*

*the summer of 2001*

7) some nouns in set phrases

Examples: *at night, by day, on foot, at noon, at peace, on sale, at war, by heart, by train, ...*

8) for proper personal names, e.g. *Jan Amos Komenský was born in 1592.*

If the name is defined by attribute, the definite article is used, e.g. *the deceased Komenský*. The exception applies to the adjectives *poor, dear, old, young - old Mr. Komenský*, not *the old Mr. Komenský*.

9) names of continents, countries, cities, and towns in singular form (in the plural form, nouns have a definite article)

10) names of islands in singular form, e.g. *Ireland, Great Britain*

11) names of individual mountains, e.g. *Mount Everest* and lakes, e.g. *Lake Superior, Lake Huron* (Dušková et al. 2006, p. 51-54)

#### **1.4. Articles in Czech**

The article does not occur as such in Czech. There is no precise equivalent for it. The word order is used in the Czech language to determine definiteness and indefiniteness. In a colloquial speech in Czech, the English grammatical article is replaced by the pronoun *that, some*, or the numeral *one*. The speaker uses these linguistic devices mainly for emphasis. In Czech, the articles are not used (Pleskalová, Karlík, and Nekula 2002, p.68).

According to Karlík (2017), Czech language realizes articles using other means, such as a zero determinant, demonstrative pronouns, indefinite



pronouns, and adjectives like *dotyčný* and *zmíněný*. Sometimes it is speculated that, especially in spoken Czech, some uses of the pronouns *ten* and *jeden* strongly resemble the definite article (however, they lack obligatoriness), for example, before a superlative: “*To je ten nejlepší fór, jaký jsem kdy slyšel*”, or in cases like “*To mám od jedné paní, tu neznáš; To není žádný problém*”, etc. The expression of the determinant in Czech also relates to other linguistic categories, such as the topic-focus articulation, sentence modality, and aspect (Karlík, 2017, author’s translation).

## 2. Approaches to teaching articles

Articles are part of English grammar and acquiring and learning grammar can demonstrate good proficiency in a language and subsequently become a part of the improvement of one's communication skills. Therefore, teaching grammar is a crucial aspect of language instruction. Furthermore, teaching grammar plays a central role in the classroom of any teacher of English as a foreign (EFL)/second (ESL) language. Language is a set of rules, and the grammar of exists even when sometimes it does not have to be noticeable (Aguion et al., 2021, p.17).

There are various approaches that language teachers can adopt to help students effectively acquire and use grammar including articles. Each approach has its strengths and limitations, and the choice of approach depends on the goals, context, and/or students’ needs and abilities. This chapter describes a historical perspective on teaching grammar and provides an overview of approaches to teaching grammar in general.

To understand what the term ‘approach’ in teaching means, it needs to be defined first. According to Lavelle and Zuercher (2001, p. 375), “approaches represent an interaction between the learner and the situation of learning with strategies serving as negotiation link leading to as task outcome”. Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 204) described “approach as a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning which is the subject matter need to be taught”. The approach should not be confused with the term ‘teaching method’. The approach is more theoretical and general. A method is



one element of the complex teaching process and approach that is used to achieve a particular goal (Thornbury, 2009, p. 131).

Some of the general approaches to teaching are described e.g. in Hoque (2016). He lists approaches such as: teacher-centred, learner-centred, interactive, individualistic, collaborative, indirect/guided, or direct.

In the teacher-centred approach, teachers are seen as the most reliable source of facts and stand at the centre of teaching. In contrast, the learner-centred approach considers the learner as the centre of teaching process, who can also be a source of information. Teacher does not offer information and knowledge immediately and tries to make learners active (Serin 2018, p. 165).

As the word interaction implies, in the interactive method, students are more active in the learning process, using interactive means. Interactive means can be creative tasks, games, excursions or solving tasks. It offers pupils more fun in learning new things and less stereotyping than in traditional teaching (Giorgdze and Dgebuadze 2017, pp. 545-547).

As the name 'collaborative' suggests, in the collaborative approach teamwork, work in groups, discussions stand in the foreground. Pairing and grouping of students helps to achieve particular goals and it is beneficial, when students of different levels are in the same group to help each other and grow in language together. It is important, that everyone is active (Gokhale 1995, cited in Laal and Ghodsi 2012, p.487).

The opposite principle underpins the individualistic approach, which emphasises the individual working alone without help from classmates. It is tailored to meet the unique needs of each student and can be also one-to-one teaching ("Individualized Instruction" 2001).

The other two approaches, direct teaching, and indirect/guided teaching, differ in who transmits or mediates new things. In the first approach, it is the teacher who directly introduces and teaches a topic. In the indirect teaching approach, the pupils discover the new topic on their own, with the supervision of the teacher who gives the pupils space in the learning process (Hoque 2016).

Approaches to teaching grammar are for example deductive and inductive, which are described in separate subchapters (see 2.2.1. and 2.2.2) since they





are important for a practical part, where the textbooks are viewed in terms of these approaches.

According to Celce-Murcia (1991, p. 5-9), there are nine approaches to language teaching. These are approaches such as: grammar-translation, direct, reading, audiolingualism, situational, cognitive, affective-humanistic, comprehension-based, communicative. For detailed discussion of these see below as these has been influencing how to teach grammar, respectively how to teach articles for years.

### **2.1. Historical insight into teaching grammar**

Throughout the centuries, the approach to teaching grammar (articles included) has evolved and adapted to the changing needs and perspectives of the society. This chapter provides an overview of approaches used to teach grammar based on Celce-Murcia (2001).

Historically, teaching grammar has been influenced by approaches to teaching a second/foreign language in general. Teaching a second or foreign language has often been approached through a grammar-translation approach, where instruction is given in the student's native language. As far as teaching grammar is concerned, this approach places a heavy emphasis on translating sentences from native language to target language and vice versa (Celce-Murcia 2001, p.6). A common method for teaching grammar is to first explain the rules of a specific grammar point, then provide examples of its use in a text, and finally practice using it through sentence writing and translation exercises (Bowen 2006).

To contrast with the great use of mother tongue of learners, direct approach is characterized by a strict prohibition on the use of the students' native language with the aim of establishing an immersive and communicative environment from the very beginning. The direct approach emphasizes inductive learning, where students are encouraged to deduce grammatical rules for themselves through repeated exposure to the language in use. In conclusion, the direct approach represents a shift away from the traditional grammar-translation approach and places a greater emphasis on communicative competence and the



development of real-life language skills (Celce-Muria 2001, p.6).

The reading approach was developed as a response to the limitations of the direct approach, which had become impractical due to a lack of teacher proficiency in the target language. The approach taught only the grammar necessary for reading comprehension, starting with controlled vocabulary. As students' vocabulary and grammar knowledge expanded, they would be able to tackle more complex texts (Celce-Muria 2001, pp. 6,7).

Audiolingualism was a teaching approach developed as a reaction to the reading approach, which lacked emphasis on oral-aural skills. The lessons relied heavily on imitation and memorization, based on the belief that language is a habit that can be formed through repetition. Grammatical structures were taught in a sequential order, with rules learned inductively. The goal of the approach was to prevent learner errors and the language was often manipulated without regard to meaning or context (Celce-Muria 2001, p.7).

The oral-situational approach in language teaching emerged for the same reason as Audiolingualism, but with the difference that Audiolingualism was dominant in the United States and the Oral-Situational approach in Britain. Grammatical structures are presented and practiced in a graded manner, moving from simple to complex. New vocabulary and grammar items are introduced and practiced in real-life situations, such as at the post office, bank, or dinner table. This approach emphasizes the importance of context in language learning and encourages learners to use the target language for communication (Celce-Muria 2001, p.7).

The cognitive approach views language acquisition as rule acquisition rather than habit formation. The approach allows for both deductive and inductive teaching of grammar. Errors are seen as inevitable and used constructively in the learning process (Celce-Muria 2001, p.7).

The affective-humanist approach involves a lot of pair and small group work, where grammar and communication are being practised (Celce-Muria 2001, pp.7,8). This approach is student-centred and primary focus is on student's feelings and acquiring grammar is considered to be secondary (Allert 2017).



The comprehension-based approach is based on the belief that the second language learning is similar to the first language acquisition. Grammar rule learning is seen as less important for acquisition and spontaneous use, and error correction is considered unnecessary (Celce-Murcia 2001, p.8).

The communicative approach sees language as a system for communication. This approach prioritizes learner ability to communicate effectively in the target language, which cannot be done without acquiring the essential language skills (Edelman 1987, cited in Moe 2019, p.76). Acquiring grammar is done through communicative activities, e.g. role-play, information transfer, group work, pair work (Moe 2019, p.76).

To summarize, the development of teaching approaches was influenced by the perceived shortcomings of earlier methods. Nowadays, a well-conceived integrated approach that considers rule formation, affect, comprehension, and communication, and views the learner as a thinking, feeling, understanding, and communicative being, could be appealing to many teachers. Or they can opt for an eclectic approach. For teaching grammar, it means that teachers need to be familiar with the different approaches and choose the approach that best suits their teaching context and the needs of their students. Approaches can, and probably will differ depending on the selected activity and grammatical issue that is being taught. They should consider the goal of language learning, the level of proficiency of their students, and the resources available.

## **2.2. Deductive and inductive approaches**

In this subchapter, two basic approaches in which English grammar, including articles, can be presented in the EFL classrooms will be mentioned. These are the deductive and inductive approaches. They are often juxtaposed and contrasted as they are based on different principles. Each of them has advantages and disadvantages. But as Abdugarimova and Zubaydova (2001) emphasize despite differences in approaches, the goal of the EFL teaching remains unchanged and both approaches are applied and can be combined (Abdugarimova and Zubaydova 2021, p.372).



