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**DETERMINATION AND POSSIBILITY OF USAGE OF DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES OF  
TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR IN CZECH SCHOOLS**

**Diplomová práce**

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## Prohlášení

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

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# **Abstract**

I was concerned with the techniques how to teach grammar and what difficulties it can bring. I also focused on grammar exercises. The aim was to find out many methodologies and ways how to teach. This work was taken as an analysis of the usage of the well known approaches in elementary schools on the Czech republic. There was made also a distinction between such factors as are age or sex of a teacher and whether it influences the teaching methods.

# Introduction

The diploma work concentrates on the determination and possibility of usage of selected teaching techniques concerning grammar and specifics connected with this field of interest.

The theoretical part of this work is focused on introduction of opinions on grammar usefulness in the learning process, concrete strategies for teaching grammar, specifics of different learners, problems bound to this process and also grammar exercises, their types and possibility of practical usage.

In the first part there are considerations included about what actually grammar means and what types it involves. Another investigated themes are the differences between the declarative and procedural knowledge and how they influence the learning process and also what differences are between native speakers and foreign language speakers.

By the foreign language speakers there are specifics like their level and age considered in the second part of the theoretical part joined to explanations what teaching strategies are for the varying learners appropriate. The teaching strategies include well-known methodology approaches. One of the strategies is also to create a teaching style with the regard to most often problems necessarily present in the teaching and learning process. There are included also possibilities of correction of mistakes and errors.

The last part of the theoretical part is dedicated to types of grammar exercises. This is a rather practical theme describing actual presentation of the methodology approaches. Here common exercise types as drills, grammar games, interaction activities and written practice are introduced. There is also made a distinction between accuracy and fluency tasks.

The practical part of the work is concentrated on the teachers and learners of elementary schools in Czech Republic. There are two researches to be run. First intends to discover the actual opinions, methodology approaches and grammar exercises used by teachers and the second one is concentrated on the opinions of pupils about drill exercises which they are familiar with. The first research also intends to find whether the number of years of practice and sex of teachers influence their teaching styles and opinions. The aim is to show characteristics of the Czech school system and whether it tries to follow a wide range of methodology approaches and use also the more recent ones in practice.



# Theoretical part

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## 1. Grammar and its importance

Language that we use can be divided into levels such as text, sentence, words and sounds, claims Thornbury. It is possible to work with the language on all four of these levels. The arrangement and right usage of patterns in these levels are crucial features of recognising a well-formed language. We study such features when exploring grammar. Thornbury further says that grammar is “the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language” (Thornbury, p. 1, 1999). Grammar concentrates on identifying the patterns on the level of sentences, that is the traditional approach. It clarifies why sentences are correct. (Thornbury, 1999)

For Ur, the easy way to define the term grammar is to see it as “the way words are put together to make correct sentences” (Ur, p. 75, 1991). Grammatical features can refer to a whole sentence but also to smaller units such as phrases or even words. For example a phrase “a tall woman” not only has an unambiguous meaning but it is also grammatically correct. But if we say “a woman tall”, it is not grammatical. (Ur, 1991)

But when analysing a text, Thornbury points out separate grammatically correct phrases and sentences are not enough. One of the functions of grammar is also the meaning of whole texts. Separate sentences with no meaningful connection between them are not considered a text. That is because grammar has a meaning-making potential. It is the reason why the sentences in a text have to be coherent and have to create context. They should communicate a meaning, a message. (Thornbury, 1999)

All of the three points of view describe grammar very well because all of its features the authors name are important and should not be left out.

Language as such has its purposes. One of them is called the representational function. It reflects the reality people live in, the world they know. An example of such a sentence can be “The sun set.” The second function is interpersonal where the language intends to influence other people, to change their actions. When using such a function people say sentences like “Tickets!”. The person wants to influence the way things happen by calling for an action. (Thornbury, 1999) By this Thornbury means to clarify why grammar is used. The two functions show a wide use of grammar in everyday communication.

Further, grammar does not only show the forms of texts but it also has its function. Sentences mean something, are bound to its context and there are sometimes more ways of interpreting a sentence. One example of this is irony. The multiple meanings can lead to misunderstandings. Sentences can have their literal meaning and meanings in various contexts. A receiver of a message has to understand grammar, meaning of words and also to the intention of the speaker. (Thornbury, 1999) Thus learning of languages does not only require forming sentences but also thorough understanding of the typical ways people of a target language communicate.

This description accords with Stevick who writes that the theorists divide language into two parts – form and meaning. Every piece of a language has its form and its meaning. The form includes grammar. (Stevick, 1982) In more detail, Thornbury describes parts of which grammar consists. It is of grammar structures, patterns and rules which make texts functional and correct. A grammar rule is a principle applied on grammar. It can be prescriptive and descriptive. Prescriptive rules teach how a structure should work and descriptive rules describe how speakers actually speak. There can be distinguished also pedagogic rules which are tailored to students and made understandable for them. They are presented rules of form which explain them how a rule is formed and rules of use which provide them with options of how and when to use the rules. (Thornbury, 1999) Stevick considers the way of acquiring the patterns. The grammar patterns themselves are first realized when a child acquires the first language. The patterns distinguish between elements in language, compare them and look for their relationship. When we identify a pattern we actually find the relationship between two or more language elements. The elements can be sounds, words or sentences. For example we understand the connection of words “work” and “worked”. Stevick considers the patterns to be abstract compared to actual words and sentences. But the patterns are enabling us to use the language repeatedly the same time and to understand it. Thus the learners need to learn to understand and use the patterns. They can acquire them when very young or in a lesson where a teacher uses approaches which include acquisition. They can also be provided examples of many sentences containing the target patterns. It is also possible to learn a new pattern by concentrating solely on the relationships of the language elements. The learner can also learn a pattern by directly being introduced to the rule (relationship) which the pattern follows. (Stevick, 1982)

Ur explains that various languages have different grammatical structures. A structure is usually an example of a specific grammar system. Different languages vary in this very

much. For example English and German genders differ a lot. This and other grammar structures cause that learning of a language can be difficult for many people. (Ur, 1991) It is important to be aware of these differences and as a teacher to enable learners to shut their minds to their mother tongue rules when forming structures of a target language.

According to Ur, grammar is important when putting language together and correctly combining it to have the right form. But it is not the only important feature of it. Another important part is the grammatical meaning which is nowadays still sometimes neglected when teaching English. Many textbooks are focused on accuracy of the grammatical structure of the language. But it is also important to know the differences in meaning of grammatical structures to be able to construct a right tense of a verb and to understand its meaning properly. It can be complicated to teach the meaning of a grammatical structure because a native speaker who did not learn how to use English tenses often experiences difficulties explaining to a foreigner when to use them. (Ur, 1991) The last statement agrees with the argument that the grammar structures, patterns and rules differ by every language.

When one learns a language as a mother tongue or lives as a foreigner in a country that uses language he or she desires to learn, the ability to use the grammar correctly is usually acquired intuitively. Ur is convinced it is not always necessary to learn grammar systematically and to be taught the grammar structures by explaining the rules of it. (Ur, 1991)

But Ur also introduces various opinions about teaching grammar. She writes that L. Newmark claims that it is not necessary to study grammar. He also states that it is not sufficient for anyone to become a fluent speaker of a language. P. Ur explains it so that to learn a new language you do not have to learn grammar. But she does not see it as a correct statement but as a rather confusing one. She says that rather than evaluating the importance of learning grammar it is important to think about whether it helps learning a language. According to her opinion, it helps. (Ur, 1991)

Another of the included opinions is of H. G. Widdowson. He doubts the knowledge of the syntactic structure of sentences and only after knowing it, being as a learner able to deal with the real language use. He considers knowing the context and meaning of a sentence much more significant. But P. Ur claims that teaching learners grammatical structures and rules is not ineffective. Further she explains that it is beneficial to learn both ways because

when one learns a grammar rule, he or she then also has to start working with the meaning of language in a real use. (Ur, 1991)

Next attitudes are named by Thornbury. He described opinion of Joseph Webbe who saw the efficient way of learning in being exposed to real language and using it. He considered practising skills like reading, writing and speaking important. Since then the acquisition of languages is spoken about. The acquisition argument is based on presumption that without acquisition the possibility of learning to use languages fluently is very low. This belongs to Krashen's theory. (Thornbury, 1999) Krashen also claimed that the natural order of acquiring a language is important. The natural order of acquiring language skills is a system in which first language learners learn first some grammar patterns and other only later.<sup>1</sup> Some theorists consider lexical items very important. Items can be words or phrases and idioms. Also the parts of language smaller than a whole sentence but longer than one word are useful. This lexical approach sees the vocabulary of learners as crucial. There are learners who expect that they would be taught how to use the language and prefer active speaking. Many learners expect to obtain the knowledge of how the language works and not only experimental acquiring. The communicative approach considers important knowing how can a sentence function and sees only knowing grammar rules as insufficient. But there are many opinions which consider grammar very important. There is a sentence-machine argument which states that learners are able to remember only a certain number of knowledge. The ability to create new sentences is supported by knowing a number of patterns. Learning the patterns is called item-learning. When a learner knows many items (patterns) he or she can form many more various sentences when they have rich vocabulary. Grammar enables people to create vast amount of meanings and that is the purpose of grammar. Lexical system cannot offer so many possibilities. Language is more communicative when grammatically correct. It is important for written language. Such important feature of grammar is significant by the fine-tuning argument. Another argument is called fossilisation. Learners who acquire language in real-life situations get to a level of knowledge from where it is hard for them to improve because they lack the linguistic competence. The advance-organiser argument was made by Richard Schmidt. He noticed that there is a delay between learning a new grammar structure and actively using it. Another argument uses a discrete item. It is a part of grammar that is clearly presented to learners and becomes a topic of a lesson or an exercise. There are for example

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<sup>1</sup> Natural Order Acquisition and Error Analysis. *Applied Linguistics and TESOL* [online]. 2006 [cit. 2012-02-14]. Dostupné z: <http://appling.wordpress.com/2006/06/08/natural-order-acquisition-and-error-analysis/>

many exercises concentrated on tenses, articles or making requests. Another view, the transmission view follows the discrete item argument. There is a transfer of knowledge from teachers to learners. It emphasizes the need for rules in learning. That is why it is called the rule-of-law argument. Another argument for grammar teaching is the expectation of learners who come to the class with a belief they would be taught grammar structures. (Thornbury, 1999)

Both of the arguments, pro and contra the grammar importance, show us that grammar has at least some importance and it should not be omitted completely. (Thornbury, 1999)

## 1.1 Declarative and procedural knowledge

The aim of teaching grammar in the language lessons is to enable the learners to apply it when using the language. It is important to distinguish between knowing and the ability to apply grammar.

Learners learn the grammar rules in order to be able to use them when speaking, listening, reading or writing. But the knowledge of the rules does not guarantee that one can apply it automatically in these skills. Therefore there must be strategies to help the learners connect the varying knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

The ability to describe a rule of grammar and to know how to create a sentence or a part of a sentence containing that rule in pattern practice drills is called declarative knowledge. But to become a fluent speaker of English this kind of knowledge is not enough. It is necessary to gain also so called procedural knowledge. It means the familiarity with how to use the grammar rules anywhere. The most common goal is to enable the student to apply grammar rules in communication. For that they need procedural knowledge but the declarative knowledge can speed up the development of the procedural knowledge. But to have the procedural knowledge of something does not necessarily mean that one has also the declarative knowledge of it. Many native speakers of any language can use it correctly even when not knowing the grammar rules by the declarative knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

Usually one needs to develop the declarative knowledge more when focusing on reading for example journal articles or history books. For talking is needed the procedural

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<sup>2</sup> *The Essentials of Language Teaching* [online]. 2004 [cit. 2011-09-06]. Teaching Grammar. Dostupné z WWW: <<http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/grammar/stratgram.htm>>.

<sup>3</sup> *The Essentials of Language Teaching* [online]. 2004 [cit. 2011-09-06]. Teaching Grammar. Dostupné z WWW: <<http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/grammar/stratgram.htm>>.

knowledge. That can be utilised when living in an environment speaking the language needed to be learnt.<sup>4</sup>

## **1.2 Knowledge of the native speakers and foreign language learners**

Native speakers are in a much different situation than foreign language learners as Harmer claims. A native speaker knows how to say even complex sentences containing many difficult grammatical structures and still it is not for sure that they would be able to explain the structures to the foreign language learners properly. Linguists found out that they must know all the rules they use when expressing themselves but they know them in a completely different way than how the rules are taught through the grammar theory. For example they do not have to know what a noun phrase or verb phrase is to be able to use it. They actually know both of the phrases, they only do not know the name of these terms. They can form many sentences containing these grammar structures and their theoretical knowledge of the structures is of subconscious character. Here the distinction between declarative knowledge of a rule and procedural knowledge arises. Native speakers have subconscious procedural knowledge of the language structures. Chomsky created concepts of the competence and performance. Competence is only the knowledge of a rule and performance is related to the practical use of the rules. (Harmer, 1991)

Harmer claims that it is necessary for the foreign language learners to know grammar. He also claims that the teacher should be well trained in grammar and know which grammar structures and rules to teach differently advanced learners. It is always important to teach not only about the grammar rules but make learners able to apply them. (Harmer, 1991)

We can assume that a native speaker with no grammar education is not a good teacher of English. His or her ability to explain grammar structures is very much limited. When a learner wants to be taught by a native speaker it is beneficial to ask an educated English language teacher. What is for more when such teacher is trained in the field of specific problems and need of a learner of a certain mother tongue it only helps to the understanding to the learning process.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Essentials of Language Teaching* [online]. 2004 [cit. 2011-09-06]. Teaching Grammar. Dostupné z WWW: <<http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/grammar/stratgram.htm>>.

## 1.3 Types of grammar

Teaching grammar is not the same for all the teachers. There are styles of teaching concentrated on different features of grammar and here we find out what approaches exist. The types of grammar are sorted according to the course of study they focus on.

First two types are called prescriptive and descriptive grammar. Woods explains traditional prescriptive grammar books intend to say information about the educated status of a person. They found sets of invariable grammar rules important for the right use of language. Today, the situation has changed. The grammar books focus more on the actual usage of language. Such orientation of books is called descriptive grammar. Descriptive grammar books work with an assumption that a language is dynamic and changing. They point out language rules as they are really used, for example although it is correct to use few, fewer and fewest by plural count nouns, they teach also about the fact that many people tend to say few, less and least instead of the correct form. It is useful because the students get the information because their knowledge is very much dependent on their textbook. (Woods, 1995)

Another types of grammar are traditional and phrase-structure grammars. The most important element of these grammars is syntax. They teach syntactic features of sentences. In English, Japanese, Farsi or Arabic they also cover with the word order because it is an important feature of these languages. Very close to the traditional way of presenting grammar is the phrase-structure grammar. The basis for this type is the traditional grammar. It only shows the syntactic rules graphically in tables. (Woods, 1995)

A type of grammar introduced by Noam Chomsky is called transformational-generative grammar. (Woods, 1995) Chomsky is a significant American linguist born in Philadelphia.<sup>5</sup> His generative grammar focuses also on phonology and semantics, not only on syntax. It teaches about “surface structures” and “deep structures”. (Woods, p. 8, 1995) The deep structure of a sentence means the real meaning of a sentence. Then we have surface structures which bear the ways a meaning of a sentence in which it can be expressed. That is why deep structures are closely connected to semantics and the surface structures can be seen in phonology, it gives us exact phonological data. We use it to explain ambiguous sentences.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> SZABÓ, Zoltán Gendler. Noam Chomsky. *Chomsky.info* [online]. 2011 [cit. 2012-01-14]. Dostupné z: <http://www.chomsky.info/bios/2004----.htm>

<sup>6</sup> SARTOR, Antonella. Linguistics and Semantics: Deep structure and Surface structure. *Suite101.com* [online]. unknown [cit. 2012-01-14]. Dostupné z: <http://www.suite101.com/lesson.cfm/18612/2062/4>

There are rules which help to work with them, these rules are called transformational. (Woods, 1995) Ambiguous sentences are usually created by having two deep structures at the same time. The transformational rules are needed for changing of the deep structure to the surface structure. This can be managed for example by a manipulation with tenses.<sup>7</sup>

When one follows learning a language by a type of grammar called functional-systematic grammar he or she learns to understand the relation between syntax, semantics and pragmatics (which stands for the real usage of language). It is important not only to explain the syntactic features of a sentence but also to enable the students to understand the semantic links. But that does not mean that functional-systematic grammar would not include syntactic description at all. (Woods, 1995)

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<sup>7</sup> SARTOR, Antonella. Linguistics and Semantics: Deep structure and Surface structure. *Suite101.com* [online]. unknown [cit. 2012-01-14]. Dostupné z: <http://www.suite101.com/lesson.cfm/18612/2062/4>



## 2. Strategies for teaching grammar

Teaching of grammar is not an easy task. Ur claims a teacher of a foreign language should himself or herself know what knowledge is needed to understand to a grammar structure. The teacher should also know the differences between the foreign language and the mother tongue which can make the learning of learners more difficult. He or she should be able to give logical explanations and all the required knowledge for the right understanding of the subject matter. (Ur, 1991) Thornbury adds every teacher should be able to apply many methodological approaches because they are only fashionable in certain time periods and new methods will occur, too. So the teacher should be a flexible person able to learn new ways of teaching. Another important reason is that not all the learners are able to learn efficiently with the same method. (Thornbury, 1999) These statements presume a good teacher should have a wide knowledge and be an expert in his or her field. Although it may be a hard task for many people a teacher should provide quality lessons to learners.

Woods points out learners of a second language are often forced to behave at a lower intelligence level because they are not fluently able to express themselves. This works as a demotivating circumstance. That is why it is important to present new structures using an attractive context. (Woods, 1995) The inability to speak fluently using rich vocabulary is still present, though. Learners do not feel comfortable when not able to express an idea the way they want to and the only way to make them comfortable is to allow using their mother tongue at least occasionally. Although when using only the target language learners can feel at least quite comfortable when there is no pressure and negative atmosphere in the class.

Ur speaks about one of the significant parts of grammar teaching which is its introducing to learners. When presenting a new structure it is hard to find the balance between the accurate information and enough simplified explanation. It is often a problem when the teacher presents accurately the whole structure because it is very complicated for the learners. But when he or she simplifies it too much, the given information loses much of its accuracy. (Ur, 1991)

There is also a struggle with the time management. It is good not to overload the learners. So a grammar presentation should last only about five minutes. There should be important information included. (Ur, 1991) This statement of Ur seems reasonable although there are many teachers who tend to explain grammar longer. She does not consider the

possibility learners would not understand at first and there would be needed further explanation.

Another very important part of language learning is to have enough opportunities to practice the using of a grammar structure. Ur mentions it is a task of every teacher to provide sufficient materials and types of exercises to practice a certain grammar structure with the learners. The structure should become automatic for the learners by practicing. When this is not done sufficiently, the learners are able to complete grammar exercises and tests oriented on a grammar structure but when producing a free sentence when writing or speaking they make mistakes right in the same structure. Here we can speak about creating a “bridge” for the learners between the controlled accurate forming of a grammar structure and a fluent expression. This can be managed by doing those activities that are communicative, meaningful and require free expressing but still they practice the grammar structure. (Ur, 1991)

Thornbury also presumes teaching grammar should be quite quick and efficient. A teacher should plan presenting of grammar carefully and decide what is the most important information that he or she should give. It is caused by the fact that much more time of a lesson should be focused on language practice and communication. Also the real life of teachers does not allow them to prepare too many new materials because they teach many classes. A teacher should learn to prepare more activities that are easy for preparation and give learners more work this way than to prepare just a couple of complicated tasks. Still, the tasks should be efficient which means to work as much as possible. But to decide on this is not easy. Such a task should interest the learners, they should also be able to understand it and be able to memorise it. To raise the learners’ attention teacher needs to motivate them. A task should be also appropriate for the learners. It should follow their language level and it should also try to follow their interests, beliefs and attitudes. Every class of learners is different which makes the teacher’s preparation harder, it is often not possible to use the same tasks for different groups. Thornbury names a set of factors that influence appropriacy. He includes the age, number and level of learners, whether they are a monolingual or multilingual group, their interests, expectations and experience, accessible materials and also for what exams will they the language lessons need and whether they attend private, state school in their country or abroad. Tasks and themes not following these factors usually do not function much. (Thornbury, 1999) Explanation of grammar should have its structure and features, as Stevick claims. A language teacher is interested in English and thus can have problems with speaking

quickly giving only the needed information. The explanation given to learners should not be long and full of amusing but not relevant facts. It should rather concentrate on the form of language that the teacher needs to explain and to speak only about the patterns learners can see and understand. Learners can ask teachers questions. This may confuse the teacher. When they ask they want to get such information that they can integrate into their procedural knowledge. So when a learner asks why a certain structure works the way it does, the learner usually wants to know under what circumstances should he or she use the structure. (Stevick, 1982)

In Thornbury's opinion, the culture background is also one of the important factors. Still there are various opinions about the appropriacy of using cultural contexts for tasks that were originally not meant for such a thing. So called Communicative Language Teaching holds a learner as the centre of the teaching-learning process. Some critics of Communicative Language Teaching consider it inappropriate in regions where it is a cultural tradition that the teacher is the centre and authority of the class. (Thornbury, 1999)

There are many speculations about teaching grammar rules. Woods found that in western Europe it became obsolete in the 1970s because there was a common opinion that grammar is not enough to enable the learner to communicate, it was even considered as an obstacle for communication. This belief belonged to the communicative approach. (Woods, 1995) It is a kind of language teaching which considers real situations in everyday-life communication a significant part of lessons. The teacher expects learners to have desire to communicate their opinions or to share information important for dealing with the situation. Teaching the grammar rules is not sufficient because the learning and topics should be meaningful.<sup>8</sup> The supporters of the communicative approach even wanted to use this method when teaching mother tongues. They claimed that students taught by big help of grammar rules were losing their self-confidence when willing to express an opinion. They had problems to express themselves in a way that would have unambiguously show what they desire to communicate. These problems often occurred when discussing. A very good fact which also supported the communicative approach was that the learners from lessons of grammar were not becoming better in real-life communication than those who never had any grammar classes. When learning a second language, it is normal to be able to communicate a message properly even if making grammar mistakes. So the communicative lessons do not

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<sup>8</sup> The Communicative Approach in English as a Foreign Language Teaching. *Monografias* [online]. unknown [cit. 2012-01-18]. Dostupné z: <http://www.monografias.com/trabajos18/the-communicative-approach/the-communicative-approach.shtml>

focus on grammar, it is even considered a negative element that slowed learners down. (Woods, 1995) Communicative approach belongs to methodology approaches and there are more interesting approaches mentioned later on.

## **2.1 The age of learners**

One of the very important factors is the age of learners. Very young learners need to be exposed to the learning through acquisition more than older learners. They are not good at understanding the grammar rules, they only subconsciously pick them up. Older and adult learners are able to analyse grammar rules, to understand them. (Thornbury, 1999)

The age concerns also the motivation of the learners. Small children are motivated very much only by their curiosity. The lesson needs to be interesting and the activities should change often, though. It is caused by children's' low attention span. (Harmer, 1991) When teaching small children it is necessary to cover the real purpose of learning with interesting, playful activities. If any kind of playing is omitted by children their attention is often lost very soon. They simply do not want to do boring things. (Harmer, 1998) Another typical behaviour is their longing for teacher's approval because they respect the authority of adult people. They need to be said what behaviour is desirable and then they do so practically only to be praised and not punished. So the teachers of young children should not forget to notice and emphasize their success.

