

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

Pedagogická fakulta

Katedra anglického jazyka

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II. ročník – magisterské studium

Obor: Učitelství anglického a českého jazyka pro 2. stupeň základních škol

**Teaching the present simple and continuous at
lower secondary schools**

Magisterská práce

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OLOMOUC 2013

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně pod vedením Mgr. Blanky Babické, Ph.D., a uvedla v ní veškerou použitou literaturu i ostatní zdroje uvedené v seznamu použité literatury.

Souhlasím současně s užitím práce ke studijním účelům.

V Olomouci dne

.....
podpis

A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t

I would like to thank Mgr. Blanka Babická, Ph.D., for her for her support, advice and valuable comments on the content and style of my diploma thesis and especially for her patience. I would also like to thank her for taking over my diploma thesis in the nick of time. Furthermore, I would like to thank my family for support.

Abstract

Learning languages is very important in modern society. In this diploma thesis, it is dealt with teaching the present simple and continuous. The inductive and deductive approaches along with the three stages of grammar teaching are described. Moreover, the typical mistakes of learners are listed. The research presents the analysis of the questionnaires filled out by the teachers and learners from two primary schools. On top of that, the analysis of coursebooks used at primary schools is made to discover if there is enough material for learners to practise.

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Introduction

A lot of English learners have many problems with understanding the system of English tenses, especially with understanding the difference between the present simple and continuous form and their meaning in the Czech language. When they learn the present simple and continuous, they sometimes do not realize the core meaning, especially of the present continuous. They also make mistakes when forming them. It was my teaching experience what has encouraged me to write about this topic.

The thesis deals with what grammar is as well as with approaches and methods used in grammar teaching. Moreover, the thesis includes a description of the three stages of grammar teaching along with the models of grammar teaching, which are the PPP and the TTT models. The meaning of the present simple and continuous and the typical mistakes of learners in terms of the present simple and continuous can be found in the last chapter of the theoretical part. The research part provides a survey among teachers and learners and also the analysis of two coursebooks used at primary and lower secondary schools, Project and Look!.

For the research part, which was conducted at two primary and lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic, these research questions were defined:

- 1) Do learners at primary and lower secondary schools think they know how to form and when to use the present simple and continuous correctly?
- 2) What type of practice do learners at primary and lower secondary schools prefer?
- 3) Do learners at primary and lower secondary schools think that they do have enough opportunities to practise the present simple and continuous?
- 4) Do teachers at primary and lower secondary schools prefer the deductive approach to teaching grammar to the inductive one?
- 5) Do coursebooks used at primary and lower secondary schools use the deductive approach?
- 6) What types of activities do coursebooks used at primary and lower secondary schools prefer?

The method used was a questionnaire analysis. The survey concerns teachers and learners. Furthermore, I also analysed the coursebooks used at primary and lower secondary school. After the analysis, solutions for how to make lessons more attractive for learners are suggested.

This diploma thesis can enrich teaching practice in that it analyses what the most common mistakes of learners are, what types of exercises learners prefer, what approach teachers use, and what approach is used in the Project and Look! coursebooks, the books which are used at primary and lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic. It also analyses these coursebooks from the point of view of the type of exercises and suggests what teachers might add into their teaching so that a lesson is simultaneously enjoyable, enriching, and communicative.

It has been decided to use the term *continuous form* instead of *progressive* because, after the analysis of the Project and Look! coursebooks, it has been found that *continuous* is the term which learners at primary and lower secondary schools are taught.

1 Language learning

In the world where people are living now it is more than necessary to learn foreign languages. They are needed at work, at school, in every-day communication. Languages are everywhere, including TV and the internet. People have different reasons for learning a new language – they want to get a better job, they need it when studying, they want to learn it for pleasure, for example, when watching movies. Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 1) says that “*both from a contemporary and a historical perspective, bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception*”. One way or the other, the want for learning comes from motivation – either intrinsically or extrinsically (mentioned below).

1.1 Motivation and factors influencing motivation

Intrinsic motivation comes from people themselves, they want to learn it for pleasure. The other type of motivation, *extrinsic*, comes from the environment, such as who people have to learn a language because it is needed for the job they want (Harmer, 1991, p. 4).

There are also many factors which affect the motivation of a learner. These can include: the teacher, physical condition, age, the method of teaching or learning, and other people sharing the acquisition process in a classroom. (Harmer, 1991, p. 5, 6). All these factors are closely related to whether the student succeeds or not and are very important within the learning process.

Teachers have a great influence on the motivation of learners. Some of the ways of motivating learners can be: providing entertaining and meaningful tasks, active involvement, and plenty of encouragement. (Wright, 1987, p. 53).

1.2 Components of language learning

The language (English in our case) consists of three basic components – grammar (structure), pronunciation (phonology), and vocabulary (lexis). These three components should be included in a language course (Ur, 1991, p. 46, Scrivener, 1994, p. 20). Grammar is very controversial from the point of view of how much to focus on it in the process of language teaching. There are many opinions about it, some of them are for the importance of grammar,

and some of them are against. For example, Krashen (1987, p. 120) says that grammar acquisition is important, and not learning as such.

When learners start their language learning process, they need to be involved in four parts of teaching – they need to be exposed to it, they need to understand its meaning, they need to understand its form or structure, and then they need as much practice as possible (Harmer, 1998, p. 24). All these four parts are essential when learning a new language. There would be no learning without enough practice and without any knowledge of the structure of a new language.

1.3 Summary

The point of this chapter was to summarise the reasons why people need to learn a foreign language in the modern world. Additionally, they are influenced by motivation which can be:

- Intrinsic: coming from people themselves.
- Extrinsic: coming from the environment around them.

There are, of course, many factors influencing motivation. They can be, among others, teachers, physical condition, age, the method of teaching or learning, and people sharing the acquisition process in a classroom with each other.

In addition, when learners learn a language, they need four aspects – to be in interaction with a foreign language as much as possible, to understand its meaning, to understand its form or structure to be able to use it, and to have as much practice as possible. There are three basic components of learning grammar, which are grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

In conclusion, all these components (including motivation) need to be included in the learning process so that it is successful, but a big part of that success depends on motivation.

2 History

In history, there existed, and still exist, some methods and approaches to language teaching differing in various aspects. According to Krashen (1987, p. 126), these methods belong to the group of “*present-day teaching methods*” because they were used either in the 20th or the 21st century.

2.1 Grammar-Translation

This model of teaching has been the most common for many years and it has become the basis for modern methods of teaching. It is based on analysis of the language and comparing it with the mother tongue. Many practitioners think that analysing the grammar will help learners to master the language because they find out how the language is constructed (Harmer, 1998, p. 30). “*Increased opportunities for communication among Europeans created a demand for oral proficiency in foreign languages*” (Richards, Rodgers, 1986, p. 5). But more recently, the Grammar-Translation method has declined in popularity because the emphasis on translation was seen as a barrier to such oral proficiency.

2.2 Audio-Lingualism

Harmer (1998, p. 30) and Richards, Rodgers (1986, p. 45) agree that this method is based on forming habits of using the structures. Teachers in the past thought that “*students would acquire good language habits*” (Harmer, 1998, p. 31). However, this method was also criticised because learning a language was about more than just learning phrases (Harmer, 1998, p. 31).

2.3 Cognitive-Code

This approach is similar, in some points, with grammar-translation. “*It attempts to help the student in all four skills, speaking and listening in addition to reading and writing* (Krashen, 1987, p. 132). In comparison to the grammar-translation, the cognitive-code does not focus only on translation of structures.

2.4 Direct Method

The focus of this method is using classroom language, classroom language of teachers and language used in exercises as an object language. It is also focused on the inductive style of teaching (see next chapter) (Krashen, 1987, p. 135) because “*the goal of the instruction is for the students to guess, or work out, the rules of the language*” (Krashen, 1987, p. 135).

2.5 Total Physical Response

This method is “*built around the coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity*” (Richards, Rodgers, 1986, p. 87). This means that learners learn a language in exposure to a physical activity.

2.6 Suggestopedia

The method is focused on teachers reading a text as the main activity; teachers use emotion and artistry in their intonation (Krashen, 1987, p. 142). “*The most conspicuous characteristics of Suggestopedia are the decoration, furniture, and arrangement of the classroom, the use of music, and the authoritative behaviour of the teacher* (Richards, Rodgers, 1986, p. 142). A suggestopedia based lesson has three stages – discussion of previous material, presentation of new material and listening to relaxing music (Harmer, 2001, p. 90).

2.7 Natural approach

The principles of this method were as following: learners were provided with instructions only in the target language, teachers taught only real-life sentences and vocabulary, the inductive approach (mentioned below) was mostly used, teachers used a lot of visual prompts to teach vocabulary, focus was put on pronunciation and grammar (Richards, Rodgers, 1986, p. 10).

From these methods and approaches, the methods used in today’s grammar teaching evolved (see the following chapters).

2.8 Summary

This chapter has given a brief history of various methods which differed in their approach to teaching. They were:

- Grammar-Translation focused on translating and comparing the structure with the mother tongue.
- Audio-Lingualism focused on acquiring learning habits.
- Cognitive-Code focused on including all four skills in learning – speaking, listening, writing, and reading.
- Direct Method focused on classroom language and the inductive style of teaching.
- Total Physical Response focused on learning a language through physical activity.
- Suggestopedia focused on teachers' reading using artistry and dynamic intonation.
- Natural Approach focused on teaching learners real-life sentences only in the target language.

As a result, all these methods became the basis of modern teaching methods which are currently used in foreign language lessons.

3 Grammar

Grammar is an inseparable part of teaching a language. It is what gives a sentence structure so that it is understandable (see below).

3.1 What is grammar

Many authors, such as Ur (1991), Thornbury (1999), Cowan (2008), and Yule (2010) agree that grammar is defined as the set of rules according to which words are changed and combined together in a sentence so that a sentence is formed both correctly and meaningfully. Their definition corresponds to the definition of grammar which can be found in the Common European Framework of References for Languages, that grammar is “*the set of principles governing the assembly of elements into meaningful labelled and bracketed strings (sentences)*” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 112, 113). These rules determine where a word should be positioned in a sentence and what form it should have. For example, a preposition in an affirmative sentence comes before a noun; there is a concordance between a noun in the subject position and a verb in the position of a predicate; the past form of the verb *work* is *worked*. Harmer defines grammar as “*the rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences*” (Harmer, 1987, p. 1). “*Understanding how grammar rules work and how the elements in a sentence relate to each other can sometimes be facilitated through the use of diagrams.*” (Cowan, 2008, p. 3), meaning that according to this definition, they show the arrangement of the elements in a sentence arranged strictly according to the rules of English grammar. These diagrams are arranged into “tree diagrams”. The following two examples are of both a grammatically correct and incorrect sentence. Incorrect sentences are marked with an *asterisk* *: The examples were inspired by Yule (Yule, 2010, p. 81).

We are at school. [1]

* We is at school. [2]

The first example sentence is grammatically correct. The personal pronoun is in the position of the subject and it has a concordance with the verb which follows. The preposition comes before the second noun. The second sentence is not grammatically correct because there is no agreement between the personal pronoun *we* and the verb.

3.2 Grammar structure and meaning

When speaking about grammar, we have to mention two terms – *structure* (form) and *meaning*. *Structure* is the elements (morphemes) put together to form a larger unit or “*a specific instance of grammar*” (Ur, 1996, p. 75). For example, *do* and *did*, *walk* and *walks*, *dog* and *dogs*, *tall* and *tallest*. All of these forms appear in a different environment within a sentence, In a sentence such as *he walks his dog*, the ending –s in the verb is added because the verb is 3rd person singular.

However, there are sentences which are grammatically correct but that do not convey any understandable meaning. *Meaning* is, then, the message which a sentence gives and which other people understand. Another aspect of meaning is that we need to know, for example, why we use the plural form of a noun in a sentence and what exactly it means when used in a sentence. In the following examples, both correct and incorrect sentences from the point of view of a meaning can be seen. The examples were inspired by Yule (2010, p. 113).

My father writes poetry. [1]

* My cow is my poetry. [2]

In the first example, we understand that it is my father who writes poetry. In the second example, there is a lack of meaning because we cannot imagine how a cow can be poetry.

3.3 Grammatical competence

Every learner possesses grammatical competence. Within the learning process, learners need to use their grammar competence which is “*the ability to understand and express meaning by producing and recognising well-formed phrases and sentences in accordance with these principles (as opposed to memorising and reproducing them as fixed formulae)*” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 113). All learners need this ability to be able to express or understand the forms of what is being communicated in both speech and writing.

This competence does not concern the fixed phrases which learners learn by heart and which, afterwards, use in communication. Grammatical competence is connected with knowing the rules of grammar and *“if learners can demonstrate that they “know” the rules, then, they must surely possess grammatical competence* (Tarone, Yule, 1989, p. 69).

As far as the learners at primary schools are concerned (in 6th up to 9th grade on which this diploma thesis is focused), the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages states what their level of grammatical competence at primary school is supposed to be. This level is A1 and A2 (A1 when they start 6th grade and A2 when they finish 9th grade and are about to start studying at primary school). These two levels which are shown in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages state that from the point of view of grammar:

A1 – *“shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire”* (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 114).

A2 – *“uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes – for example tends to mix up tenses and forget to mark agreement; nevertheless, it is usually clear what he/she is trying to say”* (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 114).

From these two descriptions, it can be seen that learners at primary schools are supposed to be able to use very simple structures and to form very simple sentences.

3.4 What learning grammar involves

As already mentioned above in the subchapter about structure and form, it is not only meaning that learners learn in the learning process. It is, therefore, necessary to include what learning grammar actually involves. Ur (1988, p. 6) states that it involves *“how to recognize the examples of the structure when spoken, how to identify its written form, how to produce both its spoken and written form, how to understand its meaning in context, and produce meaningful sentences using it themselves”*. So it is not only teaching the form or meaning but also how to recognize different aspects of language usage in real-life communication. It is general knowledge that a lot of learners have difficulties with language when interacting with other people. It is very difficult for them to connect the form which they have learned with what they hear. This is, in my opinion, because so far they have practiced the situations which teachers have prepared. It is,

therefore, important for teachers to prepare as many useful, everyday-life communication activities as possible and get learners involved in them so that learners are successful.