### 2.2.1. Deductive approach to teaching grammar

The deductive approach to teaching grammar follows the principle of deductive reasoning, starting with general concepts and moving towards specific examples. This approach is based on presenting rules, patterns, and principles first, and then applying them to specific examples. It is commonly referred to as rule-driven teaching (Silvia 2004, pp. 131-132). According to Thornbury (2009, pp. 61-62), presentation of grammar using deductive approach is related for example (and especially) to the grammar-translation approach. Deductive approach may be suitable for many learners and fits their preferred learning style because it gets directly to the most important information, in the case of grammar to the grammar rule. Self-study grammar practice books often use deductive approach, it means that the rule is explained and afterwards is followed with exercises concerning the issue.

Example of a situation when the deductive approach in teaching grammar is used can be as follows (author's example):

Teacher (explains the rule): We use indefinite article *a* before nouns that start with a consonant (e.g. *a pancake, a camel*). Indefinite article *an* is used before nouns that start with a vowel (e.g. *an egg, an elephant*). Can you add an appropriate indefinite article *a* or *an* before following nouns? Car?

Students (answer based on the presented-first rule, followed by an example): A car.

Teacher: Good, apricot?

Student: An apricot. etc.

If the deductive approach is to be effective, it is important that the rule is correctly and understandably explained. Swan (1994) described several criteria for providing a good rule to a student from the teacher's position. These criteria are:

- *Rules should be based on a true and must have similarity with reality.*
- *Rules should show what the limits are for a given form.*
- *Rules should be clear for a learner to understand the issue correctly.*



- *Rules should be simple. When they are not, a learner loses his concentration. He or she is able to remember only a limited number of exceptions or specialities.*
- *When explaining a rule, teacher should try to use for describing some concept that learner is already familiar with.*
- *Rules should be relevant to the learners. In order for students to understand the issue, they need the teacher to answer only the questions they ask (Swan 1994, cited in Thornbury 1999, p. 32).*

Thornbury (1999, p. 32) also adds that for a teacher to make a good explanation, it is not just about the rules. There are other important things, such as checking that students really understand the rules or giving more examples.

The influencing factor is also whether a teacher uses a prescribed rule or a described rule. Prescribed rule means how the language should be used correctly and how exactly the grammar rules should be followed. Standard forms of grammar are followed (Hinkel 2018, pp.1,2). An example of prescribed rule can be the structure *have you got* in British English. On the other hand, described rule rule views grammar as how a given phenomenon is used in everyday speech, including standard and non-standard varieties (Greenbaum and Quirk 1990, cited in Hinkel 2018, p.1). An example is structure *do you have*, which is an American version but the British, in the manner of American English, say it.

The deductive approach to teaching grammar has advantages as well as disadvantages. A comprehensive list of advantages and disadvantages offers for example Thornbury (1999) who states:

*One of its key advantages is the efficient use of class time, as teachers can present grammar rules quickly and simply, leaving more time for immediate application and practice. This approach also recognizes the intelligence and maturity of adult learners, as well as the significant impact of cognitive processes on language acquisition. It aligns with the expectations of many learners, particularly those with an analytical learning style. On the other hand, this approach is not without its drawbacks. One such disadvantage is that students, especially younger ones, may lose motivation when the lesson starts by presenting grammar rules. This is because*





*the concepts or grammatical terms may be difficult for them to understand. This approach also tends to create a traditional teacher-centred classroom, which reduces the level of student engagement and participation. Explanations given through this approach may not be as memorable as other forms of presentation, such as demonstrations. It can also reinforce the idea that language learning is merely about memorising rules, which is not true (Thornbury 1999, p. 30).*

### **2.2.2. Inductive approach to teaching grammar**

The inductive approach to teaching grammar is based on the principle of inducing learning through examples and experiences. Instead of starting with grammar rules (as in deductive approach), the teacher presents the students with examples and then guides them to discover the underlying grammar patterns on their own. It can be called as a “rule-discovery” approach (Thornbury 1999, p. 49).

According to Hammer (2007, p. 208), the inductive approach is suitable for advanced students. He argues that this approach is not appropriate for beginners since they are not able to analyse grammatical structures. The (in)ability to analyse grammatical structures is not the only argument for/against using inductive approach with beginners. The other argument can be based on the complexity of the approach, see e.g. Pasch (1998) who described several stages of the inductive approach:

- 1. examination of data/examples*
- 2. searching for patterns and forming hypotheses*
- 3. hypothesis testing - examining whether the hypotheses formed are valid after receiving more examples*
- 4. formulating rules and laws*
- 5. exploring the thought process used*
- 6. applying the information learned to a new situation (Pasch, 1998, p. 240).*

To contrast the fact of not using an inductive approach for beginners, Shaffer (1989, cited in Wang 2012, p.21) states that all levels of learners can benefit from an inductive approach, but especially beginners or weaker learners.



Also, the cognitive psychologist Bruner (1961, cited in Wang 2012, p.21) insists that *"students do better when they have to discover basic patterns for themselves than when they are told about them"*.

Widodo (2006) presents the advantages and disadvantages of this approach.

*Benefits include increasing students' independence in learning and self-reliance. Students are active participants in the learning process, and their cognitive thinking is used. Pupils also recognize patterns and solve related problems, which deepens their curiosity, and some will be more motivated. If pupils work in groups, they are given the opportunity to practice the language more. On the other hand, this approach is very time and energy consuming, which is one of the disadvantages of the inductive approach. It is necessary for the students to understand the rule correctly from the examples. Sometimes it can result in some pupils misunderstanding the material, which the teacher must avoid. The teacher has to prepare the lesson really precisely. Some pupils may not like the approach, or it may not correspond to their previous learning experience and would prefer being told the rule (Widodo 2006, p. 128).*

### **2.3. Recommendations for teaching articles**

Grammar, including articles, can be taught inductively or deductively, one can use grammar-translation method or direct approach or any other as well as their combination, see eclectic approaches to teaching. There are also several language teaching models that one can use.

Language teaching model is according to Criado (2013) a pedagogical strategy, which helps teachers with structuring teaching (Criado, 2013, p. 99). Some of these models are: Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP), Engage-Study-Activate (ESA), Observe-Hypothesize-Experiment (OHE), Illustration-Interaction-Induction (III), Test-Teach-Test (TTT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and others. For purposes of this thesis, PPP model was chosen and is described in the following text in more detail. The reason for choosing PPP model was because of its widespread use, versatility, because it can be adapted for learners of different language levels and has a clear structure.



The PPP teaching model has three stages: Presentation (1), Practice (2) and Production (3).

Maftoon and Sarem (2015) describe the procedure as follows: during the Presentation stage, the teacher presents a new language topic and explains it in an understandable way. To support the explanation, teacher can use examples, charts, notes, videos... In the Practice stage, learners practice the explained topic. It is done in a controlled way (such as drill, gap-filling...). Learners practice in this way until they fully understand and can do the exercises correctly. The last stage is the Production stage. Learners use the grammatical issue in a communicative and freer way, including activities as role plays, discussions... (Maftoon and Sarem, 2015, p. 32).

The possible implication of the PPP model into teaching articles can be:

Presentation: Introducing the concept of grammatical articles to students, using clear language. By means of deductive approach → explanation of the articles (based on their level of English), more precisely explanation of the rules for when each article should be used; followed by showing examples of article usage. The teacher can use visuals like charts, diagrams, videos to help illustrate the concepts.

Practice: The teacher moves on to providing students with practice exercises. The complexity of the exercises gradually increases. The exercises can be: sentence completion activities, error correction exercises, and gap-filling exercises. Feedback should be provided to students as they work through each exercise. If they make mistakes, the teacher corrects them and reinforces the rules for using articles correctly. Into the practice stage, games can be incorporated (e.g. quizzes, Kahoot...).

Production: In the production stage, the students should have opportunities to produce their own texts using articles.

In conclusion, it has to be emphasized that it is important to encounter grammatical structures (not excluding articles) several times before students can use them themselves. When they encounter a structure several times, it will gradually make more sense and it will lead to their ability to produce these structures themselves.





### **3. Teaching articles for different age groups**

#### **3.1. Primary school learners**

##### **a) Characteristics of learners**

In the Czech Republic, children begin their compulsory education at 6-7 years and continue at primary school level until 11-12 years old. This age period (6 to 11 years) can be psychologically characterized, see Langmeier and Krejčířová (2006), as the age of sober realism, during which children are fully focused on comprehending the world around them and the objects within it in a realistic manner. This characteristic can be observed in children's speech, drawings, written expressions, reading preferences, and how they play. In the initial stages, the child's realism is largely reliant on the information provided by authorities such as teachers, parents, and books - this is known as naive realism. Later, the child's approach to the world becomes more critical, leading to a critically realistic attitude that marks the approach of adolescence (Langmeier, Krejčířová 2006, p.118; author's translation).

During this developmental period, i.e. a period between 6-11/12 years, children exhibit in Zacharová's words display an increased ability to concentrate. Notably, active attention is developed significantly, meaning that the child wants to concentrate. Furthermore, cognitive abilities, including holding multiple facts in mind, problem-solving, and emotional detachment, continue to advance. In terms of linguistic skills, the child's verbal expression improves, with vocabulary, sentence length, complexity, and composition all showing progress. Additionally, children learn new words, leading to noticeable differences in the quality of verbal expression among schoolchildren. Dialogs have been found to have a significant impact on the development of a child's speech. A seven-year-old child knows an average of 18,500 words, an eleven-year-old 26,500 words (Zacharová 2012, p.48-49; author's translation).

According to Ur (1997, p. 130), children are generally more curious, open-minded, and willing to experiment with new ideas and concepts. Thus motivating and engaging children in language learning is easier than motivating adults.



**b) Implication for teaching English grammar in primary schools**

Ur (1997, p. 130) states that to instruct children in a foreign language, teaching methods should include games, pictures, stories, and physical activities, as children in this age group tend to acquire knowledge through creative pursuits. According to Ibrahim (2016, pp.51-52), young learners absorb a foreign language very well. They acquire language skills mainly through games and activities that they enjoy.

