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BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE
Teaching English in Kindergarten

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vedoucí práce: Mgr. Jana Kořínková, Ph.D.

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila pouze uvedenou literaturu a elektronické zdroje.

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Olomouc, 2024

Poděkování

Na tomto místě bych ráda poděkovala Mgr. Janě Kořínkové, Ph.D. za její cenné rady, ochotu a přístup během psaní bakalářské práce. Dále bych ráda poděkovala mé rodině a blízkým, kteří mi byli velkou oporou během celého studia.

Anotace

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Název práce:	Výuka anglického jazyka v mateřských školách
Název v angličtině:	Teaching English in Kindergarten
Zvolený typ práce:	Výzkumná práce
Anotace práce:	Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá výukou anglického jazyka v mateřských školách. Práce se věnuje obecné charakteristice předškolních dětí, jaké aktivity, pomůcky a prostředí jsou pro výuku angličtiny vhodné. Tato bakalářská práce také věnuje pozornost principům, které jsou důležité pro výuku angličtiny v brzkém věku. Praktické část se zaměřuje na porovnání výuky angličtiny ve vybrané státní a alternativní mateřské škole.
Klíčová slova:	Mateřská škola, angličtina, výuka anglického jazyka, předškolní věk, děti, státní školka, alternativní školka
Anotace v angličtině:	This bachelor thesis deals with English language teaching in kindergartens. The thesis focuses on the general characteristics of preschool children, what activities, aids and environment are appropriate for teaching English. This bachelor thesis also pays attention to the principles that are important for teaching English at an early age. The practical part focuses on the comparison of English teaching in a selected state and alternative kindergarten.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Kindergarten, English, English language teaching, preschool age, children, state kindergarten, alternative kindergarten
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Appendix n. 1: Recording sheet for observation Appendix n. 2: Observation, state kindergarten Appendix n. 3: Observation, alternative kindergarten Appendix n. 4: Interview, state kindergarten Appendix n. 5: Interview, alternative kindergarten
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Abstract

This bachelor thesis focuses on English language teaching in kindergartens. The thesis provides information about the general characteristics of preschool children and how to prepare an appropriate English lesson for them. The advantages and disadvantages in learning English at an early age are also included in the thesis. The practical part focuses on the comparison of English teaching in a selected state kindergarten and an alternative kindergarten using the method of interview and observation. The practical part shows some similarities, but also differences in the teaching of English in state and alternative kindergartens.

Introduction

Education in kindergartens plays a key role in the development of children at an early age. As interest in language education spreads from pre-school age, it is becoming increasingly important to include English in the curriculum. Although curricula increasingly focus on English language teaching, the variety of methods and approaches that can be used in this area are often overlooked.

My main motive for choosing this topic was my personal interest in finding out more about English language teaching in kindergartens. I believe that effective English language teaching at this age can have a long-term positive effect on children's language development. With the growing interest in international communication, it is more and more important to prepare children to communicate effectively in English from an early age.

This bachelor thesis is divided into theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical part focuses on the characteristics of the preschool child, specifically on somatic and cognitive development. Furthermore, the advantages and disadvantages of starting English language teaching at such an early age are examined and theoretical approaches to language acquisition such as Piaget's theory, Vygotsky's and Chomsky's are introduced. This part also presents the choice of appropriate activities, children's motivation and involvement in learning, as well as the overall organisation of teaching in the kindergarten.

In the practical part, these aspects of English teaching were investigated in a state and alternative kindergarten through interviews with teachers and observations. The main aim of this Bachelor's thesis is to explore English teaching in two selected kindergartens and to describe the differences between state kindergarten and alternative kindergarten. The thesis mainly focuses on comparing the activities, environment, teaching aids or children's involvement in learning. Preschool education plays a crucial role in building a foundation for further language development and communication, and it is therefore important to explore this topic. In this work, artificial intelligence was used as a tool in language formulation.

1 Theoretical part

The theoretical part of the thesis is focused on the key aspects of teaching English in kindergarten. This part focuses on the characteristics of pupils in this age group, including their somatic and cognitive development, and exploring the advantages and disadvantages of teaching at such an early age. Further attention is given to children's motivation and an introduction to basic educational theories such as those of Piaget, Vygotsky and Chomsky, which provide a framework for understanding the learning process in kindergarten. The principles, organisation and environment of pre-school education are also explored, including the ways in which children are involved in learning activities and how their overall development is supported.

2 Characteristics of learners in kindergarten

It is considered a preschool child to be between the ages of three and six or seven. The preschool period ends with the start of primary school.

2.1 Somatic development

According to Hermová (1994), children perceive through movement. Movement activities develop perception and the ability to communicate. Therefore, the choice of correct physical activities includes knowledge of movement possibilities of preschool children (Hermová, 1994).

In terms of body structure, a child in this period grows by 5-6 cm per year. There is a slow slimming of the body, the lower limbs become longer and the child's head becomes smaller in proportion to the body (Zacharová, 2012). Overall coordination of movement also improves. By the end of this period, the child can also handle activities that require greater motor coordination, such as ball games or dancing. Fine motor skills are also improving. There is an improvement in handling a pencil for example (Petrová, Plevová, 2018).

2.2 Cognitive development

In terms of cognitive development, we refer primarily to sensory perception, attention, memory, thinking and speech.

Petrová and Plevová (2018) say that cognitive development is a developmental change, a transition. These changes are not random, but regular and conditioned by time (Petrová, Plevová, 2018). Cognitive development in preschool children is crucial for the development of competence to learn. During this phase, children learn to observe, explore and discover the

world around them. The knowledge gained is then used to further learning (Nádvorníková, 2011).

According to Nádvorníková (2011), cognitive development is a combination of mental processes and personality qualities that allow people to see, comprehend, and engage with their environment in the widest sense. Cognitive development can be divided into cognitive abilities and cognitive processes. Cognitive abilities are only possibilities that may or may not develop. Cognitive processes are then a person's own mental activities. They are the means by which cognition is further developed. They are the essence of learning (Nádvorníková, 2011).

Cognitive development is about changing and creating cognitive functions. Cognitive abilities change and develop with age and experience, especially through interaction with the social environment (Kohoutek, 2008).

We can encounter several barriers to the development of cognitive processes. One of them is disability, whether inborn or acquired during the child's development. Another may be an inappropriate social environment where the child is either mentally or physically deprived. This environment does not provide children enough stimuli for their development (Nádvorníková, 2011). Krejčová, Kargerová and Syslová (2015) discuss individualization in kindergarten. According to them, the goal of teachers is not to unify the skills and knowledge of all children, but rather to promote learning opportunities so that each child can reach their maximum potential in preschool.

2.2.1 Sensory perception

The development of the senses is very important for a child because the senses are the most important source of a child's knowledge. Nádvorníková (2011) claims: "*What is not in the senses is not in the memory.*" (Nádvorníková, 2011, p. 23).

Thompson (2002) emphasizes the importance of sensory perception in the context of early childhood language acquisition. The ability to effectively perceive visual and auditory stimuli contributes to language learning. As children become familiar with their environment through their senses, they develop a basic understanding of language elements such as sound patterns and visual representations. This involvement of the senses not only helps in the acquisition of the mother tongue, but also provides the basis for learning foreign languages. Therefore, teachers should emphasize the incorporation of sensory experiences into the teaching

of English language in preschool settings. By creating a stimulating sensory environment and incorporating activities that engage multiple senses, teachers can enhance children's language learning experiences and facilitate their cognitive development (Thompson, 2002).

At preschool age, perception is already active. It is related to dynamic engagement, including movement or speech (Petrová, Plevová, 2018). Nádvorníková (2011) claims that the learning process is primarily based on visual and auditory perception. Children primarily perceive conspicuous signs that catch their attention, as emphasized by Petrová and Plevová (2018). At the beginning of preschool age, the children are able to perceive within a range of about four basic colours. However, their ability to accurately express colour vision is still not fully developed (Nádvorníková, 2011).

In the context of how children perceive their surroundings, according to Nádvorníková (2011), it is evident that their auditory perception becomes more accurate. It is a basis for language acquisition, both native and foreign. Preschool children have an excellent predisposition for imitating foreign speech. Therefore, it is important that the teachers themselves have a very good pronunciation of the foreign language. It can happen that the child also picks up any mistakes (Nádvorníková, 2011). Children can analyse different sound stimuli more accurately. They can recognise the sound of a musical instrument, an animal or a voice. The perception of time and space is still imprecise. Children's perception is enriched by imagination. They are able to recall ideas more quickly. For example, they can describe a situation they have experienced or tell what a fairy tale they have seen was about. Imagination develops, which children of this age use, for example, in their artwork or during play. Through imagination, children create their "own world" (Petrová, Plevová, 2018).