Pinter (2006, p. 83) says that “*grammar emerges from meaningful contexts embedded in appropriate lexis and there is some sort of meaningful communication that leads to focus on grammar*”. What Pinter means is that grammar should not be taught in isolation; vocabulary is also needed for learning grammar.

3.5 Summary

To sum up, grammar is the set of rules which we need to form a sentence which has both a correct structure and understandable meaning. We have to be careful about forming a sentence in English because it can be grammatically correct but lack meaning. English language also has very strict rules for forming a sentence. In teaching language, this is important to remember so that we do not teach learners sentences which are content empty.

All this happens under the influence of grammatical competence which is an ability possessed by all learners. This ability helps them put the different elements of a language together to form sentences which are grammatically correct and meaningful. There is a rule that if learners are able to show that they understand the rules and that they know them, they must possess grammatical competence. Learners at primary schools possess a basic level of grammatical competence which is shown in the fact that they are able to form basic sentences and simple structures. What learners need to know at A2 level in terms of grammar can be found in the Common European Framework of Reference.

Finally, learning grammar does not only involve learning structure and meaning, but also learning to recognize both spoken and written forms in practice, to produce both forms, to recognize what a person speaking or a text being read is conveying, and to produce a sentence which has an understandable meaning. An important part of learning grammar is vocabulary because grammar cannot be taught in isolation; practice and examples are equally important.

4 Approaches and methods of grammar teaching

In the beginning of this chapter, the two approaches of teaching grammar are explained. They differ in the way grammar is presented to learners. Throughout the years, there have been many approaches towards grammar teaching, some of them using the mother tongue for translating and explaining grammar. This has changed since then into the form we know. “*Both inductive and deductive learning are learning*” (Krashen, 1987, p. 113) meaning that they have nothing to do with subconscious acquisition of language.

4.1 Approach, method, technique

Before describing what the deductive and inductive approaches are, it is necessary to distinguish between the terms *approach*, *method* and *technique*. These terms are arranged hierarchically with the term *approach* at the highest level and *technique* lowest.

An approach is described as “*a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught...*” (Richards, Rodgers, 1986, p. 15). So an approach is used for description of what language teaching and learning includes.

A method is described as “*an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no parts of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach*” (Richards, Rodgers, 1986, p. 15), meaning that a method is more of a practical characteristic.

A technique is “*implementational – that which actually takes place in a classroom*” (Richards, Rodgers, 1986, p. 15). This means that a technique is the practical use of both an approach and a method, the concrete application. In the following two subchapters, the focus will be put on the two main approaches in grammar teaching.

4.2 Deductive approach

Scott Thornbury (1999, p. 29) uses the term *rule-driven* learning for this approach to grammar. This approach is used by most teachers, not only in the Czech Republic but all over the

world. It is characterized by immediate grammar presentation and, as Thornbury (1999, p. 29) says, with *“the presentation of the rule and is followed by examples in which the rule is applied”*. This means that teachers explain all the grammar rules and structures needed for understanding, provide a lot of practice activities until *“the students are familiar with it”* (Scrivener, 1994, p. 114) and prepare as many activities as possible. *“The teacher’s role... is to provide a language-rich environment in which the learners meet comprehensible language as they engage in activities of various kinds.”* (Cross, 1992, p. 27). This approach is cognitive because learners, at first, learn grammar and then they learn speaking and writing (Cross, 1992, p. 27).

This approach is usually associated with the Grammar-Translation type of lesson (mentioned in chapter 1) because it *“took grammar as the starting point for instruction”* (Thornbury, 1999, p. 21). A Grammar-Translation lesson is a lesson which *“began with an explicit statement of the rule, followed by exercises involving translation into and out of the mother tongue”* (Thornbury, 1999, p. 21). The biggest problem of this type of lesson, however, was that learners did not have many opportunities to use the language communicatively. Grammar was taught in their mother tongue, every sentence was translated into their mother tongue, and the focus was put on writing and reading. Speaking was hardly given any attention. But in comparison to the Grammar-Translation method, the deductive method encourages the use of the foreign language as the language for explaining and giving instructions, sentences are also not translated into the mother tongue (Thornbury, 1999, p. 29, 30). Thornbury (1999, p. 30) calls this method *“a new, improved version of Grammar-Translation”*. Examples of grammar books using the foreign language as the language for grammar explanation include Murphy, Swan, and Parrot.

4.2.1 Advantages of deductive approach

The list below shows some of the advantages that the deductive approach offers:

- no need for teachers’ imagination,
- not time-consuming for teachers,
- more time for practise for learners in the classroom,
- learners are used to this approach,

- expectation of learners,.
- dealing with points consecutively (Thornbury, 1999, p. 30).

4.2.2 Disadvantages of deductive approach

The list below shows some of the disadvantages of the deductive approach:

- interaction for learners,
- a boring lesson for both learners and teachers,
- rules and structures are hard to remember for learners,
- grammar is the only focus with no attention on speaking,
- demotivation of learners (Thornbury, 1999, p. 30).

4.3 Inductive approach

This approach can be also called *rule-discovery* as called by Thornbury (1999, p. 49). It means that learners are provided with as much material as possible without explaining the grammar beforehand, and they then have to deduce the rules and structures according to the material given. They *discover* the rules and structure on their own by studying examples. A typical example of the rule-discovery approach is when learners are in a foreign language environment and therefore exposed to as much language as possible and it is up to them to deduce (or discover) the rules and structures from what they hear. It works in a similar way in a class where learners are provided with the same conditions (Harmer, 1987, p. 29).

4.3.1 Advantages of inductive approach

Just like the deductive approach, the inductive approach has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are:

- focus on learners – this approach is focused more on learners. Because teachers do not explain the grammar first, learners have to deduce and “to find” the rules on their own. Teachers “*make sure that they are concentrating fully, using their cognitive powers*” (Harmer, 1987, p. 29),
- autonomy – the more learners have to discover on their own, the more autonomous they are (Cross, 1987, p. 28),
- activity – learners have to be more active in lessons based on the deductive approach because they have to make effort to understand the rules from the context by themselves (Thornbury, 1999, p. 54).

4.3.2 Disadvantages of inductive approach

- a lot of preparation and demands on teachers and their time,
- a lot of time needed for learners to work out the grammar,
- sometimes learners get the rule wrong and there is little control over the whole class,
- stressful for learners (Thornbury, 1999, 54, 55).

4.4 Characteristics of an effective lesson

Thornbury (1999, p. 153), Cowan (2008, p. 49), and Harmer (2001, p. 23, 24) agree on an efficient grammar lesson by listing the characteristics below. If these rules are not followed, a grammar lesson may be non-appropriate and non-efficient. These rules are:

- context – to teach grammar as part of a context, not as a separate item. If teachers wish to teach some rules out of context, they have to ensure that they have contextualized it as much as possible.
- use – to provide learners with opportunities where they can practice a certain piece of grammar. They will forget it almost immediately if it is not practised.

- economy – to shorten the explanation of the rules as much as possible but to be careful that learners understand it.
- relevance – to teach learners the grammar which they do not know rather than to teach them something which they already know, otherwise the time spent on it will not be used wisely.
- nurture – to try to provide learners with the conditions in which learning can take place efficiently.
- appropriacy – teachers should provide learners with the rules in relation to their level, interests, needs, and expectations.

4.5 Characteristics of a good rule

When teaching grammar, good, clear rules should be taught. According to Thornbury (1999, p. 32), the characteristics of a good rule that is understandable for learners are:

- Truth – a rule should be true and should resemble the reality of the mother tongue.
- Limitation – a rule should define the use in its entirety. For example, if teachers explain the use of the present tense, they have to explain in what situations it appears.
- Clarity – a rule has to be as clear as possible so that learners can understand it. Teachers should also explain a grammar rule in an understandable way, without using terminology which learners do not know (Harmer, 1987, p. 18).
- Simplicity – a rule should be explained as simply as possible but in balance with accuracy. Teachers should not focus on explaining all the exceptions which a grammar rule has, as learners will find out on their own as they learn and use the language for a longer period of time.
- Relevance – teachers should explain learners' answers which are relevant to the grammar of their mother tongue.

4.6 Summary

One purpose of this chapter has been to explain the inductive and deductive approach as well as to point out their advantages and disadvantages.

The deductive approach provides learners with an explanation of the grammatical rules and structures and learners are provided with examples to which they can apply the rule and find out if they understand it. Since this approach is not time-consuming, many English teachers prefer this to the inductive approach. The big problem of the deductive approach, however, is that learners can become bored very quickly.

The inductive approach can be used when teachers want to make learners be more active and to work out the rules on their own, but it also depends on the amount of time available in the lesson. Since time is a big problem, especially at Czech primary schools, the inductive approach is often abandoned in favour of the deductive approach. Another big problem is motivating the learners to attempt to deduce the rules themselves rather than letting their classmates work out the rules for them.

However, both approaches can be used successfully if teachers do a lot of careful preparation beforehand. Both of them can be used but in different situations and with different topics. Grammar structures which are the same as in the Czech language can be taught with the inductive approach, while the structures which are different in Czech can be taught with the deductive approach, using translation. Both approaches are needed to teach grammar rules. There are certain rules which teachers should follow if they want to lead a lesson which is helpful for their learners. Otherwise, learners may be confused and the lesson can become useless and pointless.

5 Stages of teaching grammar

The teaching process of grammar is achieved through different stages. They are: presentation, which comprises the introduction and explanation of the grammar; practising, which includes the various activities which help to learn the grammar structures and practise them; and production, where learners are provided with as many possibilities to produce their own sentences and ideas as possible. Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 15) call these three stages *approach, method, and technique*, while Harmer (Harmer, 1998, p. 25, 26) uses *engage, study, and activate* for these three stages. All agree, however, on the content of these three stages. In comparison, Ur uses *presentation, isolation and explanation, practice, and test* (Ur, 1988, p. 7, 9). It can be seen here that in addition to the three basic stages, one more is added, where “learners do tests in order to demonstrate...how well they mastered the material they have been learning” (Ur, 1988, p. 9). Other authors also use a testing stage but not as part of three-stage teaching. Nevertheless, before proceeding to description of the three stages individually, it is necessary to explain what the terms accuracy and fluency are. These two terms are typical for grammar activities in the practice stage and they differ in the level of control from the side of teachers.

5.1 Accuracy

Accuracy is also called “*precision*” (Thornbury, 1999, p. 91), and fluency “*automisation*” (Thornbury, 1999, p. 91). Thornbury (1999, p. 92) states that if learners want to achieve accuracy, they need to focus mainly on the form and less so on meaning. Consequently, it is best to practice accuracy activities when learners are already familiar with the meaning of what they are practising. Bartram and Walton (1991, p. 32) claim that accuracy activities are those which encourage learners to imitate native speakers as much as possible while being watched over by a teacher who is able to give correction where necessary.

As far as accuracy is concerned, according to Thornbury (1999, p. 92), a good accuracy activity should include:

- attention to form
- familiarity

- thinking time
- feedback.

In terms of feedback and error correction, there are ways of correcting mistakes during an accuracy activity: “*repeating, echoing, statement and question, expression, hinting, and reformulation* (Harmer, 2001, p. 106).

5.2 Fluency

Fluency is “*the ability to process language speedily and easily*” (Thornbury, 1999, p. 93) which means that learners are able to use the language automatically. In comparison with accuracy and focusing on form, fluency activities are focused on meaning, placing less emphasis on correction if learners make mistakes in the form. As Bartram and Walton (1991, p. 32) explain, fluency activities focus on communication being free of correction from teachers.

According to Thornbury (1999, p. 93), a good fluency activity involves:

- attention to meaning
- authenticity
- communicative purpose
- chunking
- repetition

In terms of feedback and error correction, a fluency activity should involve “*gentle correction, recording mistakes, and after the event* (Harmer, 2001, p. 107, 108, 109).

5.3 Presentation

Presentation is “*the stage at which students are introduced to the form, meaning and use of a new piece of language*” (Harmer, 1987, p. 17). What teachers need to know before they start

explaining grammar is not only the structure, but also how it is written, what difficulties learners can encounter, the best way of presenting the grammar so that everyone understands it, and the meaning itself (Ur, 1991, p. 81).

What is typical for this stage is that either learners read from a course book or teachers stand in front of the board, talking and explaining (Scrivener, 1994, p. 129). However, this can be very boring as was stated when describing the disadvantages of the deductive approach (chapter 4.2.2). Therefore teachers have to find a balance between explaining and practising, bearing in mind that the more practice students get, the better. Ur (1991, p. 82, 83) gives some characteristics of what should be included in an effective presentation stage:

- both oral and written forms should be involved
- both form and meaning
- many examples put into context, not without a context
- appropriate amount of terminology, depending on the level of learners
- appropriate structure and level of the classroom language
- appropriate balance between accuracy and simplicity.

5.4 Practice

Some authors, such as Ur (1991), Harmer (1987), and Thornbury (1999), agree that knowing grammar does not necessarily mean that it is able to be used well in practise. Therefore, teachers need learners to practise. *“The aim of grammar practice is to get students to learn the structures so thoroughly that they will be able to produce them correctly on their own”* (Ur, 1991, p. 83). Harmer (1998, p. 25) says that this stage *“means any stage at which the construction of language is the main focus”*. Ur (1988, p. 11) uses the definition of this stage that *“the function of a practice procedure is to familiarize learners with the material, not to introduce it.”* There are many activities which help learners to practice newly learnt structures and forms. They vary in the level of control – from very controlled, focused on accuracy where teachers are necessary, to activities that focus on fluency and conveying the student’s ideas and thoughts without the need of teachers.

5.4.1 Characteristics of an effective practice activity

According to Ur (1991, p. 21 – 23), each effective practice activity should show these characteristics:

- validity – a practice activity should focus mainly on the skill being practiced (a grammar rule or structure in the case of this diploma thesis).
- pre-learning – learners should be “pre-taught” the language they are about to practice, if they are not provided with pre-learning, an activity might not be successful.
- volume – learners should practice as much language as possible and be engaged with it and repeatedly if possible.
- success-orientation – a good practice activity should be designed so that learners can complete it successfully.
- heterogeneity – an activity should provide practise of not only the language being taught, but also some other structures that have been taught before.
- teacher assistance – the teachers’ task is to provide clear instructions for an activity so that learners know what to do. Teachers should also correct their learners so that the learners can be sure that they are using the rules correctly.
- interest – an activity should be interesting and learners should not become bored, otherwise the learners’ attention will be lost and the level of success will decrease.