Teachers should teach grammar (including articles) in context, not in an isolated manner. Children then have more opportunities and chances to see the foreign language in its real-life functions. When grammar is being taught, the teacher should also apply it to the chosen real-life situations, ideally in a fun way.

In the Czech Republic, pupils have a compulsory foreign language education from the 3rd grade of primary school. At the end of the primary school, the Rámcový vzdělávací program (RVP/Framework Curriculum) states that in speaking, the pupil should be able to tell in a simple way basic information about themselves, their family, school, leisure, and should be able to engage in simple conversations. In writing, he/she should be able to write a short text using simple sentences and phrases about himself/herself, family, activities, and events in his/her area of interest and daily life (MŠMT 2021, pp.25-26). The Framework Curriculum on the other hand does not explicitly list a certain grammar that should be learnt saying only that the students' knowledge should reach level A1 (MŠMT 2021, p. 17).

Ideally, grammar, including articles, should be taught to young learners through practical exercises, such as rhymes, songs, games, and role-playing, in order to make the learning process more enjoyable and stimulating. Grammar should be presented through real-life situations in context to support understanding. It is important not to insist on grammar accuracy, as learners should be allowed to communicate their intended meaning even if they make grammatical errors (Sekelj and Rigo 2011, pp.191-193).



### **3.2. Lower secondary school learners**

#### **a) Characteristics of learners**

The lower secondary school in the Czech Republic is attended by pupils from the age 11-12 to 15-16. At the end of the lower secondary school (approx. age 15), the compulsory schooling is completed. This age period is also known as puberty.

As Vágnerová (1997) states, during puberty, developmental changes can increase the risk of various problems, partly due to emotional lability and changes in emotional experience. These changes can result in increased impulsivity and lack of control, leading to behavioural manifestations that may be uncomfortable for teachers and affect students' overall assessment. Despite awareness that emotional distress is common, educators may struggle to cope with these specific rejection behaviours. Emotional fluctuations are also common, with sudden changes in activation levels leading to periods of apathy and withdrawal, resulting in decreased performance. Pubescents may draw short-sighted conclusions from negative experiences, such as concluding that school is pointless after receiving a bad grade or disagreeing with a teacher. (Vágnerová 1997, pp. 30,31; author's translation)

Poledňáková (2006) adds that in terms of the social climate of the classroom, this period is the most educationally complicated. This is since particular peculiarities of individuals are accentuated. As Cummins (2014) emphasizes teenagers are undergoing significant changes and prefer to be treated more like adults than children. They may not always accept authority and may challenge teachers. Therefore, teachers should be prepared for this possibility. It is important to provide clear reasons and motivations for the tasks assigned to teenagers, as they should not feel that their time is wasted (Cummins 2014).

Despite the educational challenges, teenagers have a significant potential for language learning. Ormrod (2012, p. 157) for example asserts that the motivation of teenage students is predominantly extrinsic, meaning that external factors, such as obtaining good grades, serve as motivation for learning. Teachers of teenager students can therefore apply various strategies to enhance



extrinsic motivation and enhance the overall language teaching experience.

**b) Implication for teaching English grammar in lower secondary schools**

According to Cummins (2014), there are several important characteristics of teenagers that should be considered when teaching them, for example that teenagers are naturally competitive and enjoy using new technology (Cummins 2014). Teachers can therefore integrate phones and tablets into classroom activities and projects. Using technology in the classroom can help to make the learning experience more interactive and engaging for students. It can also provide them with access to a wide range of resources and materials that might not be available otherwise. Since they are competitive, teachers can interconnect games and technology through apps, e.g. Quizlet

Pinter (2016, p. 377) states that it is essential for educators to create a positive learning environment for teenagers. It can be done by linking teaching materials to the students' experiences, encouraging peer interaction and collaboration, and teaching effective learning strategies to help teenagers develop their autonomy. Pinter (2016, p. 377) also thinks that teachers are allowed with this approach to gradually shift control to their students by offering more flexible, learner-centred activities. Additionally, teachers should invest time in getting to know their students and creating communities of peers who can work together. As teenagers become increasingly independent, teachers may consider involving students in selecting materials and establishing classroom rules and expectations, rather than dictating them.

Based on RVP (MŠMT 2021), at the end of lower secondary school, pupils should reach the A2 level of English. In terms of speaking, the pupil should be able to ask for basic information and respond appropriately in ordinary formal and informal situations, talk about his/her family, friends, school, leisure, and other topics to be learned, tell a simple story or event, describe people, places, and things in his/her everyday life. In writing, he/she should be able to fill in basic information about himself/herself in a form, write simple texts about him/herself, family, school, leisure, and other topics to be learned, respond to simple written messages (MŠMT 2021, p. 27). However, similarly to the



description of what is expected at the end of primary schools, the document does not specify the exact grammatical phenomena that the pupil should know at the end of lower secondary schools.

Purely from the point of view of grammar, RVP only states that the curriculum should develop the use of grammatical phenomena to realize the pupil's communicative intention, where elementary errors that do not interfere with the meaning of the message and understanding are tolerated (MŠMT 2021, p. 28).

Based on Sekelj and Rigo (2011, pp.193-197), grammar should be taught gradually and with a focus on basic structures and clear explanations. Teachers should use a variety of exercises to help learners practice and internalize grammar structures, including fill-in-the-blank exercises, substitution tables, and translation exercises. It is also important to use both inductive and deductive approaches and to encourage learners to use the language creatively in communicative patterns. Metalanguage should be used to explain rules and structures.

### **3.3. Secondary school students**

#### **a) Characteristics of students**

Students aged approximately 15 to 19-20 are in the developmental period of adolescence (Vágnerová 2000, p. 209). At this age, they typically attend secondary school.

Adolescence involves physical and psychological changes. As Langmeier and Krejčířová (2006) say the psychological changes in this period can be characterized as the onset of mature thinking. Economic and cultural factors, parents, teachers, and other persons important to the individual play an important role in this period (Langmeier, Krejčířová 2006, p. 142; author's translation).

Taxová (1987) states that during adolescence, individuals undergo personality development and socialization, leading to the formation and partial stabilization of their self-concept. Consequently, questions related to their own identity become increasingly important. This period involves the creation and formation of an independent and autonomous personality, as well as social





integration. (Taxová 1987, p. 72; author's translation)

According to Horká (2009), during adolescence, a person's identity is formed, and their social position changes, leading to changes in their behaviour and performance. The individual becomes more focused on evaluating their abilities, which results in a shift in their social role. Adolescents desire more independence, but also feel insecure (Horká 2009, pp. 60,61; author's translation).

### **b) Implication for teaching English grammar in secondary schools**

Teevno (2011, pp.33-34) lists several implications and recommendations for teaching English in secondary schools. According to the Teevno, to effectively teach EFL to adolescents, teachers should adopt a variety of modern methods and techniques since classical frontal teaching can be demotivating and boring. Encouraging students to communicate in English outside of the classroom and using learner-centered activities can help to foster language acquisition. In addition, teachers should familiarize themselves with modern teaching methodologies, such as the communicative method, and make use of audio-visual aids to create a more engaging and interactive learning experience. Students can also improve their language skills by watching English movies or series, listening to speeches, and utilizing online resources. These materials are easily available on the Internet (e.g. Netflix, YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, HBO,.). A learner-centered and activity-based curriculum that promotes the use of English as a language rather than just a subject can also be helpful in facilitating language development.

RVP (MŠMT 2021) says that in terms of grammar, students should master nominal and verbal phrases, morphemes, prefixes, suffixes, other expressions of past, present and future, subordinate clauses, complex sentences, derivation, transposition, transformation, valency. The use of articles is not mentioned, but as they are part of nominal phrases, it can be presupposed that the students should master their use (MŠMT 2021, p. 17). A student in secondary school should be aiming for level of B2 by the end of secondary school (ibid, p.18). A little bit different sets of outcomes are expected of secondary vocational schools



but as these are not targeted within the theses, these are not described.

To teach grammar effectively to adolescents, it needs to be done in a systematic way. Lessons should involve active use of language in realistic everyday situations and encourage speaking as much as possible. The Grammar Translation Method can be effective for teaching grammar rules and providing a clear sense of achievement for some learners. Teachers should consider the personal learning styles of their students, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners, and use appropriate methods and techniques (Lesiak, K. 2015, pp.232-235).

### **3.4. Adults**

#### **a) Characteristics of adults**

According to Zacharová (2012), adulthood marks the stage of life where an individual is believed to reach the height of their creative abilities, with sound physical and mental health, emotional stability, and the ability to make optimal use of their cognitive skills. It is during this time that they often establish their household and family. Adulthood can be divided into:

Early adulthood - the period from 20 to 30 years.

Middle adulthood - the period from 30 to 45 years.

Late (older) adulthood - the period from 45 to 65 years. (Zacharová 2012, p. 67; author's translation)

Zacharová (2012, p. 68) also adds that personal maturity is the critical criterion for attaining adulthood. This involves primarily taking full personal and civic responsibility, gaining emotional independence from parents, and achieving economic independence. Furthermore, an adult should develop a strong sense of individuality, have a healthy level of self-esteem, establish a solid and long-lasting bond with a life partner, and maintain a broad network of friendships (ibid; author's translation).

#### **b) Implication teaching English grammar to adults**

Based on Jelínková (2016, p. 18), adults who decide to learn a new language are typically highly motivated due to reasons such as career



advancement, job opportunities, relocation, or personal interest. However, unlike school children, adult learners have established learning styles and diverse expectations. Some prefer more conversational activities, while others prioritize understanding grammar rules and avoiding mistakes. Some may not feel comfortable working in groups and prefer to work alone. Meeting the individual needs of adult learners can be challenging for teachers, as they require a personalized approach that considers their preferences and expectations. Thus, a teacher's professional skills and personality play a significant role in meeting the needs of adult learners.