Teenagers and adolescents are much more different than small children. Harmer describes their specifics. Teachers like that there are many interesting themes adolescents can focus on and train their skills through amusing themes and activities. But this age is also the most problematic due to the discipline problems and lowering learners intrinsic motivation. They are no longer as curious as little children about everything new. They already have their own range of interest and when a teacher chooses any topic it is common that not every learner is interested in it. They do not need to be praised by the teacher as younger learners but they often wish for approval from their classmates. This can culminate into the situation when the teacher is considered to be a foe. The success can be seen as approval from the classmates for doing the most unpleasant things to the teacher and disobeying. Teachers should be open to criticism by these age groups not to get into such situation. The intelligence and ability to learn can be very high by adolescents, they should get enough stimulation to enable them to reach as high level as they can. Learning just a little of a new language can endanger their future professional life because of the wrong presumption of the teacher. But

when not speaking about the future but rather about immediate impact of slower pace learners get bored and stop listening to the teacher. This causes further demotivation. (Harmer, 1991)

For Harmer, adult learners have their own experience with being taught and they have both good and bad experiences. They have fixed attitude to what teaching should look like and thus they expect much more from the teacher's qualities than small children. Their own success or failing in the previous education causes their expectation of their own quality of learning. Those who are used to success often think that English is easy. That can be good for their positive thinking but problematic when they underestimate the demands of English learning. Adult learners tend to be nervous by the learning process, they are afraid of losing their face and also of the learning itself. They often come back to learning after a longer period and are not sure if they will be able to learn as efficiently as years ago. But their experience can be positively used. It influences the teacher's choice of themes. They are disciplined because they really want to learn the language. What is more, they can pay attention continuously much longer than children. They can understand to the new structures in a logical way and do not have to learn phrases and chunks by heart using drilling. Also adolescents have their own experience. Both adolescents and adults do not need so many games as small children. Although adults are able to concentrate without games and fun, learning can become boring even for them. Some of the adult learners sometimes need to have fun too or they lose their interest and motivation and their effort lowers along with their performance. (Harmer, 1998)

When considering the adult beginners they are mostly highly extrinsically motivated. They are said to be the less problematic group of people to teach. They learn conscientiously and they achieve the best results. Consequently, as they become intermediate learners they are motivated through their previous successful performance. But intermediate adults also lose their motivation through the fact that the language becomes more and more complicated for them and they feel successful less often. They also feel that the progress of their learning is slowing down and thus they are afraid they will not reach as high level as they need. They need to feel success also because they most often attend paid courses and when not improving fast enough they do not want to invest their money anymore and stop learning English at all. This is caused by the fact that intermediate and advanced learners must practice knowledge they already learned before and that is the reason why they are presented less often to new information. (Harmer, 1991)

## 2.2 Methodology approaches

Although it is still not sure how learning a new language actually works there were many attempts to find out the principles of it. Today there are theories that often describe first language acquisition and there are methods based on imitating of this acquisition. Recently also second language learning become important for the research. (Harmer, 1991)

There are traditional and also other methodology approaches which are known for decades but influence the teaching-learning process also today. They cover tasks, presentations and various exercises all together. (Harmer, 1998)

Since the 1970s when the communicative approach started to be influential the main approach to teaching was through the grammar rules. But today it is possible to distinguish more ways how to teach, which methods to use. (Woods, 1995)

In the first half of 20. century, the grammar-translation method was widely used. Its name is accurate because it focused on grammar rules, understanding to terms like subject, object, verb and also on translation. Learners tried to analyse the grammar rules through translation. (Woods, 1995) This method is not useless because it shows to the learner the construction of the target language in detail. This method also includes comparison of the first and target language which can be very helpful. Learners who are not fluent yet are told to be translating in their minds even when not taught by this approach. But the problem with using this method is that it is not enough to become a fluent and accurate speaker of the target language, the knowledge of the learners is simply not active. Harmer says that this method was probably used even for centuries. (Harmer, 1998)

The method when language is actively used in lessons and there is no translations and no focus on explaining grammar rules tried to make learners communicate properly. It was assumed that they themselves find and understand the grammar rules by knowing the right form of a sentence from active producing them. Such method tried to make learners speak or write or any how use a foreign language directly thus it is called the direct method. Another name for this approach is also Natural method. (Woods, 1995)

A very similar approach to the previous one is the oral approach. The main difference was in systematic way of presenting grammatical structures. There were tables for the learners dividing a sentence into systematic parts. There was also a systematic order of the lesson activities. First there was presentation where the teacher introduced a theme, then learners

practiced it, after it there were consolidation and testing and at the end the learner was able to use the subject matter which was called the free stage. (Woods, 1995)

In psychology, behaviourism attempted to explain how a human learns. It was based on responses of a person and that was also used in methodology. The responses followed a stimulus provided by the educator. When the educated person responded in a positive way he or she got positive reaction from the educator. This worked as reinforcement of the behaviour. Skinner claims that this process of stimulus, response and reinforcement (conditioning) is used when children learn their mother tongue. The result of this theory is the audio-lingual method. It uses positive and negative reinforcement as a way of creating a habit of language. (Harmer, 1991) The audio-lingual method used this technique in lessons focused on listening, repeating and free speaking. It follows that the drills were often used. The problem of this method was that it was hard to use the trained sentences in real life situations. They were very much artificial and the grammar was put out of context. (Woods, 1995) When using this method the teacher wants the learners to create a habit of forming various chunks of language. The goal is to form correct language patterns automatically. The critics saw the problem in repetition learning which did not require understanding how the structures work. But drilling itself is still popular nowadays. It offers more variability. (Harmer, 1998) This method can be very much successful. There was a success when teaching military personnel a new needed language. But one of the critics of this method claims that it is a non-sense. It was Chomsky who doubted the main thought of this method. He argued that children and adults create their own new sentences that cannot be just a result of learnt behaviour. Although there is a finite number of grammar rules that need to be taught there is an infinite number of sentences a speaker can create using the rules he or she knows. The conclusion Chomsky made is that languages are not a part of human behaviour. The theories of Chomsky were never adopted as a teaching methodology, his cognitivism remained a theory. (Harmer, 1991)

An approach which considers the tasks to be the centre of the learning process is called task-based learning. Learners are given a task and their goal is to find the needed information or to perform an action the task requires. They can for example have a task to find the timetables of trains and buses. When they complete the task they are only sometimes provided with the language explanation and it is short and concentrated only on issues that caused problems to the learners. (Harmer, 1998) This method arose thanks to the presumption that learning a language must be a deep experience rather than just learned information. The theory also says that such experience is remembered by the learner much longer than when he

or she concentrates on a new grammar rule itself. Using this method there are used no formal instructions, the language is learned through communicative tasks. When a class in Essex got task-based exercises as an experiment they performed very well and the results were satisfactory. They did not know the language structures needed for completing the tasks and yet they managed to do them. The main idea of this approach is that learners learn grammar structures subconsciously when concentrating on the content of the sentences. Thus the language learning will “take care of itself”. (Harmer, p. 35, 1991)

There are approaches which are not used very often. They arose as the result of humanistic ideas. They try to involve a whole person into the process of learning. One of these methods is Community Language Learning. A group of learners functions as a counsel. When someone wants to say something he or she says it in the mother tongue and then the one who knows how to say it he or she helps the one who wanted to say the sentence. This way learners decide what they will learn. Another methodology is based on relaxation and specific music listening. It is called suggestopedia. Learners listen to new dialogues and they tend to remember more of them thanks to the relaxation. Third approach is called the silent way. Learners are provided only with a small amount of information given by the teacher. Teacher does not assess the performance of learners. They get only information needed for performing a task. Last of the humanistic approaches I am going to investigate is called total physical response. Learners are given instructions in English and they perform practical tasks requiring movement. There is also touching included. It tries to imitate the natural way of acquiring a mother tongue when children usually need to understand an instruction given by their parent. (Harmer, 1991)

The communicative method brought a strong change in working with languages in language lessons. It demanded active, meaningful usage of languages and the real-life use of language was in the centre of focus. On the other hand, the lack of teaching grammar rules caused that learners made many mistakes when expressing themselves. (Woods, 1995) The format of such teaching turns away from the PPP (presentation, practice, production) approach. Communicative activities provide many chances for the learners to use the target language and to be exposed to the language. The aim of this approach is the ability to communicate in the target language and not only to know it as it used to be before. As a consequence of this the active knowledge became more important than the declarative knowledge. (Harmer, 1998) When the communicative approach arose the attention turned to a distinction between two main ways of adopting a language and terms “learning” and



“acquisition” became important. Acquisition is a subconscious process of learning a language without being taught grammar rules. It is a natural process of learning because the language acquisition is what children learning their mother tongue go through. They learn through listening and repeating the words, parts of sentences and whole sentences. (Harmer, 1987) The learners of the second language also at first feel what they should say that is right and they try it to be able to communicate with their classmates. The language learning is something different. It is a very conscious way of memorising knowledge and practicing language skills and competences. It is not considered communicative because of direct presenting of the grammar structures and that particularly is not a proper way of teaching very young learners. Learners who undergo teaching of grammar rules often succeed in standardized test but have problems when trying to express themselves freely and fluently.<sup>9</sup>

These introduced methodology approaches show there is a wide range of ways how to teach grammar. Although they are described separately they can be used by only one teacher who switches between them as he or she considers appropriate. There are various grammar structures that can be appropriate only for some of the approaches.

### **2.2.1 Deductive and inductive teaching**

Grammar can be taught in two directions. From direct presenting a new grammar rules to figuring a rule on our own. Woods explains that the method when teacher introduces a new rule directly and learners then practice it, is called deductive approach. Its advantage is that the learner knows how the new presented feature of grammar looks and works and can understand it in an organized way. Also it is time-effective instead of inductive method. That is caused by the common opinion that the most important part of learning is practicing. Problem-solving is usually considered unimportant. (Woods, 1995) Thornbury says this approach usually starts with the presentation of the new grammar rule and then examples and exercises follow. It can be called also rule-driven learning. Traditionally, the deductive approach is connected to Grammar-Translation. Grammar-Translation become unpopular because of using much of the mother tongue during a lesson and lack of speaking and listening. The translated sentences were not real-life-like and the chance of their practical use was very low. But there are also other ways of using the deductive method and associating it only with Grammar-Translation creates a bad image of it. But there already exists a better

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<sup>9</sup> HAYNES, Judie. Language acquisition vs. language learning. *EverythingESL.net* [online]. 1998 [cit. 2012-01-22]. Dostupné z: [http://www.everythingsl.net/in-services/language\\_acquisiti\\_vs\\_language\\_02033.php](http://www.everythingsl.net/in-services/language_acquisiti_vs_language_02033.php)

version of the Grammar-Translation method where speaking and listening are also included. The deductive approach requires a teacher educated properly in both languages, the first and the target language. It cannot be used in multilingual classes but it is possible to provide grammar explanation in the target language and omit the translation. It is useful in many cases. For example when there is not enough time for using inductive method, the deductive method is faster. It is also appropriate when teachers want to spend more time with practicing the rules. Teachers do not have to prepare the activities for discovering the rules all the time and even when accidentally asked by students to explain another rule or when they spontaneously decide to explain another rules which help understanding the key grammar rule they do not have to have prepared worksheets with discovery tasks. This way respects learners' intelligence and ability to create their mental map of grammar rules consciously. Some students expect to get explanations of grammar rules. But of course, the deductive approach has some disadvantages. It is not very much motivating to start a lesson directly with the presentation of a grammar rule and its explanation. It is very much inappropriate with small children who do not understand the principles of grammar in their first language yet. Further, the presentation is teacher-centred and does not allow concentrating on learners. Very important is that the oral explanation is not very memorable. Learners' own experience through tasks is a more memorable learning process because they can already connect new information to something. This method also leads to the impression that learning languages is only about learning vocabulary and grammar rules. (Thornbury, 1999)

Other way of presenting grammar rules is the inductive method. According to Woods's description, it starts with activities which are of the appropriate language level and learners understand how to do them but they contain a new rule which the pupils deduce themselves. They should be able to understand the grammar pattern in a sentence before being able to describe it. The main advantage of it is that this way learners get involved in the process of building their own learning strategies. Tasks created for inductive approach also motivate learners and they get used to searching new patterns in language themselves which makes them more active than when they only passively perceive presented patterns. (Woods, 1995) The principle of such learning is discovering. Thornbury explains this on an example with travelling to a foreign country. When a person travels unprepared, he or she sees people in that country rubbing their noses when meeting and after a period of time starts to repeat the same procedure. But when using the deductive method he or she is told to do so at first and starts immediately. After watching other how they do it exactly the traveller then makes the

way of doing so perfect. (Thornbury, 1999) The inductive way of learning is closer to the acquiring the first language. Methodology approaches that use this way are The Natural Approach and Direct Method. Direct method exposes the learners straight to the target language and does not use translation. Living in a foreign-language speaking society and acquiring the language intuitively also belongs to the inductive method. But here it is important to mention that though some people undergoing such process succeed very well, some do not. Even when successful when acquiring languages by the inductive method there arises lack of knowledge in various spheres of the language. The approaches trying to imitate the acquiring of the first language using the inductive technique create their methods of teaching on the presumption that when a child acquires the first language they associate the new learned stuff with the reality around them immediately. (Thornbury, 1999)

### **2.2.1.1 Grammar teaching based on the deductive approach**

Teaching grammar from rules is based on the deductive approach as Thornbury writes. It can be very useful when the explanations given by the teacher during the presentation are logical, well structured and high quality. The descriptive version of explanation of a rule given by a linguist is often not appropriate for learners of various levels and ages. Here arises the duty of teachers to adjust the explanation to their learners and create by this so called pedagogic rule. Michael Swan claims that a well formed rule explanation should be properly limited, true, clear, simple relevant and also familiar to the learners. The proper limitation lies in giving the learners boundaries of how to use and how not to use a certain rule. Rule explanation should be familiar to learners to make them understand quickly to it. It should be based on their previous knowledge and only to expand it. The familiar part should be included in the rule of form and when practicing the rule after the explanation the familiarity should help with doing so. (Thornbury, 1999)

Further, Thornbury introduces one of the typical deductive approach using method - the PPP model. Its base is grammar teaching. It predominates the language lessons. The three P mean presentation, practice and production. At first a grammar structure is presented. Then it is practised and when it was found out that it is not enough for the learner to become fluent in the target language, production part was included, too. This pattern of teaching is still used by many English textbooks. It is helpful for inexperienced young teachers who get the lesson planning under control this way quite easily. But this approach is much criticised. Critics do not like that the language is taught in small steps where the teacher fully decides of what new knowledge to provide. It should not be linear. Another problem is that by this model presumes

that accuracy is more important than fluency. This is criticised because when compared to first language acquisition accuracy is demanded much later than fluency and ability to express a thought understandably. (Thornbury, 1999)

### **2.2.1.2 Grammar teaching based on the inductive approach**

Next method Thornbury describes is the Inductive method, It begins with performing a task. Teacher wants learners to concentrate on the activity. The learner should be able to complete the task correctly and reveal a new structure. The main thing he or she should learn is when to apply the structure. As already stated it is called also discovery learning. (Thornbury, 1999) Harmer points out discovery techniques can be applied for example on listening or reading texts. The task of the learners would be to understand the text and thus find out how the language works here. The teacher can also immediately tell the learners to seek for a new structure. It could be for example finding a structure which indicates a past action (past tense). (Harmer, 1991) Thornbury mentions a piece of knowledge by Pascal. He says: "People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they themselves have discovered than those which have come into the minds of others." (Thornbury, p. 51, 1999) Harmer claims discovery techniques focus the activity on learners so the most of the work should be done by the learners. It is always good when the majority of work is done by learners when learning a language. Language learning requires practice and involvement into the learning process. An advantage of discovery techniques is that the first text learner comes across is a real-life-like correct sentence. When using deductive approach this is not guaranteed. The first contact with the language can be done through incomplete artificial pieces of sentences designed to be used only in a grammar exercise. (Harmer, 1991) Thornbury considers as important that such learning cannot exist without errors. But that is not a purely negative fact because people learn well right from their mistakes. The role of teacher here is in uncovering the right guidance and leading learners to the right forms. Still, it might happen that learners keep partly a wrong definition of the rule, it can be for example too wide or narrow. That is why there should always be further practicing and examples given by the teacher. The process of discovering the pattern makes the learner include the new pattern into his or her own system of knowledge and thinking. This requires more of the cognitive thinking and thus has greater potential to be memorised. In this way learners are not only passively given the explanations and participate on their own learning process. This way they become more self-sufficient which is a good preparation for their adult life, too. There are tasks developed for group work which gives the opportunity for communication. But there

is a danger to this method. When this method is overused learners become aware of what is their goal and start immediately searching for the new structure. They start to think that that is the key activity and not learning the meaning and use of the new structure. This method is not suited for all the patterns in languages because some of them are very difficult to be simply picked-up and have to be explained. (Thornbury, 1999) Harmer says problem-solving takes more time than a controlled presentation and it is not appropriate in every situation. There are also learners who respond to this technique always negatively and cannot succeed. (Harmer, 1991)

Thornbury is convinced that this method can be used with young children very effectively. They can get objects and pictures of realia of a country where the target language is spoken and children then concentrate on the new information they receive. It is far more interesting for them than learning the present simple tense. But they do learn it because the teacher uses it to describe the pictures and things. They can also be asked questions like “Do you think it is a man or a woman?” Children then learn to say about the people from the foreign country what they like doing and thus also what are typical habits of that country. For example: “He likes jazz.” (Thornbury, 1999)

The methodology model based on the inductive method is task-based. Its procedure is to first apply task, then teach and then again tasks. It begins with a fluency task requiring to reveal the meaning of new structures. Only after that the learners are given the explanation of how the structures work and later they practice the accuracy in other tasks. It is problematic to choose the right form of syllabus by this approach. It can be real language use themes like telling a story or asking for direction. It is complicated to choose the appropriate tasks, their right order and number. These tasks are demanding for teacher’s monitoring and they are still not very much positively accepted. Many teachers mix this approach with the PPP approach. (Thornbury, 1999)

### **2.2.2 Covert and overt grammar teaching**

It is possible to teach a language without showing the grammar structures to learners, Harmer claims. It is done through activities in which the learners are focused on the theme rather than on a particular grammar structure. In this way the learners get to work with the language very much. This method is called covert grammar teaching. There is also the opposite way of teaching called overt teaching. Here the teacher gives learners explanations about grammar structures and teaches them the grammatical rules. This seems to be an

advantage when we want all the learners to know the grammar structures. Because when using the covert teaching the teacher can only hope that all of the learners subconsciously learn the grammatical information. (Harmer, 1987)

### **2.2.2.1 Covert techniques**

First, learners obtain various exercises and they concentrate on performing the task much more than on learning a new structure. They can be exposed to the new language immediately. They later find out how the sentences work. In this way a learner can manage to acquire the new language instead of learning it consciously. This approach is more focused on the learner and his or her cognitive thinking. (Harmer, 1987)

When learners are exposed to the new language directly and focus on understanding the meaning of a sentence they often do it through reading a text or listening to it. It is called preview and it precedes the actual presentation. Also many matching exercises use the covert approach. Learners are asked to connect the appropriate parts of sentences. It is a part of problem solving. The teacher can provide a problem to learners. It can be one structure used in more sentences where the structure changes its meaning every time. The learner has to find out how the sentences work and what structure they actually use. Not only can be learners provided with sentences but also with longer texts. Then they are asked to recognise the new language. (Harmer, 1987)

## **2.3 Presentation**

The PPP approach which means presentation, practice and production was not liked by the defenders of communicative approach but still the presentation is an important part of deductive teaching as Thornbury found. It can be also used for inductive approach when the presentation follows number of preparatory exercises. That can help learners to understand better the content of the presentation. (Thornbury, 1999) Harmer states that when teachers use this approach they need to present the new grammar structure correctly and clearly. The presentation should also be efficient, it should get to learners and make them able to manipulate the structure. To make them able to personalize the new structure the presentation must give appropriate language. What learners like is that the presentation should also be interesting. When the teacher adds parts of language that interests learners he or she immediately increases their motivation. Learners' motivation is supported also when they can

actively participate already the first time they are introduced to the new structure. That means the presentation should be productive. (Harmer, 1987)

Harmer wrote there are many ways of creating a good presentation. Teacher can use a chart to make the features of a new pattern well arranged. It can be also used as an exercise and presentation at one time. The teacher can for example show a table containing information who gets how to the school and asks learners how each person gets to the school. They answer only “by car” and at the same time memorize the usage of the preposition by. The appropriate reactions can be taught through dialogues. Learners personalize new structures already during the introduction. Another method uses pictures, it presents a short situation and learners are asked to react using a new grammar rule. Harmer calls this a “mini-situation”. There are also textbooks like English in situations which provide the learners with many situations described in texts. Other texts can be used in a way where the learners have already been given the explanation of the needed grammar rule. They practice the rule with the text after the explanation. It is also possible to allow them to get help by visual aids. (Harmer, 1987)

When a teacher wants to give the all grammatical information purely during the presentation he or she can use modelling, isolation, visual demonstration and then explanation. Modelling means providing a model of the new structure. It can be repeated more times and learners should be able to hear the new structure in many sentences more times. Isolation consists of choosing the parts of sentences which contain the new structure. (Harmer, 1987)

## **2.4 Problems with teaching grammar**

This chapter tries to explore problems that occur by teaching grammar. It is important to be aware of them and to try to minimize their impact on the learning process but as they cannot be eliminated completely by all learners but also teachers they are a part of grammar teaching and learning that is worth investigated.

Learners often find many things about learning a new language difficult. It is up to the teacher to provide appropriate information and practicing. But to be able to do so the teacher must be aware of the main problems which confuse their learners as Harmer states. When speaking about English it is important to distinguish form and function of grammar structures. Form is the way in which a grammar structure is formed and functions of such a structure can

be many. Functions implicate the ways of use of a certain structure. There can arise a problem when a teacher reveals only some of the functions of a form and when they come across an unknown function, it confuses them. So it is important for the teacher not only to decide which structures to teach but also which functions of the structures to provide. Another important part of explaining grammar structures is to teach not only the meaning of it but also its use. That can be done by showing real situations to the learners, for example a video where they can see how the structure is used. Learners also need to see the structure in appropriate example sentences. They should not be only aware of how the structure is formed but also how it works in a whole sentence pattern. They should know for example where it stands in the sentence, whether it is followed by certain prepositions and so on. (Harmer, 1987)

One of the most frequent difficulties is the difference between the mother tongue of learners and the second or foreign language they learn. Here we can name many differences such as position of adjectives, different number of grammatical tenses or word order. Harmer claims that here the teachers teaching a group of learners with the same mother tongue have an advantage and can focus on helping the learners to distinguish the differences and to practice the different structures more. (Harmer, 1987) The mother tongue sometimes takes control of the learner's expression before the target language. It can happen that they apply a rule of the first language on an English sentence and create a nonsense because the languages do not have the same way of expressing a particular thought. Sometimes the first language does not use a particular rule and so the learners forget to use the rule for the other language. Another problems are false friends or distorting words similar in both languages. (Harmer, 1998)

There is one particular difficulty when teaching languages. They do not work like math does. Harmer argues that when there is a grammar rule, there are often also its exceptions which are hard for learners to grasp. For example irregular forms of past tense or irregular plurals usually makes the learning process more complicated. Teachers should predict where problems could occur and prepare for it well. The textbook they use should also be clear and help students with learning the exceptions. When there is a confusing textbook the teacher should be aware of it and adapt his or her activities prepared for the class in a way that it explains and uncovers the problem parts which the textbook contains. (Harmer, 1987)

Teaching can be problematic in many other ways. Thornbury described the problems that can be caused by the methodology approach. It is not good to teach grammar structures isolated from other aspects. A typical method of teaching this way is to come to the class and



tell the learners at the beginning of the lesson that the theme of that lesson is Past perfect and after presentation wants learners to transform sentences with other tenses to the past perfect tense. The problem is that it is not real life like, past perfect most often does not exist isolated but it is used together with other tenses. Its purpose is to avoid creating ambiguous sentences and it states which action from the sentence was first. So it is more useful for the learners to practice the tense in these circumstances in context, it itself allows the learners to see how and when the tense should be used. It is hard for them to start actively using it when they practice it separately, they can have a theoretical knowledge of how and when it should be used but it is not enough to become able to apply these rules. Another complication arises when the presentation of the new structure is too much sophisticated and tries to cover all possible functions of the structure with not enough time for practicing it. I will talk about what a presentation should cover in the next subchapter. As one of the inappropriate way of getting feedback from the learners is considered using question “Do you understand?” when speaking to the whole class. It is not enough feedback, many learners are shy to admit they are not sure. But there can be many other reasons for why such questioning is not reliable. An efficient way of teaching structures is to include texts with context and interesting content. This raises the motivation of learners. There are learners who are not interested in English language as such and it becomes crucial to include interesting activities for them to ensure they will be at least a bit willing to learn and participate. There are only very few learners who are so interested in the English language and it would be enough motivation for them to present a new isolated structure to them. Teaching grammar in context helps the learners to see the grammar items together with their meaning. The context itself should be real-life-like and provide communicative opportunities for the learners. They need to have a chance to try to really use the pattern. Further, it is useless to spend too much time on explanation of a pattern that learners already understand and to use the time of lessons more economically it is more efficient to deal longer with the structures they do not understand. The very important part of learning a language is practicing and the teacher should provide many activities that improve both accuracy and fluency. (Thornbury, 1999)

### **2.4.1 Errors and mistakes of learners**

There are many errors learners can make. It happens also to the learners of great teachers. Thornbury states the majority of teachers considers correcting the mistakes crucial. It is important not only to find the error but also to find out what kind of error it is. There can be many of them. Thornbury introduces some of them. There are errors on the level of words

– lexical errors. Learners choose a wrong synonym very often, its meaning is not usually used with the meaning they want to express. Grammar errors relate to the wrong choice of tense or word order and other grammatical structures. Sentences form longer texts and certain errors can occur also on this level. They are called discourse errors. When a learner wants to express a solution to a problem he or she creates a preceding form such as “at last” instead of “eventually”. When practicing speaking pronunciation errors often occur. There are more kinds of errors. It is very helpful to find the cause of an error. It answers the question why such error arose. Errors are very often originating in the learners’ first language. They apply rules from their own language to the target language. This is called transfer. When making an error the transfer is negative. Sometimes the transfer from the first language can be positive. Another cause of errors is overgeneralisation. A learner learns a rule and does not know many other rules and exceptions but tries to express himself freely and to form new sentences. He uses the new learned pattern on sentences that seem to have the same structure but fails because the sentence he created is usually formed differently with help of a different rule. An easy example here would be irregular verbs. Learner is taught that he can form past tense with adding –ed to the infinitive. And before taught about irregular verbs he forms words like “speaked”. The stage of overgeneralisation is natural also with the first language learners – small children. These errors belong to the developmental errors. Developmental and transfer errors can be quite easily corrected, learners do not have problems learning the right forms. There can occur random errors which are not so easy to correct. (Thornbury, 1999)

There is also another complication as Thornbury believes – mistakes. An error is an incorrect belief of a learner that a rule works a certain way. But when learners make mistakes they know the right answer and are able to correct themselves. The mistake arises due to stress or fast producing of sentences where the learner only after saying an incorrect pattern or word realizes it does not sound right. This also happens when they read their own written work. When they do not have to concentrate on creating sentences they can apply more of their knowledge on the text. The learner knows the correct version of the rules but is not successful when trying to use them. (Thornbury, 1999)

An important factor to decide is the importance of an error according to Thornbury. Although this is often decided very much subjectively there is a more objective sign. It is the extend of the error. The biggest error or more combined errors reach such extend that it is impossible to understand the speaker’s message. Then there can occur an error which makes it hard for the listener or reader to understand the message but he or she manages to do so in the

end. There are many errors which do not endanger the understandability of messages but these are assessed their gravity more or less subjectively. There are errors that bother only native speakers of certain languages. For example native speakers of languages using articles like Czech “ten banán” or German “die Banane” or Spanish “un banane” are disturbed when listening to a message saying “ta banán, der Banane, une banane”. They understand the message but the fluency of the communication is interrupted. (Thornbury, 1999)

## 2.4.2 Correction

Identifying and classifying an error or a mistake is not much controversial. But there is a dilemma whether it is right to correct the errors and mistakes and when. It is impossible not to be wrong but even so people do not like to be in such situation according to Thornbury. Some people do not like to be corrected immediately and thus interrupted. They often become nervous and forget what they wanted to say further. This affects mainly the fluency activities. But the same people say they like to be corrected and not to stay wrong also next lessons. It is a delicate problematic and teachers must think about how and when to correct. It is not a good way not to correct learners at all because that way the teacher gives the effort to improve learners language up. (Thornbury, 1999) But there are such teachers, they think that correction would create a stressful situation and want to avoid it. There are teachers who think that errors are contagious. They do not warn a group of learners not to do a particular mistake because another group did it. They believe the group would subconsciously remember the wrong version and mix it with the right one. This is also the reason why such teachers do not want use group or pair work. There are another recent opinions about errors. As Thornbury states they are considered a part of the learning process and not a detour from the right route. It is natural to go from the unknowingness to struggle with the new rule by making mistakes and only after that getting to the knowledge and the skill to apply it. People learn by making mistakes. This is the today’s trend but still it is not sure if such tolerance brings success. There occur problems with the lack of negative feedback. The learners become victims of the fossilisation and their progress slows down. Learners have system of grammar in their minds and when corrected they restructure the system. When they are only praised for applying a rule correctly they do not become aware of the moments when they actually apply something wrongly and do not restructure their system of grammar to the right form for the further use. (Thornbury, 1999)

Here comes the need for correction of the learners. There are two basic phases by the correction described by Harmer. First is showing the error to the learner. During the second one the teacher already provides correction. To correct a learner can be done in many ways. These two phases can mix or one of them can be omitted completely. (Harmer, 1991) When deciding how to respond to an error teachers have for example these options that Thornbury considered worth noting. They can immediately say “No” and provide negative feedback immediately. But the learner is not yet given clue of what was wrong. Here the teacher supposes that the learner is able to correct himself. Non-verbal communication is enough here, too. It is enough to shake the head for example. The teacher can also repeat the sentence after the learner to show him there is something wrong but gives him also the opportunity to hear and process the error one more time. When it comes to the situation when the learner still does not know what was wrong it is a good choice to ask the rest of the class first and to make them practice the rule, too. When a teacher thinks a learner made an error or does not want to lose time waiting for the learner to correct himself, he or she can say the right form immediately. Another way to correct a learner is to tell him what grammar rule was wrong or not used completely and let the learner apply it then. When the learner is able to correct himself, he most probably made a mistake. When he does not know after such correction, he made an error and does not know how the rule functions. Next possibility of immediate correction is not to tell the right form but to give a clue by showing the place where the mistake was made to the learner. It can be done by an unfinished sentence “He has ...?” A very real-life-like correction is a clarification request. When a learner speaks to a native speaker and the native speaker does not understand, he or she asks for clarification. Such a thing can a teacher imitate as well and tell learners “Sorry, I did not understand.” The teacher can also pretend to think the learner did not make a mistake. When the learner for example says “He has a long hair.” The teacher can ask if the man has really only one long hair on a bold head. This helps the learner understand what he said and realize it is not always incorrect but in this case it is a nonsense. The teacher does not have to ask here but to clarify the difference between using “hair” and “a hair” immediately and thus create a short grammar rule explanation. When the teacher believes that only a mistake occurred the correction can be less obvious. The teacher can say “He has long hair.” In this case the teacher hopes the learner will detect the mistake and already knows how to use articles in such sentences. (Thornbury, 1999) The methods where the teacher chooses only to show that something was said incorrectly belong to the first phase of showing incorrectness. Such methods of those I introduced are saying “No”, repeating the sentence after the learner, providing a clue, asking

him or her about the meaning of such statement or pretending that no error occurred and asking about what the learner actually said. In all of these methods the teacher hopes that the learner will understand the teacher's message. Harmer says that these methods enabling the learner to self-correct are beneficial in the process of learning. The methods of immediate correction do not provide a chance for the learner to self-correct. Though such teachers who consider this as the best option exist. When moving to the second phase of correction which is the actual correction of a student we must give notice that in above mentioned methods described by Thornbury there is the method of immediate correction. It belongs to the second phase of correction and Harmer claims it should not be chosen immediately but only after a period when a learner had chance to self-correct and still does not know the right correction. Accept the teacher's correction and explanation of a rule there are more possibilities of the correction choice. Harmer names for example those when learners can correct another learners when they know the right form. It is an exercise even for them. It also improves their self-esteem. But the choice of this method should not be too often. When overusing it there can occur a situation when a number of learners would feel stupid and what is for more they could feel worse than the rest of the class and conversely to what I stated above they could lose their self-esteem. (Harmer, 1991)