5.4.2 Types of practice activities

Ur (1991, p. 84) divides practice activities into seven types, going from accuracy to fluency:

1. **Awareness** – this type focuses on the structure after it is introduced to learners. For example, learners get a piece of text where their task is to underline any examples of the present tense (example inspired by Ur, 1991, p. 84).

2. Controlled drills – learners are given an exercise where their task is to produce sentences, but the structure is given by teachers or textbooks. For example, learners are given personal data and their task is to introduce themselves, using the personal data given (example inspired by Ur, 1991, p. 84).

3. Meaningful drills – this type is also focused on drills, but learners can choose what piece of information to use, such as a member of their family, then they must say what he or she likes, using the present simple tense (example inspired by Ur, 1991, p. 84).

4. Guided, meaningful practise – learners are given the opportunity to use any vocabulary they want but they still have to follow the given pattern, such as forming conditional clauses.

5. (Structure-based) free sentence composition – learners are provided with a situation and their task is to use the given structure. They still use a controlled structure, such as a description of a picture where people are doing different activities.

6. (Structure-based) discourse composition – learners are given a topic for discussion and they have to use a given structure in at least some examples. For example, a discussion on the topic “what is your favourite food and why?” (example inspired by UR, 1991, p. 84) where learners have to use at least some examples of the structure “I like...”

7. Free discourse – learners are given no specific direction to use the structure, although the given structure can appear.

These types of activities range from accuracy to fluency as already mentioned above. The purpose of practice activities is to build a bridge between knowledge and practice. Ur (1991, p. 83) calls this bridge *a leap* from accurate to fluent production.

Cowan (2008, p. 50, 51) divides these practice activities into three categories:

- 1. Mechanical Exercises** with only one answer.
- 2. Meaningful Exercises** with more than one answer possible.
- 3. Communicative Exercises** imitating a real-life communication.

Practice activities can be divided into written and oral activities as described by Harmer (1987, p. 41, 51; 1991, p. 92, 109). There are different types of activities, which are either straightforward drills or interactive games and puzzles (Harmer, 1987, p. 41). There are many books which help teachers to practice grammar ranging from grammar books by authors such as Swan, Murphy, and McCarthy, to activity books by Hadfield, Maggs, Renshaw, and Case, among others.

5.4.3 Drills

Drill *“is based on the behavioural belief that through repetition we can be trained into automatic responses”* (Scrivener, 1994, p. 118). This means that if teachers repeat a sentence with learners many times in a sequence, learners will “get used to it”. The purpose of drills is to make students learn structures by heart (Cross, 1991, p. 40). As Harmer says, drills are *“usually very controlled and therefore they have limited potential”* (Harmer, 1991, p. 92).

There are also many games in which learners can practise the new structures in an entertaining way and which *“are especially useful for grammar work”* (Harmer, 1987, p. 47). Some authors who produce grammar games and activities books are Doug Case and Jill Hadfield, whose books are also divided into different levels of English.

5.5 Production

During production, teachers provide as many practical exercises as possible. The aim of production is fluency which means *“the ability to process language speedily and easily”* (Thornbury, 1999, p. 93). *“The end of the PPP cycle is production, which some trainers have called immediate creativity”* (Harmer, 2001, p. 81). This means that learners are able to use the grammar structures they have learned instantly, without any need to refer to a coursebook. Harmer (2001, p. 81, 82) provides an example of a group of students to be found in a villa where their task is to describe what they are doing at that moment, being able to use various vocabulary and grammar structures.

During this stage, no correction is needed or is needed just minimally since learners are provided the opportunity to experiment with the language are also needed feedback from the side of teachers¹.

5.6 Overt and covert concepts

These two terms identify two concepts of instruction within teaching grammar. Overt instruction is used more for primary and pre-intermediate students while covert instruction is used more for intermediate students. They are both closely connected to the two approaches described above. Both of these concepts provide the students with grammar explanations either explicitly or implicitly.

Covert instruction is defined as teaching “*where grammatical facts are hidden from the students – even though they are learning the language*” (Harmer, 1987, p. 3), in other words, implicitly. The students have to practice the rules within an exercise, such as a gap-fill exercise. But the teacher draws the students’ attention to the exercise itself rather than to the grammar. The students, then, do not focus on grammar entirely.

On the other hand, overt grammar instruction openly demonstrates and presents the grammatical rules, and teachers are “*explicit and open about the grammar*” (Harmer, 1987, p. 4). In this case, teachers do not rely on students absorbing the grammar. Covert instructions can be used in both the deductive and inductive approach.

In terms of the inductive and deductive approach, the emphasis is put on the instructions within both approaches. In the deductive approach, the instructions are more overt than in the inductive approach because, as already stated above, teachers present grammar in the deductive approach while in the inductive approach they do not (Thornbury, 1999, p. 22).

¹ British Council. *Presentation, Practice and Production*. [online]. [cit.2013-04-01]. Dostupné na WWW: < <http://www.englishonline.org.cn/en/teachers/teaching-articles/plan-preparation/ppp>>.

5.7 Mistake vs. error

Bartram and Walton use the definition that a mistake is “*caused by the learner not putting into practice something they have learned*” (Bartram, Walton, 1991, p. 20) and Harmer explains a mistake as “*slips made while students are simultaneously processing information and they are therefore easier to correct quickly*” (Harmer, 1998, p. 62). All these definitions agree that a mistake is made after having learned a rule and it is a matter of inattention that it was made. Both learners and teachers can correct it very easily. Correction should be given right after a mistake has been made so that learners realize that they have made it.

On the other hand, an error is “*consistent and based on a mis-learned generalization*” (Ur, 1991, p. 85) and “*needs constant attention*” (Harmer, 1998, p. 62). In comparison with a mistake, learners are not able to correct themselves because they have learned a rule incorrectly.

However, it is very difficult for teachers to distinguish between a mistake and an error during a lesson. They can be unsure if learners have made an occasional mistake or understood a rule incorrectly (Ur, 1991, p. 85). Ellis states three main reasons why teachers should focus on mistakes. The first reason is that “*they are a conspicuous feature of learner language, raising the important question of “Why do learners make errors?”*” (Ellis, 1997, p. 15), the second reason is that “*it is useful for teachers to know what errors learners make*” (Ellis, 1997, p. 15), and the third reason is that “*it is possible that making errors may actually help learners to learn when they self-correct the errors they make*” (Ellis, 1997, p. 15). Bartram and Walton (1991, p. 43) point out that it is more effective if learners make the corrections on their own because they are more involved, independent, cooperative, and teachers speak less time. Bartram and Walton (1991, p. 44 – suggest the ways of correcting learners. They are gestures, facial expressions, non-verbal sounds, and simple phrases.

Harmer (2001, p. 99) divides mistakes into three categories – *slips*, *errors*, and *attempts*. *Slips* are “*mistakes which students can correct themselves*” (Harmer, 2001, p. 99), *errors* are “*mistakes which they cannot correct themselves*” (Harmer, 2001, p. 99) and *attempts* are “*when a student tries to say something but does not yet know the correct way of saying it*” (Harmer, 2001, p. 99).

Overall, both a mistake and an error are the wrong use of a rule. It is common practice to ask the learners to explain a rule to make sure that a mistake is not actually an error. When correcting an

error, it is done to “*help the learner change his or her conscious mental representation of a rule*” (Krashen, 1987, p. 117). If teachers correct the mistakes of their learners, they are trying to change an incorrectly pictured rule.

5.8 Summary

This chapter has taken a view of three basic stages of grammar teaching – presentation, practice and production. Practice means putting knowledge into practice and using the learned structures. The level of control on the part of teachers differs from very controlled to free discourse with no interruption from the teacher. Furthermore, any efficient practice activity needs to: focus on the structure being practised; involve some pre-learning; provide as much practice as possible; be success-oriented; provide practice for some structures learnt before; include clear instructions from teachers; and be interesting for learners.

Practice activities range from accuracy to fluency:

- Awareness
- Controlled drills
- Meaningful drills
- Guided, meaningful practices
- (Structure-based) free sentence composition
- (Structure-based) discourse composition
- Free discourse

Fluency activities are focused on meaning, and accuracy activities on form. Both of these types of activities can occur within one single activity, each in different proportion and level of control of teachers. According to this proportion, different types of practice activities occur as explained above. In accuracy activities, teachers need to control learners so that learners can be sure that they are using the form correctly. On the other hand, within fluency activities teachers do not correct the form which learners are using to the extent that it would jeopardize fluency

itself. Drills create habits for using various sentence structures, being based on repetition of sentence structures. One way or another, both types of these activities are designed so that learners can practice the rules of grammar. The more they are exposed, the better they automatize the language. Moreover, in accuracy activities, learners are corrected from the point of view of mistakes which are easily corrected by learners themselves and errors which are not so easily corrected by learners.

Finally, production is the stage at which learners use learnt structures and where fluency is the aim.

6 Models of teaching grammar

There are many models of teaching and they differ in staging of the three basic stages of teaching grammar – explanation of grammar, practising, and using it in different situations. Some authors, such as Thornbury, focus only on two main models of teaching, PPP and task-based teaching, while others, such as Harmer, state five models. However, they both agree that PPP and task-based teaching as the most basic and modern models.

6.1 PPP model – Presentation, practice, production

This is the most common model of teaching where PPP stands for Presentation, Practice and Production. Thornbury (1999, p. 129) calls this model *accuracy-to-fluency model*. This model is based on giving learners pieces of information in small bits. Practice, which is the second stage in this model, is focused on achieving accuracy and, after realising that achieving accuracy did not help learners to master a language, the third stage, production, was added (Thornbury, 1999, p. 128).

This model has been criticised because some authors think that dividing language learning into small steps can negatively influence the process. They believe that language is a very complex system and should be taught as such, rather than step-by-step (Thornbury, 1999, p. 129).

6.2 TTT model – task-based teaching

This model is an alternative to the PPP model and Thornbury (1999, p. 129) calls this model *fluency-first*. Harmer (Harmer, 1998, p. 30), on the other hand, calls this model ESA, or Engage, Study, Activate. Harmer also uses these names for the three stages of teaching for the PPP model which we know from Thornbury (see above). “*The learning cycle begins with the meanings that the learners want to convey*” (Thornbury, 1999, p. 129) and from here they proceed to learning the form.

This model is selected by teachers when learners have some problems with a language item, but the choice of items does not correspond to the school syllabus for grammar (Thornbury, 1999, p. 129).

Harmer (1998, p. 31) uses the example of giving learners the timetable of buses and trains where the learners' task is to find information. After finishing the task, teachers provide learners with some language to study so that they can correct any mistakes they have made.

6.3 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to point out one of the models of teaching grammar, PPP: Presentation, Practice and Production. Throughout these three stages, grammar is taught first, practising the rules follows and producing a discourse is the third stage. The aim of this model is to teach learners accuracy first and lead them, gradually, to fluency. It has been criticised, however, because some authors argue that a language is a complex system in which everything needs to be taught as a whole.

An alternative to PPP is the TTT model, task-based teaching, or ESA – engage, study, activate. The aim of this model is to teach learners fluency first and gradually lead them to accuracy. This model, however, does not follow the syllabus at schools so it is problematic to incorporate it into the syllabus when there is little time.

7 Present simple vs. continuous

Since this diploma thesis is focused on teaching the present simple and continuous, it is necessary to explain when both of them are used and what the difference between them is. It is usually these two tenses which learners are taught at the beginning of each course of English language, but since they are very similar, learners often confuse them, especially in terms of their forms.

7.1 Present simple

Form:

- Affirmative – the ending *-s* is used in 3rd person singular

I speak. You speak. He/she/it speaks. We speak. They speak.

Examples inspired by Swan, Walter (2001, p. 14).

- Question – the auxiliary verbs *do* and *does* are used

Do I speak? **Do** you speak? **Does** he/she/it speak? **Do** we speak? **Do** they speak?

Examples inspired by Swan, Walter (2001, p. 16).

- Negative – the auxiliary verb *do* along with *not* are used

I **do not** speak. You **do not** speak. He/she/it **does not** speak. We **do not** speak. They **do not** speak. → contractions: **don't** **doesn't**

Examples inspired by Swan, Walter (2001, p. 18).

Spelling rules for 3rd person:

- most verbs are added *-s* at the end, e.g. *travel* → *travels*, *dig* → *digs*,

- the verbs ending with *-s*, *-sh*, *-ch*, *-x* are added the ending *-es*, e.g. *crash* → *crashes*, *match* → *matches*,
- *-y* at the end of a verb changes into *-ies* in case there is a consonant before, e.g. *cry* → *cries*, *apply* → *applies*,
- there are three exceptions, *go* → *goes*, *do* → *does*, *have* → *has* (Swan, Walter , 2001, p. 14).

Meaning:

Based on Murphy (2007, p. 4), Swan, Walter (2001, p. 26) and Parrot (2000, p. 156), the present simple is used for situations happening:

- generally (general truths, events and states): *Water boils at 100°C.*
- repeatedly: *Peter goes to school every day.*
- all the time: *Sarah lives in Scotland.*
- in some frequency: *I often go out with my friends.*
- in quick commentaries: *Becker serves Lendl.*
- with perception verbs: *Can you see me?*
- with verbs changing something: *I declare the exhibition open.*
- for timetables, fixed times: *The train leaves at 6:12.*

Examples inspired by Murphy (1989, p. 4) and Parrot (2000, p. 156).

7.2 Present continuous

Form: the auxiliary verb *to be* is used

- Affirmative

I **am** speaking. You **are** speaking. He/she/it **is** speaking. We **are** speaking.
They **are** speaking.

Examples inspired by Swan, Walter (2001, p. 21).

- Question

Am I speaking? **Are** you speaking? **Is** he/she/it speaking? **Are** we speaking?
Are they speaking?

Examples inspired by Swan, Walter (2001, p. 24).

- Negative – *not* is added

I **am not** speaking. You **are not** speaking. He/she/it **is not** speaking.
You **are not** speaking. They **are not** speaking.