Michalska (2015, p. 127) believes that Community Language Learning (CLL) and Direct Method are the most suitable methods for adult learners. According to her CLL treats students as “clients” with individual needs, reducing their fear and stress in a new learning environment. Direct Method focuses on verbal communication and spontaneous use of language, which is desired by adult students with limited time for learning. It departs from traditional techniques such as grammar rules and translation, making it suitable for older students. Both methods emphasize the importance of natural communication and establishing a good teacher-student relationship.

It should be said that adult learners have different levels of English, prefer different learning styles, and need different approaches. In the learning process, individual needs matter to achieve certain level of language, including grammar. Thus, ideal teaching grammar, including articles, that would be applicable for all adults does not exist. The heterogeneity of the group and their needs does not allow for one method, technique, strategy, approach etc. to teaching grammar to be used.

## **4. Resources and materials for teaching articles for different age groups**

Teaching grammar, or more specifically teaching articles is influenced not only by the chosen approach (see chapters 2.1, 2.2) or by the target age group (see chapters 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4), but also by combination of these factors that





influences the choice of resources and teaching materials.

The term teaching material, according to Lewis (2020) refers to a variety of materials, and resources that are used to support the teaching and learning of ESL or EFL. These can include textbooks, workbooks, audio and video materials, online resources, and other materials designed to help teachers and students achieve their language learning goals. The purpose of these resources is to provide teachers with the materials and support they need to effectively teach grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in the classroom (Lewis 2020).

It is crucial to use appropriate materials and resources to effectively teach grammar to students in different age groups. The following chapters present the most common resources and materials one can use in teaching grammar/teaching articles in general and in the context of a specific age group.

#### **4.1. Printed resources**

##### **a) Textbook**

Textbooks are one of the most used materials for English language teaching. According to Richards (2001, p. 1), textbooks play a crucial role in language programs. They can form the basis of classroom language input, practice, and lesson content, and supplement teacher instruction. For learners, textbooks can provide a major source of language contact apart from the teacher. Additionally, textbooks can serve as a form of teacher training for inexperienced teachers. Commercial textbooks are widely used in language teaching around the world, making it important for teachers to have the knowledge to effectively use and adapt them.

Byrd (2001, p. 415) argues that teachers often take textbooks as compulsory tools and become dependent on them. This is because textbooks are taken as the centre of the classroom and provide content and activities.

The use of textbooks in language teaching has both advantages and disadvantages. Richards (2001) lists them. On the one hand, textbooks provide a structure and syllabus for language programs, which can be especially helpful for teachers who may not know how to organize a curriculum. They also help



standardize instruction and ensure that students in different classes receive similar content and can be tested in the same way. Additionally, textbooks can maintain quality by providing students with materials that have been tested and that are based on sound learning principles. Furthermore, textbooks provide a variety of additional learning resources, such as workbooks, CDs, videos, and teaching guides, which can enrich the learning experience for both teachers and students. On the other hand, according to Richards (2001) textbooks may also have some negative effects. For example, they may contain inauthentic language that is specially written to incorporate teaching points and that does not reflect real-world language use. In some cases, they may not even reflect the needs and interests of students, especially if they are written for a global market. Moreover, textbooks can deskill teachers if they are used as the primary source of instruction, leaving the teacher to simply present materials prepared by others. Additionally, textbooks can be expensive, which can be a financial burden for students in many parts of the world (Richards 2001, pp.1-2).

Examples of textbooks based on age groups used in the Czech context:

- 1) Primary school: Click with friends (Fraus), Happy Street (Oxford University Press), Wow!English (WattsEnglish, textbook with workbook), Funpark (Klett, textbook and workbook in one), Chitchat (Oxford University Press)
- 2) Lower secondary school: Bloggers (Klett), Project (Oxford University Press), New Headway (Oxford University Press), Your Space (Fraus)
- 3) Secondary school: New Success (Pearson), New English File (Oxford University Press), Focus (Pearson), Gateway (Macmillan), Life Vision (Oxford University Press), Chillout (Klett)
- 4) Adults or self-taught students: Inside out (Macmillan), English Grammar in Use (Cambridge University Press), Straightforward (Macmillan), Dive In (Klett)

## **b) Workbook**

Průcha et al. (2003) describes a workbook as a type of exercise book containing mainly tasks and exercises for independent work by pupils. According to him workbook is usually used in the primary school, in higher grades usually



as a supplement to the textbook. (Průcha et al. 2003, p. 174; author's translation)

Hladílek (2004) adds that a workbook contains exercises for selected parts of the curriculum, which are to be solved independently. Workbooks contribute significantly to rationalising the practice, consolidation, systematisation and development of knowledge and skills. They relieve pupils of the mechanical work involved in solving certain tasks and focus pupils' attention on carrying them out efficiently. (Hladílek 2004, p. 65; author's translation)

Examples of workbooks based on age groups used in the Czech context:

- 1) Primary school: Click with Friends (Fraus), Happy Street: Activity Book (Oxford University Press), Wow!English (WattsEnglish, workbook is included in the textbook), Funpark (Klett, textbook and workbook in one), Chitchat: Activity Book (Oxford University Press)
- 2) Lower secondary school: Bloggers (Klett), Project (Oxford University Press), New Headway (Oxford University Press), Your Space (Fraus)
- 3) Secondary school: New Success (Pearson), New English File (Oxford University Press), Focus (Pearson), Gateway (Macmillan), Life Vision (Oxford University Press), Chillout (Klett, workbook is included in the textbook)
- 4) Adults or self-taught students: Inside out (Macmillan), English Grammar in Use (Cambridge University Press, practice book in the textbook), Straightforward (Macmillan), Dive In (Klett, workbook in the textbook)

#### **4.2. Electronic resources**

In recent years, the explosion of digital technology has transformed the way we communicate, learn, and access information. This has also had a significant impact on language teaching and learning, with a wide range of electronic resources now available to support and enhance classroom instruction. These resources include websites, apps, podcasts, videos, online games, social media, and more. Alexander (2001, pp. 10-11) suggests that the utilization of online resources can enhance the standard of education, facilitate access to



education and training, reduce education costs, and advance the efficacy and efficiency of education.

As Marc Prensky (2001, pp.1-3) argues, the rise of digital technology has given rise to a new generation of “digital natives” who have grown up with technology and are comfortable with digital resources. In contrast, “digital immigrants”, or those who have had to adapt to technology later in life, may require more support and guidance to effectively integrate electronic resources into their teaching. Teachers may need to consider the digital literacy levels of their students when selecting and using online resources for teaching grammar. They may need to provide additional help and advice for digital immigrants, while digital natives may be able to navigate the resources more independently. However, both groups can benefit from a variety of electronic resources (Prensky 2001).

#### **a) Interactive textbook**

Průcha (2009) describes an interactive textbook as a new form of multimedia content for teaching with an interactive whiteboard. It takes as its basis the 'paper textbook' of a particular subject and additional features such as more visual material, links to websites with detailed and up-to-date information, and the replacement of many teaching aids. The pupil is thus according to him able to control the amount of information the textbook provides (Průcha 2009, p. 112; author's translation).

As an example, the following passage describes an interactive textbook Funpark (a textbook for English in primary schools).

The teacher as well as pupils have access to the interactive textbook Funpark 1 (designed for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of primary school). The interactive textbook offers a virtual glossary for selected lessons, original listening recordings and it provides all lessons, which are transformed into an interactive form based on the paper textbook. It uses videos, songs, listening, games, and interactive activities. Pupils can do exercises such as matching, choosing a correct option, completing words... Children can play games in order to practice what they are learning, e.g.



puzzles and crosswords. When they practice at home, it is enabled to them to see correct answers and the exact errors they make.

## **b) Websites and online applications**

Websites and online applications offer a vast array of resources and tools that enhance the language learning experience, serve to individual needs and interests, and are available always - at little or no cost.

Age-specific online resources that are helpful when teaching English grammar are listed.

For kids (primary and lower secondary school):

- ESL-Kids (available on <https://esl-kids.com>): ESL-kids is a website that provides a variety of material for teaching ESL to young learners, including flashcards, worksheets, games, songs, and lesson plans, that are designed to be engaging and interactive for young learners. Its focus on fun and creativity in language teaching can help to make language learning more enjoyable and memorable for young learners.
- English Activities (available on <https://www.englishactivities.net>): A free website for English learning and can be used as an inspiration for teaching ESL/EFL from beginners to intermediates. It is full of English lessons, games, and tests.
- ESL Games World (available on: <https://www.eslgamesworld.com>): ESL Games World is a website that is dedicated to helping teachers that teach ESL/EFL language by providing a variety of interactive games for classrooms, PowerPoint templates, board games, grammar/vocabulary/reading games, picture quizzes and more.

For teenagers (lower secondary and secondary school):

- LearnEnglish Teens (<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org>): A free website by BritishCouncil for improving English with reading, writing and listening practice, tips for exams, grammar and vocabulary exercises, games and videos. Grammar is presented through videos and practiced with different types of online exercises (matching, gap-filling, ordering,



multiple choice, grouping, error connection,..) and worksheets.

- GrammarFlip (<https://www.grammarflip.com>): It is an online platform that provides resources for teaching English grammar to middle school students. The platform offers a variety of interactive grammar lessons, exercises, assessments, and teacher tools that are designed to engage and challenge students. GrammarFlip covers a range of grammar topics, including parts of speech, articles, sentence structure, ... The lessons are presented in short video tutorials, which are followed by interactive practice exercises and assessments to reinforce the concepts learned. The platform also provides feedback and progress tracking for students and teachers, as well as customizable assignments and quizzes.