Thornbury claims there are teachers who do not like immediate correction and let the students speak. They write the errors down and describe them after a learner is done doing a activity. This is very useful when learners work in groups and the teacher wants all of the learners to hear the correction and not to provide it only for the one group. It is appropriate when learners do a communicative task where the meaning is more important than correct speech. (Thornbury, 1999)

When learners make errors in their writing task it is not economical or encouraging when the teacher corrects all the errors. Writing is often full of errors and mistakes even by the best learners as Harmer writes. They feel they must be stupid when they get back their work and it is covered with the red colour. More useful and also economical for the teacher is to know ahead what aspect should learners concentrate on and he or she then correct. It can be only grammar structures and the correction of punctuation or spelling can be done in a different task. But when there is a need for overall correction there is a popular system of symbols which also the learners obtain Harmer mentioned in his work. To make the writing task "less red" the teacher can use abbreviations like WO which would stand for the wrong word order. A recommended part of the correction is the comment at the end of the work to

enable the learner to understand for sure in a simplified way if the writing was a waste of time or not. It is crucial to ask the learners to correct their work. They need to become aware of the right version of their expressions and should not through the teacher's correction just away and get their mark. (Harmer, 1998) The correction is completely different by the speaking activities. The teacher may choose to correct immediately only serious errors or to correct everything. Correcting everything interrupts the speech or the learner mostly too much and the fluent way of speaking is lost. Harmer claims it is much better to wait to the end of the speech and after that tell the learner the wrong expressions or to provide the correction right away. (Harmer, 1998)

From what stated above follows that the choice of correction depends also on factors like the kind of task learners are doing and also with the type of their error. Further, it is beneficial to chose a correction according to the character of the learners as Thornbury claims. As already said some of them need it, some of them feel interrupted and stressed and some of them feel even stupid and their self-confidence lowers. But when a teacher needs his students to be brave enough to speak freely he or she has to tolerate such learners and be rather supportive than risk that the learner will feel humiliated and will not want to speak. (Thornbury, 1999) There exists a possibility not to correct at all. But Harmer states that is rather unwise because the aim of correction is in general to give learners an opportunity to know how the language should be formed correctly. The methods are most beneficial when doing accuracy exercises focused on grammar rules and their appropriate application. (Harmer, 1991)

### 3. Types of grammatical exercises

Grammatical exercises are used to practice new grammar structures. Not every learner is the same and not everyone is good at performing any type of a task. Therefore there is a need for a variety of exercises. Harmer says there are learners that are accurate when speaking but very slow and trying hard not to make a mistake. Other learners are very fluent but make many mistakes. An ideal learner would be a compromise of these two extremes but that is very often only the wish of the teacher. Mostly it is the task of the teacher to provide such palate of exercises that satisfies every learner. The main goal of using exercises and other practice is to automatize the new structures that the learners were presented to. They should get fluent when using the language correctly. There is also another kind of a learner. It is the one who is accurate and fluent at the same time but is able to form only a limited number of sentences. These learners restructure their mental map of the grammar structures they already know every time they are taught a new one. (Thornbury, 1999) There are more types of the exercises. We can use games, quezzes, involving the personality, interaction activities or drills. (Harmer, 1987)

#### 3.1 Drills

Drilling exercises provide a rapid way of practicing the new learned language as Harmer explains. There are many ways of doing it. A drill is not only a written gap-filling exercise, the teacher can practice the new structure for example orally by asking questions. Learners should then quickly answer. It is also possible to use lists which learners create after a given pattern. (Harmer, 1987)

Stevick describes phases of a drill exercise. The first that should a teacher do with the learners is to read the new sentences for then aloud. He suggests it is helpful when the textbooks remain closed even when the learners do not understand the whole sentence. The important part is to understand at least a part of it. As a second step is to check if all the learners understand the grammar pattern. There are more possibilities here. The teacher can explain the pattern immediately or let learners work it out for themselves and use their own words. After that the learners should listen to the new sentences once more. Then they repeat the sentences after the teacher which can be done individually, in groups or with the whole class. Learners are supposed to make pronunciation mistakes but since it is not the main theme here the teacher should correct only mistakes making the words not understandable or

mistakes connected with the grammar pattern. The repetition can be done quickly and loudly or in a calm atmosphere where the learners have more time to think about the structure. It depends on the teacher and what is more successful with different groups. After this repetition stage the phase of substitution comes. Learners are given clues and form new sentences. An example could be when a teacher says “Where can I buy a leather wallet? Light bulb.” And learner then substitutes the original sentence element this way “Where can I buy a light bulb?” As a sixth step learners produce their own sentences using the required pattern which involves their active thinking about the structure. Stevick sees positives in this step but is not convinced it is really useful. But it surely helps students to learn to form such sentence on their own and can do it how they wish to. Another phase is dedicated to creating more variations to the learned pattern to become able to use it in any situation. Learners can form sentences like “Where can a flowerpot be bought?” The students now decide about the meaning of the sentences on their own. As a last step it is useful to talk with the learners a couple of minutes using the pattern. The conversation can be about where the learners themselves buy anything possible. (Stevick, 1982)

Drills do not have to be combined in one activity, they can occur separately and in that case they can be divided into three types – repetition drill, substitution drill and transformation drill. Repetition drilling is mostly used right after the presentation of a new structure. It gives learners opportunity to concentrate on the form of the new structure and to memorise it. This kind of practising is most important on the lowest level of English learning. Using repetition learners say predictable sentences and do not have to think of the meaning of what they are saying very much. An exercise would be only in repeating the sentences after teacher or a given example. Learners can do so silently, or loudly when asked or chorally in groups or as a whole class.<sup>10</sup> Substitution drill is a technique where the teacher introduces a new structure by using a word or a sentence and learners are supposed to repeat it. Then the original word or sentence is substituted by other words which works the same or a similar way. For example teacher says sentences like “I have a new car., I do not like fish., I love coffee.” and learners then choose from forms “Have you?, Don’t you? Do you?”.<sup>11</sup> When we use transformational drill we give learners a sentence and then ask them to create a new one where they are supposed to transform the structure of the original sentence. They form a

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<sup>10</sup> Using Repetition Drills. *An ELT Notebook* [online]. unknown [cit. 2012-02-07]. Dostupné z: <http://eltnotebook.blogspot.com/2006/10/using-repetition-drills.html>

<sup>11</sup> Teaching English: Substitution Drill. *British Council* [online]. unknown [cit. 2012-02-07]. Dostupné z: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/knowledge-database/substitution-drill>



different sentence using the same grammar pattern. They change the patterns consciously and become aware of the form of the new structure.<sup>12</sup>

These three basic drills are not the only way to distinguish drills. Stevick describes very similar drills but his categories differ. He does not write about repetition drill at all. But he divides substitution drills into the simple substitution drill and substitution-correlation drill. The simple substitution drill is the same as the substitution drill described above. Stevick points out that the purpose of this drilling is to turn the performance of learners into competence. It should build a mental picture of a pattern which enables them to use it when forming an infinite number of sentences. Here a substitution table becomes an useful tool. It is a graphic image of more possibilities of using a pattern and it shows the possibilities on one place. The substitution-correlation is very similar to the simple substitution drill in its principle but the cues learner receives are whole sentences and the substitution he or she must make should be a part or more parts of the sentence. The third type Stevick depicts is the transformation drill. The centre activity here is to produce new sentences when given some cues. These can be answers containing words and structures from the question. (Stevick, 1982)

In most of the textbooks it is possible to find three types of grammar exercises: Mechanical, meaningful and communicative drills. When completing a mechanical drill exercise, there is only one correct answer and it often does not focus on the meaning of a sentence but only on one grammatical rule and its change. If the student knows how to form the rule, he or she can complete this exercise even without thinking about the meaning of the whole sentence. This type of a drill is not very useful because it is not realistic and it does not look like a real communication very much. Their goal is only practising of a particular pattern of a grammar rule. The difference between mechanical and meaningful drills is that one has to understand the whole sentence or a piece of a text to complete the exercise correctly. This is important often by answering questions. It is needed to choose the right form of the sentence but also to understand the question properly. This is a good technique to prepare pupils for the real conversation. They have to learn to understand how a grammar rule works in a sentence and they start connecting the form with the meaning. This is a limited way of practicing the language because this way pupils learn to understand and to give the only right answer.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Teaching English: Transformation exercise. *British council* [online]. unknown [cit. 2012-02-07]. Dostupné z: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/knowledge-database/transformation-exercise>

<sup>13</sup> *The Essentials of Language Teaching* [online]. 2004 [cit. 2011-09-19]. Teaching Grammar. Dostupné z WWW: <<http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/grammar/textgram.htm>>.

There is also a possibility to use communicative drills. They are used for realistic situations where the pupils have to form sentences that have the right form and are meaningful.<sup>14</sup> They learn to combine the form, meaning and the right use of a sentence. They are not required to give only one right answer, they use their own ideas, opinions or information when practicing.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.1.1 Involving the personality

Harmer says that this type of exercise is often used to make learners speak about themselves and people they know. It is a chance to express themselves more freely. They participate in a discussion and use their personal opinions. It can be also done within a drilling exercise. For example when substituting information in a sentence “I am (name) and I never (crime).” they can involve information about themselves. The opportunity for learners to speak about themselves can be used in a similar way in many other drilling exercises. The themes can touch their hobbies or favourite food. (Harmer, 1987)

## 3.2 Accuracy and fluency tasks

Another way to distinguish the grammar exercises is to consider their amount of accuracy and fluency. (Ur, 1991)

Thornbury explains these two types of exercising. Accuracy is the awareness of the correct form. Learners have their own system of grammar patterns in their minds and every time when taught a new structure they should reorganize the system, also called a mental map. This was believed to be happening straight during the teachers presentation but it was found out later that at this stage the majority of learners is not capable of doing so. They need practise to do so. It is impossible to pay attention every time we want to say an idea on every grammatical, lexical, phonological and other aspect of the sentence or the text. That is because our attention is limited. That is why we need to automatize our language expressing to be able to concentrate rather on meaning than on form. This implies that the learner needs to be given enough time. Concentrating requires time and practising how to automatize the expression needs time as well. It was found out that that the more time learners get the more accurate they become when using the target language. It is beneficial when the learners

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<sup>14</sup> *The Essentials of Language Teaching* [online]. 2004 [cit. 2011-09-06]. Teaching Grammar. Dostupné z WWW: <<http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/grammar/stratgram.htm>>.

<sup>15</sup> *The Essentials of Language Teaching* [online]. 2004 [cit. 2011-09-19]. Teaching Grammar. Dostupné z WWW: <<http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/grammar/textgram.htm>>.

themselves consider accuracy as crucial for expressing accurate, unambiguous thoughts. The teacher should give learners feedback and let them know how accurate they are so that they understand it. (Thornbury, 1999)

The opposite quality of a learner's language knowledge and capabilities is fluency. Thornbury describes fluency as a skill. It is the competence to form and transform language quickly and readily. This competence grows when learners progressively automatize the use of the new learned information. A way of providing learners with the opportunity to improve the fluency is to teach them parts of the language. These parts are called chunks. Those can be thematic units, parts of sentences or phrases. Exercises that are based on fluency practising are usually concentrated on the meaning, in other words on the content of the task, not on the grammar structure itself. Such exercises can be for example information gap tasks. Learners are motivated to perform the task by their need to find out the needed information. The learners interacting with one other also practice their speaking and listening skills. Simultaneously they find themselves in situations that they cannot predict. Such tasks are considered to be communicative and they move learners' focus from learning a structure to a real-life communication. (Thornbury, 1999)

There exists a scale between accuracy and fluency where accuracy and fluency practising are included both in some tasks, only in some tasks one or the other predominates. P. Ur talks about seven such types of grammar practicing. First type is called awareness. It is the most accurate type of the practice types mentioned here. For this type it is characteristic that learners only search for a certain grammar structure, they learn to recognize it. They can do so when given a text. When practicing the grammar structure further, learners produce the structure in a controlled way. They only form the structure and all the other aspects of the sentence are given to them. This type of practice is called the controlled drill. The third type is the meaningful drill where already more fluent expression is needed. Learners are supposed not only to produce the structure but also to make a choice. An example of this is when the learner can choose whether a person likes or does not like something. The fourth type of practice is aimed on producing learners' own sentences according to a certain pattern which is called guided or meaningful practice. When practicing the structure with the so called free sentence composition, learners are given a situation and they are ordered to use the structure when creating their own sentences or answers. But the whole sentence is already formed by the learner which shows a high level of fluency. As an even more fluent activity is considered the discourse composition when learners speak or write on their own. They are only given the

theme of a discussion or a piece of writing. Still they are supposed to use at least sometimes the required grammar structure. The last, seventh, type of grammar practice is the free discourse. It functions as the previous type but the learners are not ordered to use the structure anymore. They figure out to use it by themselves because the kind of the given activity should lead to the using of the structure. (Ur, 1991)

### **3.2.1 Restructuring the mental grammar system**

When a learner is told a new information he or she needs to put the information to the right place in the system he or she created in his mind to have fast access to the information and to understand it as Thornbury suggests. Today it is believed that the process of integrating a new grammar pattern into the existing mental map of rules is not fully completed during the teacher's presentation of the new structure but the main part of it is done during practice activities. The information gap exercise mentioned when describing fluency is a good practice in restructuring. The unpredictability helps improve the ability to quickly reorganize the mental system and also to be able to search efficiently in the system. That happens for example when a learner asks a question another learner and does not know what answer will follow. The both of them have to be prepared to answer and ask various possibilities of questions and thus to use their mental system speedily. Another types of exercises appropriate for practising restructuring are problem solving and activities demanding a great deal of activity on the side of the learner. All such activities should not leave the learner desperate because of its difficulty. It should always combine the new knowledge with the ones learners already have and are comfortable using them. (Thornbury, 1999)

## **3.3 Grammar games**

Grammar games are games concentrating on a particular grammar rule. Rinvoluceri writes that they can be created for every level from beginners to advanced learners. The appropriate time of using them can be before a presentation just to become aware of how much can learners pick up from a new structure themselves or they can be played after the presentation as an exercise. They can be also used when revising older knowledge. Games in lessons usually help distracting learners' attention from the content of learning to a fun activity. The advantages can be creating responsibility of every learner's knowledge, teacher out of focus of learners (has more time to monitor and observe) and that every learner works at once. Games help learning serious staff without a bad or bored mood. (Rinvoluceri, 1984)

Games as such help with personalising a new grammar pattern very much and they motivate the learners at the same time because they are enjoyable. There are many of them and often an individual or a group can compete and win. (Harmer, 1987)

Grammar games have more categories and sometimes it is hard to categorize an original game. Harmer names some of them. Very popular games are board games. Today there are many of them adapted for language learning. Other games are bingo or quizzes. Bingo is useful when practising numbers or pronunciation of sentences. (Harmer, 1987) Rinvoluceri further describes the games categories. Bingo can be also used for grammar teaching when the table of possibilities contains whole grammar patterns. There can be placed for example attributes like a few, many, much, some etc. One of the categories are the competitive games. Many games can be held as a competition. Even when giving an ordinary task on a handout the teacher can say that the first learner or group wins and thus we have a competition. A teacher can also create a board game where unfinished sentences should be carried by learners to get closer to the finish. An interesting game is grammar monopoly. The learners can buy the hotels by naming all the required tenses correctly. Next to the competitive games there are collaborative games. It is good to use quizzes as collaborative games because the learners do not learn only to know but also to share knowledge and help. They learn to work in teams. Another possibilities are to complete a frame of a poem containing only a couple of words or to create as many new sentences from given words as possible. A game can be created also from mistakes. Learners are supposed to spot the mistakes they hear and to write the dictated sentences correctly. Teachers can use real mistakes of the group, e.g. from homework. This activity can be done in pairs. Another games can be awareness activities. Learners can practice recognising of the times of day this way. They get a time grid with a path drawn and using a dice and figures they go through the path to the finish. At every square they need to say what they usually do at the time written in the small square. Grammar can be also taught through drama games. Learners obtain a set of words and create a story of them. They stand in a circle every one of them must be a part of the story which should give sense at the end of their creation. Another games can be crosswords containing irregular verbs and so on. (Rinvoluceri, 1984)

There are many other games and it is impossible to name all of them, here some of them were mentioned to show how easily a game can sometimes be created. Learners like games so it would be a pity not to use them at all.

### **3.4 Interaction activities and written practice**

Interaction activities are more meaningful and attractive for learners than drills. Harmer writes about them that they avoid becoming monotonous to learners. Interaction has a condition that the work of learners is not individual. They train in pairs or groups and exchange new information. When working in pairs they can obtain two versions of a map and ask each other directions seeking for information missing on their worksheet. Another exercise can be done with the whole class. Everyone gets a table with missing information and they should find it out when asking their classmates. The information they search for can be questions about the leisure time and hobbies of their classmates. (Harmer, 1987)

Tasks requiring writing are often used as homework. It is the written practice of the second or foreign language. One of the favourite tasks are gap-filling exercises. They can be also called fill-ins. Harmer claims learners have a number of possibilities what to fill into a blank in a sentence in. Another kind of exercises focuses on word order. Learners have to form correct sentences from a group of given words. Teachers also give students pictures and ask them to write a sentence about what they are doing using a certain grammar pattern. There are not only drill exercises. Learners can obtain a writing task based on free expression. They are given an example letter and then write one on their own. (Harmer, 1987)

## Practical part

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### **1. The actual usage of various grammar teaching methods and opinions about them**

In the theoretical part we determined the features of teaching grammar, its methods, specifics and problems connected with teaching grammar. We also found out ways of how to teach and not to teach grammar. The aim of the practical part is to determine how is the grammar considered and taught in Czech schools. The research contained question focused on the opinions about the importance of grammar, its position in the language teaching process and practical usage of methods described in the theoretical part. The purpose of the research is to determine how many methods are used in Czech schools and what methods of teaching and attitudes to grammar are typical for Czech teachers and learners. I concentrated only on the elementary schools.

For my research I used the research method called questionnaire. Chráska defines questionnaire as written questioning and getting written answers. It is the set of questions which are prepared and properly formulated.<sup>16</sup> I used two questionnaires. One I distributed to teachers of English and the second to a group of pupils from the seventh grade of the elementary school.

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<sup>16</sup> CHRÁSKA, Miroslav. *Metody pedagogického výzkumu: Základy kvantitativního výzkumu*. Praha: Grada Publishing, 2008. *Metody sběru dat v pedagogických výzkumech*, s. 163. ISBN 978-80-247-1369-4.

## **2. The attitude of teachers to teaching grammar and methods they use**

In the first part of my research I concentrated on teachers. There are many ways and techniques how to deal with the aspects of teaching grammar. The purpose of this part of the research is to discover in what measure the methods are used in the Czech republic. I intend to find out whether the teaching methods in this area are traditional and not much modern or the other way round. I also want to find out if the teachers use a wide range of methods or whether everyone uses only a couple of the methods or even only one of them. Another aim of the research is to determine the typical image of grammar teaching that teachers have about it. The research also shows what methods are successful in the area of the Czech Republic. It shows the character of Czech learners and to what methodology approach they positively respond to.

### **2.1 The characteristics of the respondents**

The group of respondents that I chose for my research were only Czech teachers of English. I distributed the questionnaire only to elementary schools across the whole republic. The sample contains common elementary schools but also organizations which include kindergarten, elementary school and also high school. In this case I distributed the questionnaire to the teachers teaching children from the elementary school. I also included integrated elementary schools for handicapped (for example for the children with impaired vision) or church schools and schools for the children from the orphanage.

### **2.2 Description of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire contains sixteen questions. Five of the questions are divided into several separate parts with the same theme where a respondent chooses from a scale, most of the questions' form is multiple choice. One question provides an open answer to the teachers. (appendix nr. 1)

The questionnaire wants to discover the techniques teachers use in English lessons. It has two parts. The first is for all of the respondents and consists eleven questions. The second part contains five questions. It is meant for those teachers who practice grammar in their



lessons anyhow. The majority (96, 52%) of teachers answered this part of the questionnaire. This means that the majority of Czech teachers considers necessary to practice grammar separately. Grammar practice belongs to the typical profile of Czech lessons of English.

The number of the completed questionnaires that I received is 294. I did not use 7 respondents who did not answer all of the questions. I assumed that they understood the questions because questions 12, 13, 14 and 15 were answered in a chaotic way. These questions are in principle the same where the questions 12 and 14 are determined for the teachers of the first to the fifth grade and 13 and 15 are for the sixth to the ninth grade. The question 12 is the same as 13 and 14 is the same as 15, they differ only in the fact that they are designed for teachers of the grades one to five or of the grades six to nine. I suppose if the teachers did not understand they would twice omit for example option A in questions 12 and 13. but they answered some parts in question 12 and did not answer the same parts in question 13. Those were teachers teaching all the grades of the elementary school. Still they answered the ninth question so I included them to the results of this question.

One of the research questions is focused on the sex of the teachers. The reason is to discover whether there is a difference between the kind and range of teaching methods of men and women and what the difference in the approach of male and female teachers is. The distinction between men and women teaching is commented by every research part. There were 257 women and only 30 men among the respondents but I managed to make a distinction between their techniques. The graph nr. 3 in appendices shows the percentage of the occurrence of men and women among the respondents.

Another aspect that I included into the research is the number of years of practice of the teachers and how this affects the choice of their methods. I also concentrated on the correction methods of grammar errors and typical grammar errors of Czech learners. I considered years of practice of the teachers also an important factor influencing their opinions. There were mainly teachers who teach between ten and twenty years in the research, accurately it was 35,89 per cent. Also many experienced teachers teaching more than twenty years answered the questionnaire, namely 32,4 per cent. These two groups are full of experienced teachers and thus the majority of my overall results comes from teachers who had already a lot of chances to try their methods in practice and also to receive feedback from the learners. It is even 68,29 per cent of the overall results. There were 19,17 per cent of teachers teaching from three to ten years and 12, 54 per cent of teachers who teach only up to three years. The graph number 4 in appendices shows the age groups of the respondents. It is

possible that the methods of these four groups differ according to their experience or the way they were taught on their university in the past. The professionally older teachers can keep old-fashioned approaches. Those are mainly authoritative teaching, need for silence and thus individual work, grammar-translation approach, audio-lingual approach and learning by heart. The distinction between the age groups is commented by every research part separately.

## **2.3 The description and results of the research questions**

Every part of the research includes the description, presumptions and analysis of the results. The results are compiled from all respondents and then with the aspect to their sex and years of practice.

### **2.3.1 Attitudes of teachers to grammar**

The opinion about grammar teaching (explaining and practicing) of Czech teachers was an important part of the research.

The question number four wants to reveal the reasons why teachers practice grammar and because it is practicing teachers I focused on, their opinion is very often based on their experience. This part of the research shows what methods work with groups of Czech learners. There were four basic opinions I distinguished. The options work as a scale. The option A was that it is not necessary to practice grammar separately at all. The option C was not that radical, it stated that it is useful to practice it sometimes but most of the grammar learning is done when doing different activities. The option D inclines more to grammar practicing. It states the practice should be often because other learning activities do not give enough space for absorbing grammar rules. The option B is the other side of the scale, it is the opinion that grammar is very important and must be practiced as often as possible. There was also included a last option E that none of these opinions are familiar to the respondents which gave opportunity even to undecided teachers to answer this question.

I did not expect that one of the answers would strongly predominate because there are many heterogeneous groups of learners. The opinions of teacher thus might be different according to their practice.

The research revealed that the most of Czech teachers consider grammar somehow important and a necessary part of their lessons (appendix nr. 5). Even 52,61 per cent of teachers think that grammar practice should be included in the process of language learning

and that it should be often because their learners are not able to work out grammar rules on their own. This fact adverts to the characteristics of Czech learners. The teachers think they most often cannot pick up the language themselves. There are two choices of understanding it. It can be caused by the incompetence of the teachers to provide quality discovery learning materials or by the learners' real inability to learn the language without clear explanations. This majority opinion of the respondents is not a radical one, they do not omit grammar completely but also do not think it would be the only important part of teaching English. But there were also more radical respondents. 5,57 per cent of them think that grammar is very important and they try to devote the lessons to grammar teaching and practicing as often as possible. I assume that their learners are well trained for passing many written exams but not for active usage of the language. But I would not consider it as a big problem. The elementary schools in the Czech republic are supposed to train learners mainly in the passive knowledge. It is expected to become active later on high schools. There are also teachers who try to teach completely without grammar practice. It was not many teachers, only 3,49 per cent but I expected such percentage because it is not a very common approach used in this area. It is interesting to point out that two of the respondents who I did not include in the results because of not answering some questions claimed that they do not teach grammar separately but then stated that they explain grammar usually for three minutes and filled the second part of the questionnaire. This means that they consider grammar teaching and practicing a part of other language aspects. It may be that they really managed to create some complex exercises but I doubt that because they answered even questions about grammar drills that are purely focused on grammar practicing. Thus the conclusion is that they did not understand the questions properly. I cannot omit the results of the option C. 35,54 per cent of the respondents do not incline to grammar teaching very much but they still consider it useful. They claim their learners pick up most of the grammar rules themselves. But they take some time of the lessons to practice also grammar. 2,79% of the respondents have a different attitude or they are undecided about grammar teaching.

The questionnaire was completed by men and also women. Although there were only 10,45 per cent of men it is possible to distinguish between the opinions of men and women. The difference in the case of this question is not very big but it is worth noting that 10 per cent of men claim grammar is very important but only 5,71 per cent of women also think so. Another difference is also visible by the opinion that grammar practice should take place often because learners cannot pick up the rules for themselves. Here 53,47 per cent of women

chose this option but only 43,3 per cent of men did it too. It is also interesting that 6,6 per cent of men have another opinion or are undecided but only 2,45 per cent of women share the same attitude. The results of the other two options were very similar. You can see the results in the graph number 6 in appendices.

Another differences were present by the different age groups of the respondents. The results can be seen in the graph number 7 in appendices. For this question a remarkable difference can be seen in the option B. It shows even 12,12 per cent of young teachers prefer grammar very much, but teachers teaching from three to ten years do not prefer grammar that much any longer. There was no one who would choose this option in this group. It is probable that they start seeing another aspects of languages important or needed to be focused on. 24,24 per cent of teachers teaching up to 3 years consider grammar practice only useful and to be done only at times but this same opinion is valid for almost twice more teachers teaching from three to ten years. This corresponds with the difference in the option B because there can be seen how many of the attitudes changed after the first three years of teaching. It is also worth noting that the results of teachers teaching ten to twenty and more than twenty years are almost the same. It shows that the teaching methods mostly do not change after the tenth year of teaching.