Examples inspired by Swan, Walter (2001, p. 21).

Spelling rules:

- the vowel *e* at the end of the verb is left out, e.g. *close* → *closing*, *breathe* → *breathing*,
- *-ie* at the end of a verb changes into *y* + *-ing*, e.g. *lie* → *lying*, *die* → *dying*,
- some consonants at the end of a verb are doubled, a) if there is only one consonant, it is doubled, e.g. *stop* → *stopping*, *run* → *running*, b) if there are two vowels before a consonant, we do not double it, e.g. *wait* → *waiting*, *dream* → *dreaming*, if there are two consonants next to each other, we do not double it either, e.g. *want* → *wanting*, *pant* → *panting*. (Swan, Walter, 2001, p. 21)
Examples inspired by Swan, Walter (2001, p. 21).

Meaning:

Based on Murphy (2007, p. 2), Swan, Walter (2001, p. 26) and Parrot (2000, p. 163), the present continuous is used for situations:

- happening at the time of speaking: *I am writing my diploma thesis at the moment.*
- happening around the time of speaking: *Sarah is reading an interesting book at the moment.*
- happening temporarily: *Claire is sleeping.*
- which are changing: *Is his English getting better?*
- with stative verbs: *I'm thinking about it.*
- which are habitual with certain time expressions, such as always, forever: *He is always coming late.*

Examples inspired by Murphy (1989, p. 2).

7.3 Typical mistakes of learners

“Learners generally have far more difficulty in using present tenses correctly than in understanding them” (Parrot, 2000, p. 162). This can be explained by the fact that there is usually enough information in a text so that learners understand what the main idea of a sentence is (Parrot, 2002, p. 162).

In terms of the present simple only, the most common mistakes according to Fitikides (2000, p. 49, 50) and Parrot (2000, p. 163) are:

- omission of –s or –es of 3rd person singular, e.g. *Linda drive a car. (correct: Linda drives a car.). Parrot (2000, p. 163) speaks about *generalization* of the rule for omitting the –s in 3rd person. The example inspired by Murphy (2007, p. 18).
- not using *don't* rather than *doesn't*, e.g. *Paula don't know the answer. (correct: Paula doesn't know the answer.) The example inspired by Murphy (2007, p. 20).

In terms of the present continuous only, the most common mistake from my teaching experience is:

- omission of the –ing ending, e.g. *She is have a shower now. (correct: She is having a shower now.) The example inspired by Murphy (1989, p. 2),

In terms of both the present simple and continuous, Parrot (2000, p. 163) and Fitikides (2000, p. 23) say that the most common mistake for both these tenses is:

- using the present simple instead of the present continuous, e.g. *She works right now. (correct: She is working right now.) Example inspired by Murphy (1989, p. 2).

Learners confuse both tenses, replacing one with the other one and vice versa because they prefer to standardise and simplify. In some cases, the reason is also that they do not have full knowledge of the verbs which cannot be used in the present continuous (stative verbs) (Fitikides (2000, p. 23) and Parrot (2000, p. 163).

7.4 Summary

The present simple is used for general actions and habits and the present continuous for temporary actions or actions happening at the time of speaking. For the present simple, the auxiliary verb *do* is used to make questions and *don't* is used for making negatives. For the present continuous, the auxiliary verb *to be* is used for affirmatives, questions and negatives. Learners also have to be careful about the spelling rules, applied when forming the –ing verb form.

The most common mistakes that occur when using both the present simple and continuous are omitting both the auxiliary verbs *do* and *be*. According to Parrot (2000, 162), learners have more difficulties with using the forms correctly than with understanding them, so teachers need to provide enough practice.

Practical part

8 Introduction to the research

The practical part of this diploma thesis presents research divided into three parts – a survey among teachers teaching learners at primary and lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic, a survey among learners, and the analysis of coursebooks used at primary and lower secondary schools in the Czech Republic and evaluation of activities used in the lesson.

8.1 Activities

Four activities according to the type of grammar learners should practise were put together according to the rules an effective practice activity should have (see chapter 5.4.1). The first activity was focused on the present simple, the second activity on the present continuous, the third and fourth activity on both. The learners were given the explanation of what to do in Czech to be sure that they fully understood what to do. It was also decided only to present the activities, not to explain the usage of the present simple because the activities themselves took a lot of time. The number of English lesson for each class was three lessons a week.

8.1.1 Introduction of learners

The research took place in two classes at the primary school 2. ZŠ, Krnov, and in two classes at primary school Míru, Brno. In one class at the primary school in Krnov, there were 15 learners aged 13 to 14 (8th grade) and in the other class, there were 17 learners aged 14 to 15 (9th grade). In one class at the primary school in Brno, there were 17 learners aged 12 to 13 (7th grade) and in the other class, there were 14 learners aged 13 to 14 (8th grade).

8.1.2 Find someone who... (appendix I)

Name of the activity: Find someone who...

Language point: the present simple – affirmatives, questions, negatives (see chapter 7.1)

Material used: pieces of paper with the given sentences

Time: 10 minutes

Level of control: meaningful drill (see chapter 5.4.2)

Classroom organization: the whole class

The aims: to find out if the learners are able to transform the affirmatives into questions and being able to communicate in English

Procedure: the learners were handed out the small pieces of paper with five sentences in 3rd person singular and their task was to transform them into 2nd person singular question and ask their classmates the question. If a learner answered the question according to the required answer, the name of the asked learner could have been written next to the question. If the asking student had one name at each sentence on his piece of paper, the task was finished.

Evaluation: at first, the learners were confused about what to do so it was needed to explain the rules once more. After the second explanation, they started working. The atmosphere in all the classes was good and friendly during this activity so it might be concluded that the learners liked the activity and found it entertaining.

Problems encountered: the biggest problem encountered was the correct transformation of the affirmatives into questions. When this problem occurred, the learners were made figure the mistake out on their own first. If they still had not known what the mistake was, they were told and asked to correct it by themselves. When they were not able to correct it, they were said by me. This was probably the consequence of not explaining the grammar rules beforehand. In addition, the learners were also prone to using Czech language instead of English. If this situation happened, they were warned about not to it, being said an English instruction “Speak English, please!” In all four classes, this warning helped so the learners

8.1.3 Guess what I am doing

Name of the activity: Guess what I am doing

Language point: the present continuous – affirmatives (see chapter 7.2)

Material used: small pieces of paper with a verb on them, a small box for the pieces of paper

Time: 10 minutes

Level of control: controlled drill (see chapter 5.4.2)

Classroom organization: the whole class

The aims: to find out if the learners are able to make the present continuous affirmatives

Procedure: the learners were provided with an explanation of the activity and told that they had to answer, using a full sentence, not just a phrase or one word. One learner came to me and took one small piece of paper from a small box. His task was to read the verb for himself and perform it without telling the class what the verb was. Then, the rest of the class had to guess what the performing learner was doing. They had to guess until somebody said what the correct answer was. The procedure was repeated until all the cards were taken and performed.

E.g. You are sleeping on the desk! – Yes, I am.

Verbs used: *read in a coursebook, sleep on the desk, look out of the window, sit on the desk, drink water, walk around the class, write on the blackboard, stand in a corner, do homework, sing a song, write a letter to my friend, dance, draw a picture, speak English, text an SMS, speak Czech, call somebody.*

Evaluation: this activity was followed by a good atmosphere in all the classes so it might be concluded that the learners liked the activity. The learners were also using the English language the whole time. It might be stated that the activity was carried out highly according to the plan. However, this activity might be improved by asking the individual learners for answer so that lack of participation from the side of the shy and slower learners can be avoided.

Problems encountered: at the beginning, the biggest problem encountered at this activity was to calm down the class when each verb was being performed. When this activity was introduced in the first class, the precautions about the noise in the following classes were taken by emphasising that if the noise was too big, the activity would be finished. After the learners were said it, the noise was avoided. On top of that, another problem occurred was that

not all learners participated in guessing the activity. The reason might be that they were weaker in terms of their English.

8.1.4 Interview your partner (appendix II)

Name of the activity: Interview your partner

Language point: the present simple and continuous – affirmatives, questions, negatives (see chapter 7)

Material used: small pieces of paper with four questions with prompts only

Time: 10 minutes

Level of control: guided, meaningful practice (see chapter 5.4.2)

Classroom organization: pairs

The aims: to find out if the learners are able to make the affirmatives, questions, and negatives in the present simple and continuous and use them correctly and to find out if they are able to communicate in English

Procedure: the learners were given the small pieces of paper with the questions. Then, they had to make pairs and interview their partners, using the correctly formed questions in either the present simple or continuous, depending on which one to use in which question. They had to change pairs at least once so that they could interview at least two classmates.

Evaluation: although this type of activity was intended for pairs, in the classes with the odd number of learners had to be one group of three learners. The atmosphere during this activity was good on the whole. Nevertheless, the slower learners needed more time to complete the activity while the quicker learners were finished already. For the next time, this might be possibly avoided by changing the pairs of quicker learners so that they interview more classmates.

Problems encountered: the most significant problem encountered by the learners was transformation of the sentences into questions. When this problem occurred, the learners were, at first, asked to transfer the sentence once again, if they had still been not successful, they were

said the correct answer (more about mistake managing in chapter below). This problem occurred especially in the classes of the learners aged 12 to 13. The weakness in this activity might be attributed to the fact that the learners were not presented the grammar needed beforehand for a success of performance of this activity (see chapter 4.4).

8.1.5 Picture description (appendix III)

Name of the activity: Picture description

Language point: the present simple and continuous – affirmatives, negatives (see chapter 7)

Material used: one picture for each pair

Time: 10 minutes

Level of control: (structure-based) free sentence composition (see chapter 5.4.2)

Classroom organization: pairs

The aims: to find out if the learners are able to make the affirmatives of the present simple and continuous and use them correctly and to find out if they are able to produce sentences with no vocabulary prompts, only with visual

Procedure: the learners had to make pairs. Each was given a picture and their task was to describe it, using various vocabulary and the structures with both present simple and continuous. After all of them were finished, two pairs had to describe their picture in front of the class, saying at least two sentences.

Example sentences: *He usually goes out but he is reading a book now. He usually plays the guitar but he is texting now.*

Evaluation: this activity was relatively not a good choice because it could have been seen on the learners that they were bored as soon as they were given the pictures. After being asked what they did not like about this activity, they said that this was the most common type of activity they did at school. This activity might be possibly improved by an activity where one learner describes a picture and the other learner draws.

Problems encountered: the most significant problem which occurred was that the learners got bored by this activity. The reason might be the fact that they possibly did not know what sentences to make in terms of the present simple. So the duration of the activity was shortened to the minimum of using four sentences for the description for each pair. The learners were also helped by giving some example sentences but in Czech. The degree of success of this activity was determined by the nature of this activity – describing a picture. Another problem was that learners did not know what sentences to form so that they could also use the present simple and not only the present continuous as the usual tense used for picture description type of activity. They were, therefore, given the clue sentences in Czech aloud so that the whole class could hear them.

8.1.6 Mistake correction

At the beginning, mistake correction of the learners and whether to correct them at all was needed to be thought through. It was difficult to decide how often to correct the mistakes not interrupt the learners in fluency of their speaking. So for these activities it was decided to correct the learners' mistakes right after making them. They were expected that they would be more careful in the following activity. After being corrected, their reaction was an immediate correction of the mistake. However, there were some who made a wrong correction so they were needed help.

The learners were corrected by echoing the mistake, stressing the mistake learners made (see chapter 5.7). E.g.:

- L: You sleeping on the desk?
- T: *You sleeping?* Are you sure? What's missing?
- L: So, you are sleeping on the desk.
- T: Well done!²

In case of using a wrong person, the learners were corrected by a gesture, namely pointing the number of fingers, e.g. three fingers for 3rd person (see chapter 5.7).

² L – learner, T – teacher

Furthermore, another way of correcting the mistakes of the learners was directly pointing it out. This was proceeded once it was clear that the learners did not know what the mistake was. After being done so, the learners were asked to correct the mistakes on their own. No learner who was not able to correct a mistake appeared. This can be attributed to the fact that they already had knowledge of the structures.

To turn to the reaction of the learners when correcting the mistakes, the difficulty appeared in the fact that the learners were confused about the gestures used. This may be due to not being used to gestures from the side of their teachers. Once teachers become accustomed to the gestures used for correcting, the class will also become aware of what the gestures mean and to the fact of making a mistake.

8.1.7 Summary

As these activities have shown, the more interactive an activity is, the more likely learners might like it. What need to be aimed at are clear and easy-to-follow instructions to avoid an improper understanding of what to do and repeating the instructions whilst losing time for the activities themselves. The last but not least, the weakness of these activities may be the fact that no revision of the present simple and continuous before performing was not possible due to lack of time in terms of one lesson.

8.2 Questionnaire for teachers

The questionnaire was filled out by the teachers from various primary and lower secondary schools not only in Olomouc but in various Czech towns and cities, e.g. Ostrava, Přerov, Brno, Krnov, etc The teachers completed the questionnaire either via e-mail and sent it back or physically when their class with the activities for their learners was visited. The questionnaires were anonymous. The questionnaire for teachers consisted of eight questions which were focused on which method they use in their English grammar teaching (see chapter 4), on mistakes which their learners make when learning the present simple and continuous (see chapter 7.3), how they correct the mistakes of their learners (see chapter 5.7) and how they

practise the present simple and continuous (see chapter 5.4). The language of the questionnaire was English. The number of the teachers was 23.³

8.2.1 Analysis of the questionnaire for teachers

→ Question one: “Do you use the inductive or deductive approach in grammar teaching?” Originally, the teachers had to choose only one option but some of them chose both options therefore this third option is included below. According to the answers of the teachers, the most common approach among them is the inductive approach. The results are in contradiction with the original assumption that it is the deductive approach which is the most common. The results in Figure 1 also show that the teachers use the deductive approach the least. This may be due to the fact that the teachers want their learners to think more. Both options might have been stated because the teachers may use one approach for explaining one piece of grammar and one approach for explaining the other piece of grammar.