For adults:

- BBC Learning English (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/>): This website offers a range of resources for English language learners and also inspires teachers. The website provides audio and video materials, grammar lessons and quizzes.
- Teach This (<https://www.teach-this.com>): Teach This is a platform that provides resources for English language teachers, including lesson plans, activities, games, and worksheets for teaching various aspects of English grammar, including articles. For teaching articles itself are provided games, worksheets, board games, error-connection activities or quizzes. The platform offers materials for different levels, from beginners to upper-intermediates.

## **5. Evaluation of materials for teaching articles for different age groups**

### **5.1. Definition of material evaluation**

Tomlison (2003) defines evaluation as a *“procedure that involves measuring the value (or potential value) of a set of learning materials. It involves*





*making judgments about the effect of the materials on the people using them'* and attempts to measure various aspects such as the credibility of the materials to learners and teachers, their validity and reliability, and their ability to interest and motivate learners and teachers. Additionally, the evaluation considers the value of the materials for short-term and long-term learning outcomes. Other factors that are evaluated include the assistance provided to teachers for preparing, delivering, and assessing the materials, their flexibility, their contribution to teacher development, and their alignment with administrative requirements (Tomlison 2003, p. 15).

Harwood (2014) offers deeper insight into evaluating materials and argues that it is essential to examine textbooks at 3 different levels – specifically the levels of content, consumption, and production. At the first level, which is the level of content, an analysis can be conducted to determine what the textbooks contain or leave out in terms of subject matter, language, teaching strategies, and cultural aspects. This level of analysis is typically done outside the classroom context. At the second level, consumption, researchers examine how textbooks are used by teachers and students in the context of classroom. At the production level is investigated the process of creating, writing, and distributing textbooks, as well as the constraints, affordances, and industry standards that impact textbook development (Harwood 2014, p.2). The practical part will be focused on the analysis of articles only at the content level. The reason for this focus is based on the aim of the thesis, where the content level is the most important and relevant.

## **5.2. Evaluation methods**

There are several tools for evaluating educational materials. The choice of an evaluation tool depends on the purpose of the evaluation, the target learners, and the available resources. Some of the evaluation tools are check-lists, surveys, comparisons, content analyses, interviews, observations, analyses, peer reviews, feedback from teachers and students and user testing.

Regular evaluation of course materials, especially textbooks, is crucial to identify weaknesses and improve them throughout the course. In the Zohrabi (2016, p. 216), there are listed other types of evaluation methods, such as preliminary, summative, and formative evaluation, as well as external and





internal evaluation.

For the purpose of the bachelor thesis the evaluation method chosen was checklist. The checklist method is one method that can be utilized to evaluate textbooks. This technique serves as a tool that aids practitioners in assessing course books in a practical and effective manner. Sarem, Hamidi, and Mahmoudie (cited in Jusuf 2018, p.21) suggest that checklists provide evaluators, such as teachers, researchers, and students, with a list of features that are crucial to successful learning-teaching materials. Based on these criteria, the quality of the material can be evaluated and rated. In summary, the checklist method is an instrument used to determine the value of materials based on predetermined aspects (Jusuf 2018, p. 21).

McGrath (2002) has identified four advantages of the checklist method, including its systematic approach that ensures all important elements are considered. The method is also effective in recording a substantial amount of information in a relatively short amount of time. The recorded information is presented in a convenient format that permits easy comparison between competing sets of material. Additionally, the checklist method is explicit, and if the categories are well understood by all parties involved, it can provide valuable insights during the evaluation process.



## 6. Practical part

The practical part of the bachelor thesis deals with the analysis of chosen English language textbooks for different age categories to show how these textbooks deal with the grammatical topic articles and what students learn about it since articles has no exact replacement in Czech grammar. The practical part focuses on how the articles in the English language textbooks are presented and practiced and how the follow-up production takes place.

The textbooks of Klett publishing house for primary schools, lower secondary schools, secondary schools, and adults/self-taught learners were selected. The practical part research included successful approaching the Klett publishers resulting in the textbooks being provided which enabled the subsequent analysis to happen. Choosing Klett publishing house as a source for English language textbooks for the practical part has several reasons. Klett publishers offer a wide range of textbooks for different age groups (from primary schools textbooks to adults/self-taught learners), which means comparing how articles are presented, practiced, and how the production is elicited across different levels can be done. Secondly, Klett publishing house is a well-established publisher with a good reputation in the field of language education. This means that their textbooks are likely to be widely used and may provide a good representation of how articles are taught in the Czech Republic. Thirdly, from a personal perspective, Klett has provided the textbooks to the analysis carried out in the bachelor thesis, which indicates, in my opinion, that they are willing to provide professional support for research in the field.

### 6.1. Research methodology

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how grammatical articles are taught in English language textbooks for Czech learners, and to explore whether there are any differences in the approaches to how this topic is being taught across different age groups (from primary schools EFL learners to adult/self-taught EFL learners). The reason for it was that articles belong to grammar items that are typically connected to problems (errors and mistakes) for Czech learners of English.



Checklist was used for the research as the most appropriate and objective method of the textbook evaluation (for more details on checklists and other educational material evaluation tools see 5.2).

First, a checklist was created based on theoretical findings. The checklist is divided into several parts. For the research, PPP model was used in the checklist to find out how textbooks follow these three stages. In terms of article presentation, it addresses whether it is done in context, out of context, implicitly, explicitly, in a deductive or an inductive approach. In the practice stage, it focuses on how the articles are practised, for example, what type of exercises the textbook uses (drilling, gap-filling, multiple choice, creating or completing sentences...) and how often the different types of exercises appear. The last section of the checklist looks at how the learners are led by the textbook to use articles, whether the free production stage is done in oral or written form. This checklist is made for all selected age categories in the same way in order to collect information that is comparable.

As explained in the theory, articles are an inseparable part of the language system, therefore they appear, in laymen words, "everywhere".

To collect data for this study, a total of 14 English language textbooks were obtained from Klett. After reviewing the textbooks, it was found that only four textbooks included a chapter on articles (one textbook for one age group). Only one chapter for one age group was selected to create a sample. However, the whole textbook was also analysed to see whether the selected chapters do or do not deviate from that book norm for working with the grammatical topic of articles. The checklist data were analysed to see how the articles are taught for different age groups and where are the differences and similarities.

## **6.2. Research questions and assumptions**

Based on the aim of the thesis, a research question and a set of assumptions have been formulated and they are used as a basis for the practical part. By answering the question and testing these assumptions, this study aims to provide insights into the current approaches to teaching articles in English language education in the Czech Republic for different age groups.



Research question:

- What are the differences and similarities in how articles are presented, practiced, and how production is taught in English language textbooks for different age groups?

Assumptions:

- English language textbooks use deductive approach to teaching articles regardless the target age group
- Textbooks for primary school pupils have a greater focus on contextualizing articles than textbooks for adult learners.
- Textbooks for younger learners (primary school pupils) teach articles implicitly or without describing rules, while textbooks for lower secondary and older students teach articles explicitly.

### **6.3. Evaluated textbooks**

As mentioned above, textbooks from Klett publishing house were chosen. In this subchapter, the selected textbooks are described in greater detail in the context of other textbooks targeted at the same age group.

#### **Textbooks for primary school:**

- Funpark 1: published in 2022, authors: Kristýna Elišková, Věra Forejtová, Tereza Hnátková; 85 pages
- Funpark 2: now in a test version (2023), authors: Kristýna Elišková, Věra Forejtová, Tereza Hnátková
- Bloggers 1: published in 2018, authors: Mgr. Pavlína Hrabětová, Mgr. Michaela Mikulková, Ph.D., Karen Cryer; 121 pages; CEFR A1.1

#### Structure of the Funpark textbooks:

Funpark 1 and 2 are textbooks and workbooks in one. Both textbooks consist of 10 units. Each of the units then has 3 lessons introduced by a comic strip/picture, and at the end of each chapter there is a review and a vocabulary page. In each chapter there are exercises focusing mainly on listening, use of



language, and reading exercises. The textbook comes with an interactive online material and videos. Klett recommends using Funpark 1 and 2 for grades 3-5, or an option in 5th grade to follow up with Bloggers 1.

Structure of Bloggers 1 ("Klett Bloggers"):

1. Introductory double page focusing on the main character or the topic of the lesson, introducing relevant cultural aspects via an authentic video
2. Parts A, B, C, D: double pages of grammar, vocabulary and exercises with emphasis on speaking and listening
3. Reading: different types of texts, e.g. email, blog, comics, etc., additional authentic texts at the end of the textbook
4. Writing: linked to the Reading page, where pupils learn to write different types of texts they have been working with in Reading, always includes a 'Step by step' table with instructions
5. Video: exercises focused on working with a didactic video
6. Your challenge: a page that contains instructions for the projects, the textbook works with different types of projects (making a video, making a poster, preparing a presentation, etc.)
7. Picture dictionary in the textbook: the purpose of the picture is to provide visual support for vocabulary acquisition, the pictures are labelled with numbers that correspond to the entries in the glossary at the end of the workbook. The picture is used for conversation activities in pairs and groups. The assignments for these activities are on the last page of each lesson.
8. Culture: activities focusing on traditions and holidays are included at the end of the book

The textbook chosen for the research is: Funpark 2, unit 7

The reason for choosing this particular unit is the fact that the difference between *a/an* articles is taught and it is the first explicit knowledge about this grammatical topic they are aware of.



### **Textbooks for lower secondary school:**

- Bloggers 2: published in 2019, authors: Mgr. Pavlína Hrabětová, Mgr. Michaela Mikulíková, Karen Cryer; 121 pages; CEFR A1.2
- Bloggers 3: published in 2020, authors: Mgr. Pavlína Hrabětová, Mgr. Zdeňka Soukupová Španingerová, Ph.D., Karen Cryer; 121 pages; CEFR A2.1
- Bloggers 4: published in 2021, authors: Mgr. Helena Flámová, Iveta Dittrichová, Karen Cryer; 121 pages; CEFR A2.2
- Bloggers 5: published in 2022, authors: Mgr. Helena Flámová, Mgr. Karoline Němcová Růžičková, Damien Galeone; 85 pages; CEFR A2.2

Structure of the Bloggers textbook: see Structure of Bloggers 1

Each Bloggers textbook contains of six units with a clear and unchanging structure, which means it is the same as Bloggers 1 textbook.