### **2.3.2 Covert and overt techniques**

Fifth of the research questions was dedicated to the practical usage of the covert and overt teaching techniques. It intended to find out which of these techniques teachers prefer. I did not expect all the respondents to understand the terms covert and overt teaching so the options were rather describing a kind of work that each technique includes. The option A stated that the teacher prefers when a pupil understands to every grammar rule and they are logically explained to him or her. The option B was the other way round. It said the teacher prefers situations when learners are exposed to tasks without knowing the needed grammar rules and they learn the application of the rule themselves by successfully completing the task.

I expected that Czech teachers use rather the overt techniques. This presumption is based on my own experience with language learning from the elementary school. I had to consider also the fact that some years passed since I was an elementary school pupil and that the techniques of grammar teaching might have changed.

But the results were not surprising in the end. Though 33,8 per cent of teachers prefers to start teaching a grammar rule by giving tasks and not a clear explanation of grammar there

are still 66,2 per cent of teachers who believe it is more useful when the learner understands a new rule immediately (appendix nr. 8). We can presume that it is more successful with the learners and the covert technique is too demanding for the majority of them. This research item revealed the preferred techniques of work but it does not mean that teachers who chose the overt technique do not use covert techniques at all. That is why it can be assumed that the reasons why the majority of teachers chooses overt techniques can be some of the following conclusions: it can be more comfortable for the teacher to explain a grammar rule immediately than to prepare discovery tasks, it saves time because learners can have difficulties with tasks they do not understand completely or the teachers do not like using covert techniques because their group of learners simply cannot work out the majority of new structures. But an important point is that the options were chosen according to what the teachers prefer. Sometimes it is also the case that it is identical with their actual teaching methods but there may be teachers who cannot teach the way they prefer for a reason so their answer could be rather their wish than the practically used methods.

There is a great difference between the usage of covert and overt techniques by men and women (appendix nr. 9). There are even 83,3 per cent of men who use the covert technique but only 27,98 per cent of women who use it. Women on the other hand vastly use the overt technique. It is 72,02 per cent of them.

Also the different age groups teach very differently. It can be stated that teachers who have more than ten years of practice do not differ very much. The biggest differences can be seen between teachers teaching first three years and those who teach between three to ten years (appendix nr. 10). The results show that 81,82 per cent of the professionally youngest teachers prefer the overt technique but only 54 per cent of the teachers teaching between three to ten years prefer this method too. In this age group of teachers there is actually the biggest amount of respondents who use the covert technique. The results clearly show a change in the teaching methods caused by the experience with pupils.

### **2.3.3 Comparison of results of questions four and five**

I assumed that teachers who chose the option D in the question number four which means their learners pick up grammar rules by themselves would choose a similar option in the question number five. It is the option A stating the teacher prefers when learners are explained grammar before picking it up subconsciously. But I found no visible connection between these two questions, the respondents answered differently every time (appendix nr.

11). When comparing the results of these two questions even 9,41 per cent of respondents who chose the option D in the question number four prefer the option B from the question number five. It means although they claim their learners cannot pick grammar rules by themselves they prefer when they are exposed to new grammar via various activities. Both of the questions are concerned with the opinions of the respondents and not with the actual methods used in lessons so the reason why they chose these two options may be they did not understand the statements formulated in the questionnaire the way that was expected. The cause can be also a situation that although learners do not pick up rules for themselves the teacher would rather prefer if they could. On the other hand, the option C of the question number four corresponds with the option B from the fifth question. Both of the options state that learners are able to pick up grammar rules by themselves and teachers also prefer it. 20,91 per cent of the teachers chose these two options. The options are similar so it is understandable why they chose options corresponding to each other. It is also interesting to compare the option B of the question four with the option B of the question five. The one from the question four states grammar practice should take place as often as possible and the one from question five states the teacher prefers when a learner picks up rules by himself or herself. These two options were chosen by 1,045 per cent of respondents. It means they prefer covert practicing. The result shows there is just a small number of respondents who consider grammar important and prefer using covert techniques.

### **2.3.4 The use of the deductive and inductive approaches**

The purpose of the next question is to discover the measure of usage of the deductive and inductive methods in Czech schools.

The seventh part of my research goes hand in hand with the previous one. Teachers were asked what method they use most often. Also in this case I included practical examples rather than using the actual terminology because many respondents might not be familiar with them. The options are formed as an order of activities which teachers use most often when introducing new grammar structures and rules. The order of activities in the option A is first giving a task focused on its content where pupils work with unknown structures but because the structures are not too complicated they manage to complete the task. The second phase is the actual presentation of the grammar rule they worked with and the third phase are further tasks and exercises focused on the new grammar rule. This option represents the inductive approach. The option B has a different order of activities. The first phase is already the

presentation of the rule and after that examples and subsequently tasks and exercises follow. There is also the option C included. It is for those teachers who do not explain grammar and teach it separately.

It is expected that the most of the teachers teach most often through the deductive method because I assumed they like when every learner knows what to do. Many teachers also feel that when teaching this way the responsibility of not knowing how to apply a grammar rule is mainly on the side of learners because they cannot say they do not know because they did not get an explanation. I also assumed Czech teachers have to teach a lot of information during a school year and it causes time pressure which does not allow them to wait long time for learners to pick a rule by themselves up.

Although there were 10 respondents in the question number four who claimed they do not teach grammar separately at all here the option C was chosen only by eight respondents. This means that another two respondents at some point explain grammar sometimes though they think it should not be necessary. The results of the question number seven which focuses on deductive and inductive approach are surprising (appendix nr. 7). It shows that vast majority of teachers (69,69%) gives tasks at first and only after that they explain a new grammar rule. It shows they manage to “lose” time with waiting for learners to complete a task and to understand new structures by themselves. I consider it good because learners get in touch with language more often and also have a chance to take responsibility for their learning and restructuring their mental map of grammar rules. There are 27,53 per cent of the respondents who use the deductive approach most often. It is very interesting to compare the results of the questions five and seven. The results of questions number five showed that teachers prefer teaching by the overt technique, namely they prefer when learners are clearly explained all the grammar structures. This majority is exactly 190 of respondents. But there is a paradox that a similar number of respondents (200) actually most often choose the option A from the question number seven. That implies that many teachers who prefer to explain grammar before letting learners pick it up use the inductive approach when they at first let learners work out the rules on their own. One of the reasons can be the content of their textbooks. If a textbook works more often with the inductive approach teachers follow it to retain the integrity of the syllabus of the book.

There is no significant difference between men and women in case of this research part but there is a difference again between the age groups (appendix nr. 13). The two groups teaching more than ten years more or less do not differ but there is a remarkable change

between the teachers who teach three to ten years and who teach only up to three years. It shows only 53,13 per cent of the new teachers tend to use the inductive method but after three years of practice the number raises to 81,81 per cent. It shows that Czech teachers have good experience with using this method.

### **2.3.5 Individual, pair and group work**

When trying to find out how many opportunities Czech pupils have to interact with one other I included a question about the organisation of the work of pupils.

The teachers were asked if the learners work most often individually, in pairs or in groups. This information serves as a clue to what methodology approach teachers prefer. For example the communicative approach or community language learning cannot exist completely without pair or group work. Other methods as total physical response, task-based teaching or oral approach work best if pair and group work included.

I presumed that the most used method would be pair work. Language learning should be also about language using and when learners not tested they should be able to communicate and to share ideas. I did not expect group work to be often and popular with the teachers because I talked to them more times and generally they are afraid of group work. Mgr. Svobodová from the elementary school in Hovorany told me that pupils are hard to control when working in groups, that every group has very much different pace of work and that there is always someone in a group who is not working at all. So when thinking only negatively about group work it is understandable teachers do not want to include it very often.

The results of the research support my thoughts about group work (appendix nr. 14). There are 10,45 per cent of teachers who choose group work most often for their lessons. Still it includes more teachers than I expected. They must be able to monitor the class very well because if not it really might be a problem that some learners will rarely be anyhow active. Pair work is the most often used method of work by 33,8 per cent of teachers. The majority which is even 55,75 per cent give preference to individual work. This can mean they like organized and quiet class the most. These respondents probably feel need to see clearly the quality of the performance of learners not influenced by the overall performance of a group or of their classmate they would work in pair with.

There is almost no difference between the usage of pair work when speaking about men or women. But there is a difference between individual and group work (appendix nr.



15). There are even 20,1 per cent of men using group work but only 10,66 per cent of women use it also most often. This difference reflects in the usage of the individual work. There are 55,74 per cent of women who use it but only 43,3 per cent of men. This says that men do not that much incline to the individual work as women. Perhaps they feel more self-confident about controlling the class discipline even when doing a group work.

It is also interesting to point out the connection between the years of practice and a chosen method. Also in this case there is a very small tendency to change the teaching methods after the tenth year of practice (appendix nr. 16). But there is an interesting change between the third year of practice and teaching up to ten years. There is 66,7 per cent of the professionally youngest teachers who prefer the individual work but only 24,24 per cent of them allow pair work- But when considering teachers with practice from three to ten years they allow pair work more, there is even 41,51 per cent of them used to this method the most. 50,94 per cent of them most often use the individual work.

### **2.3.6 Presentation of grammar**

Many of the teachers stated they explain grammar somehow. In the theoretical part there is stated that a grammar presentation should give only important and needed information and it should be quick and efficient. It would be pointless to ask the respondents whether they think they provide only important information in their presentation because it can be assumed that most of them would consider their presentations well formed. I hope every teacher puts into the presentation the information he or she considers the best and most needed. But there is another aspect of the presentation and that is its length.

The teachers were asked how many minutes their grammar presentation usually takes. They could choose between options A – three minutes, B – six minutes, C – ten minutes, D fifteen minutes, E – more minutes and F which stated they do not explain grammar.

Pupils are not supposed to become advanced learners during the years of attending the elementary schools. They should know basic information of how and when to apply grammar rules they learned. To manage this I assume one presentation for one grammar rule does not have to take more than ten minutes when speaking with an average pace.

The results showed Czech teachers use mainly quick presentations and spend much more time with different activities (appendix nr. 17). Only 7,67 per cent of the teachers explain grammar for only three minutes on average. Many of them (29,27%) manage it in six

minutes and most of them (42,16%) is able to explain new structures in ten minutes. There are also teachers who spend more time only explaining. It takes 15 minutes to 11,15 per cent and more time than 15 minutes to 8,01 per cent of the respondents. 1,74 per cent of the respondents say they do not explain grammar at all.

There are great differences between how much time a grammar presentation usually takes to men and women (appendix nr. 18). Although by both sexes the most common answer is ten minutes, there are many more women who manage to explain grammar in six minutes. It is even 32,92 per cent of them and only 13,3 per cent of men. On the other hand there is 26,6 per cent of men who need fifteen minutes for their explanation and only 9,58 per cent of women needing the same time. There can be many causes, it can be the average pace of speech but also individual needs of classes the respondents teach.

When comparing the duration of presentations of different age groups we come to the same conclusion as always. The biggest proportional change is visible between teachers teaching up to three years and between three and ten years (appendix nr. 19). There are many teachers from the first group who need ten minutes to explain new grammar, it is 48,48 per cent of them, then 27,27 per cent of them need only six minutes. But in both of these cases the teachers with practice from three to ten years are not represented here by so many of them. There are more of them who need fifteen minutes or more time to explain grammar. It is interesting to point out that here the youngest teachers have similar results as all teachers teaching more than ten years. It means between the third and tenth year of practice there is a change in the time needed.

### **2.3.7 Comparison of results of questions seven, four and eight**

According to the results of the question number seven there are eight respondents who do not explain grammar at all and according to results of the fourth question there are ten people who think it is not necessary. The results of the eighth question show that actually only five of the respondents do not explain new grammar rules. There are ten people who did not fill the part of the questionnaire about practicing grammar so I assume ten of the respondents feel they do not practice and explain grammar and consider it unnecessary but five of them sometimes explain it and two of them somehow teach and explain it though they feel it is not an independent part of their lesson. Maybe they managed to integrate grammar practice and explanation into other focused activities than teaching grammar.

### 2.3.8 Methodology approaches

One of the significant chapters of the theoretical part are methodology approaches. It describes older but also more recent methods of teaching languages.

The purpose of the question number six is to research the practical application of most of the described approaches. Respondents were asked which approach they choose for teaching grammar patterns most often. This time the question provided a chance to decide about the usage of every single method. There were six methods included and by all of them teachers could choose whether they use them often, only sometimes or not at all. I used only examples of activities typical for a particular methodology approach because again I did not expect all of the respondents to understand the methodology terms. First of the methods was the communicative approach. The method was described in the part A of the question. It involved active work of pupils, speaking, interaction of pupils, searching for information to complete tasks and an exchange of personal and real information. The part B included activities typical for the grammar-translation method. It embodied work with textbook, practice of the accuracy of knowledge of pupils and translation. Activities included in the part C were conversation among pupils, teacher speaking only in English and teaching pupils how to intuitively express their thoughts. This part covers the natural and oral approach. The next part contained tasks requiring movement and instructions in English. This part describing total physical response as a part of humanistic style of teaching was marked with D. The part E included listening and repeating sentences to remember new phrases and sentence structures. That represents the audio-lingual approach. The last investigated method was task-based teaching. This part marked as F embodied practical tasks (for example to find out when a train or bus departs, how to orient in a city).

I was not decided about how the results would look like because I did not know how many young or senior teachers would answer the questionnaire. But I expected that more experienced teachers would use old-fashioned methods and thus preferring parts B and E. Then I also expected professionally young respondents to be applying a wider range of methods. I am going to investigate the differences between teaching techniques of various age groups later in the practical part. I did not expect total physical response to be used almost at all.

But the results of the research revealed that all of the methods are used (appendix nr. 20). There were always just a couple of respondents who chose that they do not use a certain

method at all. The communicative approach is used very often. Even 55,05 per cent of the respondents use it often and 43,55 per cent at least sometimes. Only 1,39 per cent of the asked teachers do not use it at all. Also the grammar-translation is still much fashionable. 54,36 per cent use it often, 43,21 per cent use it sometimes and 2,44 per cent of the respondents do not apply this method. Activities typical for natural and oral approaches are not used that much but still they are common. 37,98 per cent apply them often, 55,05 per cent use them only sometimes and 7,32 per cent of the teachers do not use these methods. The utilization of total physical response is far more common than I expected. 43,21 per cent of the teachers apply it often, 50,52 per cent of them apply it sometimes and 6,27 per cent do not use it. Also the audio-lingual method was widely chosen. 54,7 per cent of the teachers use it often, 40,42 per cent sometimes and 4,88 per cent do not use it. Although still very much used the last described method was chosen least often. Task-based teaching apply most of the teachers (62,72%) only sometimes. Only 17,77 per cent of them apply it often and even 19,51 per cent do not use it at all. All these results imply that Czech teachers use a wide range of methodology approaches and are not used only to a couple of approaches. This is a positive conclusion because the learners can do miscellaneous activities.

There were no significant differences between men and women regarding options A, B and E (appendix nr. 21). The biggest differences occurred only by the use of natural approach, total physical response and task based teaching. When considering the natural approach the difference can be seen in the often and less often use. There is even 70 per cent of men using it only sometimes and 23,3 per cent of them use it often. This method is more popular with women, even 40,08 per cent of them choose it often and 52,48 per cent of them use it at least sometimes. A very similar case occurred by the total physical response. There are only 16,7 per cent of men using it often but there are 47,79 per cent of women using it often. 73,3 per cent of men use it only sometimes and so do 46,59 per cent of women. The task based teaching does not differ much when speaking about an occasional use. But there are even 40 per cent of men who use it often and only 3,3 per cent of them do not use it. There are not that many women using it often, only 15,95 per cent do. There are even 22,41 per cent of women not using it at all.

There are not many dissimilarities between the age groups when analysing the results of the sixth question (appendix nr. 22). There are significant differences only in the use of grammar translation. Although it is a rather old-fashioned method the most of respondents using it often are actually those professionally youngest. It is even 70,59 per cent of them.

After the third year of practice the often use lowers to an average 48,18 per cent of respondents (the average includes the groups from three to ten, from ten to twenty and more than twenty years of practice). There is small progress in using the natural approach with growth of the years of practice (appendix nr. 23). There are 32,52 per cent on average of teachers teaching up to ten years using it often but after the tenth year of practice the number grows to 40,75 per cent of teachers using it often.

### **2.3.9 Mistakes of the pupils**

A part of learning a language is making mistakes. It is not possible to be always sure and never to make a mistake when learning a new language. It is only modern approaches that tolerate these mistakes and consider them a part of a learning process.

The question number nine intends to discover what mistakes Czech learners do the most often. The research question had no options, teachers were simply supposed to describe the most often grammar mistakes their pupils make in general.

I supposed it would be those mistakes which are connected to applying Czech grammar rules into English language. That includes word order or “Czenglish” which is typical for translated Czech phrases and structures incorrectly word for word into English.

Although the mistakes are tolerated by modern teaching methods many teachers were clearly unhappy about the mistakes. They complained pupils do these mistakes no matter how many times they repeat the grammar rule. There appeared many miscellaneous answers. There were also many people who did not answer the question at all. I received answers from 71,08 per cent of all of the 294 respondents. Here are the 515 analyzed answers from 211 respondents. There were some answers which repeated many times. What surprised me was the most often answer. The most common mistake appears to be adding -s to the third person of singular of all the tenses where it belongs. There were 17,67 per cent of the answers where this mistake was mentioned. It is known that this mistake occurs a lot but because it occurs so often it is sure that it is a knowledge that is hard to learn using automatically. The second and third most frequent answers were also connected to tenses. 15,92 per cent of the answers state pupils make mistakes in conjugation. That includes also using the right past forms of irregular verbs and omitting words in more complicated tenses. Teachers often wrote that learners omit the verb to be in progressive tenses. 0,97 per cent of the answers say pupils confuse verbs to be and to have when using tenses. Some also stated that learners who do not know how to distinguish tenses always put -ing to the verb forms and hope it is right. 14,56 per cent of the

answers describe that learners do not understand when to use various tenses at all and it confuses them very much. Some answers gave evidence that learners also mix up the tenses and use different ones than they should in a situation. These results clearly indicate that the biggest problems learners have are connected with verb tenses in general. It is problematic according to 48,15 per cent of answers. Still the results represent the meaning of teachers and not of the learners themselves. The correct English word order is also problematic, 12,23 per cent show learners mix words up. Also forming negative sentences and questions is connected with the word order. Many teachers wrote the learners have problems with the word order namely in questions and negative forms. For negative forms it concerns 4,47 per cent of answers. It also includes omitting of auxiliary verbs when forming a negative. 9,13 per cent of answers show pupils have problems with question, they not only change the word order incorrectly but also omit auxiliary verbs and sometimes do not know which auxiliary verb to use. Other common mistakes are articles. 7,57 per cent indicate learners do not use them or use them where they should not. They also confuse indefinite article with the definite according to the teachers. Forming plural is also not easy for learners. They forget using the ending -s according to 3,11 per cent of answers. The same percentage of answers indicates learners use wrong prepositional phrases and do not know which prepositions to use in which sentence. 0,78 per cent show they have problems with distinguishing countable and uncountable nouns, 0,39 per cent say they do not recognize the word classes in sentences, 0,58 per cent show they omit subject, 1,94 per cent indicate they mix up pronouns, 0,19 per cent show they are not able to form an adverb and 0,19 per cent are about not respecting subject-verb agreement. There are 0,58 per cent of all answers that say pupils use “Czenglish” but they did not specify in what aspects of “Czenglish” pupils make mistakes. 0,58 per cent of answers were about the translation. Teachers claimed learners translate only word for word. There are apparently teachers who did not read the question properly and included not grammatical mistakes or did not name any mistakes at all. Even 18 (3,5 per cent of answers) respondents wrote pupils have problems with spelling. And 0,58 per cent of answers (3 respondents) were about pronunciation mistakes. 2 respondents wrote that learners do not understand grammar terms in Czech so they cannot learn them in English properly, 1 respondent wrote that pupils do not respect capital letters, 1 respondent claimed learners have problems to understand grammar rules that Czech language does not have, 1 respondent said pupils do not apply rules at all, 1 teacher said learners do only nervousness based mistakes but know the rules when asked, 1 respondent answered “Grammar mistakes.” and even 4 of them

wrote that learners make all kinds of mistakes. The results of this question are included in appendix number 24.

### **2.3.10 Correction of mistakes**

There are questions ten and eleven connected to the pupil's mistakes. They are concerned with their correction. The question number ten intended to discover how teachers correct learners. It was concentrated on the correction of a learner's speech. It did not distinguish between a fluent speech and forming prescribed sentences. The purpose was only to find out teacher's favourite way of correction in general. Correction of writing works was not included because it differs from the oral expression very much and is almost never immediate. The aim was to find out the usage of the immediate forms of correction. Teachers could choose one of the correction techniques described by Thornbury. They could select one of the options A to F. The technique in the option A was that when they hear a mistake, they say "No" to the learner or use nonverbal communication to show something is wrong. Another way to do so is to repeat the sentence after the learner. That belonged to the option B. The option C suggested the teacher corrects the mistake immediately. The option D stated the teacher drops a hint to the learner. For example he or she repeats the sentence of learner to the point where the error occurred "He has ...?" Teacher can also ask the learner how he or she meant the statement pretending he does not understand it as if a native speaker does not know sometimes. That was the option E. There was An option to pretend that a mistake did not occur. The teacher simply comments the statement of the learner as if it was right. The example included was a sentence of the learner "He has a long hair." Commented "He must look weird with only one long hair." This option is listed as F. The least option G was that the teacher does not correct speaking of learners. Correction of grammar errors is not much different from correcting the pronunciation for example. But that is only better when the results can be applied on more language issues.

I expected the options to say "No" or to correct immediately would be the most popular with teachers. I assumed senior teachers do not like learners doing mistakes so they would correct them immediately and that younger teachers say "No" simply because it is a short and easy word to say and a word one remembers immediately when something wrong.

In the end, the actual most often choice of correction was very different (appendix nr. 25). 61,67 per cent of teachers prefer giving a hint to learners. All the other options are used just by some of the teachers. It is worth noting that repeating of the mistake is most used by

14,29 per cent of teachers but other options were not picked that often. The option A chose 5,23 per cent of teachers, the option C chose 7,32 per cent of them, the option E picked 6,62 per cent, the option F use most often 4,53 per cent of teachers and not correcting at all chose only 0,35 per cent of the respondents. Not correcting at all does not provide enough feedback so it is good that 99,65 per cent of teachers are not used to it.

We cannot find many differences between the correction ways when distinguishing between men and women (appendix nr. 26). The only difference is that 53,3 per cent of men use a hint when correcting but even 63,31 per cent of women do so. On the other hand, 23,3 per cent of men use asking the learner about his or her statement's meaning but only 5,65 per cent of women do the same when correcting.

Also there are not crucial differences between the age groups when speaking about a correction choice (appendix nr. 27). But it shows even 81,48 per cent of the teachers teaching from three to ten years use a hint when correcting but only 49,45 per cent of the teachers practicing more than twenty years. It shows they use more repeating after learners, correcting them immediately or asking them about the meaning of their statement.

### **2.3.11 Criteria of a correction choice**

Also the another research item is concerned with grammar correction. This time it is rather focused on the learners and activities they do. There is a presumption that some learners feel humiliated when corrected so I intended to find out how many teachers consider this as important. The question number eleven asked whether teachers correct learners the same way or not. The option A was that they do, the option B stated the way of correction is chosen by the character of a particular learner, the option C was to be chosen by teachers correcting according to the activity type learners perform and the option D stated that it depends clearly on the situation.

I expected that the activity type would be important to many teachers because as I already stated for example speaking and writing are corrected differently.

Nevertheless, the most of the teachers claim the situation is important (appendix nr. 28). The option D was chosen by 57,49 per cent of them. That means teachers mostly do not focus on any specific activity or character of people they work with and correct how they think it is appropriate. The situation factor can also indicate that teachers correct with regard to the activity and learner's character simultaneously and thus the correction choice changes



very often and is dependent of a particular situation. There were even 28,92 per cent of teachers who focus on what type of activity they do with learners and they modify their correction method according to it. Only 7,67 per cent are concerned mostly by the character of learners not to cause any negative feelings to them. 5,92 per cent of teachers claim they correct always the same way. This approach can be marked as fair and teachers using it probably see it that way.

There are only minor differences between men and women when considering how to correct learners. The same is valid also for the age groups. The opinions do not vary by the personal differences of teachers.

### **2.3.12 Grammar practicing**

As already mentioned the whole questionnaire is divided into two parts. The second part ought to be completed only by teachers who claim they practice and explain grammar anyhow. Ten teachers do not feel they practice grammar separately so they did not fill in this part. But 96,56 per cent of teachers paid attention to this part. This part contains five questions focused on grammar exercises. The questions twelve and thirteen are practically the same. The only difference is the age range of learners from elementary schools. This is also the case of the questions fourteen and fifteen. There is a different number of teachers who teach learners from first to fifth grade and those who teach sixth to ninth grade. The number of teachers teaching younger children is 223 and older pupils are taught by 207 teachers of the overall number of the respondents. So 223 teachers responded to the questions twelve and fourteen and 207 teachers to questions thirteen and fifteen.

#### **2.3.12.1 Use of practical exercises with pupils from first to fifth grade**

The twelfth question is specified for the learners from the first to the fifth grade. It is concerned with the methodology methods applied on practical exercises. There are five ways of grammar practice included. I chose them because of the presumption that they are widely used in Czech language teaching. The respondents were supposed to choose whether they use a particular exercise often, sometimes or never. The first exercise is of the grammar-translation kind. The option A is an exercise when learners translate sentences from textbook or given by teachers. The second exercise is an oral repetition drill. The option B is the simple repetition of sentences said by the teacher. The option C is concerned with teaching grammar through texts. It involves exercises like articles in textbooks where learners work with the new

structures. The option D is focused on all written drilling exercises. The option E represents grammar games.

I expected that grammar games would be chosen often because they are recently very fashionable. I also expected the oral repetition to be often because it is the tool not only for practicing grammar structures but also pronunciation. My expectation is also based on the presumption that small children need games and do not understand grammar terms that much as older pupils do.

The results were not surprising (appendix nr. 29). 69,51 per cent of teachers use grammar games often with small children and 28,25 per cent use them at least sometimes. Only 2,24 per cent do not give to kids the opportunity to play games. Filling exercises were the second most often used method. Even 58,74 per cent of respondents use them often, 39,91 per cent use them sometimes and 1,35 per cent do not use them. 44,84 per cent of teachers use often also the oral repetition, the same percentage uses them sometimes and 11,30 per cent do not teach this way. At least but still very much applied exercises were the translation and using whole texts. Translation is often taught by 30,49 per cent of respondents who teach small kids, 53,36 uses this method often and 16,14 does not use it at all. The option C is taught by 36,77 per cent of respondents often, by 52,47 per cent sometimes and by 10,76 not at all. These results show that all of the five exercises are included in the English lessons.

When analysing the differences between the usage of the exercises of the question number twelve we cannot find many differences. But we can distinguish between men and women in the usage of the translation very easily (appendix nr. 30). The results show women use it much more often. Even 33,67 per cent of them use it often and only 14,8 per cent of them do not use it at all. 18,18 per cent of men on the other hand use it often and 22,72 per cent of them do not use it. But there are more men using this method sometimes. It is 59 per cent of them.