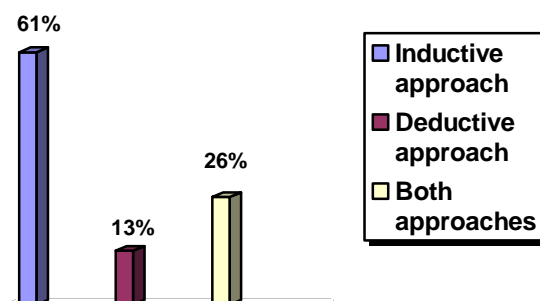


Figure 1: Approaches to teaching grammar

→ Question two: “Why do you use it?” This question was open and the teachers were asked why they use the approach which they stated in question one. The answers were generalized so that they are able to be categorized.

³ The questionnaire can be found in appendix IV.

Out of 60% of the teachers (counting 14 teachers), who claimed using the inductive approach, 36% chose the option of making the learners think. The trend in using one of the approaches seems to be, therefore, making the learners think. As Figure 2 shows, the teachers' attempt in grammar teaching seems to be making them active.

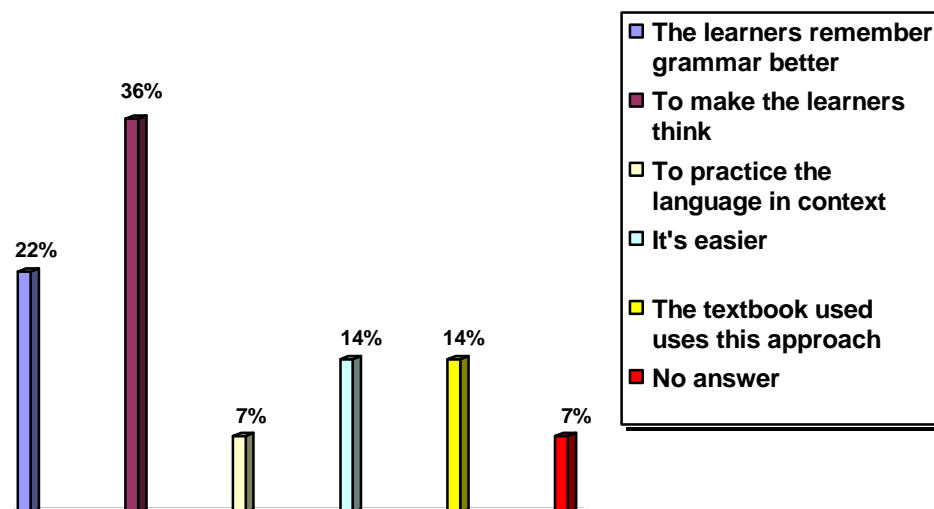


Figure 2: Reasons for the usage of an approach

For all 13% of the teachers (counting 3 teachers) who stated using the option of the deductive approach, the answer was understood to be that it is easier for their learners and that it is fast. Once teachers become accustomed to this type of approach, learners may possibly lose their motivation for English (see chapter 1.1).

As seen in Figure 1, 26% of the teachers (counting 6 teachers) expressed their opinion of including both approaches in grammar teaching depending on the difficulty of grammar. However, since the option of circling both approaches was not included, the small number of teachers using both approaches may not be considered to be a less used option among teachers.

Some of the additional comments were that they prefer the deductive approach for more difficult grammar the structure of which does not appear in Czech, e.g. present perfect, and for the grammar the structure of which is similar to the grammar structure in the Czech language, e.g. the passive voice, they use the inductive approach. One of the comments also stated that the approach depends on the age of the learners.

→ Question three and four dealt with the most common mistakes of the learners. Question three: “What are the most common mistakes of your pupils when learning and practising the present simple?”, question four: “What are the most common mistakes of your pupils when learning and practising the present continuous?” The teachers had the opportunity to circle more than one answer.

For question three, the results shown in Figure 3, the highest number of the teachers claim that the most common mistake of their learners is omitting the ending –s in 3rd person singular which seems to be the most common mistake in comparison to the rest of the options. This may be due to the fact that it is unusual to add an ending to a verb only in one person.

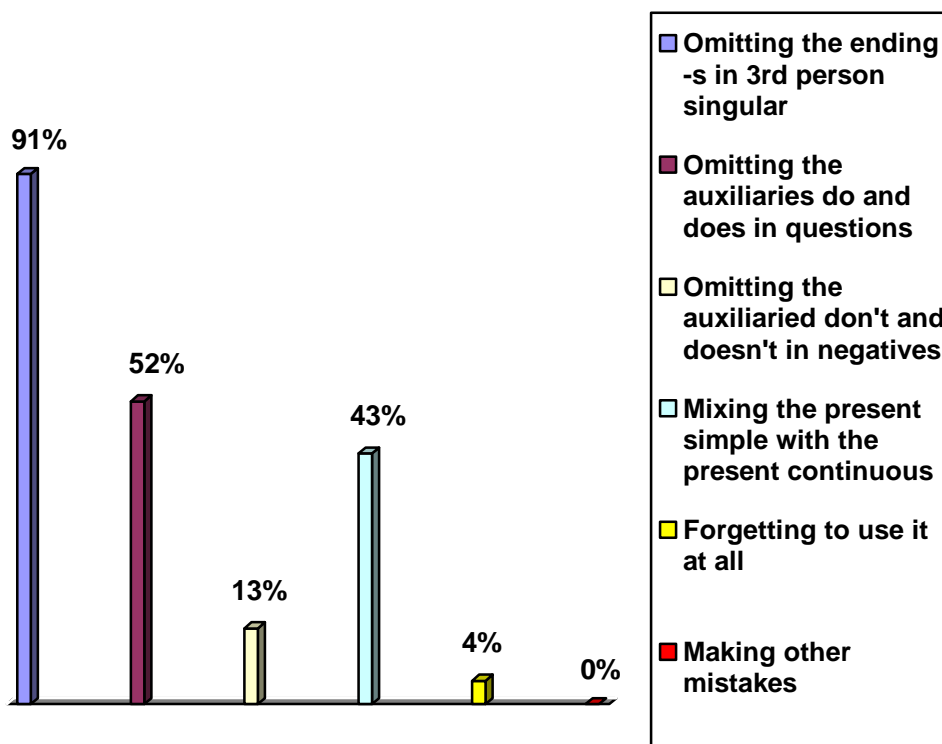


Figure 3: Typical mistakes within the present simple

In terms of the mistake for the present continuous as presented in Figure 4, the highest number of the teachers stated that their learners omit the auxiliary verb *to be*. The reason may possibly be the fact that it is unnatural for learners to add an auxiliary verb which does not exist in the Czech language. These results also correspond to the opinion of the learners who think that it is just the present continuous they have the most troubles with (see in 8.3.2). also mixing the

present continuous with the present simple is a problem teachers may encounter. The more interest is taken for practising the forms of not only the present continuous but also the present simple, the less mistakes learners may make.

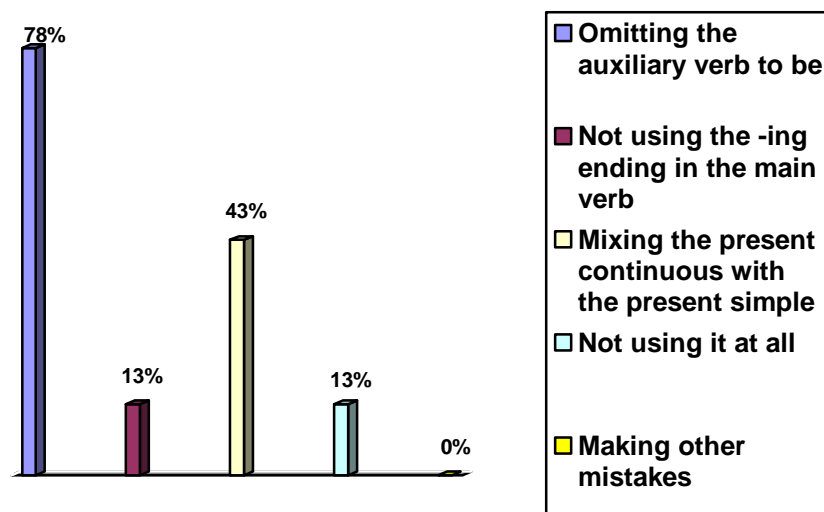


Figure 4: Typical mistakes within the present continuous

→ Question five: “When do you correct the mistakes of your pupils?” According to Figure 5, it seems that correcting learners right after finishing the sentence is practised by most of the teachers. However, it may not be said that it is an effective way of correcting learners. This fact may suggest a further research. What possibly needs to be paid attention to is what effect this way of correcting has on learners.

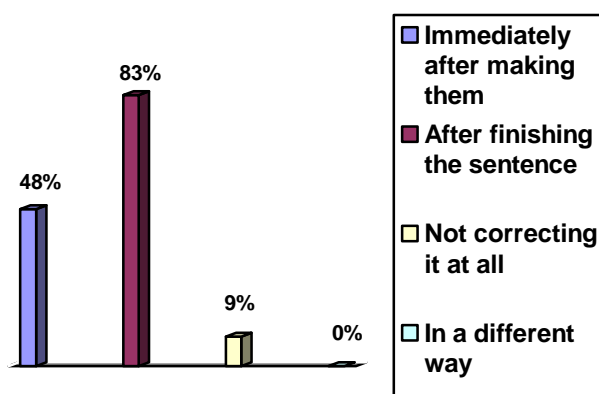


Figure 5: Way of correcting mistakes

→ Question six: “What example sentences do you use for practising?” As Figure 6 shows, the teachers rather prefer making up their own example sentences which may be on one hand useful since they may know what sentences their learners may need, on the other hand, it may happen that they will not have enough imagination and also instant making up the sentences may get exhausting. There was a difference between expected and obtained results because the coursebooks used at primary schools provide relatively enough example sentences.

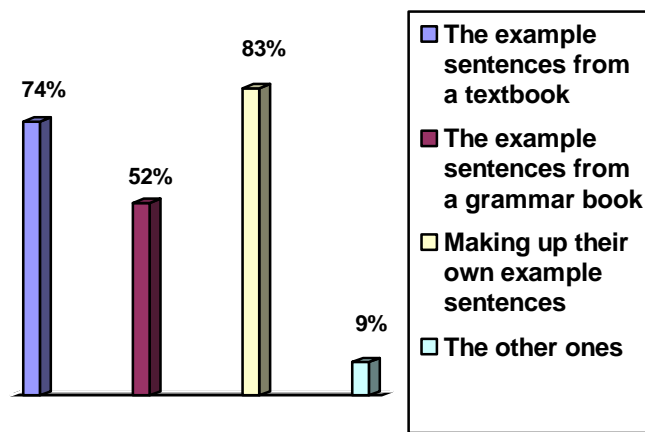


Figure 6: Type of example sentences

→ Questions seven and eight dealt with the practice. Question seven: “How do you practise the present simple?”, question eight: “How do you practise the present continuous?”

For question seven, the majority of the teachers seem to use the combination of both the written exercises from a textbook or a grammar book and communicative exercises. This way of practising may provide learners the opportunities to actually use a language when solving different tasks prepared by their teachers. In my opinion, to use a grammar book first and communicative exercise after seems to be a good option.

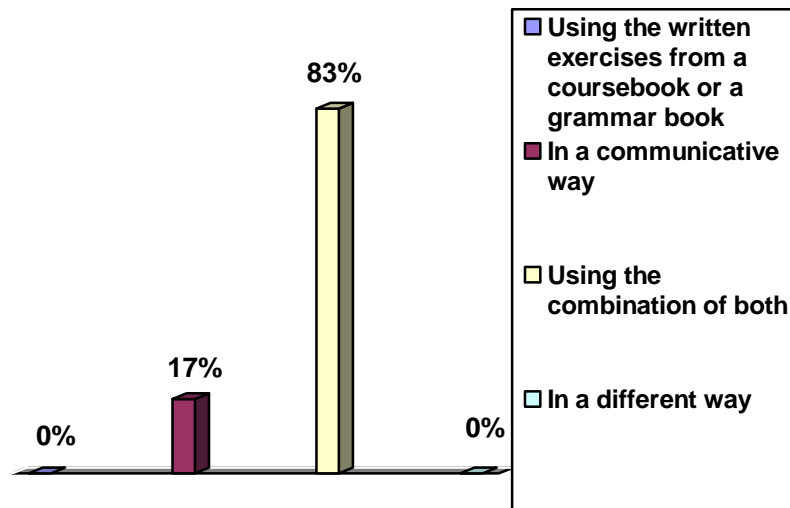


Figure 7: Way of practising the present simple

Question eight concerning the present continuous showed the same results as question seven, meaning that the trend in practising seems to be the combination of both, a coursebook and a communicative way, e.g. the suggested activities in chapter 8.1).

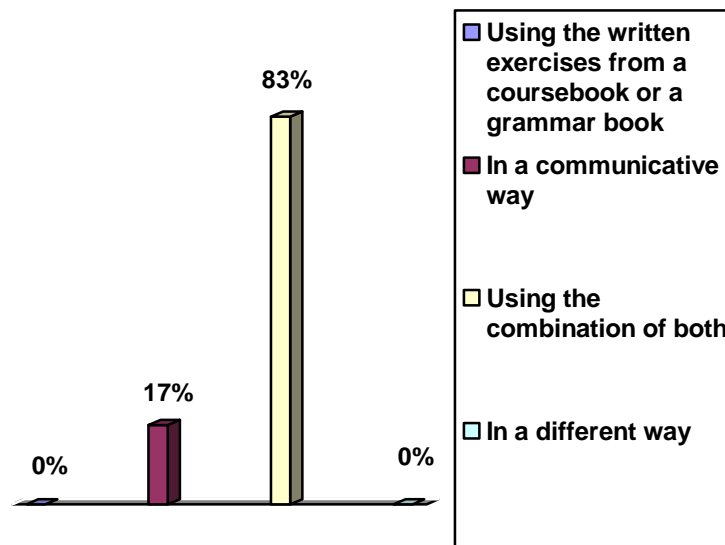


Figure 8: Way of practising the present continuous

To conclude, the survey among the teachers provided some opinions about how teaching grammar may be like in real life. However, to get a more realistic view about the topic, more samples would be needed.