The textbook chosen for the research is: Bloggers 2, unit 3

This unit was chosen because learners get familiar with the superlative form of adjectives, which means they get to know one of the uses of article *the*.

### **Textbooks for secondary school:**

- Chill Out 1: published in 2012, authors: Carla Tkadlečková, Tazeem Manesouraly Perná, Dana Krulišová; 260 pages; CEFR A1-A2
- Chill Out 2: published in 2012, authors: Carla Tkadlečková, Marsha Henderson, Radmila Vyskočilová, Natália Orlova; 335 pages; CEFR A2-B1
- Chill Out 3: published in 2013, authors: Carla Tkadlečková, Petra Mrzenová, Kateřina Kacerovská; 335 pages; CEFR B1-B2

Structure of the Chill Out textbooks:

All three Chill out textbooks follow the same structure. They consist of 10 units followed by practice tests, grammar summary/help for writing, workbook, and a dictionary. Each unit consists of 3 sections that focus on language exercises, vocabulary + grammar – presenting and practicing, listening and





pronunciation training. The last two pages are devoted to revision and exercises on developing reading, writing, and speaking skills. At the end of each chapter there is also a page dedicated to explaining the grammar being practised.

The textbook chosen for the research is: Chill Out 1, unit 2

Among Chill Out textbooks, there is one unit grammatically focused on articles, namely unit 2 in Chill Out 1. It was chosen because it is the most suitable for analysis.

### **Textbooks for self-taught learners/adults:**

- Dive In! Yellow – Me and My World: published in 2019, author: Fiona Mauchline; 56 pages
- Dive In! Green – Out and About: published in 2019, author: Fiona Mauchline; 56 pages; CEFR A2-B1
- Dive In! Blue – Home and Away: published in 2019, author: Fiona Mauchline; 56 pages; CEFR A2-B1
- Dive In! Orange – Let's get together: published in 2019, author: Fiona Mauchline; 56 pages; CEFR A2-B1

### Structure of the Dive In! textbooks:

Each Dive In! textbook contains the following sections: 5 units that has the same system - warm-up double page/introductory activities, followed by a language focus with listening/writing/speaking activities. The last part of the lesson is a project that serves as a bridge between the two units. The units are then followed by a quiz, language workouts, personal pages, and language support (deeper explanation of grammatical phenomena) at the end of the textbook.

The textbook chosen for the research is: Dive In!: Let's get together, unit 3

In the unit 3, students learn countable and uncountable nouns to which relate articles. Since no other textbook in the Dive In! series discusses articles more, this unit was chosen.



# 7.Results

## 7.1 Primary school – Funpark 2

Unit 7 was chosen in the Funpark 2 textbook. Workbook is included in the textbook and the results of the analysis are summed. This unit was chosen because pupils get to know the difference between using *a* and *an* article. It's the first rule about articles they meet. So far, articles have been presented only in the context within structures: *It's/It isn't a ...*, *I'm a ...*, *I'm the ...*, *I've got a ...* and have been not presented explicitly with rules - they occur in the sentences but are not explained.



Figure 1: Presentation and Practice stage in Funpark 2 (Kristýna Elišková et al., Funpark 2, 2023)

The first exercise (p.24) serves as an introduction to the issue. The presentation of the rule about using *a* and *an* article is done in context. For the purpose of presenting the issue for such young learners (circa 9 years old) a comics (picture 1, p. 24) was used. The use of visuals like comics can be helpful for young learners to understand better. In this exercise, pupils listen to and read the comics. In the exercise 2 (p.25), vowels are listed to show the letters before which the article *an* is used.

The presentation of the rule about using *a* and *an* is done inductively. The articles are presented in the context of a comics through examples (*It's AN*



*airport./It's A school.*) first with following exercises when deciding between a/an. Afterwards, the rule is introduced explicitly through an exercise where students are given a list of vowels and told to use "an" before words that start with those letters. However, it is worth noting that the textbook does not include information regarding exceptions, for instance, the use of "an" before words that begin with a pronounced vowel sound such as *an hour, an honest person* or the use of "a" before words that begin with a pronounced consonant, e.g. *a unicorn, a union*. This omission may be attributed to the age and level of the learners for whom the

textbook is designed. The rule that the indefinite article does not occur in the plural is not explicitly explained, but it occurs passively in the text and in the exercises (e.g. *There are drums in the city.*).

The practice stage is realized through different types of exercises. Pupils get to apply the rule they have learned mostly in choosing the right option (3x). There are multiple exercises where pupils read and repeat sentences (7x), which can be considered as drilling exercise. There are also 2 exercises, in which pupils put words, including articles, into correct order. One exercise is dedicated to matching words to the correct articles. These exercises allow the students to apply what they have learned in a variety of contexts and reinforce their understanding of the rule.

One exercise in Chapter 7 can be included in the production stage. In it, students create sentences on their own, using form *There is/are a/an...* This exercise is both written and then spoken, which implies that the sentences are produced by the pupils in both forms. The above mentioned drill exercise can already be seen as controlled production, but in the research was chosen to analyse only free production.



		PRIMARY SCHOOL
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	inductive	yes
	deductive	no
	in context	yes
	without context	no
	implicitly	no
	explicitly	yes
<b>PRACTICE</b>	drilling	7x
	fill-in	-
	correct order	2x
	completing sentences	-
	choosing right option	3x
	matching	1x
<b>PRODUCTION</b>	oral	yes
	written	yes

*Figure 2: Checklist for the analysis of unit 7, Funpark 2*



## 7.2 Lower secondary school – Bloggers 2

Unit 3 was chosen in the Bloggers 2 textbook for the analysis. In this unit, superlative forms of adjectives are presented, which means that pupils get familiar with the rule: *superlative = the + adjective + -st*. No other unit in the Bloggers textbooks pays explicit attention to the articles.

In the presentation stage, this rule is introduced explicitly through a combination of tables (without context) and sentences (in context). Specifically, in exercise 1 on page 62 (picture 2), tables are used to illustrate the formation of superlatives using "the" with both regular and irregular adjectives. The tables also highlight the different spellings and pronunciations of superlatives depending on the endings of the adjectives. The use of tables allows for a clear and concise presentation of the rule, making it easier for students to understand. Following the tables, pupils are presented with sentences that use superlatives, providing further opportunities to understand the rule and to see the model sentences. In terms of approaches to teaching, a deductive approach is used as the rule is presented first and then examples are worked with.

1 Study the tables.

DVD: 17

Adjective	Superlative
<b>1 syllable adjectives + 2 syllable adjectives ending with -y</b>	
strong	the strong <b>est</b>
fast	the fast <b>est</b>
small	the small <b>est</b>
big	the big <b>gest</b>
fat	the fat <b>t</b> est
cute → (e)	the cut <b>e</b> st
lazy → (y → i)	the laz <b>i</b> est
friendly → (y → i)	the friendl <b>i</b> est
dirty → (y → i)	the dirt <b>i</b> est

Adjective	Superlative
<b>2 and more syllable adjectives</b>	
popular	the <b>most</b> popular
dangerous	the <b>most</b> dangerous
beautiful	the <b>most</b> beautiful
<b>Irregular</b>	
good	the <b>best</b>
bad	the <b>worst</b>

2 Work in pairs. Read the sentences with superlatives a)–h). Match them to the pictures 1)–8). Use a dictionary.

a The cheetah is **the fastest** runner.

b This monkey has got **the biggest** eyes.

c My little rabbit is **the cutest** animal.

d My hamster is **the laziest** pet in the world.

e Dogs and cats are **the most popular** pets.

f **The most dangerous** Czech snake is the viper.

g For me, **the best** pet is my guinea pig.

h Flies are **the worst** insect!

Figure 3: Presentation stage in Bloggers 2 (Pavína Hrabětová et al., Bloggers 2, 2019)

While the presentation stage offers a clear and explicit rule about the use of the definite article in superlative forms, the practice stage is relatively limited



in scope. Only one exercise in the given unit is dedicated to practicing this rule, which is about completing sentences with the appropriate superlative form using the definite article. However, the accompanying workbook offers a few additional exercises to reinforce this concept, including matching exercise (1x), drilling exercises (2x), completing sentences (2x).

The production stage in the textbook emphasizes the use of superlative forms with the definite article *the*. While not directly focusing on the use of articles, this stage requires students to apply their basic knowledge of articles in order to effectively produce the sentences, e.g. students creating 2-4 questions using superlatives, both in oral and written form. In the workbook, students are asked to write ten sentences about an animal of their choice and to choose a pet and produce orally also ten sentences about it. These tasks require students to use their language production skills while also applying their knowledge of article usage in context.

		LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	inductive	no
	deductive	yes
	in context	yes
	without context	yes
	implicitly	no
	explicitly	yes
<b>PRACTICE</b>	drilling	2x
	fill-in	-
	correct order	-
	completing sentences	3x
	choosing right option	-
	matching	1x
<b>PRODUCTION</b>	oral	yes
	written	yes

Figure 4: Checklist for the analysis of unit 3, Bloggers 2





### 7.3 Secondary school – Chill Out 1

The textbook *Chill Out 1*, unit 2 was selected for the practical part. The workbook is included in the textbook and the results of the analysis are summed from both the workbook and the textbook. It is the only chapter in the *Chill Out* textbook series that explicitly addresses the grammatical topic of articles. In this chapter, students learn the difference between definite and indefinite articles and are also reminded of the difference between the use of *a* and *an*. The use of the articles is presented explicitly in context through an overview that explains the difference between *the* and *a*. This overview tells students that the indefinite article is used when talking about a thing or an object for the first time.