Translation, teaching grammar through texts and gap-filling exercises are used more or less equally by teachers of all age. But the usage of the drilling repetition differs here (appendix nr. 31). The results show even 32 per cent of the professionally youngest teachers do not use it at all. Many more older teachers use it at least sometimes. But it is often used most by the group of teachers teaching between ten and twenty years. It includes even 53,42 per cent of them. We can also see a difference between the teachers by using grammar games. Here the situation is interesting. There are most if the similarities by teachers teaching up to

three years and teaching between ten and twenty years. 70,42 per cent of them use this method often on average and 26,97 per cent on average use it sometimes. The results show a slight reduction of using the grammar games after the third year of practice and then also after the twentieth year of practice. 60,45 per cent of these who groups use it often and 39,56 of them use it sometimes.

### **2.3.12.2 Use of practical exercises with pupils from sixth to ninth grade**

The thirteenth question is the same as the previous one. The only difference is that this time teachers modified their answers according to the strategies they choose for the learners from sixth to ninth grade.

I did not expect that the repetition drill and games would be widely used with these learners.

The results confirmed my presumption (appendix nr. 32). The repetition drill is not used at all by 41,55 per cent of respondents but still 44,93 per cent of them use this method at least sometimes and only 13,53 per cent use it often. I assume this is mainly done because of pronunciation difficulties rather than as grammar practice. The games are also not used often by many teachers. It is 34,3 per cent of the respondents. 56,04 per cent of them allow pupils play games sometimes and 9,66 per cent do not use grammar games. It is caused by the fact that older learners do not require playing games as small children. The translation is done less often on average. 16,43 per cent of teachers do not choose this method of teaching but still 44,44 per cent choose it sometimes and 39,13 per cent choose it often. The most often used exercise types are work with texts and filling exercises. Filling exercises are used even by 76,33 per cent of respondents, 21,26 per cent choose it sometimes and only 2,42 per cent of teachers do not teach this way at all. It means the vast majority of teachers often applies these exercises. I presume its purpose is to enable the learners to score high in standardised tests. Only 6,76 per cent of teachers do not prepare text activities for these learners but 30,43 per cent of them prepare them sometimes and 62,8 per cent of them use such exercises often. This may be caused by the fact that more advanced learners understand longer texts and the teachers teach learners to think in context and not only in isolated words which is almost impossible.

There is no significant contrast between the women's and men's usage of the examined exercises with older learners. There are also not many differences between the age groups here. But the results of the repetition and grammar games differ very much (appendix

nr. 33). There are no systematic differences showing any kind of practice progress, though. But still it is interesting to point out that the repetition of sentences after teacher is used often by only 3,45 per cent of the teachers teaching up to three years. They use it rather often (48,28 per cent) or not at all (48,28 per cent). It is worth noting that 32,2 per cent of teachers teaching more than twenty years also do not use this method. There can be made a distinction between teachers teaching up to ten years and more than ten years by the usage of grammar games. The results show that 25,89 per cent of the two younger groups use them often but after the tenth year of practice the often usage raises averagely to 43,03 per cent of respondents. We can also see that 63,34 per cent of the two younger groups use it only sometimes and 49,4 per cent of the two professionally older groups use it sometimes. So we can see the usage of games raises with the years of practice.

### **2.3.12.3 Comparison of questions twelve and thirteen**

So the difference between answers for questions twelve and thirteen is as expected. The biggest differences are in options B, C and E. Repetition drill is chosen of 31,31 per cent more with the younger learners and 30,25 per cent of teachers more do not use it with older learners. Working with texts is used for 26,03 per cent more with the older learners. The games are played with younger learners 35,21 per cent more than with the older ones who play games mostly only sometimes. They play the games 27,79 per cent more only sometimes than children from first of fifth grade.

### **2.3.12.4 Practicing by drilling with pupils from first to fifth grade**

One of the very much common techniques of teaching is drilling. It can be done in many ways and it is still popular.

The question number fourteen was to be answered by teachers working with pupils from first to fifth grade. It is concerned with repetition, substitution and transformation drills. The aim was to find out which of the drills teachers use with these pupils most often. The option A stands for the repetition drill, the option B for the substitution drill and here also an example was included to make the option clear to teachers. The example was: "Use past simple: I am at home. I \_\_\_\_ at home yesterday." The option C also provided an example: "Answer the question: What will you do next week?" and it stands for the transformation drill. The respondents could choose by every option a number 1, 2 or 3 where the 1 stands for the most often use and 3 for the less often use. None of these numbers presumed that a

method would be applied always or never. The numbers work as a scale and teachers pick a number subjectively.

There is a difference between the difficulty level of these levels and I presumed beginners would most often practice by the repetition drill.

The outcome of this research question shows a vast majority of teachers apply all of the drills often (appendix nr. 34). But the repetition drill is used most often according to the results. 38,12 per cent of respondents stated that their learners use it most often, 41,7 per cent of them use repetition less often and 20,18 per cent use it least often. The substitution drill is also very much used. 34,08 per cent use it most often, 50,22 per cent use it less often and 15,7 per cent use it least often. The transformation drill is used at least often of all three drills but it is still used very much. 23,77 per cent of teachers use this drill most often, 43,5 per cent of them apply it less often and 32,74 per cent of the respondents apply it least often. Actually, I was not much astonished because I presumed a very often use of drilling because of my own experience. When we consider the substitution drill it is used at least sometimes (less often) by 84,3 per cent of teachers and that and also the rest of the results show that drills have an important place in Czech language lessons.

Teaching of the pupils from first to fifth grade is not very different regarding to the sex of the respondents. Although, the results show that women do not use repetition drills as often as men (appendix nr. 35). There are 26,21 per cent of women who use it least often but only 13,64 per cent of men claiming the same. I consider repetition drill with small children necessary and thus it would be interesting to find out what different technique use the 26,21 per cent of women to make pupils remember new phrases well.

There are minor differences in the aspect of sex. Nevertheless, this question was completed very differently by different age groups (appendix nr. 36). The option A has a very varied outcome. It appears the youngest teachers use the repetition drill very often, it is even 52,17 per cent of them. Then 48,84 per cent of teachers teaching between three and ten years use it less often. There are 39,29 per cent of teachers teaching from ten to twenty years who use it very often but the same number is valid also for the occasional use. Although there are 38,46 per cent of teachers teaching more than twenty years who use the repetition drill less often, even 35,89 per cent of this group use is least often. So there is a decrease visible in the use of this method and the growth of years of practice. The substitution drill is most often used by 60,87 per cent of the youngest teachers. Later the tendency to use this exercise often

lowers and most of the teachers teaching more than three years use it commonly less often. When looking at the results of the usage of the transformation drill it is clear that the often use raises very much during teachers' career. Only 8,7 per cent of teachers practicing up to three years use it often, but already 20,93 per cent of respondents practicing more than three years use it often. After the tenth year of practice the number of respondents using the transformational drill raises to 26,83 per cent and after the twentieth year of practice it is already 37,8 per cent of teachers. These results indicate good experience with using the transformation drill with Czech learners.

### **2.3.12.5 Practicing by drilling with pupils from sixth to ninth grade**

Another question is practically the same as the previous one but it is made for respondents teaching learners from sixth grade to ninth grade.

My presumption was that the drills are not used very much and that learners do more fluent activities requiring free speech that cannot be marked as any of these three types of drilling. In the end I was far from truth.

It is obvious from the results that drills are more used with older pupils than with younger (appendix nr. 37). The repetition drill is used much more often than I assumed. Even 48,79 per cent of teachers use repetition drill often. We can assume it is because of the pronunciation practice and not only for repeating new grammar structures so therefore the percentage is so high. Less often it is used by 42,03 per cent of respondents. 11,11 per cent of them uses this approach least often. Also the substitution drill is included very often. 47,83 per cent of respondents states they use it most often, 41,55 per cent of them claims they use it less often and it is least often used by 10,63 of them. My presumption that learners should spend more time on transforming sentences than on only substituting one of the grammar patterns for another was wrong. Substitution drill appears to be the most often tool of Czech teachers for practicing grammar. The transformation drill is surprisingly used at least often. It is worth noting that even so this drill is used also quite often by the majority of respondents. Only 29,47 per cent of the respondents use it often. 47,83 per cent of them practice grammar this way less often and 22,71 practice it this way only occasionally.

The tendency of using drills is not very different regarding to the sex of the respondents. The only significant difference is by the use of the transformation drill. It shows men use it more with older learners than women do (appendix nr. 38). 64,29 per cent of men

use it less often and only 3,57 per cent of them use it least often. But there is only 40,26 per cent of women who use it less often and 25,4 per cent of them use it only least often.

We cannot find significant differences between the usage of the transformation drill when considering the age of respondents. But the repetition drill is used by the majority (44,44 per cent) of the professionally youngest teachers least often, after the third year of practice there are already 47,22 per cent of respondents who use it less often but not least. Although, the majority of teachers using it often are teachers teaching between ten and twenty years (30 per cent), most of these teachers (41,43 per cent) almost do not use it. Here we cannot see any visible progress in using this drill. But a decrease can be seen by the use of the substitution drill. The youngest teachers use it often and older teachers use it most commonly only less often. There are 65,52 of teachers practicing up to three years who use it often, 52,77 per cent of teachers teaching from three to ten years who do the same, 43,48 per cent of teachers teaching from ten to twenty years and 42,37 per cent of teachers teaching more than twenty years who do also the same often. You can see these results in the appendix number 39.

### **2.3.12.6 Opinions about practicing by drilling**

The last question of the research focused also on the drills. This time it was the mechanical, meaningful and communicative drill. The question was not divided into more parts according to what learners it focuses on, the aim of this question was to discover the opinion of teachers. The question was not what methods they use but what methods they think are the most useful. The actual teaching approach does not have to correspond with a teacher's opinions always and fully. This we found out already when analysing research questions number four and seven. The mechanical and meaningful drills are similar with substitution and transformation drilling. The option A was representing the mechanical drill. There was an example used to make sure all respondents understand it. There was this example: "Use past simple: I (be) at home yesterday." The option B represented the meaningful drill. There was this example included: "Answer the question: What will you do newt week?" The option C had as an example free conversations where learners use their attitudes and opinions. It represented the communicative drill.

My expectation was that the option C would be the most common answer. Although free speech is demanding for learners I heard from many teachers that learners learn best when speaking, speaking and speaking again.

But the results state that the most useful drill is the meaningful one where a learner has to form sentences and answer questions (appendix nr. 40). It is important to point out that learners attending elementary schools are not so advanced to be comfortable when free speaking so many teachers may feel the most acceptable drill is the one where the learner concentrates on the sentence form more rather than on meaning and form simultaneously. Even 41,88 per cent of respondents consider this drill the most useful when speaking of pupils attending elementary schools. Also the communicative drill has a significant representation. It is 30,32 per cent of the respondents. 27,8 per cent of the teachers believe that the mechanical drill is the most useful with the learners. These results show the opinions vary quite a lot.

The sex of the respondents did not influence these results very much (appendix nr. 41). The mechanical drill is used more by men, 34,48 per cent of men use it most often and 28,85 per cent of women do the same. The meaningful drill is used with almost no difference, here only 3,73 per cent more of women use it most often. The communicative drill is used only by 20,69 per cent of men most often but even by 32,21 per cent of women.

There is no systematic difference in using the mechanical and communicative drill when considering the age groups. The communicative drill shows a slight decrease in its use with growing years of practice. But the use of the meaningful drill raises with the years of practice from 35,29 per cent of the youngest respondents to 47,19 of the professionally oldest respondents (appendix nr. 42). This means the meaningful drill is successful with the Czech learners.



### **3. The attitude of the learners to the drilling exercises and usefulness of the knowledge of grammar rules**

Czech pupils are used to practice grammar by drills. This is what I noticed during my first and second teaching practice. There are many drilling grammar exercises in various textbooks. It is interesting to find out whether pupils find these exercises easy, pleasant or more useful. I supposed that transformation drill or forming a whole sentence is very demanding instead of substitution drilling but on the other hand more useful for learning a new language. The aim was to discover whether my speculation was right or wrong. Another aim was to research the opinion of the pupils about the importance of declarative and procedural knowledge of the grammar rules when learning a new language.

#### **3.1 Characteristics of the respondents**

The group of respondents that I used was a group of 16 pupils of the seventh grade of elementary school, who practice grammar by drilling very often, what they think about these exercises. The pupils of this group are 12-13 years old and include girls and also boys. They attend the elementary school of the T. G. Masaryk in Hovorany.

#### **3.2 Description of the research method**

As the research method I used a questionnaire which contains three questions and each of them is answered by the multiple choice containing three options with one possible answer. (appendix nr. 2).

#### **3.3 The opinions about the grammar exercises**

The three research parts contain description, presumptions and results compiled from the pupils.

### 3.3.1 Attitude to drilling exercises

At first I asked the group which of the drilling exercises they consider the most pleasant and easy to do. I offered them three possibilities including substitution drill and transformation drill. The option A was answering questions which belongs to the transformation drill. There was an example attached: “*Did you go to the library last night? Answer the question.*” Other two options belonged to the substitution drill. The option B was a rather demanding version of the substitution drill. The included example was “*Where is George? Answer the question using the information in the library.*” The option C was the easiest one to fill in. It was provided with the example “Fill in the past simple tense: *I \_\_\_\_\_ (go) to the library last night.*”

The results of this question were not surprising but rather expected. You can see them in the graph number 43 in the appendices. Only one respondent considered the option A as easy and pleasant. Five pupils liked the option B the most and the majority of the pupils liked the exercises similar to the one provided in the option C. This means that the pupils like doing easier exercises which do not demand much of their activity and they like rather staying passive.

### 3.3.2 Usefulness of drilling exercises

The second question intended to discover which of the drill exercises are considered by the pupils useful. The question is “Which of the methods of practising language (from the question nr. 1) do you consider the most useful for learning a language?” The purpose of the question was to find out how the learners feel about the efficiency of the exercises. I intended to determine if the pupils think that more demanding tasks improve the process of learning and thus whether they consider such tasks meaningful or even necessary. Easy exercises are not demanding and thus do not move the pupils’ knowledge further at a satisfactory rate.

I supposed that the most easy exercises are the least useful for them because they do not challenge them and do not make them active and hard-thinking. I also supposed that pupils of the grades 6 to 9 already know that the harder methods challenge the rate of their progress more than easy tasks. My presumption that the most easy exercises are not as efficient as harder ones was supported by the respondents.

You can see the results in the graph number 44 in the appendices. Nine of the respondents considered the option of answering a question with no clue given the most useful.

It was more than half of the respondents and it confirmed my hypothesis that pupils of the grades 6 to 9 know what kind of exercises is meaningful for them. But we must also count with the minorities here because they are rather big. 43,75 % of the group considered other types of exercises beneficial and even 25% of the pupils think that they learn English best when practicing only substitution of one grammar element in sentences. I suppose these exercises are useful for a number of learners and it would be a mistake to omit them completely from the language teaching. The aim of teachers is to teach English all of the learners and thus to use method that suite all of the learners.

### **3.3.3 Grammar importance**

In the third question the pupils were asked whether they consider theoretical knowledge or practical skills and competences in a language important. My aim was to find out what learners consider important and thus what they want to learn. The question was formed in a rather practical way because I needed to be sure that every learner understands it. The task was to decide what is according to the learners the most important by any sentence (e.g. I was with George in the library last night.). The option A was that the most important and useful is to know how to say the sentence properly. The purpose of this option is to find out how many learners learn a foreign language only to become able to use it actively and even think knowing grammar rules is unnecessary for such learning. The option B was that it is important to recognize and analyze the grammar rules in the sentence. This option clearly intends to find some people interested in grammar as such and future potential linguists. But the main aim of including this option is to find out who of the learners thinks that for learning a new language it is important to understand its structures and it is not possible for them to learn it without studying the structures. Option C was designed for those learners who considered both of these abilities important when learning a new language.

In this case I expected rather balanced results where everyone chooses according to their feelings about the language. In other words I was expecting that a couple of learners who are interested in grammar learning exist in the group.

You can see the results of this question in the graph number 45 in appendices. I do not know what is the relationship of this group to learning about their mother tongue but according to the results of this research question learners do not consider declarative knowledge of grammar rules important. None of the respondents chose the option B that means that none of them considers grammar learning more important than the practical

application of the rules. The majority even chose option A which means they consider really only the practical knowledge of language important. That is the goal they want to reach when learning a new language. They do not feel like needing to understand the language. They only wish to be able to communicate through the language. But although no one considers grammar rules themselves important the results of the option B shows us that a great deal (43,75%) of respondents holds grammar rules as important as practical usage of languages. This means that almost a half of the respondents think they need to know grammar rules to be able to speak in a foreign language. The outcome of my research is that pupils from elementary schools want to learn a new language and everybody considers as important practical application of the language with the fact that only some of the learners think they need also the knowledge of grammar rules to learn to be a fluent speaker of the language. And surely learners are not pleased by attending lessons focused on grammar explanation and practice because grammar itself is not the aim of language learning. This means that methods like grammar translation are not popular by the learners. The vast majority comes to the language lessons with the need to learn a new language and not to become also a theoretical expert in it.

## Conclusion

What concerns the theoretical part the findings were following. There are more definitions of grammar which can be all consider appropriate. There are also many opinions pro and contra teaching grammar separately but although grammar should not be the only focus of teaching it cannot be omitted completely. Such neglecting of teaching grammar is considered unsuccessful and might cause fossilisation of the learners further learning abilities. Teachers should be professionals aware of problems and characteristics their learners have in the learning process and how to utilize the differences between their mother tongue and target language and not let this become a problem. The presentation of a new grammar structure should not be very much long and should contain only important information designated for actual application. Mistakes and errors should be somehow corrected to provide feedback to the learners. The correction should be done with respect to character of learners and activities they perform.

The practical part discovered the opinions and methods of Czech teachers and opinions of learners.

The Czech teachers most often do not omit grammar teaching and think that because learners cannot pick up its rules by themselves its practice should be often. The teachers most often choose overt techniques where most of the respondents choosing this method are teachers with practice up to three years. But men use more the covert techniques. Inductive approach is used most by teachers teaching from three to ten years. Women ask more often for individual work than men and the professionally youngest teachers incline to this way of work most often. Although Ur claims a presentation of new grammar should not take more than five minutes most of Czech teachers need ten minutes and the highest percentage of teachers doing so are the ones who teach only up to three years. There are more men than women needing even more time. Many of methodology approaches are used in Czech schools where the communicative approach is the most often one and task-based teaching less often. When speaking about mistakes it shows that Czech learners have most problems with tenses and conjugation of verbs where the most common problem is not adding –s to the third person of singular in tenses which use it. Correction ways named by Thornbury are not used equally in Czech schools. Giving a hint to learner is the most common way of correction. Although correction should reflect also the character of learners, most of teachers focus on a particular situation in whole or on the type of the activity learners do. Czech teachers in general use a

wide range of grammar exercises. By learners from sixth to ninth grade there are the most common fill-in exercises and by learners from first to fifth grade most teachers choose grammar games most often. When speaking about drills by all learners the most common drill is the repetition drill where older learners also often practice by the substitution drill. Drills can be also distinguished as mechanical, meaningful and communicative. Czech teachers consider the meaningful drill most useful. The results show characteristic method used by Czech teachers and their opinions. Their opinions are reasonable and they know what is possible with Czech learners and what not. It would be better to include pair and group work more often and to use more interactive exercises than repetition and fill-in exercises by the learners from sixth to ninth grade, though.

The results of the analysis of what Czech learners prefer and consider important it shows they are convenient with easier exercises which do not require much of activity. Although the results show they know more demanding exercises are better for learning English they like staying passive. Czech teachers use many kind of exercises so they found a way how to cope with their inclination to passivity. When learners of the seventh grade learn a language they expect teacher teaches them how to use English in everyday life and mostly do not wish to be taught grammar rules on a theoretical level because they do not find them as useful as ability to use language itself.

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# Appendices

## Questionnaires

### Appendix nr. 1

#### Questionnaire for the teachers

1. Are you a man or a woman? (choose only one option)
  - a. man
  - b. woman
2. How many years do you teach? (choose only one option)
  - a. 0-3
  - b. 3-10
  - c. 10-20
  - d. 20 and more
3. Which organization of the work of pupils do you chose the most often? (choose only one option)
  - a. individual work
  - b. pair work
  - c. group work
4. What is your opinion about the importance of grammar and the need of its explanation and practice in the teaching process? (choose only one option)
  - a. It is not necessary to teach grammar separately
  - b. Grammar is very important, it is necessary to practice grammar as often as possible
  - c. It is useful to focus on grammar separately sometimes but most of the grammar rules are learned by the pupils subconsciously when doing activities focused on different aspects of language than grammar
  - d. Practicing of grammar should be quite frequent, pupils cannot learn grammar rules successfully only when practicing other language competences
  - e. Other opinion or undecided
5. You prefer when ... (choose only one option)

- a. a pupil understands even to the easiest grammar and it is logically explained to him/her
  - b. a pupil is exposed to tasks without knowing the needed new grammar rules and he/she learns subconsciously how to apply them
6. Which activities do you choose most often for the teaching of new grammar rules?  
(choose one of the options by every activity type)
- a. active work of pupils, speaking, interaction of pupils, they search for information to complete tasks, there is an exchange of personal and real information
    - i. I choose this method often
    - ii. I choose this method sometimes
    - iii. I never teach this way
  - b. work with textbook, practice of the accuracy of knowledge of pupils, translation
    - i. I choose this method often
    - ii. I choose this method sometimes
    - iii. I never teach this way
  - c. teacher speaks only in English, conversation among pupils, teaching pupils how to intuitively express their thoughts
    - i. I choose this method often
    - ii. I choose this method sometimes
    - iii. I never teach this way
  - d. giving tasks requiring movement, instructions in English
    - i. I choose this method often
    - ii. I choose this method sometimes
    - iii. I never teach this way
  - e. listening, repeating sentences to remember new phrases and sentence structures
    - i. I choose this method often
    - ii. I choose this method sometimes
    - iii. I never teach this way
  - f. practical tasks (for example to find out when a train or bus departs, how to orient in a city)
    - i. I choose this method often
    - ii. I choose this method sometimes

iii. I never teach this way

7. Which method for grammar teaching do you choose most often? (choose only one option)
1. task focused on content (e.g. an article), 2. explanation of new grammar patterns which pupils worked with during the task unknowingly but successfully, 3. next exercises focused on the grammar pattern
  1. explanation of a new grammar pattern, 2. giving examples, 3. exercises
  - I do not explain or teach grammar separately
8. Explaining of new grammar usually takes you (choose only one option)
- 3 minutes
  - 6 minutes
  - 10 minutes
  - 15 minutes
  - more time
  - I do not explain grammar
9. What grammar errors do pupils most often? (write please)
10. What is your initial correction of pupils' errors do you choose most often? (choose only one option)
- "No" or nonverbal communication
  - I repeat the sentence after the pupil and wait if he/she can correct himself/herself.
  - I correct the error immediately
  - I drop a hint (e.g. I repeat his/her sentence to the point where the error occurred "He has ...?")
  - I ask him/her about the meaning of the statement as if I was a native speaker not understanding the statement
  - I pretend the error did not occur and it was said on purpose (e.g. "He has a long hair." I comment that the person must look interesting with only one long hair on the head)
  - I do not correct at all
11. Do you correct your pupils the same way? (choose only one option)
- yes
  - according to their character

- c. according to the activity
- d. according to situation

**Fill in the following part of the questionnaire only in case you chose options showing that you practice grammar with pupils.**

12. How do you practice a new grammar pattern with pupils of the 1. to 5. grade? (choose one of the options by every activity type)

- a. Translation of sentences given by me or textbook
  - i. I choose this method often
  - ii. I choose this method sometimes
  - iii. I never teach this way
- b. Repetition of sentences given by me
  - i. I choose this method often
  - ii. I choose this method sometimes
  - iii. I never teach this way
- c. with the context of more text (e.g. articles in textbook)
  - i. I choose this method often
  - ii. I choose this method sometimes
  - iii. I never teach this way
- d. gap-filling exercises
  - i. I choose this method often
  - ii. I choose this method sometimes
  - iii. I never teach this way
- e. grammar games
  - i. I choose this method often
  - ii. I choose this method sometimes
  - iii. I never teach this way

13. How do you practice a new grammar pattern with pupils of the 6. to 9. grade? (choose one of the options by every activity type)

- a. Translation of sentences given by me or textbook
  - i. I choose this method often
  - ii. I choose this method sometimes
  - iii. I never teach this way
- b. Repetition of sentences given by me
  - i. I choose this method often

- ii. I choose this method sometimes
  - iii. I never teach this way
- c. with the context of more text (e.g. articles in textbook)
  - i. I choose this method often
  - ii. I choose this method sometimes
  - iii. I never teach this way
- d. gap-filling exercises
  - i. I choose this method often
  - ii. I choose this method sometimes
  - iii. I never teach this way
- e. grammar games
  - i. I choose this method often
  - ii. I choose this method sometimes
  - iii. I never teach this way

14. Pupils of the 1. to 5. grade practice grammar most often with help of these activities ...  
(choose a number according to how often you use them, 1= often, 2= sometimes, 3= not much)

- a. repetition drills, pupils repeat sentences given
- b. grammar exercises that require substitution of a known grammar rule by a new one (e.g. instructions: "Use past simple: I am at home. I \_\_\_\_\_ at home yesterday.")
- c. grammar exercises requiring transformation of more grammar patterns in a sentence or forming a whole sentence (e.g. instructions: Answer the questions: I was at home last week. What will you do newt week?")

15. Pupils of the 6. to 9. grade practice grammar most often with help of these activities ...  
(choose a number according to how often you use them, 1= often, 2= sometimes, 3= not much)

- a. repetition drills, pupils repeat sentences given
- b. grammar exercises that require substitution of a known grammar rule by a new one (e.g. instructions: "Use past simple: I am at home. I \_\_\_\_\_ at home yesterday.")
- c. grammar exercises requiring transformation of more grammar patterns in a sentence or forming a whole sentence (e.g. instructions: Answer the questions: I was at home last week. What will you do newt week?")