2.2.2 Attention

At preschool age, attention is unstable. Only stimuli that are attractive to them will attract the child's attention. Children are only able to concentrate fully on an interesting activity (Zacharová, 2012). As noted by Petrová and Plevová (2018), intentional attention begins to form towards the end of the preschool period. They can gradually pay attention for longer periods of time and more intensively (Petrová, Plevová, 2018).

In this period, three types of attention can appear. Firstly, selective attention. This means that the children perceive only what is the focus of their attention. The rest of the stimuli are perceived either only marginally or not at all. The second type is individual attention. There

are great differences between the perceptions of individuals. It also depends on what is important to the individual at the time and what they will pay attention to (Nádvorníková, 2011).

2.2.3 Memory

Memory is one of the basic psychological predispositions that are the basis of our educational system. It is a key element that affects how we learn. During the preschool years, there is typically a constant development of memory. Children are able to remember large amounts of information very quickly, but they can forget it just as quickly (Nádvorníková, 2011).

Children do not make a concerted effort to memorize. There is an unconscious by nature. However, during this period, there is a rapid development of memory and also an increase in capacity (Zacharová, 2012). Mechanical memory predominates here. Children are able to remember songs, stories and nursery rhymes. At the end of the preschool period, memory changes to intentional memory (Petrová, Plevová, 2018). There is an intensive development of permanent memory and a transition to long-term memory (Zacharová, 2012).

2.2.4 Thinking

Petrová and Plevová (2018) mention significant changes in thinking during preschool period. Until children begin to understand words as symbols for things and phenomena in the world, their thinking is largely symbolic. This means that in practical activities they gradually realise that each thing has its own name. However, as children grow and develop, there is a gradual change in this thinking process. There is a transition from symbolic thinking to intuitive thinking. Intuitive thinking, according to them, means that the child begins to think in holistic terms that are formed by noticing the essential similarities between different objects and phenomena. In this way, children begin to understand more complex patterns and connections in their environment (Petrová, Plevová, 2018). Lai (2018) mentions researches (Chen, Law, 2016; Erhel, Jamet, 2013; Sun, 2013; Kim, Park, Baek, 2009; cited by Lai, 2018) that shows the importance of intuitive thinking. According to them, intuitive thinking plays an important role in teaching English in kindergarten, especially in conjunction with play experience. Game-based learning engages children in interactive games, which motivates learning and enhances their cognitive development and language skills (Lai, 2018).

Additionally, it is claimed by Nádvorníková (2011) that children's function of the second signal system is improved, allowing them to create basic thinking situations such as analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalization.

The thinking of preschool children is influenced by their great imagination and fantasy. Characteristic features include, for example, anthropomorphic thinking, children tend to give human characteristics to nonliving things or animals. Furthermore, thinking is magical and children change reality according to their wishes (Zacharová, 2012).

A very common trait is egocentrism. The child has a problem to understand another person's point of view. They do not understand that all people do not have the same opinion as they have (Zacharová, 2012).

2.2.5 Speech

Preschool age is a very important period for speech development. By the age of three, when a child is about to start a kindergarten, speech is far from perfect (Zacharová, 2012). However, pronunciation gradually improves. During kindergarten, the child acquires 2000-2500 new words, before starting school they know 3000-6000 words. However, as each child is individual, this can vary a lot. For example, the environment where the child grows up or the child's overall intellect has an impact on the development of speech (Petrová, Plevová, 2018).

The expansion of vocabulary is also accompanied by inventing new, proper names for phenomena and objects that do not really exist in their mother tongue. This period is a period of questioning. The child tends to ask questions all the time, such as "why?". Which can sometimes be very challenging for parents (Zacharová, 2012).

3 Teaching English as a foreign language

3.1 Positive attitude and advantages of learning English at the early age

There are several opinions and questions about learning a foreign language. One of the most common asked questions is “When is the right time to start learning a foreign language?”. Opinions on this questions vary widely and there is probably no right answer. Lojová (2006, p. 44) states that experts supporting the idea “the sooner the better“ support the Critical Period Hypothesis. The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) is that there is a nonlinear relationship between a learner's age and their acceptance to second language learning. There is a critical period in development when individuals are most sensitive to second language acquisition, and then this sensitivity gradually decreases with age (Vanhove, 2013). Lojová (2006) claims: *“They believe in brain plasticity at an early age which enables rapid subconscious learning and developing innate brain capacity. They also suggest that children’s potential is wasted if it is not being developed sufficiently at an early age. Therefore this potential, and cognitive capacity in particular, must be stimulated by an enriched environment, so why not also by a foreign language.”* (Lojová, 2006, p. 44).

Harmer (2007) argues that if a foreign language is started earlier, the child has no history of learning. They have never learned a foreign language before and have no experience of learning a second language. He explains this by saying that they have no previous case that will make them say over and over again that they will fail again. Young learners do not have a specific elements that demotivate them in this way, which can often happen with older learners. He says that adults are often more worried about not making mistakes (Harmer, 2007).

Stern (1967) also claims that the earlier a second language is learnt the more it is possible to acquire it in a way which is similar to the first language learning, i.e. largely by a process of unconscious habit formation. The unique advantages of early language learning have been highlighted by Theodore Andersson (Andersson, 1960, cited by Stern, 1967). Drawing from existing studies on language development in children, Andersson contends that a child's linguistic proficiency results from a combination of conditioned and conceptual learning. During infancy and the early stages of childhood, conditioned learning, characterized by unconscious processes, predominates, while conceptual learning remains minimal. Over time, there is a gradual decline in the capacity for conditioned learning, accompanied by an increasing reliance on conceptual learning, as illustrated in the diagram below. According to Andersson,

learning a second language early on supports a process that is more similar to learning a first language, mostly through the development of unconsciously formed habits (Stern, 1967).

Najvar (2010) argues that people who believe it is beneficial to start learning a foreign language at an early age very often point to the ease and naturalness with which the child acquires the first (mother tongue) language. It appears that the child has at some point absorbed the language "like a sponge" without teaching the grammar, without studying lists of new terms, without purposeful and exhausting toil. Regardless of linguistic ability, every healthy child learns their mother tongue correctly (to an acceptable level) by listening to their parents speak, correcting them unknowingly, and being stimulated by their social surroundings. It appears that kids are more likely to pick up languages rapidly, effortlessly, and spontaneously. This point of view holds that it would be appropriate to take advantage of the opportunity for kids to acquire one or two foreign languages in addition to their native tongue during this time (Najvar, 2010).

3.2 Negative attitude and disadvantages of learning English at early age

Lojová (2006, p. 44) states that experts who hold the "later is enough" position do not believe in the Critical Period Hypothesis. They do not believe in the existence of a sensitive period of development during which individuals are most sensitive to second language acquisition. According to them, children should be protected from over-pressure at an early age. The supporters of this viewpoint argue that children's potential should be developed in an environment that suits them naturally. This environment is the most appropriate for the growth of the child. It offers conditions for discovery, experimentation and interaction with the world around them. Additionally, experts warn that focusing too much on children's language learning could neglect their emotional and personal growth, which is just as important as learning a new language. These experts assert: "*Children can learn a foreign language faster, better, and more effectively once the learning mechanisms have been developed that correspond to the conditions of instructed classroom language learning.*" (Lojová, 2006, p. 44). Therefore, the question arises: "*Why bother children so early with foreign language learning?*" (Lojová, 2006, p. 44). Reilly and Ward (1997) also write about the fact that mood swings often occur in young children and self-control is not yet sufficiently developed. In addition, they point out that at this age they are not able to cooperate effectively, which can lead to further difficulties.

Benedetti and Freppon (2006, p. 13) focused on the FLES ("*Foreign Language in the Elementary School*"). This is an educational program aimed at early integration of foreign language instruction into the curriculum at an early age implemented in many countries around

the world. This initiative seeks to develop students' language skills from the beginning of their schooling, believing in the primacy of language learning from an early age. However, there are disagreements and concerns over the efficacy of this strategy (Benedetti, Freppon, 2006).

Labusová (2013) also warns of the harmful effects that learning a foreign language at early age can bring. She says: *“Over-organised and overspent adult time clearly contributes to health problems and problematic behaviour, including typical abnormalities such as hyperactivity, impulsivity or concentration problems.”* (Labusová, 2013). Benedetti and Freppon (2006) agree and argue that there are many reasons why young children do not benefit from learning a foreign language. The first argument for FLES programs is that children learn languages "better" than adults. However, this myth, according to Benedetti and Freppon (2006), can lead to unrealistic expectations and inadequate teaching strategies, which can have just mentioned the negative effect, such as on effectiveness of teaching.