**Členy a, the**

V angličtině známe dva druhy členů – neurčitý člen **a** nebo **an**, určitý člen **the**.

Neurčitý člen se používá, když mluvíme o věci, předmětu poprvé.  
*Look, this is **a** new computer game.*  
*I have got **an** interesting book.*

U neurčitých členů dbáme na rozdíly mezi **a/an**.

<i>a</i> game	<i>an</i> idea
<i>a</i> book	<i>an</i> alarm clock
<i>a</i> watch	<i>an</i> umbrella

Člen se přifazuje podle výslovnosti podstatného jména.

**Všimněte si!**  
*a* university /ju:ni'vɜ:(r)səti/ × *an* umbrella /ʌm'brelə/

Pokud se jedná o věc známou, používáme člen určitý **the**.  
*Look, this is **a** new computer game.*  
***The** computer game is Jack's game.*  
*I have got **an** interesting book. **The** book is about **the** USA.*

Figure 5: Presentation of articles in *Chill Out 1* (Carla Tkadlečková, *Chill Out 1*, 2012)

Two examples are given: *Look, this is **a** new computer game. I have got **an** interesting book.* The overview also tells them that with indefinite articles we pay attention to the difference between *a/an* and that the article is assigned according to the pronunciation of the noun. The words *a university* and *an umbrella* are pointed out. Both words begin with a vowel, but only *umbrella*



begins with a pronounced vowel, *university* begins with a pronounced consonant. Next, the review focuses on the definite article *the* - it says that if it is a known thing, we use the definite article *the*. It also gives examples contrasting the use of the definite and the indefinite article: *Look, this is **a** new computer game. **The** computer game is Jack's game. I have got **an** interesting book. **The** book is about **the** USA.*

The approach to teaching articles in this textbook is deductive. The overview provides students with an explanation first (the difference between definite and indefinite articles), followed by examples to illustrate the rule.

The practice stage focuses on providing students with various exercises to reinforce their understanding of the use of articles. The textbook and workbook helps students apply the knowledge they gained from the overview in the previous stage and tests their ability to use the correct article in context. This unit provides students with drilling exercises (3x), fill-in exercise (1x), completing sentences (1x), matching exercises (2x) and correct order exercise (1x).

In the production stage, students are given the opportunity to practice using articles both orally and in writing. In oral exercises, students are asked to create dialogues and use articles in them correctly. This allows them to practice using the grammatical issue in a communicative context. In the written form, students are asked to describe a person. Although this exercise is not solely focused on using articles, they should still use articles in a written description and build their ability to communicate clearly and accurately.



		<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	inductive	no
	deductive	yes
	in context	no
	without context	yes
	implicitly	no
	explicitly	yes
<b>PRACTICE</b>	drilling	3x
	fill-in	1x
	correct order	1x
	completing sentences	1x
	choosing right option	-
	matching	2x
<b>PRODUCTION</b>	spoken form	yes
	written form	yes

*Figure 6: Checklist for the analysis of unit 2, Chillout 1*



### 7.4 Self-taught students – Dive In!: Let's get together

For the analysis was chosen unit 3 from Dive In! Let's get together. In this unit is taught grammatical topic of expressing quantity and countable and uncountable nouns. The appropriate use of articles is an integral part of these grammatical topics.

The topic is introduced and presented with a table. There is explicitly written *You can use numbers and a/an/ some with countable nouns.* and *You cannot use numbers or a/an with them.* In the table, there are examples given (*one bottle, a bottle, some water, a bottle of water...*) but the presentation stage is done without further context. As far as articles are considered, there is also rule about distinguishing *a* and *an*. Students are also introduced to the rule "use one to say 'not two, not three, not six, only one'. Otherwise, use a or an".

COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS	
one bottle, a bottle, three bottles one apple, an apple, some apples	<b>Countable nouns</b> are things which can be counted. They have a singular and a plural form. You can use numbers and <i>a/an/some</i> with them.
some water some sugar some bread	<b>Uncountable nouns</b> do not have a plural form. You cannot use numbers or <i>a/an</i> with them.
a bottle / litre of water a packet / spoonful of sugar a loaf / slice of bread	Often you can use a quantity word with uncountable nouns.

Figure 7: Presentation stage of the phenomena (Fiona Mauchline, Dive In!: Let's get together, 2019)

Students are given rules and after, they can practice through exercises, which means that deductive approach to teaching grammar is implied.

Students practise grammar and articles in different types of exercises. Drilling exercises, of which there are four in the textbook, predominate. Other exercises that appear in the practice stage are fill-in (1x), putting words in the correct order (1x), completing sentences (1x), choosing the right option (2x) and



matching (1x).

The production stage is fulfilled in both written and oral form. In the written form, students write a recipe, where they need to express quantity. Oral form of the production stage is done by discussion and finding solutions.

**LANGUAGE FOCUS: TALKING ABOUT QUANTITIES**

Which of the following are correct? Put a tick (✓) or a cross (X) next to each one.

a bread \_\_\_    a biscuit \_\_\_    a water \_\_\_    a trousers \_\_\_    a T-shirt \_\_\_  
 a milk \_\_\_    a jam \_\_\_    a tea \_\_\_    a packed lunch \_\_\_    a ham \_\_\_

Figure 8: One of the exercises in the Practice stage (Fiona Mauchline, *Dive In!: Let's get together*, 2019)

		ADULTS/ SELF-TAUGHT LEARNERS
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	inductive	no
	deductive	yes
	in context	no
	without context	yes
	implicitly	no
	explicitly	yes
<b>PRACTICE</b>	drilling	4x
	fill-in	1x
	correct order	1x
	completing sentences	1x
	choosing right option	3x
	matching	1x
<b>PRODUCTION</b>	spoken form	yes
	written form	yes

Figure 9: Checklist for the analysis of unit 3, *Dive In!: Let's get together*



## 8. Comparison of collected data

		PRIMARY SCHOOL	LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	ADULTS/SELF-TAUGHT LEARNERS
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	inductive	yes	no	no	no
	deductive	no	yes	yes	yes
	in context	yes	yes	no	no
	without context	no	yes	yes	yes
	implicitly	no	no	no	no
	explicitly	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>PRACTICE</b>	drilling	7x	2x	3x	4x
	fill-in	-	-	1x	1x
	correct order	2x	-	1x	1x
	completing sentences	-	3x	1x	1x
	choosing right option	3x	-	-	3x
	matching	1x	1x	2x	1x
<b>PRODUCTION</b>	spoken form	yes	yes	yes	yes
	written form	yes	yes	yes	yes

*Figure 10: Checklist including each age category and each part of the analysis with collected data*

There is the full checklist above with all aspects examined. It includes the 3 stages examined - Presentation, Practice, Production and the 4 types of age categories for which these stages were examined. These were English language textbooks for primary school, lower secondary school, secondary school and adult/self-taught learners. For Production, it was only examined whether the pupils are given any production exercise in written or oral form. It was not the intention to find out whether the exercise was controlled, semi-controlled, or





free, as in this case it mainly depends on the teacher's conception.

Several similarities and differences can be found in the checklist, which will be described in the subchapters below. The subchapters are divided according to the stages of Presentation, Practice and Production.

### 8.1 Presentation stage of the articles for different age categories

	PRIMARY SCHOOL	LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	ADULTS/SELF-TAUGHT LEARNERS
<b>INDUCTIVE APPROACH</b>	yes	no	no	no
<b>DEDUCTIVE APPROACH</b>	no	yes	yes	yes

*Figure 11: Checklist comparing using deductive and inductive approaches for different age groups*

In terms of the approach used to teach articles in English textbooks, it was found that the inductive approach was used only for primary school students, while the deductive approach was used for all other ages (learners aged 12 years and older).

	PRIMARY SCHOOL	LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	ADULTS/SELF-TAUGHT LEARNERS
<b>IN CONTEXT</b>	yes	yes	no	no
<b>WITHOUT CONTEXT</b>	no	yes	yes	yes

*Figure 12: Checklist comparing whether articles are taught in or out of context*

Looking at whether the articles were presented in a deeper context or only in isolation without context, it can be concluded that for the youngest pupils at primary school, the articles appeared in context. For the lower secondary students, the grammatical phenomenon was presented both in and without context. For the older students - secondary school students and adult/self-taught learners, articles were presented only in isolation without context.



	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>ADULTS/SELF-TAUGHT LEARNERS</b>
<b>IMPLICITLY</b>	no	no	no	no
<b>EXPLICITLY</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes

*Figure 13: Checklist showing differences in explicit/implicit presentation of the articles for different age categories*

For all age categories, namely from primary school learners to adults/self-taught learners, the rules for using articles in specific phenomena were presented explicitly.

Overall, it can be said that in the presentation stage, it was possible to find differences and similarities in the different age categories. All aspects examined had the same results for secondary school students and adults/self-taught learners. Further similarity can be observed for primary school learners and lower secondary school learners to whom the articles were presented in context. The greatest similarity was found in the explicit presentation of articles. The difference can be the approach to teaching the members, which was only for primary school learners, inductive. The approach to teaching articles for primary school learners differs most from all other age groups.