8.3 Questionnaire for learners

The research was conducted at the lower secondary school Míru in Brno and at the lower secondary school 2. ZŠ, Krnov. The number of the learners was 63 – two classes from the lower secondary school 2. ZŠ, Krnov, and two classes from the lower secondary school Míru, Brno. The number of the learners at the lower secondary school in Krnov was 15 in one class and 17 in the other class, and at the lower secondary school Míru in Brno 17 in one class and 14 in the other class. The questionnaire consisted of eleven questions. It was handed out after presenting the four grammar activities focused on practising the present simple and continuous (see chapter 7). In the questionnaire they had to choose one of the four activities which they liked the most and which one they thought was the most useful for them. Then, they had to say if they thought that they knew how to form the present simple and continuous and if they wanted to practise them more.⁴

8.3.1 Common mistakes during the activities

When the learners were doing the activities, they were observed and monitored. The most common mistakes of them were noted down. Before conducting the research, I put together a chart with what I expected the most common mistakes (see chapter 7.3) would be. The chart was as following:

1. Omitting the ending *-s* in 3rd person singular in the present simple,
2. Omitting the auxiliaries *do* and *does* in questions in the present simple,
3. Omitting the auxiliaries *don't* and *doesn't* in negatives in the present simple,
4. Omitting the auxiliary *to be* in affirmatives in the present continuous,
5. Omitting the auxiliary *to be* in questions in the present continuous,
6. Omitting the auxiliary *to be* in negatives in the present continuous,
7. Mixing the present simple with the present continuous,

⁴ The questionnaire can be found in appendix V.

8. Misusing the present simple for the present continuous or vice versa.

For the activity *Find someone who...*, the most common mistake was omitting the auxiliaries *do* and *does* in questions in the present simple.

For the activity *Guess what I am doing*, the most common mistake was point four, omitting the auxiliary *to be* in affirmatives in the present continuous.

For the activity *Interview your partner*, the most common mistakes were points five, omitting the auxiliary *to be* in questions in the present continuous, seven, mixing the present simple with the present continuous, and eight, misusing the present simple for the present continuous or vice versa.

For the activity *Picture description*, the most common mistakes were points five, omitting the auxiliary *to be* in questions in the present continuous, seven, mixing the present simple with the present continuous, and eight, misusing the present simple for the present continuous or vice versa, the same points as for activity three.

Overall, the most common mistake of the learners was the point four, omitting the auxiliary *to be*, and five, omitting the auxiliary *to be* in questions (see chapter 7.3). From my teaching experience, learners usually think that if they form the verb + *-ing*, it is enough, they do not realize that they also need to use the auxiliary verb *to be*. It might be caused by the fact that the present continuous is different in Czech and in English. From my point of view, teachers should not correct all the incorrect uses of a rule during a lesson but only those on which there is either focus or are elementary for learners. If teachers corrected all of them, a lesson would be interrupted by only correcting and the learning process itself would disappear.

8.3.2 Analysis of the questionnaire

As already mentioned above, the number of the learners was 63. They were handed out the questionnaire after they carried out all four activities. The questionnaire was in Czech so that I could be sure they fully understand what to do and what to answer. The questionnaire contained eleven questions focused on if they liked the activities, if they think they know how to form and when to use both the present simple and continuous, if they want to practice the present simple

and continuous more at school, and what way of practising is the best for them. The questions were either with more possible options or with one option only. At the beginning of performing the activities, I also told them the English name for “čas přítomný prostý” a “čas přítomný průběhový” to be sure that they knew what the questionnaire was about. Each question also had an option of writing the open answer.

→ Question one: “Do you think that you can form the present simple correctly?” 65% of the learners chose the option “Yes” which means that they think they know how to form the present simple. Only 2% of the learners chose the option “The other” which counted only one learner who added the comment that “I have to think about forming, but I form it in the end.” In other words, the learner can not form it automatically. This might be attributed to the lack of practice.

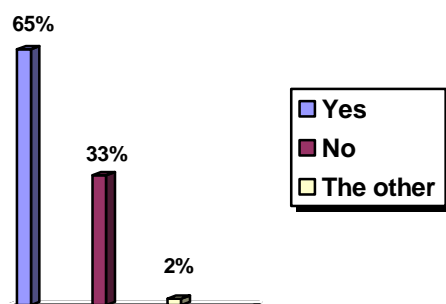


Figure9: Forming the present simple

As expected, most of the learners think that they know how to form the present simple. However, 33% do not think so which might be attributed to the fact that they do not have enough time at school to practise.

→ Question two: “Do you think that you know when to use the present simple?” The answers were clear because almost of the learners chose the option “Yes”. Only one student, counting 2%, chose the option “The other”, commenting that he has to think about it, in other words he may not use the present continuous automatically for the situations where it is used and possibly needs more practice. As Figure 10 presents, the overwhelming majority of the learners think that they know when to use the present simple in comparison to the question one, how to

form it. This means that they have more problems with forming the present simple than with understanding when to use it.

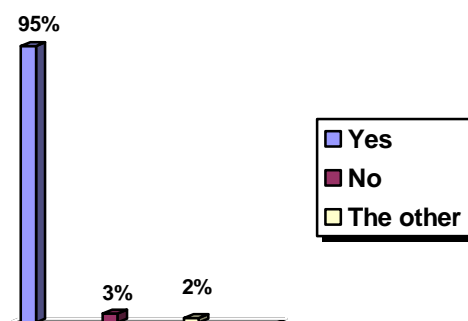


Figure 10: Present simple in context

→ Question three: “Do you think that you can form the present continuous correctly?” As it can be seen in Figure 11, the possibilities are almost in balance so it may not be concluded clearly that the learners either know or do not know how to form the present continuous. However, they might have a tendency to underestimate themselves which might have possibly influenced the results. In comparison to the present simple, the results were clearer for the present simple which might suggest that the present continuous is a more difficult piece of grammar for learners.

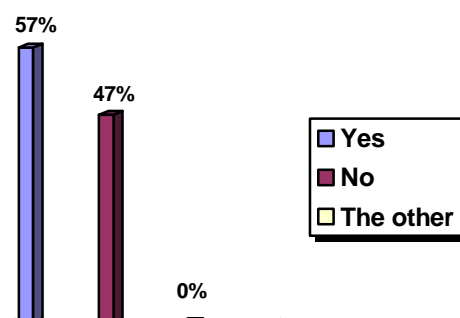


Figure 11: Forming the present continuous

→ Question four: “Do you think that you know when to use the present continuous?” In comparison to the question three above, it can be seen from the Figure 12 that most of the learners have no problems with understanding when to use the present continuous because most

of them stated that they know when to use it. 2%, which counted one person, chose the option “The other”, commenting that he knows just sometimes. This would seem to stem from not using the present continuous automatically.

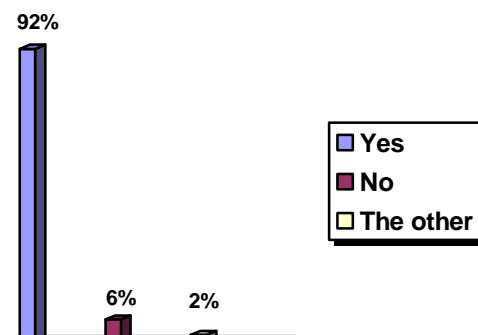


Figure 12: Present continuous in context

To summarize the questions about forming and meaning, the results have shown that the learners are not sure about if they form the present simple and continuous correctly. On the other hand, distinguishing when to use it makes them no problems.

→ Questions five and six dealt with the activities which were put together for the learners (they are described above in chapter 8.1). Question five: “Which activity did you like the most?” and question six: “Which activity do you think is the most useful one?”

For question five, the highest number of the learners stated that they liked the activity *Guess what I am doing* the most. As the results in Figure 13 show, the activity *Picture description* was the least favourite one. This may be due to the fact that the learners often do this activity at school or that they possibly have less chance to mingle with more classmates in a classroom.

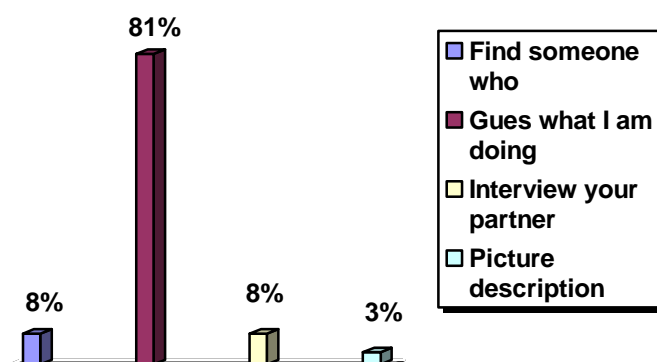


Figure 13: Favourite activity

As presented in Figure 14, the results are more balanced than in the previous question. However, the activity *Interview your partner* seems to be the most useful activity according to the opinion of the learners. The least useful activity for the learners seems to be the activity for practising the present continuous which is in contradiction with what grammar they have troubles with. The explanation might be that they possibly think that the present continuous is not used very often.

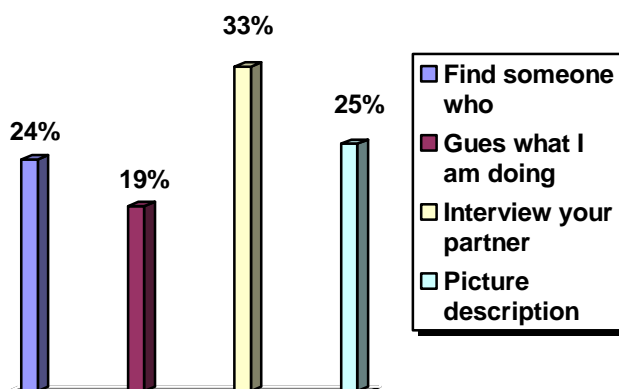


Figure 14: Useful activity

→ Question seven: “Why do you think it is the most useful activity?” For the activity *Find someone who...*, 13 out of 15 learners, which is the highest result, stated that it is the activity which they need the most in the real life. The results shown in Figure 15 suggest that the

type of grammar practised in this type of exercise (the present simple) is thought to be the most needed in the real life.

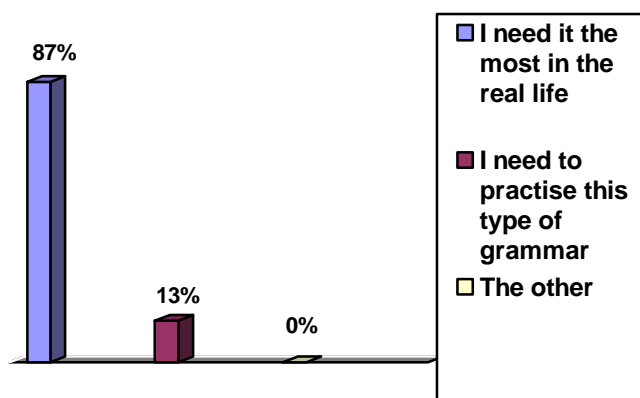


Figure 15: Why *Find someone who...* useful?

For the activity *Guess what I am doing*, as the Figure 16 may suggest, what learners concern about is if they need to practice it or not. The learners who chose the option “The other”, gave the reason that this type of activity makes him think. The results also show that this type of activity which was focused on practising the present continuous is the most problematic for the number of the learners who chose this type of activity as the one being the most useful one. In other words, the learners want to practise it because they are possibly not confident enough in using this piece of grammar.

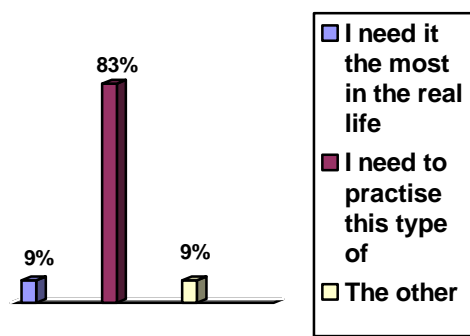


Figure 16: Why *Guess what I am doing* useful?

For the activity *Interview your partner*, as shown in Figure 17, almost all of the learners need this activity the most in their real lives. The results might also indicate that the learners are possibly concerned about the purposefulness of the piece of grammar used in this type of the activity. This may be due to the fact that the present simple is possibly one of the most frequent tenses

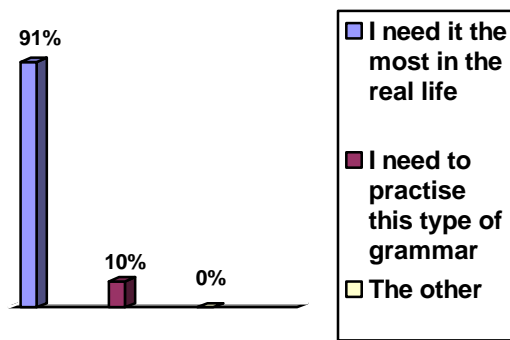


Figure 17: Why *Interview your partner* useful?

For the activity *Picture description*, as it can be seen in Figure 18, the highest number of learners finds the picture description as an activity the practice of which they need the most in the real life. This may be reflected e.g. in describing the world around them or the people they are together with.

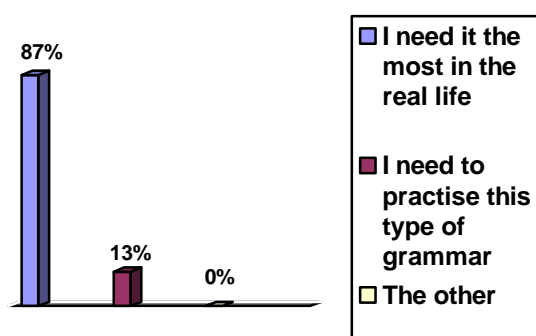


Figure 18: Why *Picture description* useful?

The results may indicate that the learners prefer the activities which are helpful and useful in everyday-life communication, which might be the best what they can take from learning English. It is possibly the practice for the real life situations what all the learners need to be able to use the language.

→ Question eight: “Do you think that you have enough opportunities to practise the present simple and continuous at school?” According to the results shown in Figure 19, most of the learners think that they have enough opportunities to practise at school. However, a relatively high number of the learners stated that they do not have enough opportunities. The reason may be the lack of time which they have for English at school during a school year.