Benedetti and Freppon (2006) highlighted that the only area in which children outperform adults is the acquisition of authentic pronunciation. According to them, this skill may not be crucial to the ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language. This suggests that pronunciation should not be the sole determining factor when assessing children's overall language competence (Benedetti, Freppon, 2006). The problem that arises here, according to Zormanová (2015), is that the child should first of all acquire his mother tongue and then the foreign language.

Research claims that adolescent and adult learners have cognitive advantages (Benedetti, Freppon, 2006). Young learners are characterized by having short attention and concentration span (Scott, Ytreberg, 1995). Other benefits for adults include more developed native language skills, a better ability to compare language structures, and a greater cognitive ability to reflect on their learning. This fact raises questions about the effectiveness of FLES programs that target the youngest learners and highlights the need to consider the cognitive aspects of foreign language learning (Benedetti, Freppon, 2006).

In general, Benedetti and Freppon (2006) argue that despite several positive aspects of foreign language teaching at younger age, there are uncertainties and questions about the effectiveness of this approach.

3.3 Neutral attitude

Hanušová and Najvar (2006) mention Sophie Genelot's study (Genelot, 1991-93, cited by Hanušová, Najvar, 2006), which examined success rates in English in regular school. Results show that there are not many advantages to starting early. The only group of children who benefited from early education was the highest IQ group. It was shown that teaching is greatly impacted by a wide range of factors besides age. These include the student's social background, the way they are taught, or their own intelligence (Hanušová, Najvar, 2006).

Hanušová and Najvar (2006) also discuss a comparable large research that a group of experts from Belgium, France, Britain, Germany, and Italy conducted (Blondin et al, 1998, cited by Hanušová, Najvar, 2006). The results of this research confirm that age is not the only important factor and there is no ideal age to start learning a foreign language. They say: "*The conclusions confirm that early age alone does not automatically guarantee success, more important factors being the quality of teaching and the amount of time devoted to learning.*" (Hanušová, Najvar, 2006, p. 78)

According to Lojová (2006, p. 44), many experts say "it depends". They say that when making decisions regarding a particular child, one must consider the benefits and negatives of each age group (Lojová, 2006). Also Scott and Ytregerb claim that the abilities of young learners are very different. They state: "*Some children develop gradually, others in leaps and bounds.*" (Scott, Ytregerg, 1995, p. 1).

Lojová (2006) focuses on other aspects that she thinks are important. For example, according to her, the age, the child's predisposition to learning, environment and exposure to the foreign language, quality of interactions and motivation play a key role. Family support and cultural factors can strongly influence learning success. Modern technologies such as applications and interactive programmes can be an effective complement to traditional methods. Overall, each child responds to learning a foreign language in an individual way, and the combination of these factors determines when and how quickly a child becomes proficient in a foreign language (Lojová, 2006).

4 The current status of the researched problematic

Hradecká (2022) and Horská (2016) discussed parents' evaluations and expectations of English language teaching in kindergarten. Hradecká (2022) focused more on identifying parents' interest in English language learning in the preschool years and the factors that influence this interest. While Horská (2016) focuses on parents' evaluations and expectations towards English language teaching in kindergarten, including their views on the benefits and concerns associated with this teaching.

In her research, Hradecká (2022) found that there is a rapid increase in parents' interest in English language learning as early as the preschool age of the child. According to her, this trend is probably due to the progressive globalization and the need for foreign language skills, especially English, which is the most widely spoken language. Similarly, Horská (2016) stated a rather positive attitude towards early English language learning on the part of parents. Parents who are supportive of English language learning see several benefits in early learning. They see it as beneficial for future English language learning, developing a positive attitude towards a foreign language, and as an opportunity to learn about other cultures. On the contrary, parents with negative attitudes usually express concerns about possible negative influences such as the formation of incorrect habits, lack of interest of the child, or disruption of mother tongue development (Horská, 2016).

5 Educational teaching theories

This part will be devoted to the educational theories of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and Noam Chomsky.

According to Yaman (2019), they are pillars in the field of education and have each contributed fundamental theories that shape our understanding of how children at certain age categories learn language. Piaget's cognitive constructivism emphasizes stages of cognitive development, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of social interaction, and Chomsky's theory of universal grammar posits innate mechanisms of language acquisition (Yaman, 2019). In the context of teaching English to preschoolers, the integration of these theories offers insights into adapting instruction to young learners' cognitive abilities and promoting shared language acquisition experiences.

5.1 Piaget's theory

Piaget identified four major stages of children's cognitive development. He suggested that when a young child from infancy to preschool age experiences an event, they create a balance between assimilation and accommodation when processing new information. Assimilation means taking a new knowledge and integrating it into already formed mental schemes. The process of accommodating new knowledge into previously formed mental schemes involves making revisions and adjustments (Malik, 2023).

Piaget's four stages are sensorimotor stage, preoperational stage, concrete operational stage and formal operational stage. Preschool children belong to the category of preoperational stage.

5.1.1 Preoperational stage

This stage begins around the second year and lasts until approximately seven years. The children start using language at this period and also their imagination and memory grow. He also characterizes this stage by egocentric and intuitive thinking and a lack of logical thinking. In these aspects, Piaget agrees with the general characteristics of the preschool child (Zhou, Brown, 2015). The children use a language to imitate and reflect events that happened in the children's past. They are able to think and assimilate knowledge, absorb information (Scott, 2023).

Heo (2011) mentions that according to Solso (1995, cited by Heo, 2011), Piaget believed that these aspects can have a significant impact on early English learning. An example is

egocentrism, which can affect the way children interpret and respond to new language and its use in their environment (Heo, 2011).

5.2 Vygotsky's theory

Vygotsky and Piaget are often associated, as they shared many similar views in general. In addition, Vygotsky discussed how cognitive development is influenced by social factors. Language was also a tool of culture for him, which allows us to interact socially (Zhou, Brown, 2015). Vygotsky considered Piaget's theory too focused on biological factors. In his view, Piaget overlooked the influence of environment and culture on child development (Kohoutek, 2008).

He believed that knowledge is built in a social environment with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) being a key aspect (Benedetti, Freppon, 2006).

According to Doolittle (1995), The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the child's cognitive growth potential. This potential growth is bounded at the lower end by what the child can achieve on his or her own with his or her own experience and abilities, without the help of someone else. At the upper end, what they can achieve with the help of someone more experienced, more knowledgeable. It shows the importance of the teacher's role in the learning process and their approach to children (Doolittle, 1995). Working within the ZPD, according to Vygotsky, is an ideal setting for learning because it carefully builds on the children's previous experiences based on their current needs (Pinter, 2006).

5.3 Chomsky's theory

Chomsky believes that every person has innate cognitive mechanisms for understanding language that are part of their genetic makeup (Kohoutek, 2008). He says that the child is already born with specific language skills. Because children are not born with a complete knowledge of the language, they have to learn the vocabulary. However, he also claims that some grammatical characteristics of a language are created through the combination of the child's innate abilities (known as Universal Grammar) and the linguistic stimuli to which the child is exposed (Clibbens, 1993).

According to Chomsky, Universal Grammar is the common basis for all languages. He argues that this is what makes us able to learn a foreign language quickly. According to him, it is an unconscious knowledge, a special device of the human brain.

6 Motivation of children

Motivation plays a key role in the formation of positive personality development of pupils in preschool education. The effectiveness of the motivation lies in the fact that it is adapted to the specific objectives and content of the lessons and also takes into account the age specificities of the children. The system of motivational factors is constantly changing as children undergo development (Lokšová, Lokša, 1999).

Motivation is not innate but is learned. It is influenced by several factors, including the environment in which the child grows up. The family, society and the environment in which a child lives can play a key role in shaping their motivation to learn and their interest in learning (Hunter, 1999). The right motivation can be the driving force that stimulates and keeps a child interested in learning, while inappropriate motivation can hinder and create disinterest (Lokšová, Lokša, 1999).

According to Hunter (1999), it is important to remember that motivation is not in the power of the teacher to change it unilaterally, but the teacher can create a stimulating and supportive environment that can help develop positive motivation in children.

Asmali (2017) discusses the motivation of young children in learning English. According to him, motivation and attitude towards language learning is a key factor affecting success in language acquisition. Motivation is defined as a combination of the ambition to learn a language and positive attitudes towards language learning (Gardner, 1985, cited by Asmali, 2017). He argues that children's intrinsic motivation to learn a foreign language dominates (Nikolov, 1999, cited by Asmali, 2017).