## 8.2 Practice stage of the articles for different age categories

<b>type of exercise</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>	<b>ADULTS/SELF-TAUGHT LEARNERS</b>
<b>drilling</b>	7x	2x	3x	4x
<b>fill-in</b>	-	-	1x	1x
<b>correct order</b>	2x	-	1x	1x
<b>completing sentences</b>	-	3x	1x	1x
<b>choosing right option</b>	3x	-	-	3x
<b>matching</b>	1x	1x	2x	1x

*Figure 14: Checklist that shows, for different age groups, what types of exercises and how many times a certain type of exercise appears*

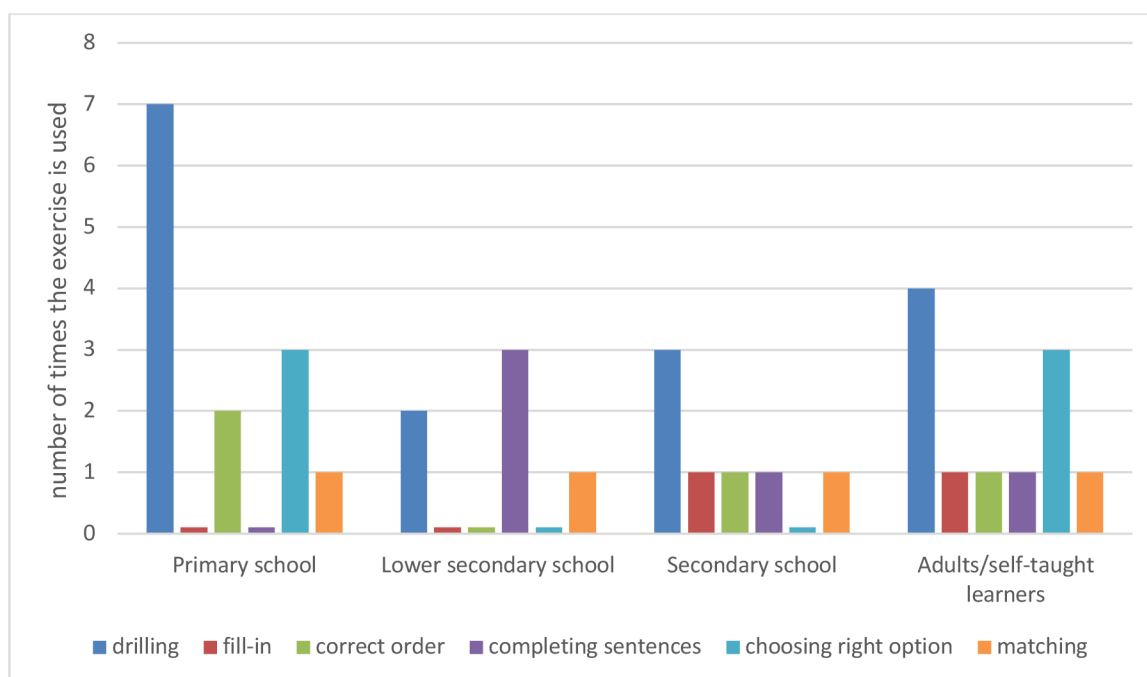


Figure 15: Graph showing the types of exercises for practising articles at different ages.

In this stage, the types of exercises for practising articles that appear in textbooks and workbooks were examined. In total, there were 6 types of exercises - drilling, filling-in, putting words in correct order, completing sentences, choosing right option, and matching.

It can be observed from the graph that primary school and lower secondary school learners practise in fewer types of exercises than secondary school and adult/self-taught learners. All types of exercises are represented in the textbooks and workbooks for adults/self-taught and all but the choosing right option exercises for secondary school.

Most drills occur at primary school, but overall, this type of exercise has a place in all age categories and is used on average the most. Conversely, the least used type of exercise on average is the fill-in, which does not appear in materials for primary school and lower secondary school learners.



### 8.3 Production stage of the articles for different age categories

form of production	PRIMARY SCHOOL	LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	ADULTS/SELF-TAUGHT LEARNERS
<b>spoken form</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>written form</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes

*Figure 16: Checklist showing in which form the production stage was fulfilled in different age categories*

In the production stage, it was analysed whether the production was performed in written or oral form. This part was the most difficult for the analysis because it depends on how the teacher conceives the different exercises and how he/she uses them to organize the teaching for the production of the articles. However, it was founded that the production stage of the articles was realized in all age categories in both written and oral form.



## 9. Discussion

The practical part aimed to discover what are the differences and similarities in the way of presenting, practicing, and teaching article production in English language textbooks for different age groups.

The presentation stage of the topic revealed the first notable difference, which was the approach used to introduce the rules of using articles. Only primary school learners were presented with the inductive approach, which aligns with Shaffer's (1989) argument that this approach is suitable for beginners. The rules are presented in a deductive approach for all other age groups. This approach may be more effective and efficient for older students in terms of acquiring more complex and abstract language skills, which is what the articles can be for Czech students. This part disproves the assumption "*English language textbooks use deductive approach to teaching articles regardless the target age group*" because clearly, the inductive approach is used for teaching articles for primary school learners.

At primary and lower secondary school levels, the textbooks presented articles in context using comics or full sentences to provide a deeper and clearer understanding of the rules. This is because young learners are more dependent on context to grasp new concepts, and thus presenting articles in context can be an effective method for them to learn. This fact corresponds with the theoretical part as grammar should be presented for young learners in real-life situations using context. However, older students at secondary school or adults are not as dependent on context as younger learners. Therefore, the analysis showed that these age groups were introduced to the topic of articles through tables or overviews without further context. This finding confirms the assumption "*Textbooks for primary school pupils have a greater focus on contextualizing articles than textbooks for adult learners.*".

Despite these differences, a similarity for all age categories was observed. Regardless of the age group, the rules of articles were presented explicitly since the explicit presentation of rules often provides a systematic understanding of the rules and patterns that govern the language. It disproves the assumption that "*Textbooks for younger learners (primary school pupils) teach articles*



*implicitly or without describing rules, while textbooks for lower secondary and older students teach articles explicitly*". In each of the units, the rule was explicitly presented in some form using tables, overviews, or sheets.

From the collected data, it can be deduced that the types of activities used in the practice stage vary across different age groups. This variation in the types of activities used in the practice stage may reflect the different learning needs and preferences of the different age groups. Primary school students are given more drilling exercises, which involve repeating language items until they become familiar. The fact that primary school students have more drilling exercises could also be related to the fact that they are still building their foundational language skills. Drilling exercises can help them develop automaticity in using the language. Lower secondary school students focus more on completing sentences and drilling exercises also have their place in this age group. Secondary school students have a more balanced mix of activities, including filling in blanks, putting words in the correct order, and matching exercises. Adults have the most varied mix of activities, with more emphasis on drilling and choosing the right option. The use of more varied activities for secondary school students and adults reflects the need to provide more engaging and stimulating learning experiences. These learners may benefit from activities that require critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.

In each of the age categories studied, the free production stage is carried out in both oral and written form. This allows the learners to practise producing the target language and also provides the learners with the opportunity to develop different aspects of their language skills, in this respect, grammar. The use of both forms of production enables learners to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively in a variety of situations. In the textbooks, the production stage is done by discussions, finding solutions in groups, creating text, or creating sentences.

To answer the research question "*What are the differences and similarities in how articles are presented, practiced, and how production is taught in English language textbooks for different age groups?*" a summary of what the research showed was created.





The approach used to introduce students with the rules for using articles varies by age group. The inductive approach is used for primary school pupils, while the deductive approach is used for all other age groups. Contextualizing articles is more common in textbooks for primary and lower secondary school students, while tables or summaries without further context are more common for secondary school students and adults. The rules about articles were presented in an explicit way, regardless of the age group.

The types of activities used in the practical stage vary across age groups. Primary school pupils have more drills, lower secondary school pupils focus more on completing sentences, secondary school pupils have a more balanced mix of activities and adults have a more varied mix of activities with more emphasis on drilling and selecting the correct option. Overall, on average, regardless of age group, drilling exercises are used the most.

The free production stage takes place in both oral and written form in each of the age groups studied, allowing learners to practice producing the target language.

In order to further investigate the teaching and learning of English articles, there are a number of potential suggestions for future research. One possible area for investigation could involve a comparative analysis of textbooks from different publishers to determine whether there are any significant differences in the approaches to teaching articles across different materials from different publishers.

Another potential area for future research could be an exploration of the impact of culture and first language on the acquisition of articles for English language learners. Given that the use of articles can vary significantly across different languages and cultures, it is possible that learners from different backgrounds may struggle more with mastering the rules and conventions of English article use.

The last but not least suggestion that could be interesting for research is to investigate in which phenomena, in terms of articles, students of different ages make mistakes.



## 10. Conclusion

In conclusion, the aim of the thesis was to explore the approaches used in teaching articles in English language textbooks for different age groups. The theoretical part provided an overview of articles as a grammatical phenomenon in English and different approaches to teaching grammar, including articles. It also highlighted the characteristics of learners in different age groups and recommended resources and materials for teaching grammar, including evaluation methods.

The practical part of the thesis analysed four units in English language textbooks published by Klett for different age groups, including primary school, lower secondary school, secondary school, and adults/self-taught learners. The analysis was focused on the presentation, practice, and production stages for teaching articles. The findings showed that there were differences and similarities in the approaches used for teaching articles across different age groups.

The presentation stage showed that the inductive approach was used for primary school learners, while a deductive approach was used for other age groups. The practice stage varied in terms of the types of activities used, reflecting the different learning needs and preferences of the different age groups. Finally, the production stage showed that all age groups were required to produce articles in written or spoken form.

The thesis findings provide useful insights into the approaches used for teaching articles in English language textbooks for different age groups. The thesis also suggests further research on the teaching articles in English language learning. For me personally, this thesis has meant gaining a deeper understanding of the topic through the process of writing the theoretical part and of conducting research and analysing data. It has provided me with further insight into learning English grammar and articles, which will be useful for my future profession.



## **APPENDICES**

The appendices have been submitted separately for more clarity. The appendices contain the checklist and all the analysed units of the selected textbooks, namely:

Funkpark 2, unit 7

Bloggers 2, unit 3, textbook

Bloggers 2, unit 3, workbook

Chill Out 1, unit 2, textbook

Chill Out 1, unit 2, workbook

Dive In!: Let's get together, unit 3



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