16. Which of these grammar exercises do you consider the most useful? (choose only one option)
- grammar exercises requiring transformation of sentences by using a new grammar rule (e.g. instructions: “Use past simple. I \_\_\_\_ at home yesterday.”)
  - grammar exercises requiring answering a question or forming sentences (e.g. instructions: Answer the questions: What will you do next week?”)
  - conversations where pupils use their own opinions and attitudes

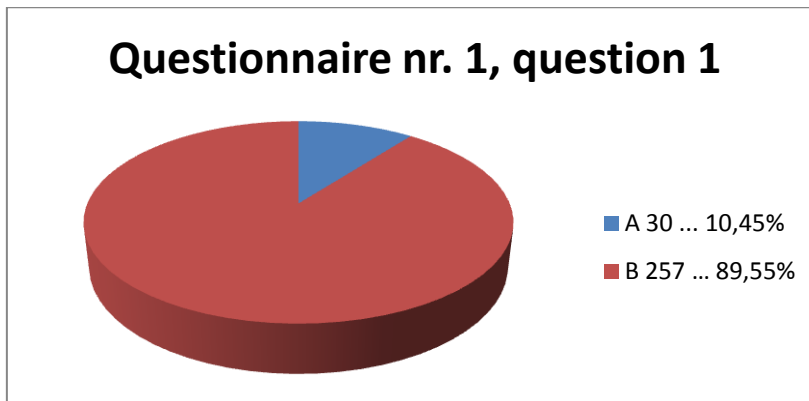
## Appendix nr. 2

### Questionnaire for the pupils of the 7. grade

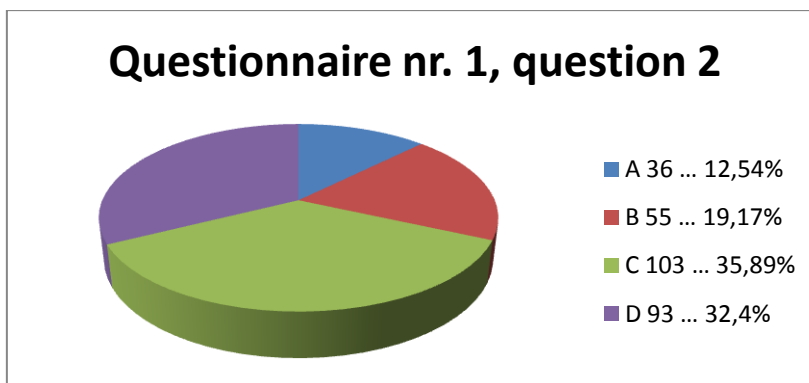
- Which of these grammar exercises is easy and pleasant for you to fill in? (choose only one option)
  - answering questions (for example: “Did you go to the library last night?”  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ )
  - answering questions with clues given (for example: “Where is George?”  
Answer: (in the library) \_\_\_\_\_ )
  - changing only one element in a sentence (for example: Use past simple “I  
\_\_\_\_\_ (go) to the library last night. )
- Which of the methods of practising language (from the question nr. 1) do you consider the most useful for learning a language? (choose only one option)
  - answering questions (for example: “Did you go to the library last night?”  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ )
  - answering questions with clues given (for example: “Where is George?”  
Answer: (in the library) \_\_\_\_\_ )
  - changing only one element in a sentence (for example: Use past simple “I  
\_\_\_\_\_ (go) to the library last night. )
- Look at the sentence “I was with George in the library last night”. Do you think that it is important? (choose only one option)
  - to be able to say the sentence properly
  - to be able to recognize and analyze the grammar structures of the sentence
  - to be able to do both

# Graphs of the questionnaire number 1

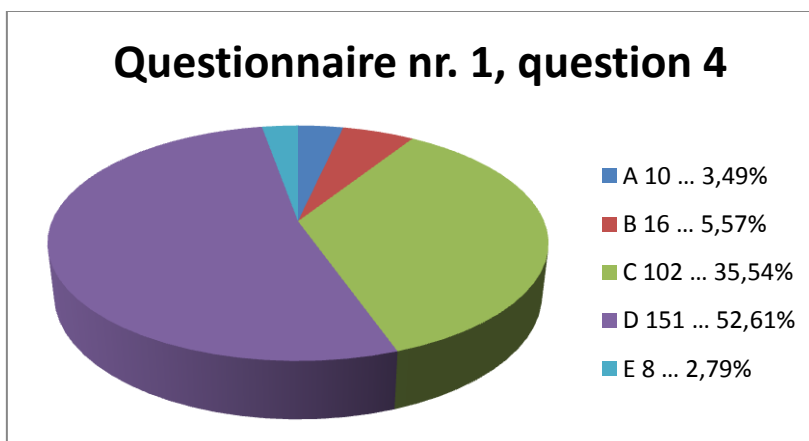
## Appendix nr. 3



## Appendix nr. 4

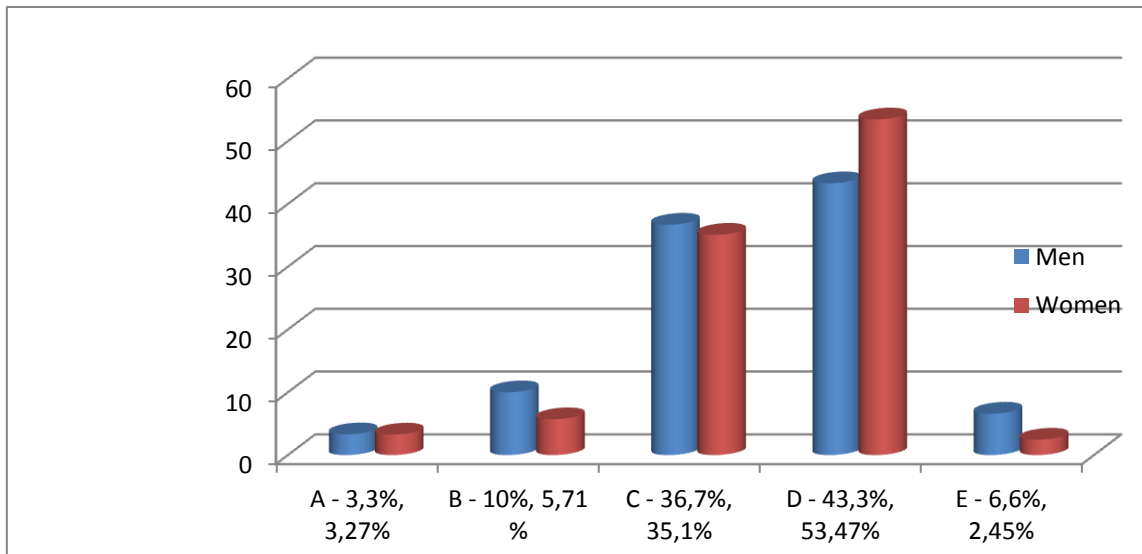


## Appendix nr. 5



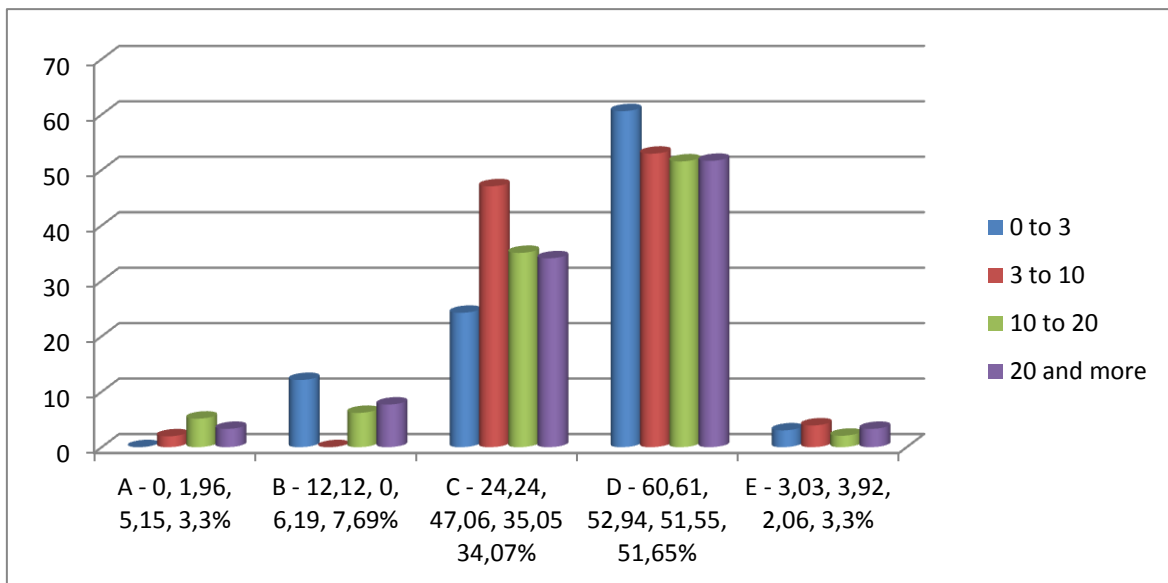
## Appendix nr. 6

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 4 – men's and women's answers distinction



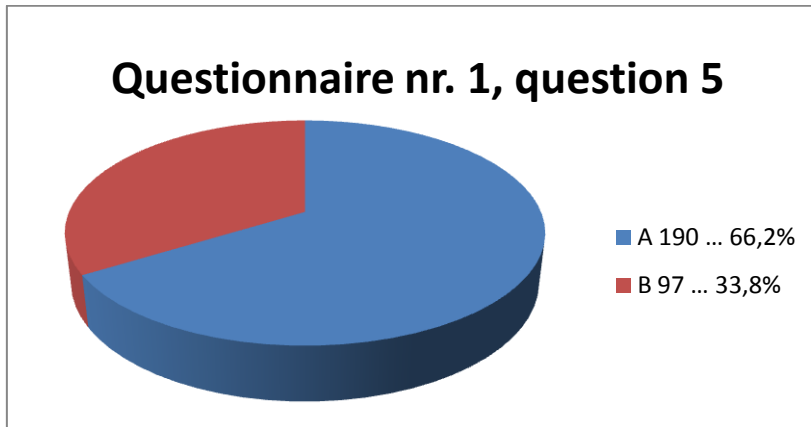
## Appendix nr. 7

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 4 – differences between age groups



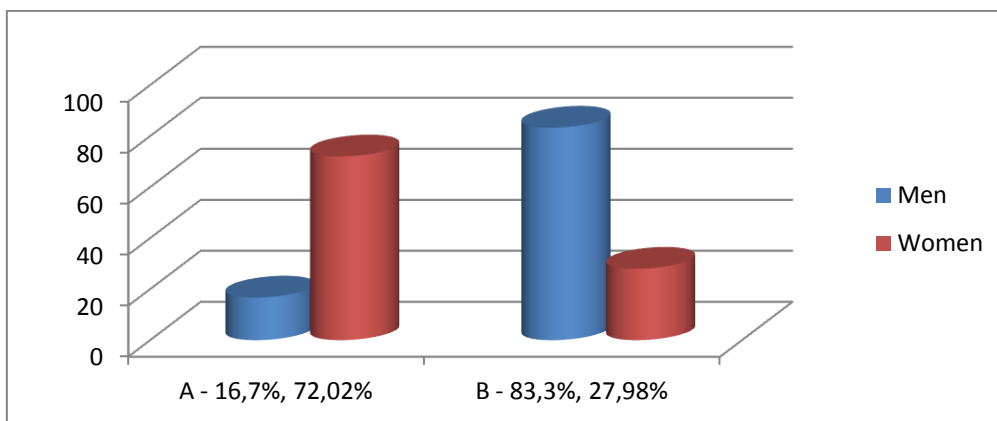


## Appendix nr. 8



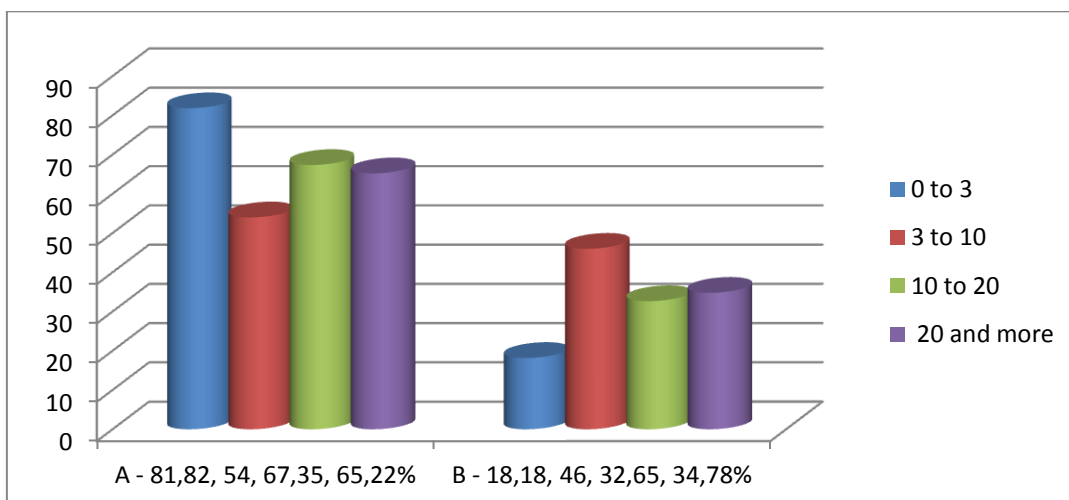
## Appendix nr. 9

*Questionnaire nr. 1, question 5 - men's and women's answers distinction*



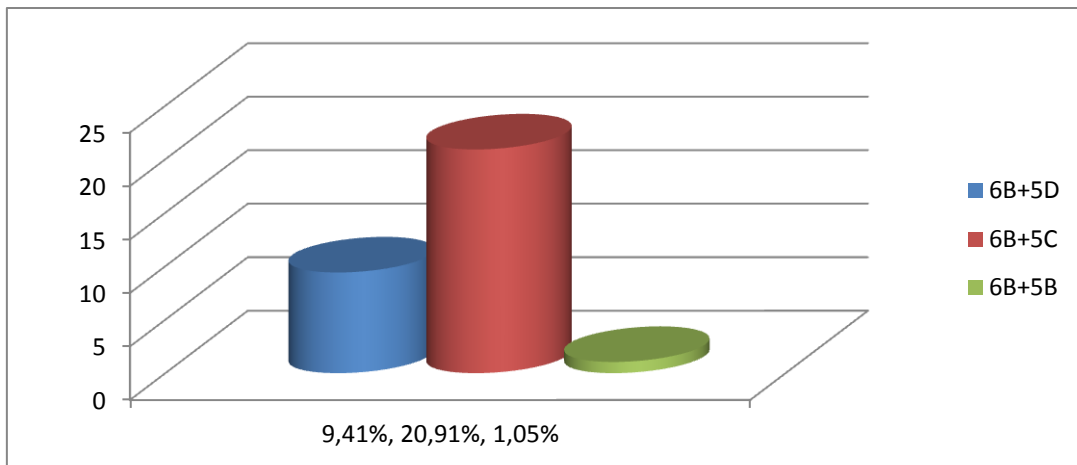
## Appendix nr. 10

*Questionnaire nr. 1, question 5 – differences between age groups*

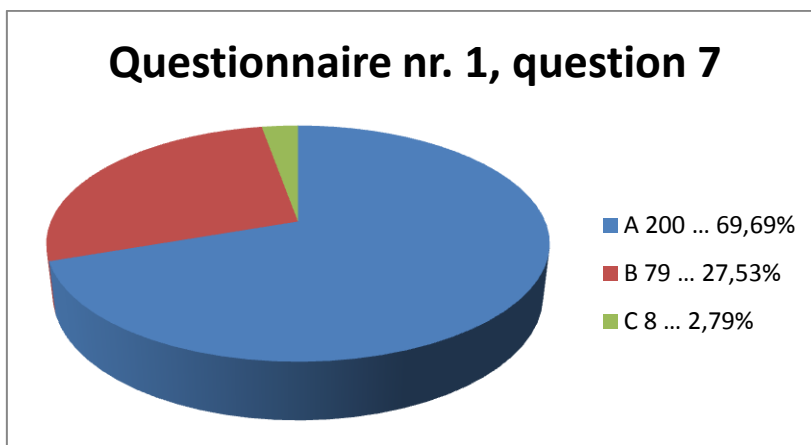


## Appendix nr. 11

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 4+5 comparison

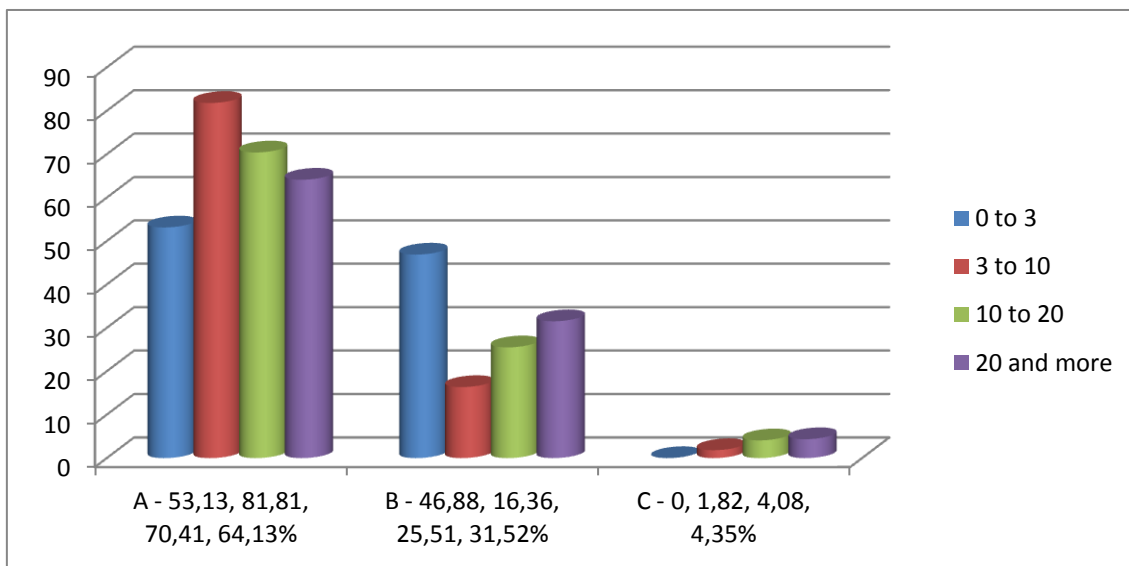


## Appendix nr. 12

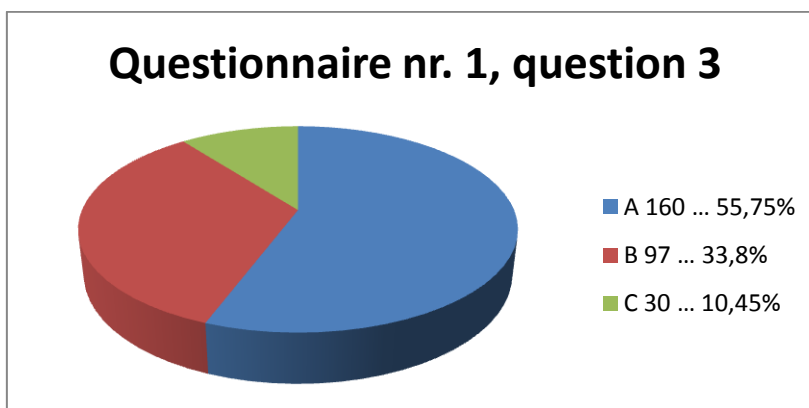


## Appendix nr. 13

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 7 – differences between age groups

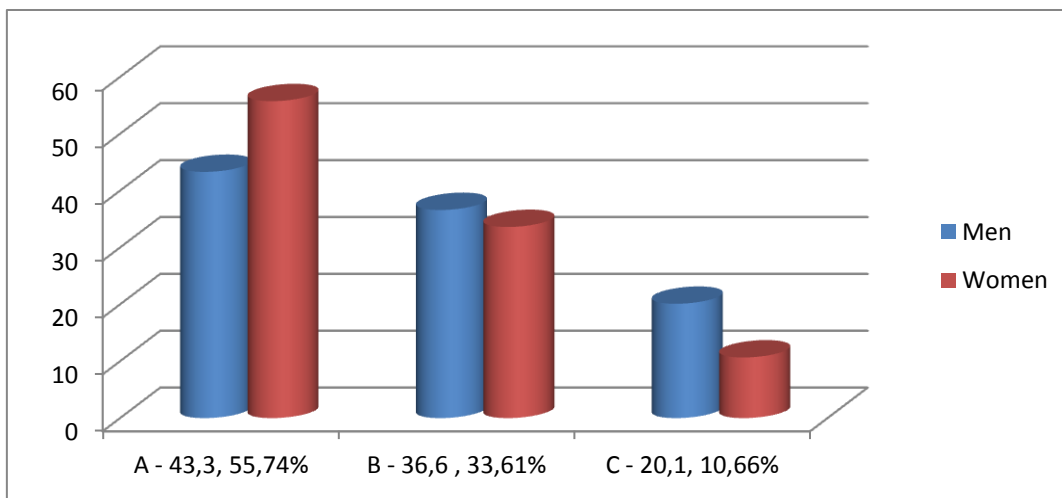


## Appendix nr. 14



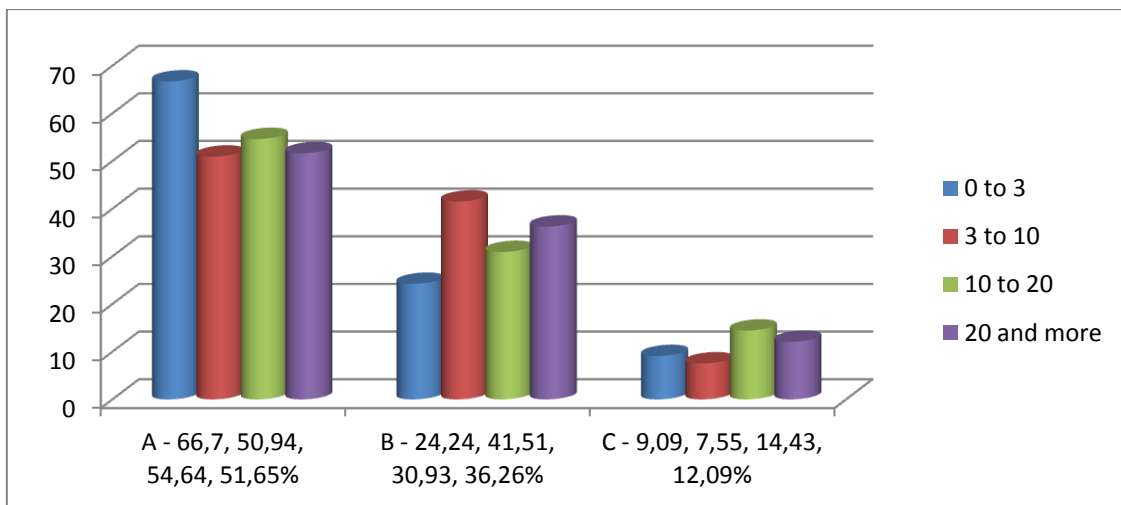
## Appendix nr. 15

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 3 - men's and women's answers distinction

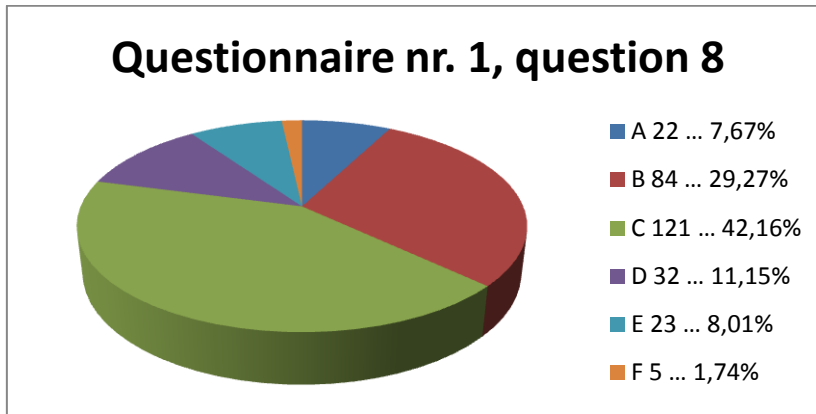


## Appendix nr. 16

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 3 – differences between age groups

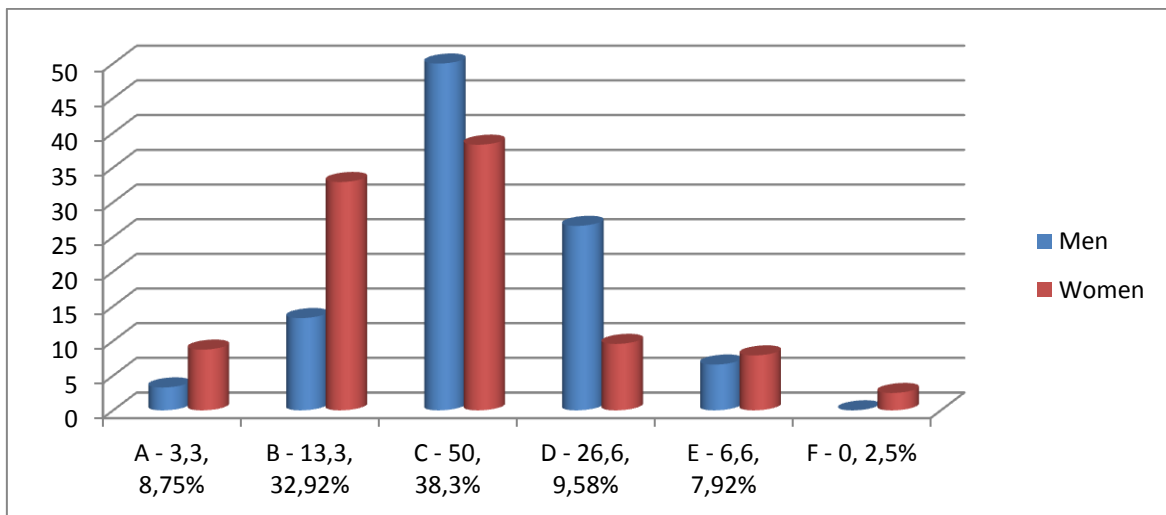


## Appendix nr. 17



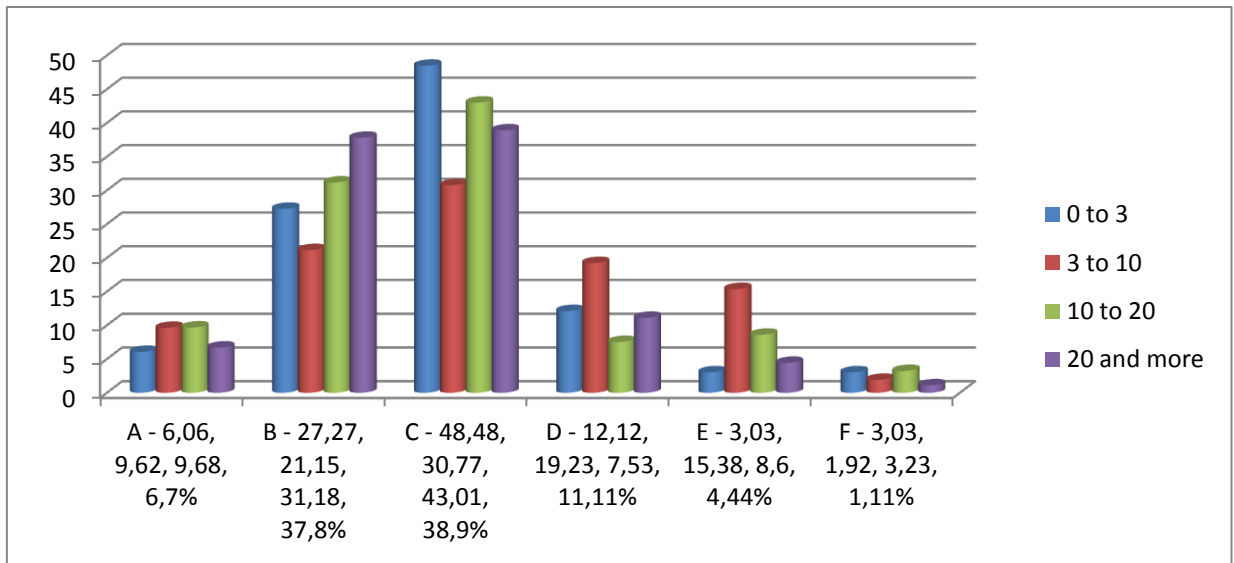
## Appendix nr. 18

*Questionnaire nr. 1, question 8 - men's and women's answers distinction*



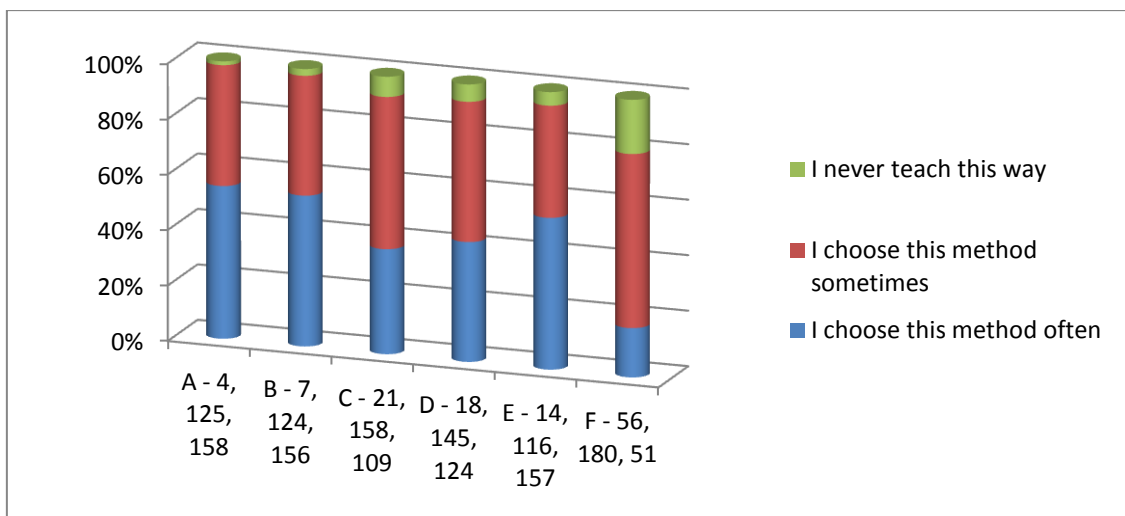
## Appendix nr. 19

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 8 – differences between age groups