6.1 Intrinsic motivation

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is a key element that expresses the innate human desire to learn and improve. Lokšová and Lokša (1999) claim that this type of motivation occurs when a child performs certain activities out of self-interest and desire without expecting external recognition or reward. This means that children engage in activities for pleasant experiences (Ryan, Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation may be driven by cognitive needs, interests, performance needs or social needs. For example, a child may be motivated to draw because it is fun and brings them joy, or to learn a new language because they want to make new friends (Lokšová, Lokša, 1999).

6.2 Extrinsic motivation

Extrinsic motivation plays a significant role in influencing children's behaviour. Extrinsic motivation often takes the form of rewards and punishments that can motivate or discourage children to engage in certain activities. For example, the promise of a reward for completing a task, such as praise from a teacher or a small gift, can motivate children to actively engage in learning activities. On the other hand, the possibility of a punishment, such as a reprimand or withdrawal of an advantage, can serve as a negative motivator to discourage children from engaging in undesirable behaviour. It is important to remember that extrinsic motivation should not completely dominate children's intrinsic motivation. Too much dependence on external rewards and punishments can reduce children's capacity for independent decision-making and initiative (Lokšová, Lokša, 1999). If a child exerts effort based on extrinsic motivation, then once the goal is reached, their effort will very quickly stop (Hunter, 1999).

6.3 Supporting the motivation of preschool children

Davies (2004) considered the ways in which an educator can promote motivation in children. One of the key elements of the environment that an educator creates is highlighting the positive aspects of pupils and encouraging their efforts. This means that the teacher actively searches for and appreciates each pupil's strengths and encourages them in their efforts. In this way, an environment is created that is not based on comparing with weaknesses, but on reinforcing the strengths of each individual (Davies, 2004). Asmali (2017) and Wu (2003) agree with her. They say that teacher support can significantly influence children's motivation to learn a new language.

Activities such as games, movement or visual support are also an important motivation for preschoolers. Activities can engage children and stimulate their interest in English (Asmali, 2017). Wu (2003) also agrees with this view and adds that teaching methods can significantly influence this intrinsic motivation.

Another important aspect is to provide equal opportunities for each pupil to express their potential. The teacher tries to ensure that every pupil has an equal opportunity to participate in lessons, to express their views and to engage in activities, regardless of their individual abilities or interests (Davies, 2004).

6.4 The problem of praise

Kyselá (2019) deals with the problem of praise. According to her, the key point is that if a child is used to frequent praise or even material rewards for every activity from a young age, they quickly become dependent on these external incentives. The child then learns to act primarily because of the expected reward, not out of intrinsic motivation. This results in a decline in genuine interest and intrinsic motivation for the activity. Kyselá (2019) therefore stresses the importance of supporting and developing the child's intrinsic motivation, which should drive his or her actions, rather than depending on external rewards.

7 Preschool education

Teaching pre-school children differs significantly from that of school-age children, mainly because most children in kindergarten can not read or write. With regard to teaching in kindergartens, Reilly and Ward (1997) report that in most countries there is no prescribed curriculum for teaching English that teachers have to follow. Not having a curriculum can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. The advantage is, for example, that the teacher has freedom in teaching. They can therefore follow the needs of the children, their interests and adapt the curriculum to the best situation. The disadvantage is that teachers do not have guidelines, so it can happen that the teacher does not really know what he or she should teach the children and how (Reilly, Ward 1997).

7.1 Principles for teaching English to preschool children

Fern (2023) mentions two basic principles for teaching English in preschool- playfulness and consistency. A playful approach means that children learn better through games, and it is important to have age-appropriate games for learners. Consistency is important because repeating the same games with children helps them remember what they have already learned, and new knowledge is effortlessly added to what the child already knows. This consistency is key to effective learning (Fern, 2023). O'Shea (2022) agrees with this view. According to him, consistency manifests itself in setting classroom rules from the beginning and repeating these rules regularly, which helps to maintain a respectful learning environment. A playful approach is key to engaging younger students and keeping their attention during class (O'Shea, 2022).

Additionally, O'Shea (2022) also mentions pacing as an important principle in teaching English to young children. Learning a language is fun for children, so it is important to maintain activity and engagement. Preschool learners have shorter attention spans, so you need to maintain the flow of the lecture. This also involves planning activities. It is important to consider the requirements of children and provide them individual tasks if they finish the main activity sooner than the other children (O'Shea, 2022).

The importance of activities is also mentioned by Hashemi and Azizinezhad (2011) who argue that activities play a key role in children's English learning. One of the important principles is to engage children in learning through various physical activities. Another key element is planning thematic blocks that provide a broader framework in which learners can

absorb the language more effectively. In this way, different activities, songs and stories can be integrated into the learning process (Hashemi, Azizinezhad, 2011).

7.2 Organisation

The organisation of English lessons depends on how many children are in the group, their age and how long the lesson is. If the lesson lasts longer than 15 minutes, we should change the activities every 5-10 minutes. This is important to keep the children's attention. If we spend too long on one activity, the children may stop enjoying it and not continue to cooperate with us (Reilly, Ward, 1997). According to Bertrand (2012), the key to success is changing activities often enough.

Each child has a different pace. It may happen that someone manages to finish an activity earlier. To avoid the child starting to disturb others, it is important to have alternate activities ready. The child who has finished the previous activity early will have fun and the other children will feel comfortable enough to carry on. At the same time, it can be helpful to have predetermined signals to change the activity. For example, a signal can be a whistle during a movement activity or a clap during a singing activity. This gives children a sense of security. They will know what to expect next. It can also teach them to establish a routine (Reilly, Ward, 1997). Bertrand (2012) also recommends starting and ending each English lesson in the same way, which also helps the children's routine. According to Scott and Ytregerg (1995), a sense of security also includes respect. It is important to respect everything our children tell us, including mistakes. Constantly correcting children is not effective and does not help to create a comfortable atmosphere and safe environment for children. During teaching English, correction is of course crucial, but this is mainly in the instructional language exercises, not in the use of language to communicate (Scott, Ytregerg. 1995). If the correction is necessary, according to Fern (2023), we should kindly correct the child and say the thing correctly, then ask them to repeat it.

7.3 Environment

The environment should be pleasant for children. This is helped by colourful walls with children's pictures, signs, posters, calendars and other decorations. We can place stuffed animals, plants or boxes with other tools on shelves. There should be signs/pictures on the boxes so that the children know what is where (Scott, Ytregerg, 1995). According to Reilly and Ward (1997), having enough space is also an advantage. During physical activities, children will not get in each other's way and everyone will have space. For activities such as singing or talking

it is good to have a rug where everyone can sit together and see each other. This can help them to work together. Children at this age are not yet used to working together, so generally the teacher leads the lessons. If the children are not cooperating as much or are noisy, it can help to change the environment and move outside to the playground, for example, if they have the opportunity. In this case, we do not have to be afraid to change the activity (Reilly, Ward, 1997).

7.4 Participation of pupils in learning

However, if the child does not want to participate in the lesson at all, we do not have to make a big issue out of it. This can happen for several reasons. The child may be hungry, tired or nervous. If this is the case, then it is best not to force them into the lesson at all (Reilly, Ward, 1997). Children's attitudes and abilities are not yet fully formed at this age, so it is important for the teacher to be as patient and open-minded as possible (Scott, Ytregerg, 1995). Usually when the individual then sees that the other children are having fun, they will eventually want to join in themselves (Reilly, Ward, 1997).

7.5 Activities

Choosing appropriate activities is an essential part of English lesson planning for preschool children. The amount of time spent on activities depends on the size of the room, how much experience the teacher has with the activity, but also how many children are in the group and how old they are (Reilly, Ward, 1997).

Preschool children generally have short attention and concentration spans and may soon stop enjoying the activity. It is therefore important to have a variety of activities ready (Scott, Ytregerg, 1995). Preschool children generally have short attention spans and may soon stop enjoying the activity. If this happens and we need to end the activity early, we can finish it the next lesson. We have several activities that can be beneficial for young learners (Reilly, Ward, 1997).

7.5.1 Rhymes and songs

Pokrivčáková (2020) mentions that for young children learning English in kindergarten, there are many of fun and interactive activities that support their learning. One of these activities is various rhymes and songs. Rhyme, two or more words with the same final sound, is an effective way to engage children in learning. For young children, nursery rhymes - short poems that are easy to remember and fun - are ideal. These rhymes are a common part of educational programmes and are available in a variety of forms, including books, video or audio recordings, providing children with a variety of resources for learning (Pokrivčáková, 2020).

Music plays an important role as a means of communication and entertainment. It is perceived as one of the most valuable activities for children of this age and is an integral part of the daily programme in kindergartens (Gardošová, Dujková, 2003). Children learn new words and phrases through songs and musical activities that are fun and interactive. Scott and Ytregerg (1995) categorized rhymes and songs as a “*listen and repeat*” activities. They argue that these activities give children a proper feel for language and promote overall language development (Scott, Ytregerg, 1995, p. 27).