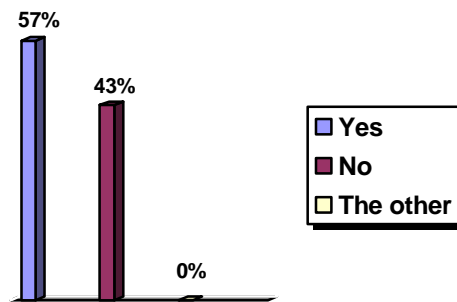


Figure 19: Enough practise at school

→ Question nine: “Would you like to practise the present simple more at school?” The highest result, as shown in Figure 20, suggests that the learners would like to practice the present simple more. This fact may be due to the fact that the present simple is one of the most frequent tenses appeared in English. On comment which appeared written on the questionnaire was “Why not”. It might be concluded from this answer that the learners are possibly willing to practise.

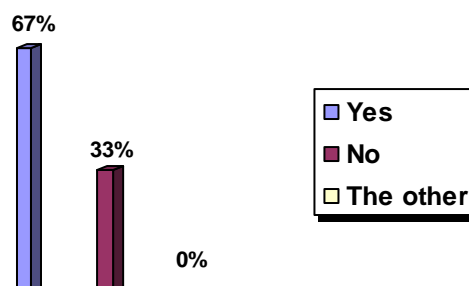


Figure 20: More practise of the present simple

→ Question ten dealt with grammar practice, too, more specifically with practice of the present continuous, “Would you like to practise the present continuous more at school?”. The results suggest that the learners would like to practise the present continuous even more than the present simple as the results of the previous question state. This may be due to the fact that the present continuous does not exist in the Czech language so the learners may be possibly confused about both the form and the meaning.

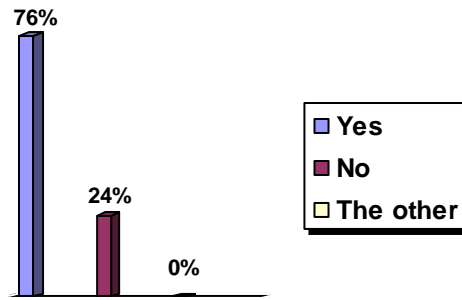


Figure 21: More practise of the present continuous

→ Question eleven: “Which of the listed activities of the present simple and continuous practise do you find the most useful one?” As Figure 21 presents, communicative exercises with the classmates is an activity which the learners define as the most useful one. This may be contributed to the fact that they realize that it is not filling in the exercises what helps them to communicate in the real life. 2% of the learners chose the option “The other.”, commenting that they welcome any type of an activity which should help to practise the present simple and continuous. That says, no matter what activity is practised, the significant fact is that the practice itself takes place. A discussion with a teacher was not as frequent which may be due to the fact that there are many learners in a class and not all of them would have the opportunity to communicate since some of them are shy, some are more talkative.

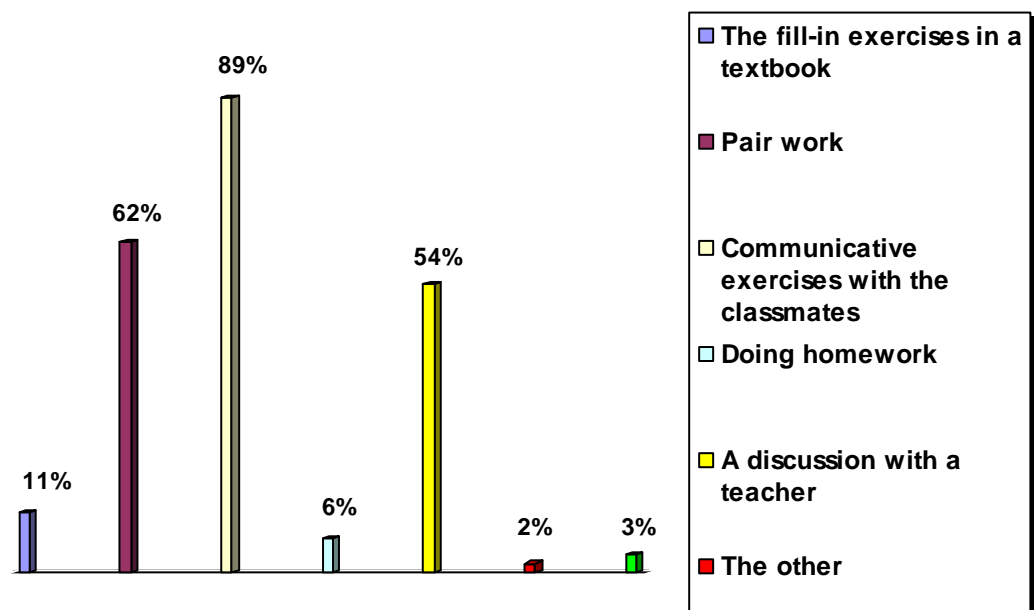


Figure 22: The most useful type of practice

As expected, the highest result was given to the communicative exercises with the classmates. This might be possibly explained by the reason that the learners are not fully observed by a teacher therefore they are not afraid to talk, another reason might be that the learners can use the language in communication or they have more space to use the language. This type of activity is also preferred in my teaching practice. The pair work type of activity is also very useful for the learners. A discussion with a teacher can be useful but the big disadvantage might be that not all the learners in a class actually participate, some of them are talkative, some of them are not and therefore this type of an activity might be useful in the way that everybody has the opportunity to practise the language when speaking with a teacher. However, the learners chose this type of an activity as the third most useful for them. As expected, one of the lowest scores was given to the fill-in exercises in a textbook. This type of practice can be quite boring. Anyway, from my point of view, it is sometimes needed for at least practising grammar forms before actually practising it in the real life situations.

8.4 Analysis of coursebooks

In this part of the research, the aim is to analyse the coursebooks which are used at primary and lower secondary schools. They are The Project and Look! coursebooks. The Project has been chosen because it has been used at primary and lower secondary schools for a long time already and the Look! because it is a relatively new book published in 2009. The student's book will be taken into focus as well as the workbooks and the teacher's books. The purpose of this analysis is to find out if there is enough material for learners to practise the present simple and continuous and what kind of practice is presented (see chapter 5.4.2). Along with the analysis of the exercises in the books, the aim is also to find out what approach the analysed books use (see chapter 4.2 or 4.3).

At the beginning of the analysis, it is important to say that in terms of the analysis of the exercises in the books, it was decided to analyse only the chapters where there is the focus on the present simple and continuous for present, not for future. Also the activities are focused only on the present simple and continuous. The reason is that the present simple and continuous are used and reflected in almost every chapter as a part of learning a new piece of grammar so it would be time-demanding to analyse all the chapters and it would need a deeper analysis.

The Project coursebook is divided into five parts. It is also important to mention that all the grammar presentation in the student's books is introduced by a reading exercise. Then, grammar explanation follows. Each chapter has the subchapters and revision parts. In each subchapter, a different topic (either vocabulary or a piece of grammar) is presented. The Look! coursebook is divided into three parts. The Look! coursebook structure contains the chapters and a communicative part plus "look again" part. It is important to state that all grammar in the Look! coursebook is presented with the picture prompts which are well arranged and colourful. Each colour represents a different word (for better imagination, look at Figure 25 below).

8.4.1 The Project

In the Project, the tendency is to introduce grammar with a reading exercise. This procedure is repeated in all student's books. The chart with completing the grammar rules always follows a reading exercise. The following part mostly includes the controlled drill type of exercises (see Figure 23). Within Project One, grammar of the present simple and continuous is included in chapters four and six. The Project Two makes a revision of the present simple and continuous in chapters one and two. Chapter two in the Project Three involves the present simple and continuous as well as chapter one in the Project Four. There is an introductory part in the Project Five which is focused on the present simple and continuous. In terms of the workbooks, the additional exercises for learners are included. After an analysis of all the workbooks the Project 1 – 5, it was found out that all the exercises focused on the present simple or continuous are of the controlled drill type on an exercise.

Overall, in all the Project books, there were 123 exercises ranging from the controlled drills to the structure-based free sentence compositions as Figure 23 shows. According to the results, it may be concluded that controlled drills are the most common activity learners encounter in lessons.

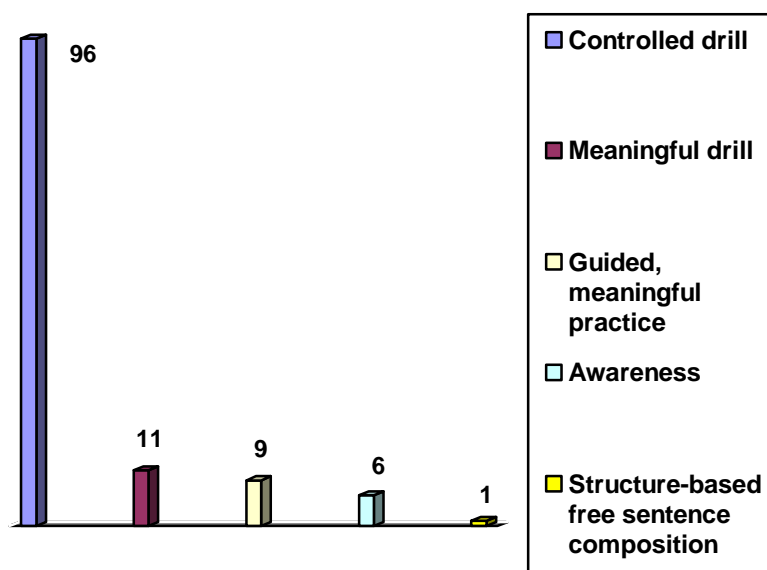


Figure 23: Number of exercises in Project

In The Project one, the present simple is followed by the vocabulary of everyday activities. The present continuous is introduced by the vocabulary of clothes. The Project two revises the present simple along with the vocabulary of housework and the present continuous along with the vocabulary of animals. In The Project three, the contrast between the present simple and continuous is shown with help of the vocabulary of places and spaces. The vocabulary of describing clothes and material for clothes appears in presenting grammar of the present simple and continuous in The Project four. Sport places and equipment is a part of grammar in The Project five in the introduction part of the book. The number of listening exercises focused on the present simple and continuous counts 21 in which learners may have the opportunity to hear the structures, not just to write them or read them.

On the whole, the type of the exercises which prevails in the Project coursebooks is a controlled drill. This type of an exercise, however, does not provide learners with the opportunity to practise English in a communicative way. On the other hand, learners are provided with practise of structures. To compare this result with the results of the questionnaire for learners and with the question concerning what type of the activity they consider to be the most useful one, the exercise where they have to complete the exercise on a paper is, according to their answers, the most useless one but the most used one in the coursebook they use at school.

8.4.2 Look!

In the Look!, grammar is introduced by a reading and listening exercise and a new set of vocabulary. Two units in the Look! One focus on the present simple and continuous which are revised in a starter unit in the very beginning of the book and in chapter one in the Look! Two and in the same way in the Look! Three. The vocabulary of everyday activities, time and days of the week accompany the present simple and jobs, sport and leisure activities the present continuous in the Look! One. Activity verbs are the vocabulary presented in the Look! Two as a part of revising the present simple and continuous. Making revision of the present simple and continuous is made with help of the family, travelling, and things which you can find in a bag vocabulary (e.g. a purse, a wallet, etc.). The controlled drill type of an exercise is the most common one used in the coursebook. The workbooks and teacher's books include few additional exercises. There is also a CD included in each Teacher's book where each unit from a student's book can be found. Two posters with visual grammar prompts for the present simple and continuous can be found in the teacher's books.

Overall, the number of the controlled drill type of an exercise is 84 as Figure 24 below shows. There are only eight listening exercises focused on the present simple and continuous in comparison with the Project coursebook.

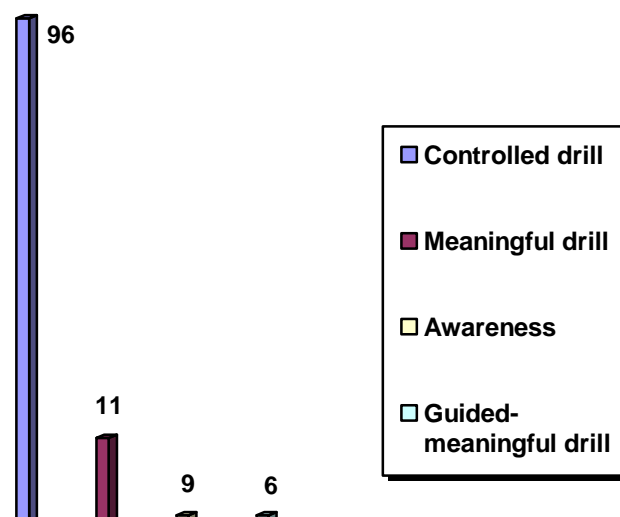


Figure 24: Number of exercises in Look!

8.4.3 Exercises description (see chapter 5.4.2 and appendix VI)

As shown in appendix VI, the awareness type of an exercise describe an activity where learners, after being introduced to grammar, have to find the examples of the structures in a text, in the case of the exercise in appendix VI, in a cartoon.

The controlled drill is a type of an exercise where learners have to follow the grammar structure, no space for their choice of vocabulary is provided. The answers are closed-ended.

The meaningful drill stands for an exercise where learners are given the exact structure (questions focused on the present continuous in case of the exercise in appendix VI) and they have to answer according to what they are really doing at the moment.

In guided, meaningful practice from the appendix VI, learners are given a topic which they are supposed to lead discussion about but still, they have to follow the grammar structure, the choice of vocabulary is up to them.

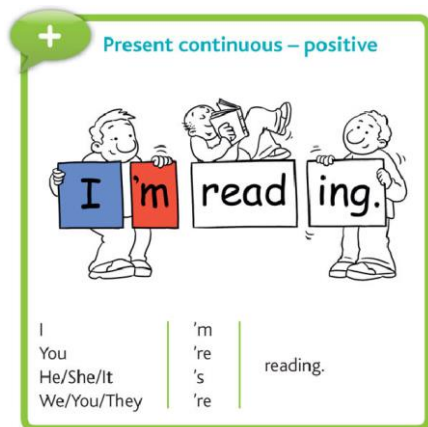
(Structure-based) free sentence composition in appendix VI includes a project work where the task is to choose a photo or a magazine they e.g. find at home and to compose their own responses but to cover the given grammar structure.