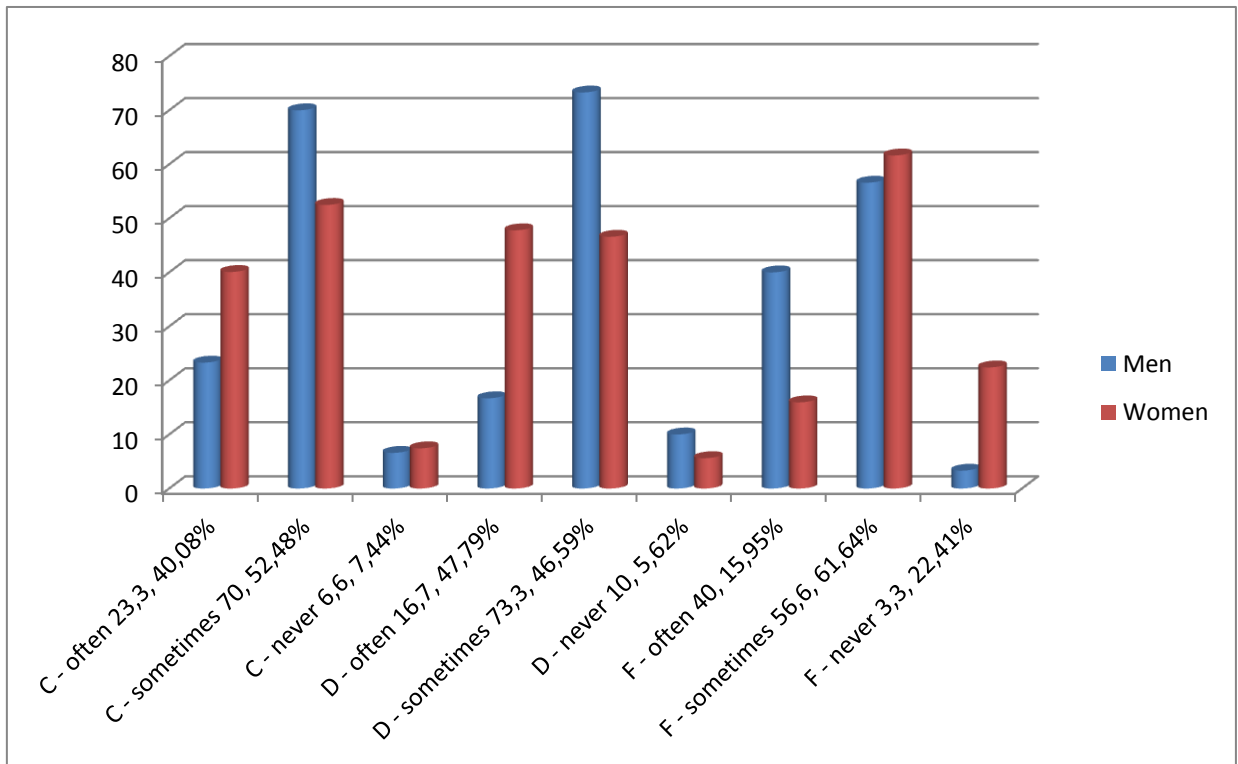
## Appendix nr. 20

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 6



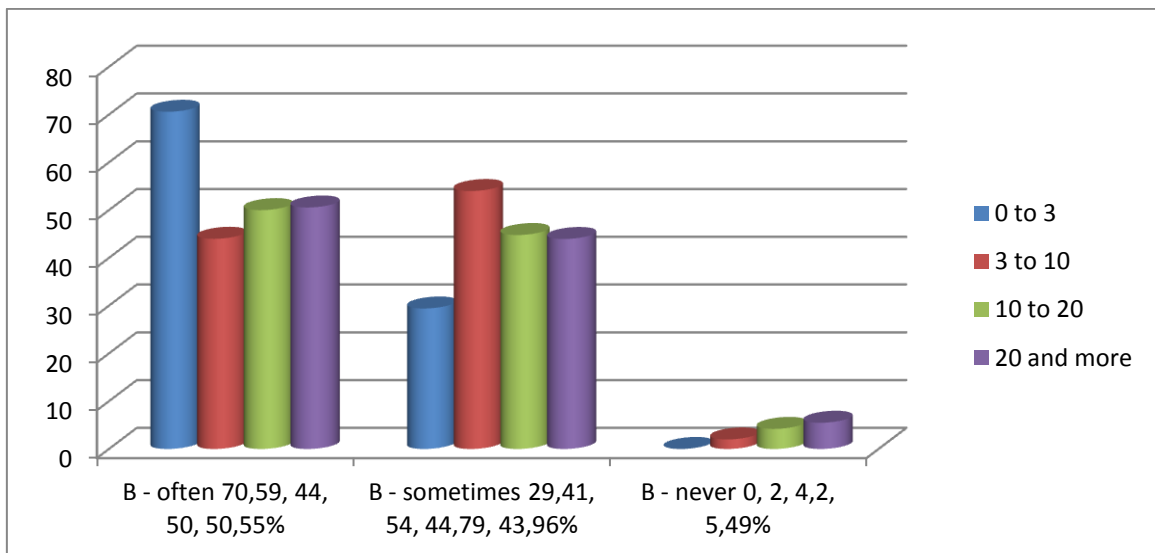
## Appendix nr. 21

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 6 - men's and women's answers distinction – options C, D, F



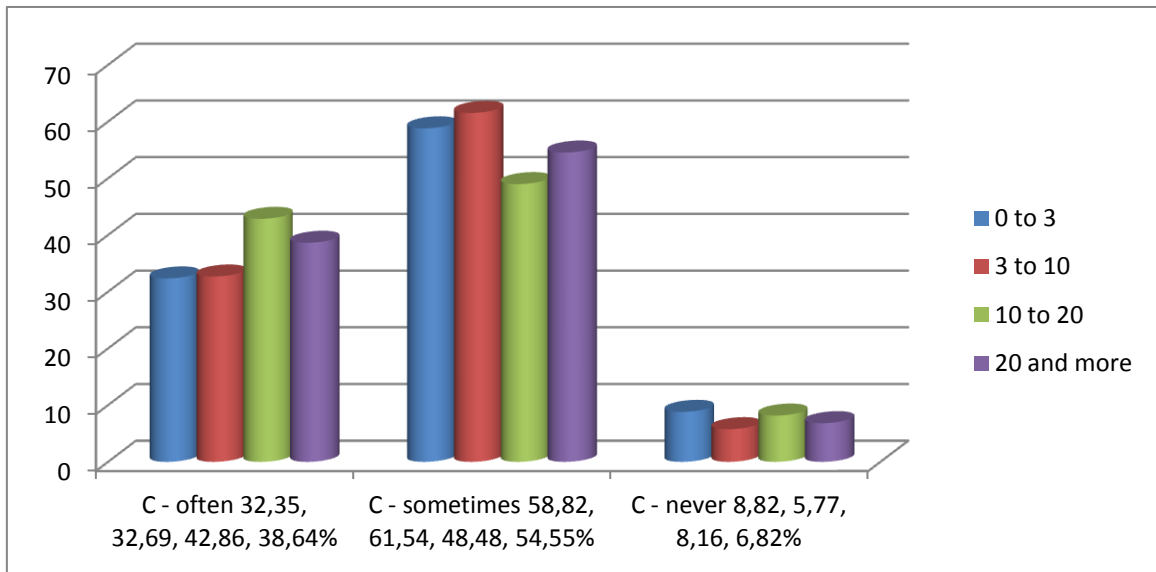
## Appendix nr. 22

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 6 – differences between age groups – option B

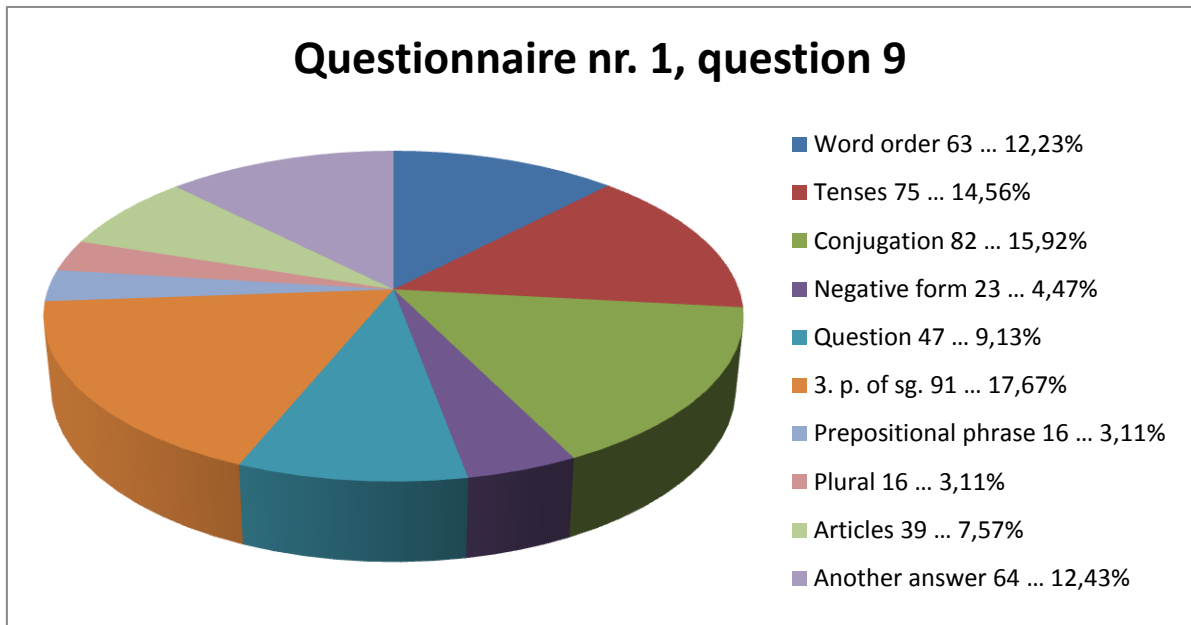


## Appendix nr. 23

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 6 – differences between age groups – option C

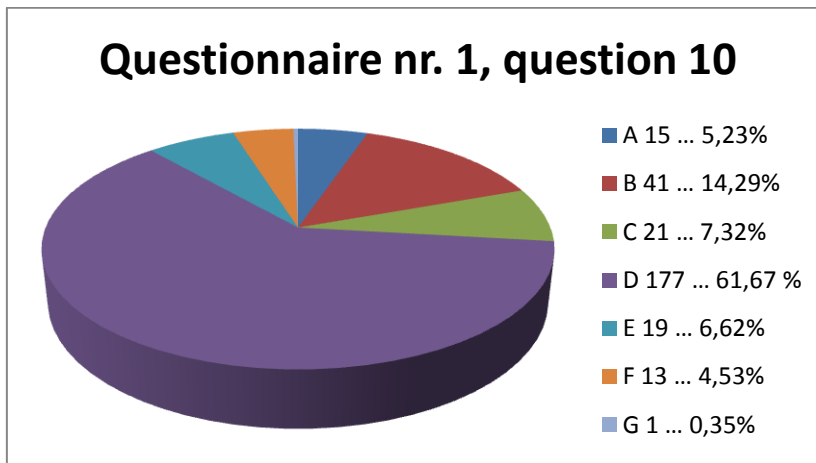


## Appendix nr. 24



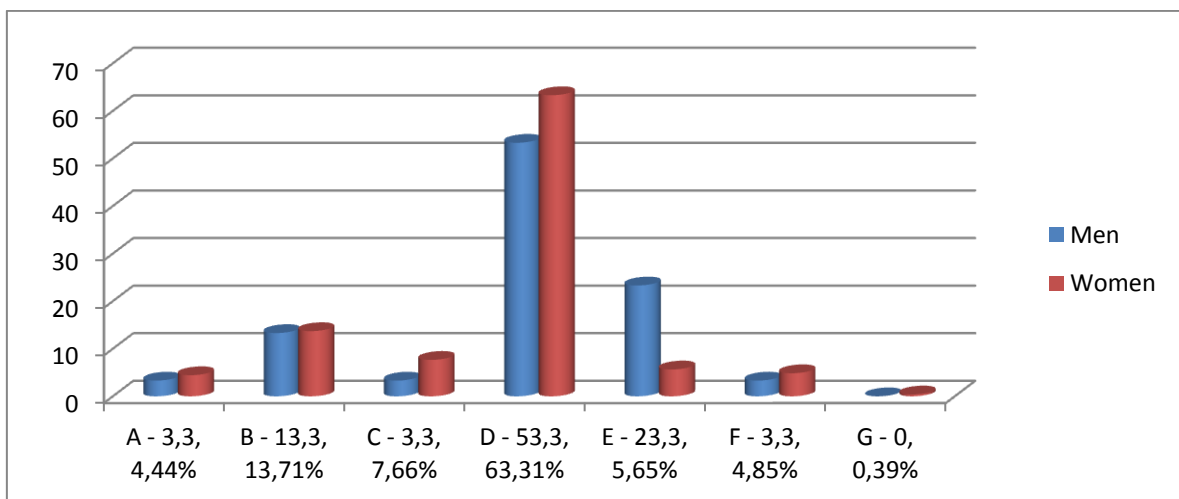


## Appendix nr. 25



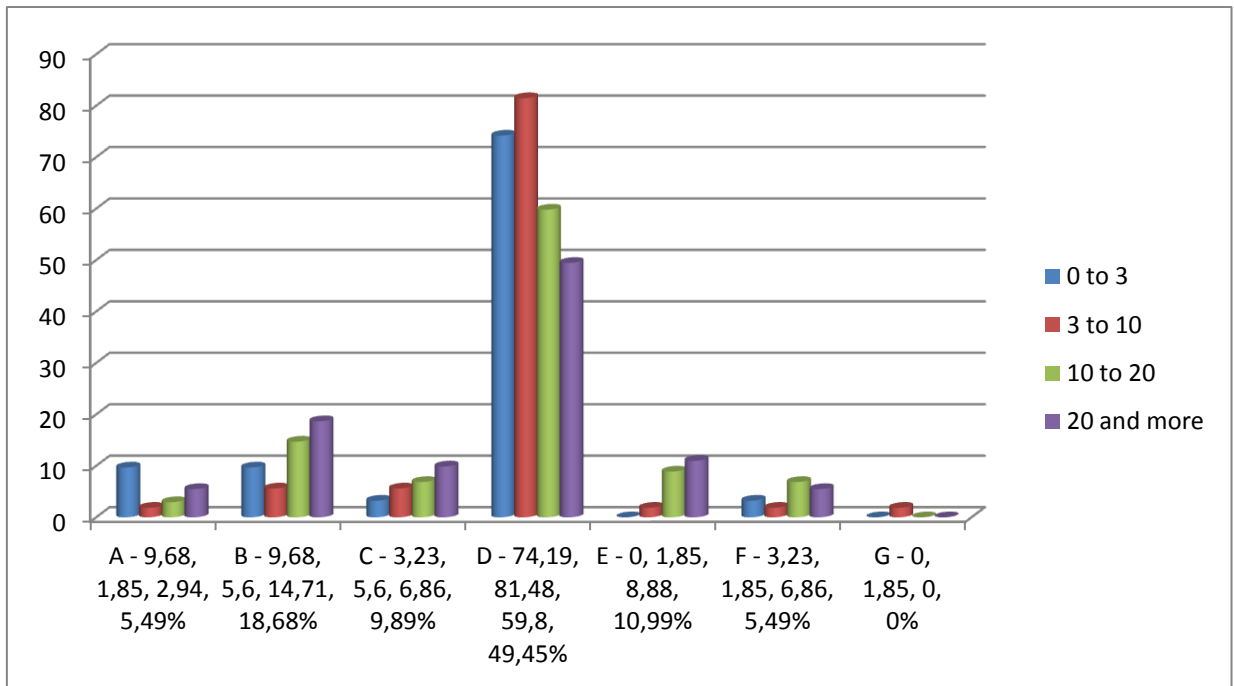
## Appendix nr. 26

*Questionnaire nr. 1, question 10 - men's and women's answers distinction*

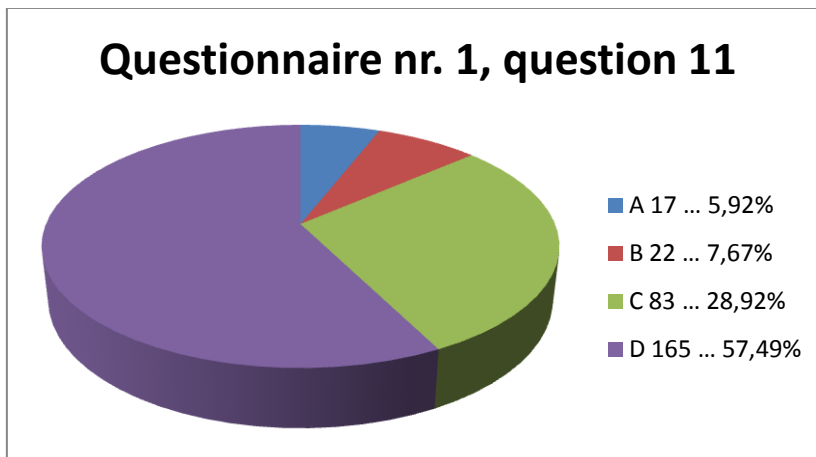


## Appendix nr. 27

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 10– differences between age groups

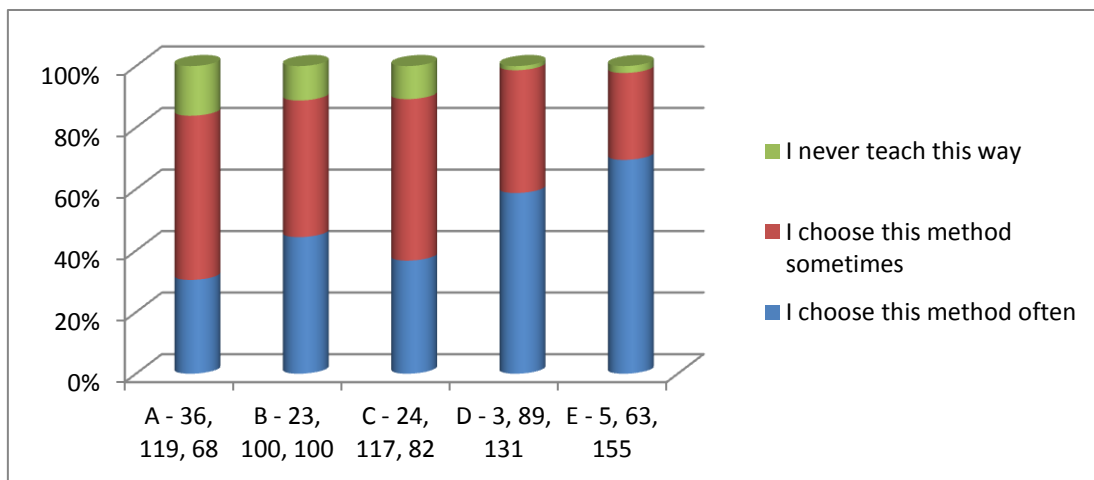


## Appendix nr. 28



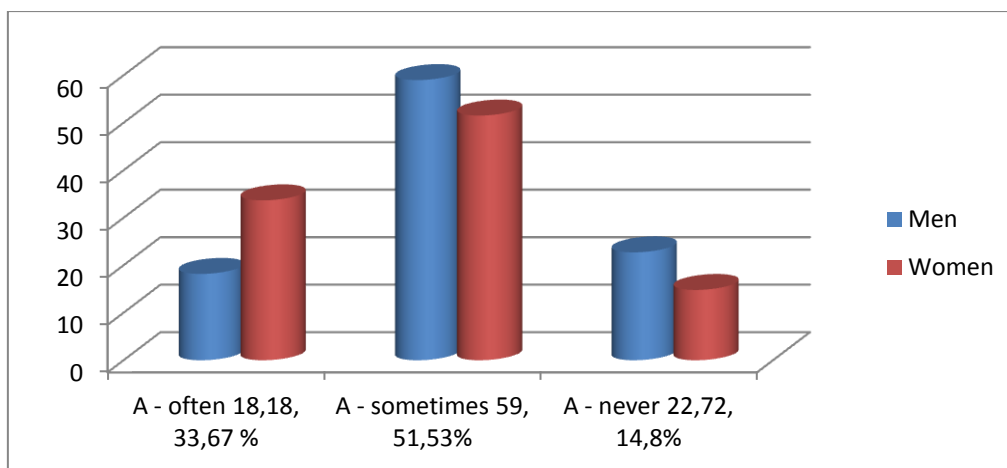
## Appendix nr. 29

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 12



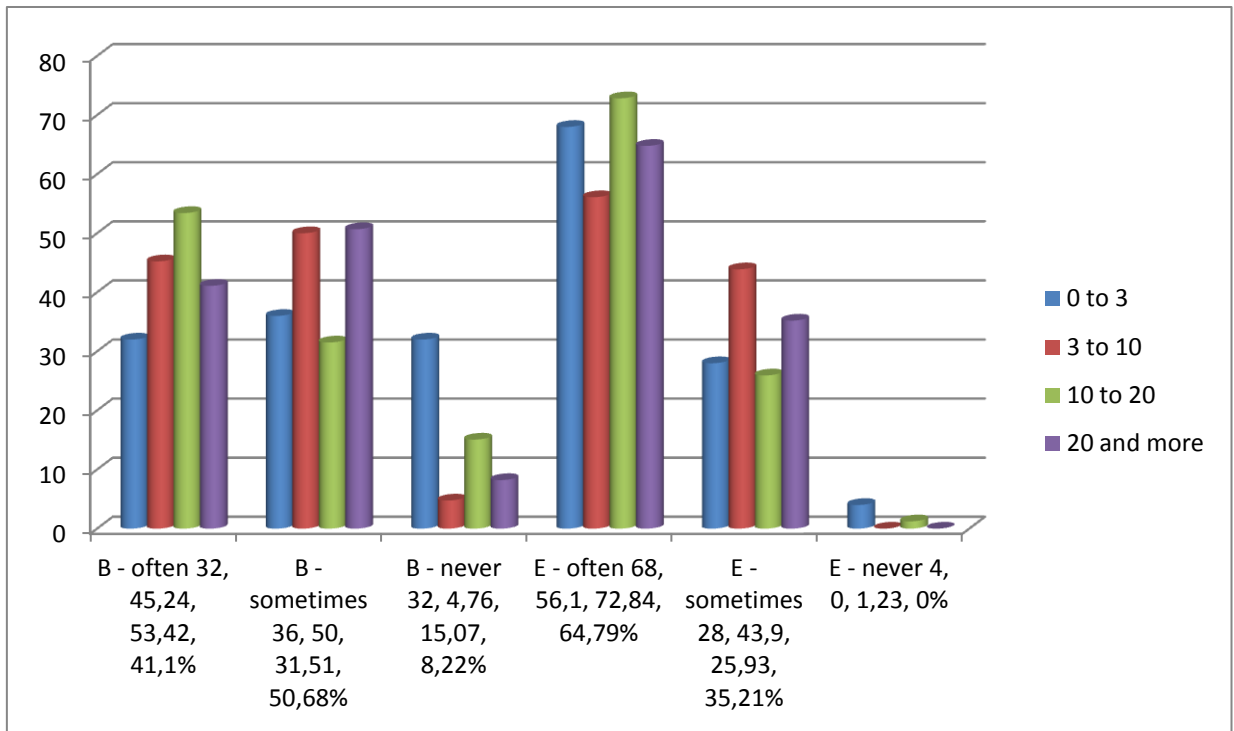
## Appendix nr. 30

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 12 - men's and women's answers distinction – option A



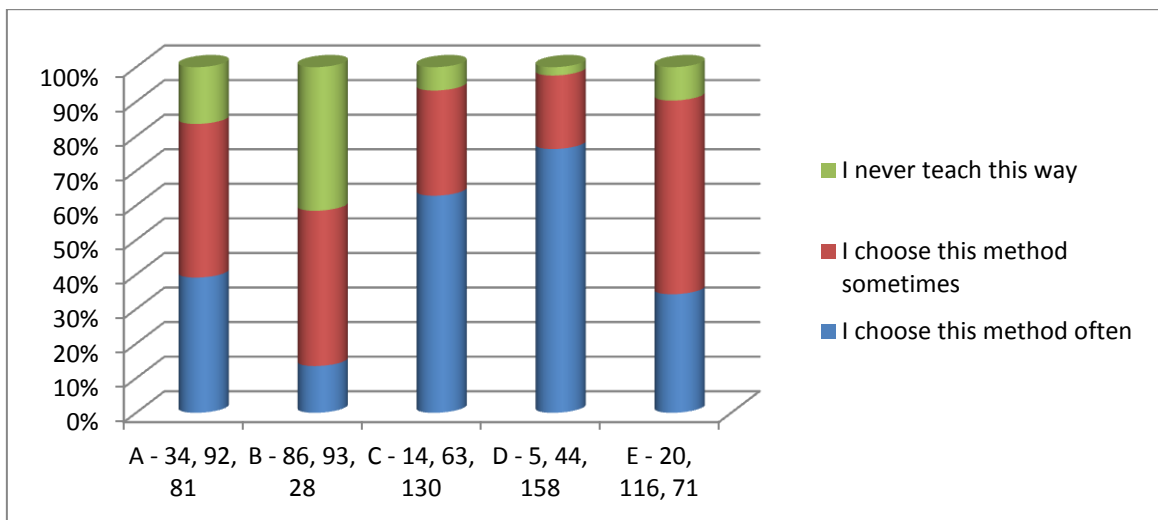
## Appendix nr. 31

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 12 – differences between age groups – options B, E