Singing also promotes social interaction when children sing along with others. Some songs may include movement elements, which supports the development of motor skills. Singing helps children to remember vocabulary and the associated pronunciation of words. Their overall language development is supported, including listening, speaking and comprehension. These activities create a combination of fun and learning that is optimal for young children learning English in kindergarten (Pokrivčáková, 2020).

7.5.2 Storytelling

According to Aprillina (2021), the core of storytelling is communication. Storytelling is used as a means to establish communication and to support the development of communication skills.

Aprillina (2021) mentions three ways in which this approach can be implemented. The first way is to use images, flash cards or books as a media. This method provides visual support for the story being told and helps children to better understand the content (Aprillina, 2021). According to Gardošová and Dujková (2003), in preschool education, books are an important tool in teaching a foreign language. Even if children can not yet read, books provide them with the opportunity to explore pictures and become visually familiar with a new language (Gardošová, Dujková, 2003). Reilly and Ward (1997) suggest that instead of reading directly from a book, it is more appropriate to tell the story spontaneously and accompany it with pictures or projections, which helps children to understand and remember the story better. Given children's limited vocabulary and grammar, it is important that the story is presented in a simple and understandable way (Reilly, Ward, 1997).

The second way is to use puppets, dolls or costumes as a media. This approach adds an element of fun and interactivity to the lesson and can lead to greater child engagement. A third way is to use videos as a media. Video stories can be attractive and engaging for children and

allow them to visually follow the storyline and situations, which can enhance their understanding and memorisation of the content (Aprillina, 2021).

Pokrivčáková (2020) highlights important aspects to take into consideration. Before starting these activities, it is a good idea to focus on introducing important vocabulary through games, such as flashcards, and then repeating the vocabulary with the children. In addition, it is crucial to choose the right story or book with minimal text and plenty of pictures. Ideally, choose a story that is already familiar to children from their mother tongue so that they can better understand the content and engage with the storyline (Pokrivčáková, 2020). Reilly and Ward (1997) add that it is crucial to focus on facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures to help children understand and empathise with the story (Reilly, Ward, 1997). In order for children to get the most benefits, the right atmosphere is also important, ideally on a carpet where all the children can sit comfortably and see each other, which encourages interaction and involvement in the story (Scott, Ytregerg, 1995).

7.5.3 Games

Pokrivčáková (2020) argues that games are the most natural, effective and fun way to teach and develop children. The game should relate to the topic being discussed and be simple enough for the particular age group. It is important to explain the rules and make sure each child fully understands them before playing. To make the children enjoy the game more, we can prepare teaching aids to work with (Pokrivčáková, 2020).

To be an effective means of learning English, the game should follow several principles. Isenberg and Jalongo (1997, p. 41, cited by Azmari, 2010) mention five principles that a game for preschoolers should have. Firstly, it should be voluntary and encourage children to participate of their own choice. Secondly, it should be symbolic, allowing children to take on different roles, which helps language learning. It should be dynamic, allowing children to explore and experiment with their surroundings actively. The game should also have rules. Finally, the game should be enjoyable, giving children pleasure and motivating them to engage further. These principles are key to creating an environment that supports effective English language learning through play (Azmari, 2010).

Sochorová (2011) and Suchánková (2014) also discuss symbolic play. In preschool it is important to encourage symbolic play, which develops imagination and creativity (Sochorová, 2011). According to Suchánková (2014), symbolic play is that which meets the emotional and mental needs during the child's adaptation to his or her environment. This type of play is shown,

for example, by children treating toys as real objects. It is important for speech development and helps to improve communication. Children learn new words or phrases better through symbolic play (Suchánková, 2014).

During the game it is important to encourage and praise the children so that they feel supported and motivated. At the end of the game, all children should feel a sense of achievement, and we can reward them with small things such as stickers, which will boost their self-esteem (Pokrivčáková, 2020). When choosing games, it is important to consider that young children usually expect to win, so avoid competitive games (Reilly, Ward, 1997).

8 Summary of the theoretical part

In kindergarten, children experience a crucial phase of their development, which provides the basis for their future education.

During this period, important changes occur in their physical, mental and linguistic development. They grow, improve their coordination and learn to perceive the world around them. The theoretical insights of Piaget, Vygotsky and Chomsky help us to better understand this process and how children learn and develop.

Teaching English at an early age has its benefits but also risks. It is important to consider the child's individual needs, family and available educational resources. Properly managed teaching can open up new possibilities for children and strengthen their language skills, while overstressing them could negatively affect their emotional and personal growth. It is important to motivate children to learn, to plan and organise lessons carefully and to choose activities that support their language development.

9 Practical part

10 Research

Research can be quantitatively or qualitatively oriented. Quantitative research works with numbers, such as finding out quantity, range or frequency is ascertained (Gavora, 2000). In the practical part of my thesis I focused on qualitative research using observation and interview research methods. Qualitative research uses word form to describe. It is a concise and detailed description (Gavora, 2000). I chose this type of research to enable me to gain a rich and comprehensive understanding of English language teaching in kindergarten.

11 Setting the goal

The main aim of the research is to describe the differences in English teaching between state and alternative kindergartens, especially in terms of activities, children's involvement and motivation, and the teaching aids used. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the approaches and practices in these two types of schools.

12 Research questions

For this research I chose the following research questions:

- What activities are typical for English language learning in state and alternative kindergarten?
- What are the barriers and challenges that English teachers in kindergartens face?
- What is the difference in the English learning environment between state and alternative kindergarten?
- How do the teaching aids used in the state and alternative kindergarten differ?

13 Process

For my research I chose two kindergartens in Pardubice. One of them is a traditional state kindergarten, while the other has elements of a forest kindergarten. During the selection process I encountered complications. I had originally planned to visit more kindergartens, but due to some misunderstandings the visit to the others had to be cancelled. In the end, I decided to keep the names of these two kindergartens anonymous in order to maintain a neutral and objective position in the research.

The visit to both kindergartens was very pleasant. The teachers were very helpful and supportive. They showed interest in my research and were willing to be interviewed. They also allowed me to look into one English lesson, which was very useful for my research.

14 Research sample

In both of kindergartens, English was taught in mixed groups of children aged 3-6 years.

In the first, a state-run kindergarten, one teacher was teaching English. During my visit, I interviewed her, which provided me with valuable information about the methods of teaching English in this institution.

In the second, alternative kindergarten, three teachers were involved in English teaching. However, my interview was conducted only with the lead teacher who was in charge of directing the English teaching in this school. Through this interview, I gained important information about the approach to teaching English within the alternative school setting.

15 Methods

15.1 Observation

The first method I used was observation. I had the opportunity to look into one English lesson in both kindergartens.

Observation is one of the oldest and most widely used research methods for collecting data in educational settings (Chráska, 2007). Chráska (2007) described the characteristics of a good pedagogical observation. The main requirement is that the observation should be valid and reliable. Good validity is recognized by the fact that what is observed is really what is supposed to be observed. This means that other irrelevant information is avoided. Reliability means that the observation is not affected by errors to a greater level and we can therefore consider the observation as reliable and accurate (Chráska, 2007). By adhering to these principles, I aim to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of pedagogical processes in both state and alternative preschools.

Observations can be divided into direct and indirect (Gavora, 2000). In direct observation, the observer must be in such a place that they disturb and distract others as little as possible (Gavora, 2000). In indirect observation, we do not directly interact with the object of observation, but only work with different statements about the object we are investigating

(Chráska, 2007). Since I have personally visited the kindergartens and seen the teaching process, these are direct observations.

For observations, it is important to know in advance exactly what will be observed. When we know in advance what phenomena we are going to observe and what we are going to focus on, then we talk about structured observation (Gavora, 2000). I chose structured observation. I had an observation sheet prepared (Appendix 1) in advance where I later noted individual elements.

Before the beginning of both classes, the teachers told the children who I was and why I was with them in the English class. I did not engage further in the lesson. Therefore, both lessons proceeded as they do in every other English lesson.

As the English lessons in the two kindergartens took place in completely different environments, the environment was what I focused on first. Next, it was the choice of activities and teaching aids that I focused on individually, which I tried to describe in detail. I was also interested in the overall engagement of the children. I therefore focused on whether all children were involved in the learning. If not, I was wondering about the following solution.

15.2 Interview

This method is usually used face-to-face. With this method we can go deeper into the topic, it is not just the knowledge we capture. It also allows us to observe the respondent's reactions to the question and subsequently reformulate the question if necessary (Gavora, 2000).

It is important to create a friendly atmosphere before the interview begins. Familiarize the respondent with the issue and create a safe environment for them. This procedure is called rapport. Without this step, an unfriendly approach could result in the respondent refusing to cooperate (Gavora, 2000).

The interview can be divided into three types. It can be structured, unstructured and semi-structured. A structured interview is characterized by the fact that the interview is carried out exactly according to a prepared text. The formulation of the questions and their order are precisely given and the interviewer holds tightly to them. The advantage may be that the same conditions are provided to all respondents. The disadvantage is that the interviewer does not establish a closer contact with the respondent and the interview may appear mechanised (Chráska, 2007).

The second type is the unstructured interview. This conversation may look like normal communication between people. The third type is the semi-structured conversation. During this interview, the interviewer offers several possible alternative responses. Furthermore, the interviewer may also ask for explanations or justifications from the respondent (Chráska, 2007). I chose this type of interview in my research. This allows me to get richer and more comprehensive information. The whole interview was conducted in Czech.

I asked the following questions:

- How often do the lessons take place?
- How many children are in the group?
- What age group?
- Is English a voluntary activity or a compulsory part of the curriculum in your kindergarten?
- Where does English language teaching usually take place in your kindergarten?
- Do you stick strictly to a pre-prepared plan?
- How do you make decisions when choosing activities to teach English?
- What activities do you choose most often?
- Which ones are most successful with the children?
- Do you use teaching aids for the activities?
- Which do you prefer and which do the children prefer?
- How do you generally motivate and involve children in English language learning?
- What are the main challenges you face in teaching English in your kindergarten?
- How do you deal with them?

16 Results

16.1 Observation

The completed observation sheets are provided in the appendix (Appendix 2, 3).

State Kindergarten

Number of children: 7

Age of children: 3-6 years

Length of teaching: 60 minutes

Alternative Kindergarten

Number of children: 11

Age of children: 3-6 years

Length of teaching: 30 minutes

16.1.1 Environment

State kindergarten

In the environment of the kindergarten, where English is taught, there is a pleasant and friendly atmosphere. The children are seated together with the teacher in a circle on a soft carpet, which allows for interaction and sharing between them. This arrangement creates space for shared activities.

Since spring is coming, the classroom is decorated for spring, which creates a joyful and inspiring atmosphere. Paper flowers are placed on the windows to remind us of the arrival of spring and other design elements on the walls, including pictures and decorations. Live flowers add natural beauty and freshness to the classroom.

The classroom has a radio player that can be used to play music or sounds during various activities. There are various games on the shelves, including board games, which can provide additional fun and learning opportunities for the children. There are also books and stuffed animals that children can use for various games and reading activities.

A net with pictures made by the children themselves hangs on the wall, creating a space for them to express their creativity and artistic abilities. Overall, the classroom is very colourful, which helps to support joy and friendship between the children and creates an inspiring environment for learning and development.

Alternative kindergarten

The kindergarten lessons took place in a pleasant rural setting, where the children and three teachers sat on benches around a fireplace. The inspiration and stimulus for learning was the surrounding nature. There were trees, forests and fields with sheep that belonged to the nursery. In addition, there was a playground nearby with various play elements such as a swing, a slide and a playhouse that allowed children to develop motor skills.

Motivational messages were prominently displayed on the kindergarten building to promote a positive atmosphere and encourage children to be active. These signs encouraged the children to learn, sing and at the same time maintain a happy and friendly attitude towards each other. Such an environment provided a suitable framework for the children's learning and development in the kindergarten, combining natural beauty with support and encouragement from the teachers.

English lessons were taught primarily by one of the teachers. This teacher worked with the children using play and interactive methods to create a comfortable environment for the absorption of new language skills. The use of the outdoor environment and natural elements also promoted the children's overall development and their ability to understand and communicate in a foreign language. This approach not only enriched the children's learning experience but also helped to create a conducive atmosphere for learning and development within the kindergarten.

16.1.2 Organisation of lessons and activities

State kindergarten

The lesson started with a greeting "Hello, sit down" from the teacher who welcomed the children. Then followed the attendance. The children brought their individual work folders. These folders served as personal workspaces where the children put the worksheets they were given during class.

The teacher began the lesson by asking "How are you?" to which the children responded "I am fine" or "I am good". She then asked the children to introduce themselves and answer the question "What is your name?" with the phrase "I am...". This was followed by a review of vocabulary from previous lessons where the children sat in a circle and repeated words related to family, animals, colours and other topics.

The teacher also asked the question "How many siblings do you have?" to which the children answered "I have...". The children composed short phrases from Czech to English, such as "brown dog", "white cat" or "pink pig". Phrases were translated without the article. Vocabulary was revised and included weather, food, days of the week and more. Also, no visual stimuli were used for revision. This was followed by repeating vocabulary related to the body and singing the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes" during which the children pointed to body parts. The teacher used a mobile phone with music to accompany the singing.

After twenty minutes of repetition, it was finished and the new topic was Easter. First they were reviewed together on new vocabulary. The new words were for example ribbon, basket, egg or chocolate. The children were then divided into two groups. One group were children who were learning English for the second year and the other group were children who were learning English for the first year. After they were seated at their desks, they were given worksheet. The groups had different worksheets. The children who had English for the first year were younger, so they only had to colour the picture. The second group of older children had to follow the instructions on how to colour the picture. Each shape in the picture had to be coloured with a given colour. They also had new vocabulary written on the worksheets for possible revision with their parents. This creative activity lasted approximately 15 minutes.

Afterwards, the children returned to the carpet and sang the song "If You're Happy and You Know It" together, performing gestures according to the lyrics of the song. At the end of the lesson, the new vocabulary was reviewed and the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes" was sung again. The lesson ended with a saying goodbye "Bye, see you next time"

Alternative kindergarten

In the morning block in this kindergarten, English was integrated into the curriculum for all children. It started with the recitation of poems to identify the day of the week, the month and the season. With the setting being child-friendly, this element interactively linked learning with fun and through the poem the children learned the English names of days, months and basic concepts associated with the seasons.

The teacher then announced to the children the theme of the lesson, which was Easter. In English she said, "I brought some pictures here," and then repeated it in Czech so that everyone understood. She brought Easter-themed picture cards, which they went through together. During this activity, the children had to say in English what they saw in the picture or what colour it was.

The next part of the lesson was to look at the pictures in the book where the animals were. The teacher presented the children with words which they repeated after her. During the lesson she often asked questions: "What is it?" and "What color is it?"

This was followed by a change of activity where everyone stood in a circle next to the fireplace, and the teacher brought a ukulele. The singing of songs began and the teacher played the ukulele while the children moved to the lyrics of the song. Songs were sung such as "Hello Hello! Can You Clap Your Hands?" and "Walking Walking". The teacher asked if the children were happy today, to which the children answered yes, followed by the song "If You're Happy and You Know It".

Other songs included "Make A Circle" and a song in which the children practiced counting. The lesson then ended with a clap.

16.1.3 Children's involvement in lessons, possible challenges State kindergarten

The involvement of the children during the lesson was active and interactive. They responded to the teacher's instructions, sang songs and showed joy and laughter. They interacted with each other during drawing, shared crayons and supported each other.

However, there were situations during the lesson when some pupils showed different behaviour. One girl did not want to answer questions, which the teacher respected and waited

for her to engage on her own. After all the children had answered the question the teacher went back to the girl. She did eventually join in, her participation was welcomed and encouraged.

Another boy was unable to concentrate and distracted others. The teacher provided several opportunities for him to correct his behaviour. First, she asked him to sit on the couch next to the classroom as a punishment to calm down, but the boy did not comply. When even talking the child into doing something did not help, she sent him to sit at a table a little further away from the main group of children. When this action was found to be insufficient, the boy was sent to the couch for a moment to rest and reflect on his behaviour as a punishment after uttering a bad word. After a short break, the boy returned to the classroom and the rest of the lesson was carried out without further interruptions.

Towards the end of the lesson, when the children were tired and didn't feel like it, the teacher flexibly ended the vocabulary review and they sang a song together that the children had chosen. Despite the tiredness, the end of the lesson was pleasant. In the case of a state kindergarten, I would rate the children's involvement at eight out of ten. It is important to note that a 60 minutes lesson can be challenging for young children, which can affect their level of engagement.

Alternative kindergarten

During the activity, the children were involved in different ways. Occasionally, one of the children stood in a circle and watched in silence, but no one reacted to him in any way. Over time, however, this boy engaged in the activity on his own. Attention was also paid to mutual respect between the children, with an emphasis on not interrupting or shouting. Teachers asked children to keep quiet when someone else was saying something, which contributed to a pleasant atmosphere in the circle.