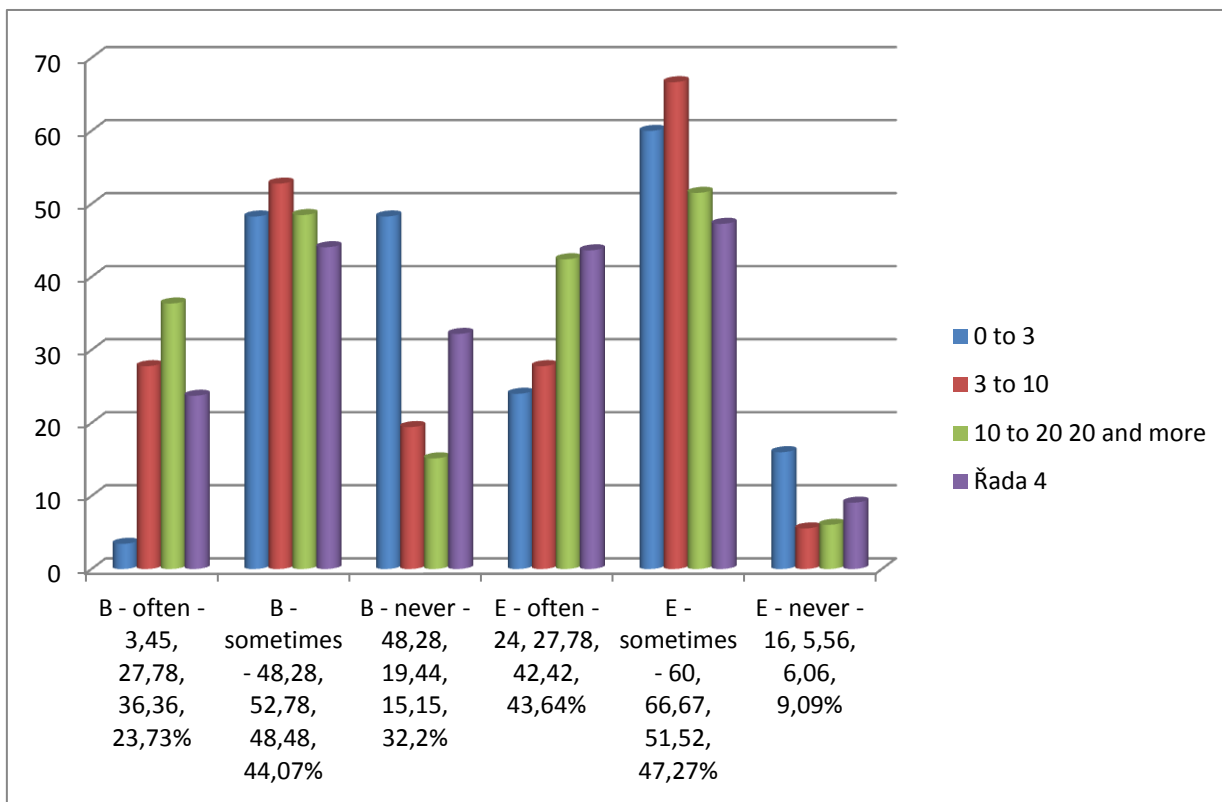
## Appendix nr. 32

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 13



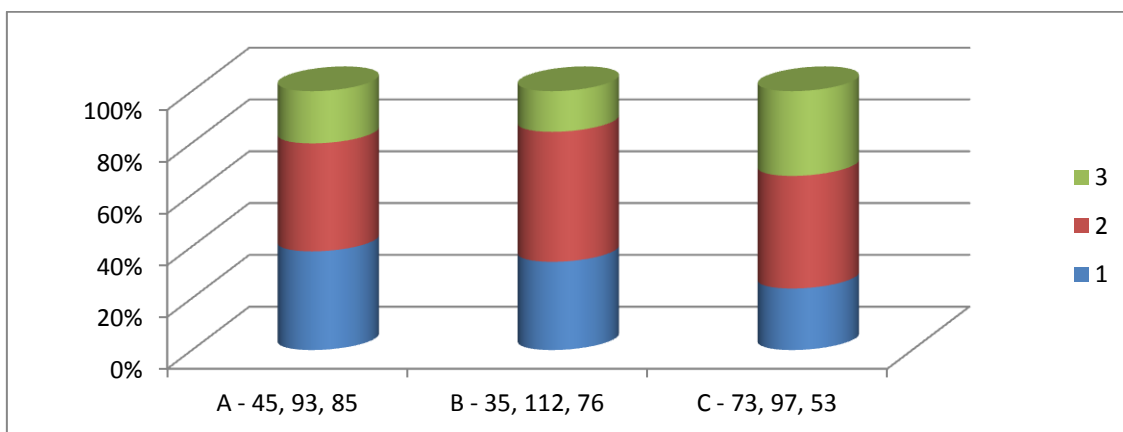
## Appendix nr. 33

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 13 – differences between age groups – options B, E



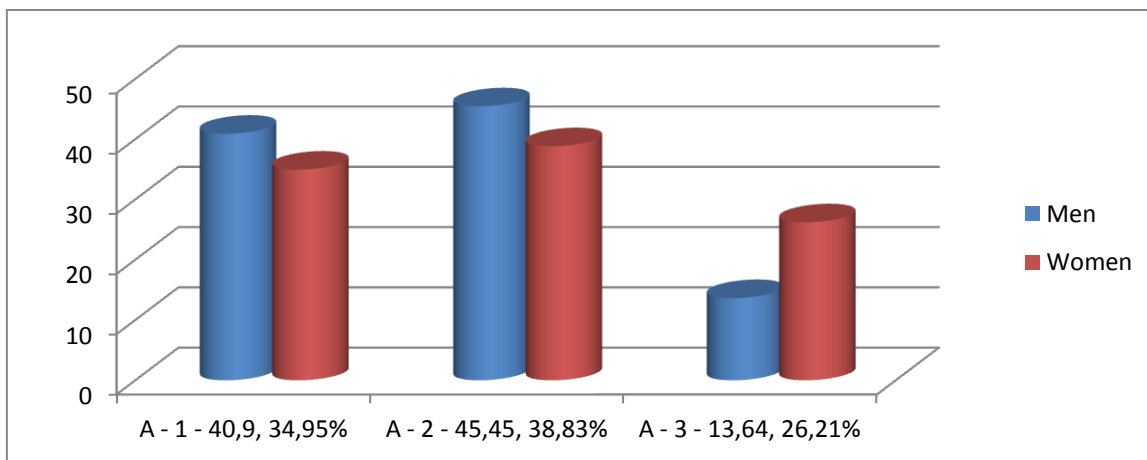
## Appendix nr. 34

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 14



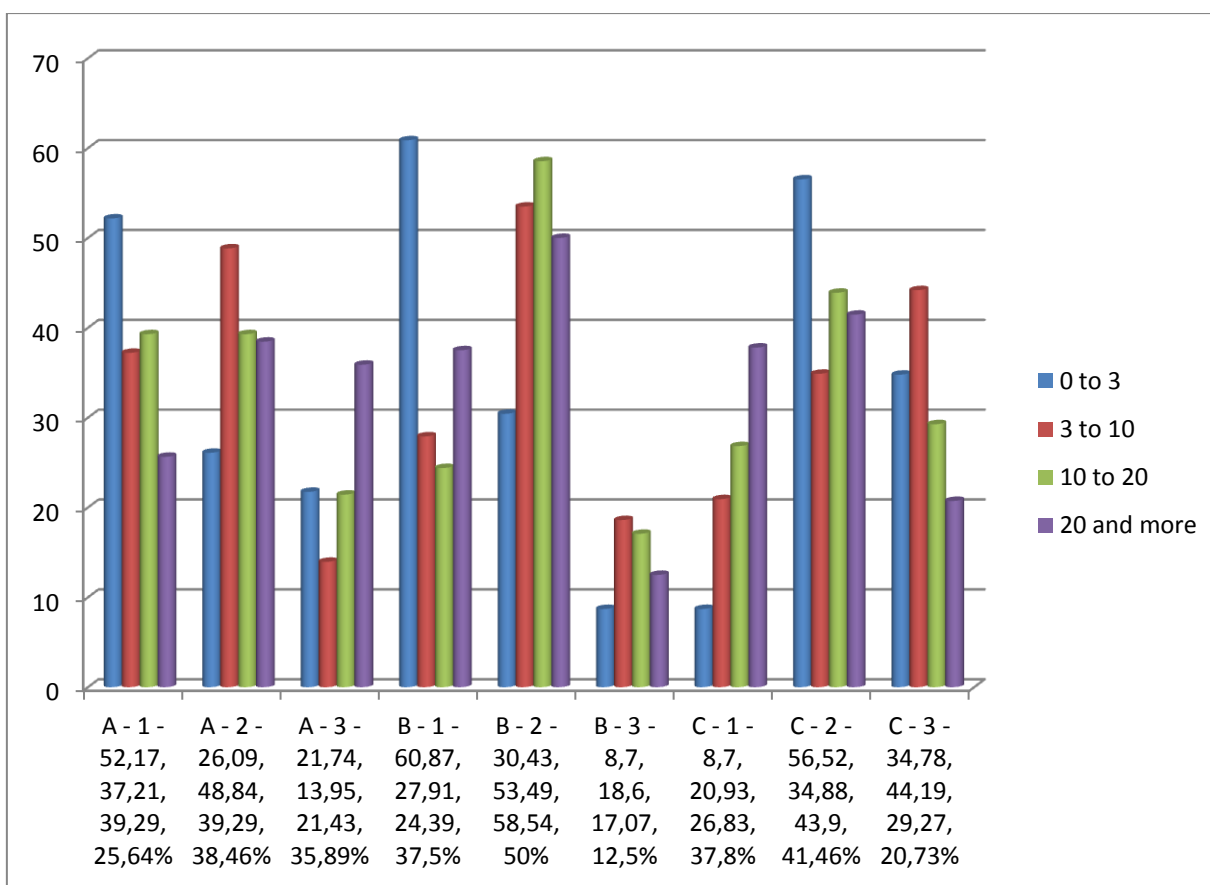
## Appendix nr. 35

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 14 - men's and women's answers distinction – option A



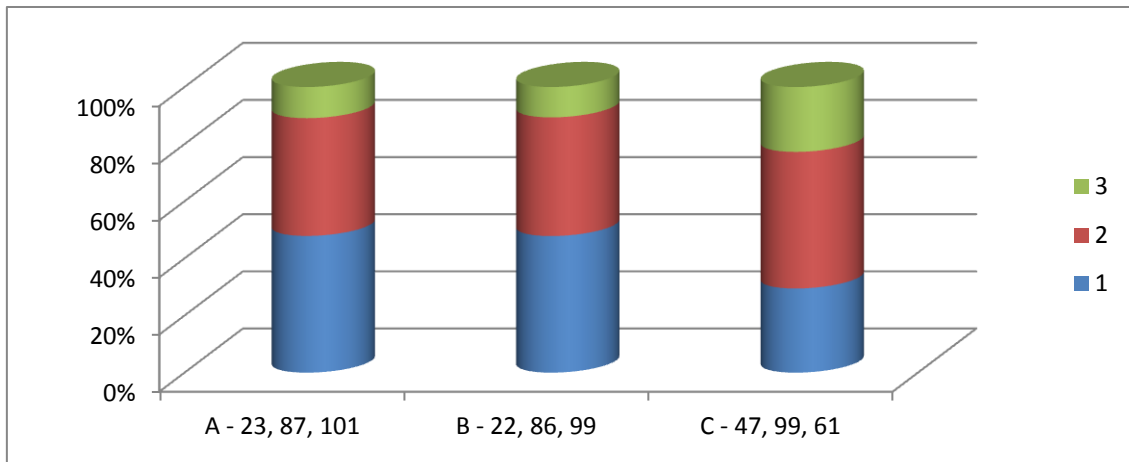
## Appendix nr. 36

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 14 – differences between age groups



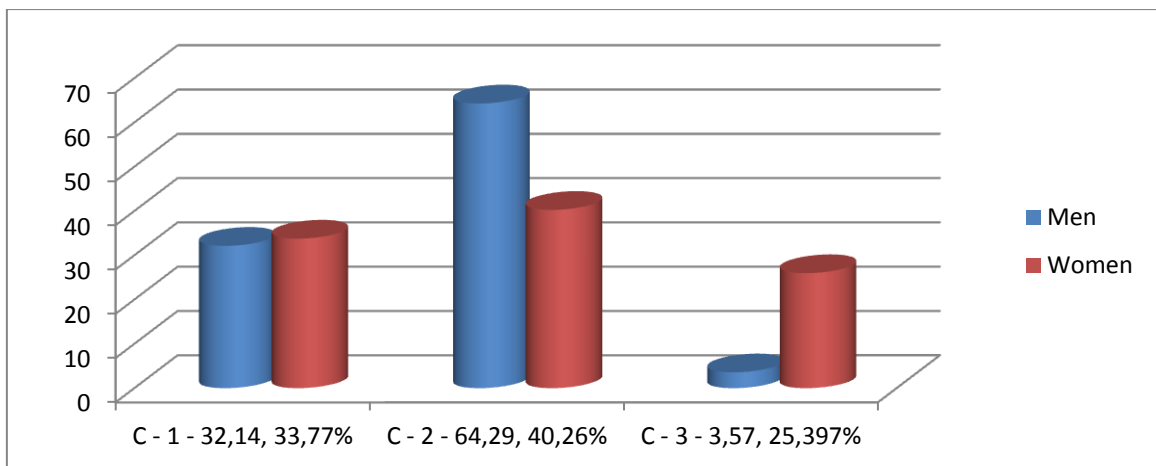
## Appendix nr. 37

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 15



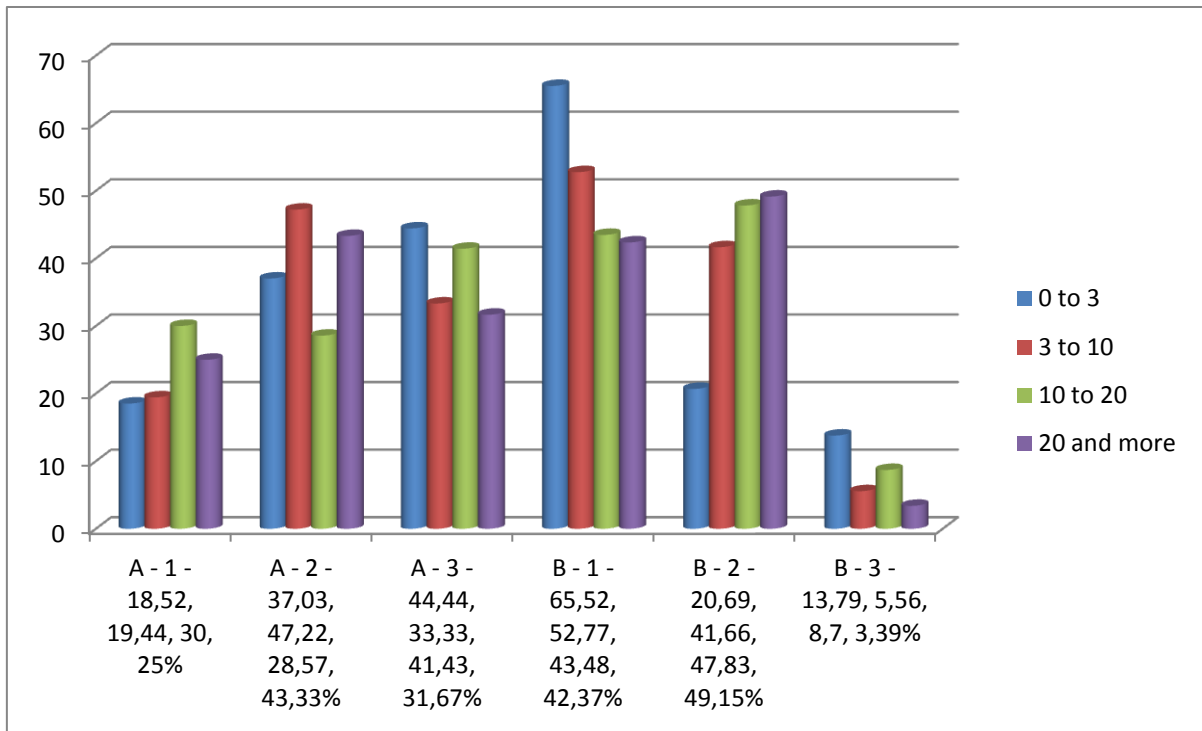
## Appendix nr. 38

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 15 - men's and women's answers distinction – option C

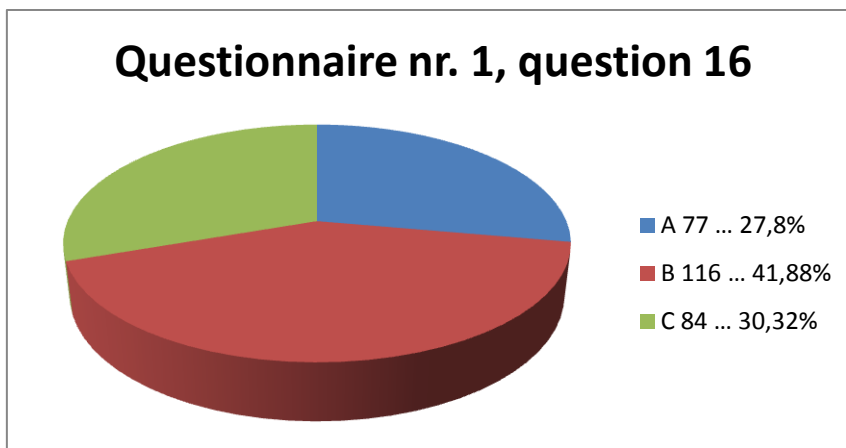


## Appendix nr. 39

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 15 – differences between age groups – options A, B



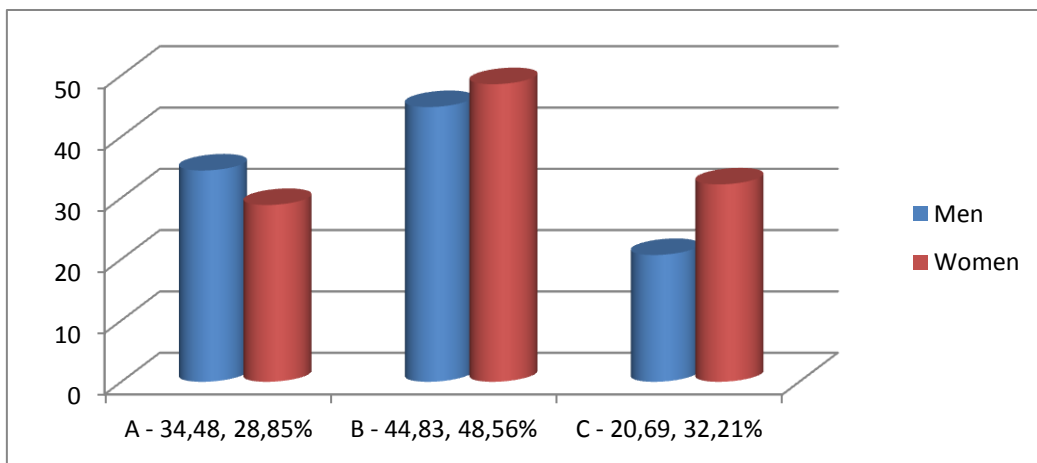
## Appendix nr. 40





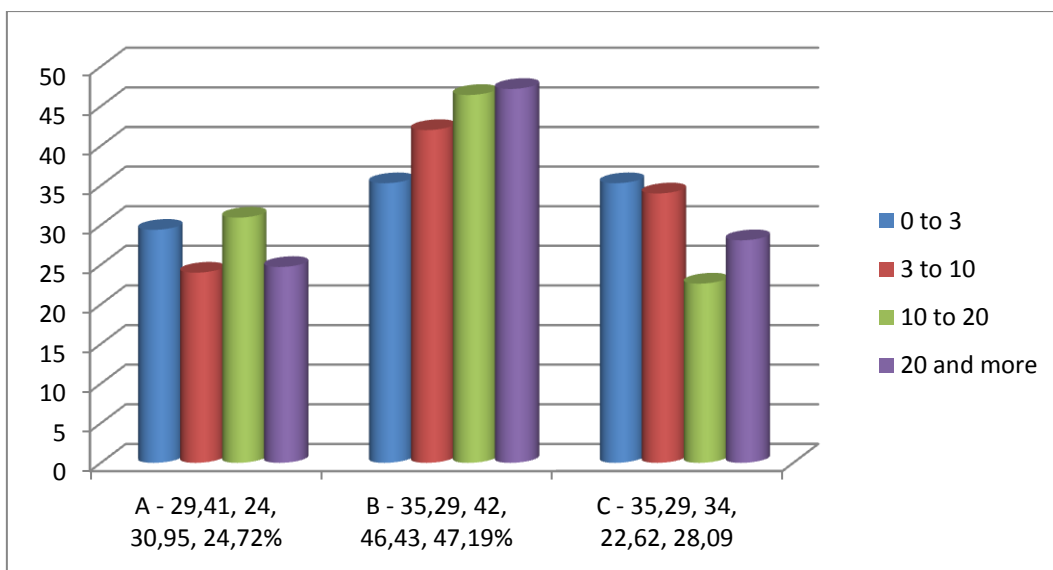
## Appendix nr. 41

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 16 - men's and women's answers distinction



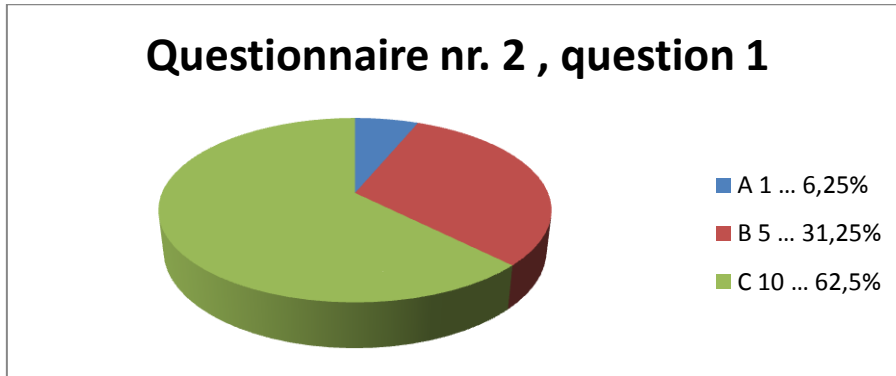
## Appendix nr. 42

Questionnaire nr. 1, question 16 – differences between age groups

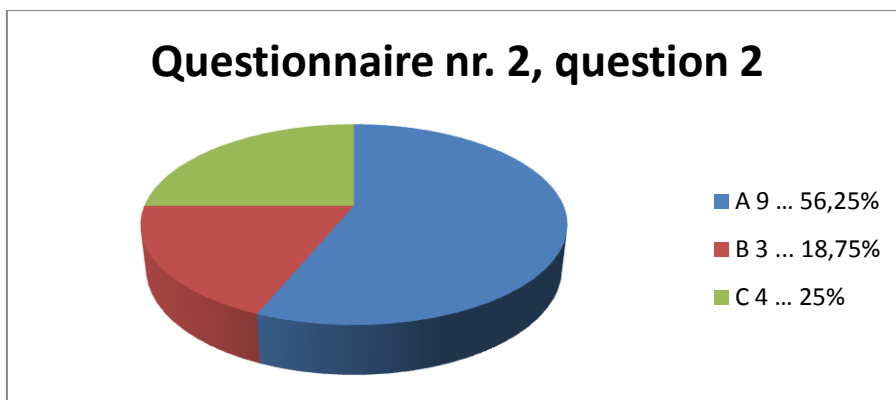


## Graphs of the questionnaire number 2

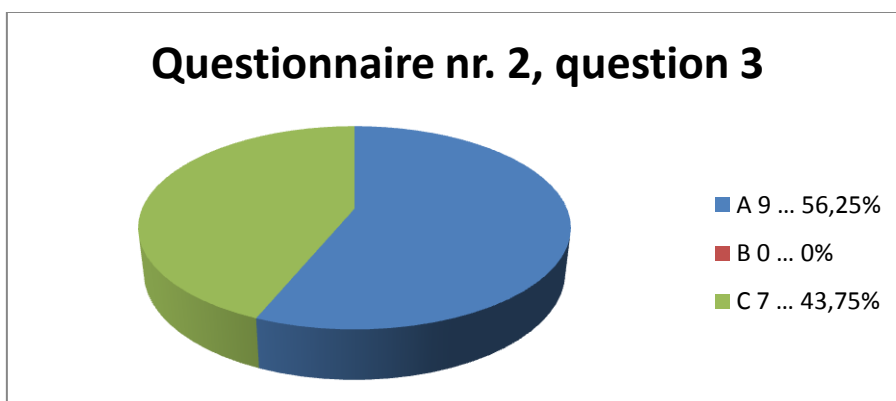
### Appendix nr. 43



### Appendix nr. 44



### Appendix nr. 45



# Resumé

Diplomová práce se zaměřovala na popis metodologických přístupů pro vyučování gramatiky a na tipy, které mohou v praxi s obtížemi spojenými s učením gramatiky pomoci. Výzkumná část zkoumala využití metodologických přístupů a názory dotazovaných učitelů. Také obsahovala názory žáků. Bylo zjištěno, že čeští učitelé pracující na základních školách mají zdravý přístup k výuce a snaží se využívat velké množství metod, ale že čeští žáci druhého stupně základních škol rádi zůstávají pasivní, i když jsou jejich představy o výuce jazyka v rozporu s jejich pasivním přístupem.

# Anotace

<b>Jméno a příjmení:</b>	Bc. Kamila Dudková
<b>Katedra:</b>	Anglického jazyka
<b>Vedoucí práce:</b>	Silvie Válková, Mgr. Ph.D.
<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2012

<b>Název práce:</b>	Determination and possibility of usage of different techniques of teaching English grammar in Czech schools
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	Determination and possibility of usage of different techniques of teaching English grammar in Czech schools
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Diplomová práce objasňuje vyučování gramatiky, specifika a způsoby tohoto vyučování a různá gramatická cvičení, která jsou při výuce často používána. Výzkum potvrdil časté využití těchto cvičení v českém školství a objasnil názory žáků a učitelů na výuku gramatiky anglického jazyka. Učitelé gramatické aspekty jazyka procvičují často. Žáci od výuky očekávají praktické užití jazyka spíše než teoretické poznatky o jazyce. Přestože náročnější cvičení považují za vhodnější, raději zůstávají pasivní.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	Gramatika, typy gramatiky, didaktické metody, charakteristika žáků, druhy chyb, oprava chyb, gramatická cvičení, cvičení drilem
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	The diploma work clarifies teaching of grammar, its specifics and ways and various grammar exercises which are often used. The research confirmed that Czech teachers use these exercises often and revealed the opinions of pupils and teachers about grammar teaching. Teachers often use practice of grammar aspects. Pupils expect to gain practical skills more than theoretic knowledge about the language. Although they consider more demanding exercises more useful they rather stay passive during lessons.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	Grammar, types of grammar, methodology approaches, characteristics of learners, errors and mistakes, correction of mistakes, grammar exercises, drill exercises
<b>Přílohy vázané v práci:</b>	45 příloh příloha 1 – dotazník č. 1 příloha 2 – dotazník č. 2 přílohy 3 – 42 – grafy k dotazníku č. 1 přílohy 43 – 45 – grafy k dotazníku č. 2
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	80 stran
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	Anglický