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher asked the children what they enjoyed most about English and most of them replied that they enjoyed singing the most. This response indicated that singing was appealing to the children and brought them joy and pleasure during the lesson. In the alternative kindergarten, I would rate the children's participation higher at 9 out of 10. Although there were moments when some children stood in a circle and watched in silence, these children later engaged in the activity on their own.

16.1.4 Motivation

State kindergarten

Children were often praised for their efforts and progress. This support was mainly expressed verbally through words such as 'great' or 'beautiful'. When children managed more difficult vocabulary or tasks, the teacher additionally motivated them by saying 'great, you know it', which boosted their confidence and sense of achievement.

The teacher also actively encouraged cooperation between the children and created an environment in which they respected each other. To achieve this, the teacher cautioned children to avoid distractions and quietened others when someone was talking. This ensured a positive atmosphere for learning and mutual support within the classroom.

Alternative kindergarten

Throughout the morning session it was evident that the teachers placed special emphasis on giving each child the opportunity to express themselves and give their opinion to the rest of the group. This approach is absolutely essential to promote children's self-esteem and active participation in the learning process. It was clear that teachers paid attention to each child and their individual needs, creating an environment of openness and respect.

16.2 Observations in terms of theoretical principles

Both kindergartens emphasized repetition of games and vocabulary as a means to improve memorization.

The activities were age-appropriate and the environment in both kindergartens created a pleasant atmosphere. Enough space for physical activities was provided in both the state and alternative kindergartens.

However, there were some differences in the organisation and delivery of the lessons. While in the state kindergarten some activities, such as repeating vocabulary words, took a long time, which could affect the pace of teaching, in the alternative kindergarten the activities were continuously changed and the pace of teaching was maintained. Signals for changing activities were not predetermined in both kindergartens.

Regarding the readiness of alternative activities for children who completed tasks earlier than others, it was found that in the state kindergarten such activities were not prepared, while in the alternative kindergarten this situation did not occur.

There was no change of environment in any of the kindergartens. However, in the state kindergarten there was a change in activity when children stopped paying attention, while in the alternative kindergarten this situation did not occur.

16.3 Interviews with the teachers

I conducted the interview with two female teachers. The interview in the public kindergarten took place in the teachers' room where no one else was with us at the time. In the alternative kindergarten, the interview also took place in a quiet environment, outside on a bench.

I started the interview by introducing my work. The aim was to establish a closer contact with the teachers and to relieve possible stress. After introducing the topic of this thesis, we moved on to the questions. The whole interview was recorded on the phone with prior consent. Recording the interview allowed me to concentrate on the actual flow of the interview without having to spend time writing down every detail. Subsequently, transcriptions of the interviews were made.

The two interviews lasted the same length of time, approximately 15 minutes. Both teachers were very helpful in answering all my questions. Their answers are attached in the appendix (Appendix 4,5).

Comparison of results

Both kindergartens teach English to children aged 3-6, but there are some differences. One of the differences is the number of children in the group, where in the state kindergarten there are eight children, while in the alternative kindergarten there are around eleven. This may be because there are fewer children in the state school because it is a voluntary group. Another difference is the frequency and duration of the classes, where in the state school the classes are held once a every other week for one hour, while in the alternative school they are held every day during the morning circle. The length of the lesson then affects the overall engagement of the children. 60 minutes of English in a state kindergarten is a long time for children, so it is obvious that by the end of the lesson they will be quite tired and may not be as engaged. In the alternative kindergarten, teachers devoted their attention to the children throughout the lesson, whereas in the state kindergarten, children spent some time drawing on their own. In addition, the alternative kindergarten used visual stimuli to support vocabulary acquisition, whereas this practice was not observed in the state kindergarten.

Both schools try to create an environment that encourages children to be actively involved in learning, but the environments differ. In the state school, teaching takes place indoors in a friendly and welcoming classroom environment, while in the alternative school, teaching takes place outdoors. During the interview it was found that teaching in the state kindergarten always takes place indoors whereas in the alternative kindergarten most of the time it takes place outdoors. However, these differences may not have been as crucial, as the chosen activities did not differ so much. The activities used in teaching are quite similar, but there are subtle differences, such as the use of mobile phones in the state school and the ukulele during songs in the alternative school.

In both kindergartens, the children like the songs that are often sung during English lessons. Children in both the state and alternative kindergarten sing the same or similar favourite songs such as "Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes" and "If You're Happy and You Know It".

These songs are sung repeatedly during lessons and bring joy and fun to the children. These songs keep the children engaged in their English learning through active movement and singing. Despite the different settings and organisational structure of English teaching, it is clear that the songs are very successful in the teaching of both kindergartens and contribute to the children's motivation and engagement in the classroom.

Besides the similarities in English language teaching in the state and alternative kindergartens, there are also differences. An example is the approach to situations where children do not want to participate in the lessons. In the state kindergarten, if a child does not want to participate, he or she may be sent aside as a punishment or to take a break. On the contrary, in the alternative kindergarten, children are left alone and teachers try to explain the meaning and importance of involvement in the lessons. This difference in approach shows the different strategies for dealing with similar situations in English language teaching between the state and alternative kindergarten.

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List of appendices

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Appendix n. 3: Observation, alternative kindergarten

Appendix n. 4: Interview, state kindergarten

Appendix n. 5: Interview, alternative kindergarten

Appendix n. 1:

Záznamový arch

Pozorování

Typ of kindergarten: state x alternative
Length of lesson:
Number of children:
Age group:
Date of visit:

Environment

Where did the teaching take place? a) Inside b) Outside c) Inside and outside
Were children provided with an appropriate, supportive, safe environment? Yes x No

Activities

Were the activities changed? Yes x No
How often the activities were changed: a) 5-10 minutes b) 10-20 minutes c) after 30 minutes
What activities were used: a) Movement games b) Singing songs c) Saying nursery rhymes d) Stories e) Other:

Teaching Aids

What teaching aids were used?

- a) Books, magazines
- b) Picture cards
- c) Musical instrument
- d) Interactive technology (radio player, mobile phone, interactive whiteboard...)
- e) Own creations
- f) Natural materials
- g) Toys (commonly available in the kindergarten)
- h) Other:

Motivation and children's involvement

Did any of the children not want to take part in the activity during the lesson? Yes x No

Pupil involvement in learning:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Minimally			Medium				Highly		

What strategies were used to motivate children to participate and become fully involved in the learning process?

- a) Praise, verbal encouragement
- b) Rewards
- c) Active engagement in the lesson
- d) Teacher's interest in getting to know the children individually, their interests, strengths and weaknesses
- e) Providing a supportive, safe environment
- f) Other:

Appendix n. 2:

Záznamový arch

Pozorování

Typ of kindergarten: state x alternative
Length of lesson: 60 minutes
Number of children: 7
Age group: 3-6
Date of visit: 21. 3. 2024

Environment

Where did the teaching take place? a) Inside b) Outside c) Inside and outside
Were children provided with an appropriate, supportive, safe environment? Yes x No

Activities

Were the activities changed? Yes x No
How often the activities were changed: a) 5-10 minutes b) 10-20 minutes c) after 30 minutes
What activities were used: a) Movement games b) Singing songs c) Saying nursery rhymes d) Stories e) Other: Dance

Teaching Aids

What teaching aids were used?

- a) ~~Books, magazines~~
- b) ~~Picture cards~~
- e) ~~Musical instrument~~
- d) Interactive technology (mobile phone)
- e) Own creations
- f) ~~Natural materials~~
- g) ~~Toys (commonly available in the kindergarten)~~
- h) ~~Other:~~

Motivation and children's involvement

Did any of the children not want to take part in the activity during the lesson? Yes x No

Pupil involvement in learning:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Minimally			Medium				Highly		

What strategies were used to motivate children to participate and become fully involved in the learning process?

- a) Praise, verbal encouragement
- b) ~~Rewards~~
- c) Active engagement in the lesson
- d) ~~Teacher's interest in getting to know the children individually, their interests, strengths and weaknesses~~
- e) Providing a supportive, safe environment
- f) ~~Other:~~

Appendix n. 3:

Záznamový arch

Pozorování

Typ of kindergarten: state x alternative
Length of lesson: 30 minutes
Number of children: 11
Age group: 3-6
Date of visit: 25. 3. 2024

Environment

Where did the teaching take place? a) Inside b) Outside c) Inside and outside
Were children provided with an appropriate, supportive, safe environment? Yes x No

Activities

Were the activities changed? Yes x No
How often the activities were changed: a) 5-10 minutes b) 10-20 minutes c) after 30 minutes
What activities were used: a) Movement games b) Singing songs c) Saying nursery rhymes d) Stories e) Other: Dance

Appendix n. 4:

Jak často probíhá výuka?

„Jednou za čtrnáct dní na hodinu.“

Kolik je ve skupině dětí?

„Osm dětí.“

Jaká věková kategorie?

„Od 3 do 6, je to namíchané.“

Je angličtina ve vaší školce formou dobrovolného kroužku nebo jako povinná součást výuky?

„Kroužek, ve státní školce to není povinně součástí učiva.“

Kde ve vaší mateřské škole většinou probíhá výuka anglického jazyka?

„Vevnitř, i v létě, venku to nemáme, tam by to asi nebylo reálné.“

Držíte se striktně předem připraveného plánu?

„Jo, mám připravená témata, tak aby mi to sedělo s tématem, které bereme běžně ve školce, v té třídě. Podle toho, že teďka budou Velikonoce, jaro. V zimě jsou zimní sporty, v létě máme prázdniny. To mám připravené na celý rok a podle toho si to pak připravuju ty materiály.“

Jak se rozhodujete při volbě aktivit pro výuku angličtiny?

„Podle toho, jak jsou zrovna naladěny děti. Většinou to mám ale tak, že mám vždycky deset slovíček, ty jim představím, opakujeme předchozí hodiny, pak tvořím už nějaký slovní spojení krátký, věty úplně neděláme. Pak mají vždycky omalovánku, ty co chodí vždycky první rok a pro ty, co už chodily rok předchozí, tak mám připravený pracovní list nebo nějaký úkol, aby to měly trochu jinačí. A taky mají slovíčka navíc, oproti těm novým, protože ty to jedou druhý rok už to stejný.“

Jaké aktivity volíte nejčastěji?

„Tak dále děláme ještě básničky a písničky s pohybem. Třeba Head, shoulders, knees and toes máme, a pak Happy Happy, Five little ducks. Tak tohle jsou písničky, co je baví, co opakujeme.“

Tyhle písničky děláme klidně dvakrát za tu hodinu, to je fakt baví, takže to spíš přizpůsobuju i jim.“

Které mají u dětí největší úspěch?

„Ty písničky. Takže jako ve chvíli, když už je tohle nebaví nebo neudrží pozornost, tak jdeme na ty písničky, a pak se k tomu zas třeba vrátíme. Prokládáme to právě tou omalovánkou nebo tím pracovním listem a zas se vrátíme na koberec, aby to nebylo celou dobu, že jen sedí a tlačím to do nich.“

Používáte k aktivitám výukové pomůcky?

„Máme ty pracovní listy, ty si děti dávají do vlastních desek, které si pak nosí na angličtinu.“

Které preferujete vy a které naopak děti?

„To asi takhle úplně nedokážu říct. Baví je hodně ty písničky, ke kterým si pouštíme hudbu. Nebo i ty omalovánky.“

Jak celkově motivujete a zapojujete děti do výuky anglického jazyka?

„Odměny nebo soutěže to vůbec ne. Každou hodinu si opakujeme, takže ono je to jako baví, že to co vědí, tak se předhání většinou až skoro, kdo to řekne rychleji. Tím, že to zas není úplně jejich stěžejní věc, co by měly umět třeba do školy, tak to úplně nejedeme na sílu. Je to fakt spíš takový pro zábavu, že když jim něco utkví v tý hlavě tak je to jako plus.“

Jaké jsou hlavní výzvy, se kterými se setkáváte při výuce anglického jazyka ve vaší mateřské škole.

„Děje se, že některý děti se nechtějí zapojit. Když se to stane, tak většinou už všichni, tak se právě přesuneme k těm písničkám, a pak se vrátíme k původní aktivitě.“

Jak s nimi pracujete?

„Když zlobí, do takový míry, že už to je neúnosný, tak je na chvílku dám stranou, třeba na gauč. Když nechtějí mluvit, já je nenutím, tím, že to je kroužek dobrovolný, volitelný, tak je nechci nutit. Občas je spíš takový problém, že mají třeba od rodičů naučenou jinou výslovnost nebo tak, tak to je občas trochu problém, že se se mnou dohadují, pak mi ale rodiče napíší, že jsem měla pravdu.“

Appendix n. 5:

Jak často probíhá výuka?

„Každý den v rámci ranního kruhu, časově to nemáme daný, ono to tak navazuje na ten český kruh, takže jak to vychází.“

Kolik je ve skupině dětí?

„Když je plný počet tak 12 dětí, je to dětská skupinka o 12 dětech.“

Jaká věková kategorie?

„Věkově to je smíšená skupinka, od 3 let a nejstarší má teďka 6 let, to je předškolák“

Je angličtina ve vaší školce formou dobrovolného kroužku nebo jako povinná součást výuky?

„Nemáme to jako kroužek, máme to všichni společně.“

Kde ve vaší mateřské škole většinou probíhá výuka anglického jazyka?

„Vždycky to máme venku, když prší, tak býváme pod stříškou. Ale opravdu, co se týká ty zimy, když je potom mráz, tak ta angličtina je úměrně tomu kratší.“

Držíte se striktně předem připraveného plánu?

„Vychází to určitě z těch témat, co teď probíhají. Když teď je jaro, budou Velikonoce, tak jsme to přizpůsobily tomu tématu. A jinak potom jedeme ty témata, ten základ. Snažíme se slovíčka přizpůsobit těm tématům, plus základ jako je počasí, barvičky, dny v týdnu, roční období. A teďka jsme daly to jaro, ty zvířátka, jak to tady máme aktuálně, protože se nám minulý týden tady narodila ovečka.“

Jak se rozhodujete při volbě aktivit pro výuku angličtiny?

„Vždycky to přizpůsobíme i podle počasí. Když je v zimě zima, tak se snažíme to udělat rychle, ani třeba v zimě nepracujeme s kartičkami. Třeba se jen na něco zeptáme, aby tam byl ten anglický kontakt, hodně se hýbáme.“

Jaké aktivity volíte nejčastěji?

„Jak jsem říkala, hodně se hýbáme, společně u toho zpíváme a hraju na ukulele. Taky ty kartičky.“

Které mají u dětí největší úspěch?

„Písničky mají u dětí největší úspěch. To je asi nejvíc.“

Používáte k aktivitám výukové pomůcky?

„Máme kartičky, máme ukulele... Já se snažím podle počasí samozřejmě, potom, když je zima, tak to s ukulelem moc nejde, ale je to nejlepší. Já to používám, aby se udržely ty tóny. Aby si i děti zvědomovaly, že to je v nějaké tónině. Že ta písnička je buď vyšším hlasem, nebo nižším hlasem a že to má tu melodii. To ukulele tomu krásně pomůže, podrží to. Nenasadíme jakýkoliv ton, ale vždycky to máme takhle, ať je to kterýkoliv den.“

Které preferujete vy a které naopak děti?

„Myslím, že můžu za všechny nebo za většinu říct to ukulele. I ty kartičky děti baví. Jsou tady i děti, které jsou s angličtinou napřed, tak to je pak takový hnací motor pro ostatní, když děláme ty kartičky a slovíčka.“

Jak celkově motivujete a zapojujete děti do výuky anglického jazyka?

„Zapojujeme společnými aktivitami, snažíme se dětem hodně vysvětlit, že je to společná aktivita, že je to pro nás důležité, aby se zapojily.“

Jaké jsou hlavní výzvy, se kterými se setkáváte při výuce anglického jazyka ve vaší mateřské škole.

„Stane se třeba při písničkách, že v závislosti na tom naladění, že je někdo smutnější, takže nechce zpívat, to se nám občas stane. Nebo že se děti nechťejí chytit v kroužku.“

Jak s nimi pracujete?

„Reagujeme na to aktuálně a snažíme se vysvětlit, že je to fajn se zapojit, že je to pro nás všechny důležité, že jsme skupinka a že je potřeba tohle dělat. Snažíme se ty děti vést k tomu, aby se zapojovaly, ne aby zůstaly někde stranou, nestává se, že by někdo zůstal sedět. Když tak třeba jen stojí, ale je s námi přítomný a je s námi v tom kroužku, ale pokud nezpívá, tak nezpívá, nemutíme. Je spousta dětí, který, ty malinký, ještě ty písničky neumí, takže stojí a poslouchají a třeba začnou tancovat. Takže je nemutíme samozřejmě, ale jsme rády, snažíme se je motivovat k tomu, aby se zapojovaly.“

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na výuku anglického jazyka v mateřských školách. V práci jsou prezentovány vhodné aktivity pro výuku malých dětí, jak správně motivovat nebo jak pro předškoláky naplánovat hodinu angličtiny. Byl proveden rozhovor a pozorování ve dvou mateřských školách za účelem porovnání výuky angličtiny. Ve výuce angličtiny ve státní a alternativní mateřské škole lze identifikovat jisté podobnosti i rozdíly.