8.4.4 Grammar presentation

The presentation of grammar was also analysed. On the basis of this analysis, it was concluded that the Project uses the inductive approach where learners have to deduce the grammar rules from a text (see chapter 4.3) and the Look!, on the other hand, on the deductive approach with a pre-completed grammar chart. In the Project, grammar is introduced as a part of a reading exercise followed by the questions and a grammar chart. This procedure is repeated in all student's books. In the Look! student's book, grammar is presented in the similar way – a reading exercise is introduced at first, moreover followed by a listening exercise and a new set of vocabulary. To conclude, it is not only the inductive approach which, according to the results, the coursebooks use.

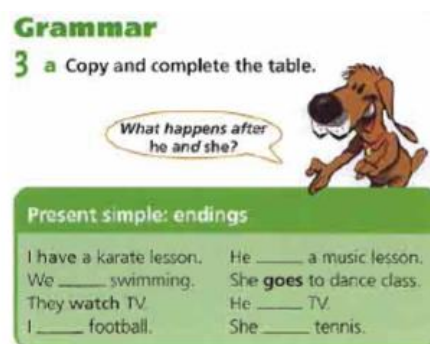
8.4.5 Comparison of the Project and Look!

To compare, the Project provides more exercises for practising and more opportunities for revision than Look! This may be due to the fact that there are five parts of the Project coursebook in comparison to three parts of the Look! coursebook. However, this may not count to the number of units since in the Project coursebooks, there are usually six unit, on the other hand in the Look! coursebooks, there are mostly nine units. The Look!, on the other hand, deals with grammar presentation in a more enjoyable way, using visual prompts as shown in Figure 25 and 26 below. Concerning vocabulary, each coursebook introduces the present simple using completely the same set of vocabulary – everyday activities. In terms of the present continuous, the Project is aimed at clothes, the Look!, on the contrary, jobs, at sport and leisure activities. Controlled drills dominate in both coursebooks as well as the inductive approach towards teaching grammar. So the trend in practising grammar seems to be controlled drills. On the basis of this comparison, it may be concluded that it is mostly the vocabulary of everyday activities with help of which the present simple is taught. The number of listening exercises in both coursebooks may possibly suggest that the Project coursebook provides more possibilities for practising the present simple and continuous by listening.



(Adapted from Elsworth, Rose, 2009, p. 90)

Figure 25: Grammar presentation in Look!



(Adapted from Hutchinson, 1999, p. 44)

Figure 26: Grammar presentation in Project

Since the result showed that it is the controlled drill type of an exercise which the coursebooks at primary and lower secondary schools use, here are some suggestions how to enrich a lesson in terms of its communicativeness. Teachers may bring some extra exercises in which learners have the opportunity to practise a language. However, there is not much time for such additional activities since learners have only three lessons of English during a week. Therefore, it may be suggested not to complete all the exercises in a coursebook and bring some

extra communicative exercises to the class instead. The communicative exercises can count, e.g. Find someone who... (see above in 8.1.2) or the other activities suggested by the research (see chapter 8.1). Another way of enriching may be using the exercises in a book as a communicative exercise, e.g. learners transform the sentences into the questions and ask their partners. One way or other, teachers' imagination is very important at this stage of practice.⁵

⁵ Examples of controlled drill, meaningful drill, awareness, guided-meaningful practice, and structure-based free sentence composition can be found in appendix VI. The activities in appendix VI represent the types of activities for both coursebooks. It was decided so because the activities are very similar in both coursebooks.

9 Conclusion of the research

One purpose of this research was to show what approach most teachers at primary and lower secondary schools prefer. It has been found out that it is mostly the inductive approach where learners have to deduce the grammar rules from the context. A second purpose of the research was to find out if learners think that they know how and when to use the present simple and continuous as well as what type of practice exercises they prefer and why. According to the results, it may be pointed out that learners possibly need more practice of the present continuous. Most teachers think that the most common mistake of their learners is omitting the ending –s in 3rd person singular in terms of the present simple whereas most learners think that it is the present continuous they have the most difficulties with, especially with omitting the verb *to be*. This contradiction signifies that there are some things about teaching the present simple and continuous that need to be explored. This fact may be attributed to the fact that the Czech language does not possess any continuous form of the present tense.

Another purpose of this research was to analyse the coursebooks used at primary and lower secondary schools and to find out what approach they use and what type of practice is the most common one being used in these coursebooks and if they provide enough opportunities for learners to practise. The coursebooks, as well as teachers, use the inductive approach so learners at primary schools get involved in deducing the grammar rules. Nevertheless, controlled drills are the most common types of exercises which, however, do not provide learners the opportunity to communicate. Teachers can, nevertheless, help to provide learners some additional exercises which are more communicative than controlled drills so that learners have the opportunity to actually use a language in context. In terms of the analysed coursebooks, the Project is aimed at more revision of the present simple and continuous throughout the whole course of English at primary and lower secondary school than the Look!

10 Conclusion

The diploma thesis dealt with how to teach grammar in general and what approaches can be used when teaching it. Moreover, it was focused on the three stages of teaching grammar which are presentation, practice, and production. Furthermore, the aim was to describe the most common mistake of learners in terms of the present simple and continuous the target grammar of which they were. The research part was divided into three sections – the survey among teachers, learners, and the analysis of the coursebooks used at primary schools.

The intention of this diploma thesis was, above all, to point out what approach teachers use in grammar teaching and what mistakes their learners are prone to making as well as if learners themselves think they know how to form the present simple and continuous. Additionally, it was focused on what way of practising grammar learners find enjoyable and useful. The point, on top of that, was also to put together a set of practise activities which I found useful and effective and to apply them to learners.

According to the research, research question one, “Do learners at primary and lower secondary schools think they know how to form and when to use the present simple and continuous correctly?”, the learners mostly think that they know how and when to use the present simple and continuous, however, a higher percentage of the learners stated that they have more difficulties with forming the present continuous. This may be due to the fact that the present continuous does not occur in the Czech language therefore the learners have no possibility to compare.

In research question two, “What type of practice do learners at primary and lower secondary schools prefer?”, the responses of the learners highly suggested that it is the communicative practice they prefer.

Most learners, however, stated that they do not have enough opportunities to practise the present simple and continuous as pointed out in research question three “Do learners at primary and lower secondary schools think that they do have enough opportunities to practise the present simple and continuous?”. This fact may be due to the lack of time learners are provided in school syllabus.

The trend in grammar teaching today seems to be the inductive approach as stated by research question four, “Do teachers at primary and lower secondary schools prefer the

deductive approach to teaching grammar to the inductive one?” This is in contradiction with the expected original idea before conducting the survey.

Research question five, “Do the coursebooks used at primary and lower secondary schools use the deductive approach?”, the coursebooks turned out to apply both the inductive and deductive approach.

And finally, as stated in research question six, “What types of activities do coursebooks used at primary and lower secondary schools prefer?”, the most frequent type of an exercise used by the coursebooks are controlled drills.

Finally, few suggestions for further research can be mentioned. One of them is what approach the future teachers at universities are trained to use and what approach they actually use when teaching. This suggestion may be presented to find out if future teachers are trained to use the same approach as the coursebooks used at primary and lower secondary schools. Additionally, what gestures teachers at primary and lower secondary schools use when correcting mistakes or drawing attention to them or if teachers actually use any gestures at all. This may help to learn about the most common gestures used and what they signify. And last but not least, what coursebooks teachers know or have experience with and which of them are enjoyable and effective at the same time. The result of this finding might be useful to provide information about what coursebooks which may help learners to learn a language and which learners might like.

The results of this research may be helpful especially in what mistakes to pay attention to the most so as to help learners to prevent from making them. Additionally, what type of practising exercises learners like or, in other words, find useful and enjoyable so that teachers can integrate the exercises into the lesson. Moreover, teachers may get a notion of if their learners consider the provided amount of practice sufficient enough. In that case, they may adjust their lesson plans to learners themselves.

Let me finish this diploma thesis with a quotation of an American author and journalist William Safire, pointing out that it is just grammar in what we may achieve excellence, successfully. *“Only in grammar can you be more than perfect.”*

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LIST OF APENDICES

Appendix I – Find someone who...

Appendix II – Interview your partner

Appendix III – Picture description

Appendix IV – Questionnaire for teachers

Appendix V – Questionnaire for learners

Appendix VI – Examples of types of exercises

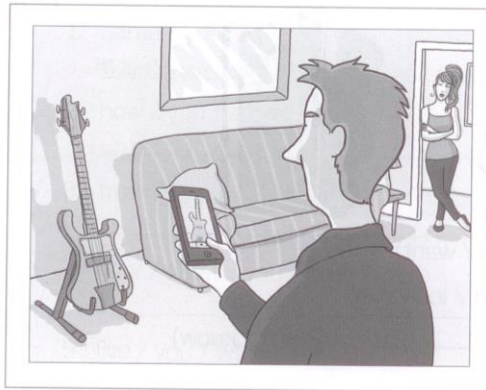
Appendix I – Find someone who...

likes watching football.
doesn't do sport every day.
plays golf.
often goes to the cinema.
thinks professional athletes get too much money.

Appendix II – Interview your partner

- 1) What/you/usually do at weekends? Who/you do it with?
- 2) You/writing anything at the moment? If yes, what?
- 3) You/like watching movies? What movies?
- 4) You/sitting now?

Appendix III – Picture description



(Adapted from Latham-Koenig, Oxenden, 2012, p. 164)

Appendix IV – Questionnaire for teachers

The present simple and continuous Questionnaire for teachers

1. Do you use the inductive or deductive approach in grammar teaching?
(Inductive = examples first, explanation after, deductive = explanation first, then examples)
- Inductive.
 - Deductive.
2. Why do you use it?
3. What are the most common mistakes of your pupils when learning and practising the present simple? (You can choose more than one option.)
- They omit the ending –s in 3rd person singular.
 - They omit the auxiliaries *do* and *does* in questions.
 - They omit the auxiliaries *don't* and *doesn't* in negatives.
 - They mix the present simple with the present continuous together (e.g. I don't going).
 - They forget to use it at all and they use the present continuous instead.
 - They make other mistakes. Which ones?
4. What are the most common mistakes of your pupils when learning and practising the present continuous? (You can choose more than one option.)
- They omit the auxiliary verb *to be*.
 - They don't use the –*ing* ending in the main verb.
 - They mix the present continuous with the present simple together (e.g. I don't going).
 - They don't use it at all and they use the present simple instead.
 - They make other mistakes. Which ones?

5. How do you correct the mistakes of your pupils?
- Immediately after they make them.
 - After they finish the sentence.
 - I do not correct them at all.
 - In a different way. In which one?
6. What example sentences do you use for practising? (You can choose more options.)
- The example sentences from a textbook.
 - The example sentences from a grammar book.
 - I make up my own example sentences.
 - The other ones. Which ones?
7. How do you practise the present simple?
- Using the written exercises either from a textbook or a grammar book.
 - In a communicative way where the pupils can actually use it.
 - Using the combination of both – a textbook or a grammar book and in a communicative way.
 - In a different way. In which one?
8. How do you practise the present continuous?
- Using the written exercises either from a textbook or a grammar book.
 - In a communicative way where the pupils can actually use it.
 - Using the combination of both – a textbook or a grammar book and in a communicative way.
 - In a different way. In which one?

Appendix V – Questionnaire for learners

Přítomný čas prostý a průběhový Dotazník pro žáky

1. Myslíš si, že umíš správně vytvořit přítomný prostý čas?
 Ano.
 Ne.
 Jiná možnost. Vypiš.
2. Myslíš si, že víš, kdy přítomný prostý čas použít?
 Ano.
 Ne.
 Jiná možnost. Vypiš.
3. Myslíš si, že umíš správně vytvořit přítomný průběhový čas?
 Ano.
 Ne.
 Jiná možnost. Vypiš.
4. Myslíš si, že víš, kdy přítomný průběhový čas použít?
 Ano.
 Ne.
 Jiná možnost. Vypiš.
5. Která se tří aktivit se Ti nejvíce líbila?
 aktivita č. 1 – Find someone who ...
 aktivita č. 2 – Cvičení s kartičkami
 aktivita č. 3 – Interview your partner
 aktivita č. 4 – Picture description
6. Která aktivita se Ti zdála nejužitečnější?
 aktivita č. 1 – Find someone who ...
 aktivita č. 2 – Cvičení s kartičkami
 aktivita č. 3 – Interview your partner
 aktivita č. 4 – Picture description
7. Proč se ti zdála nejužitečnější?
 Nejvíce ji využiji v praktickém životě.
 Nejvíce potřebuji tuto gramatiku procvičit.
 Jiná možnost. Vypiš.
8. Myslíš si, že máš možnost oba časy ve škole dostatečně procvičit?
 Ano
 Ne
 Jiná možnost. Vypiš.
9. Chtěla bys ve škole přítomný prostý čas procvičit více než doposud?
 Ano
 Ne
 Jiná možnost. Vypiš.
10. Chtěla by jsi ve škole přítomný průběhový čas více procvičit než doposud?
 Ano
 Ne
 Jiná možnost. Vypiš.
11. Které z daných aktivit procvičování obou časů považuješ za užitečné? (Můžeš zatrhnout více než jednu možnost.)
 Doplnění cvičení v učebnici.
 Práce ve dvojici se spolužákem.
 Komunikativní cvičení se spolužáky.
 Plnění domácích úkolů.
 Diskuze s učitelem.
 Jiná možnost. Vypiš.

Appendix VI – Examples of types of exercises

Awareness



2 My dad's a journalist. At the moment he's writing an article about a gang of robbers.



3 The court case is tomorrow. They're trying to stop him.



4 The police are taking the gang to prison now.



5 We're safe! And my dad isn't hiding from the gang now!

Adapted from Elsworth, Rose, 2009, p. 92.

8 In the text, find an example of:

- 1 the Present continuous positive.
- 2 the Present continuous negative.
- 3 the Present continuous question.

Controlled drill

3 Write the questions.

- 1 what/Corinne/do?
What is Corinne doing?
- 2 what/you/watch?
- 3 who/they/talk to?
- 4 why/Lucas/read a magazine?
- 5 who/she/listen to?
- 6 why/you/study English?

Adapted from Elsworth, Rose, 2009, p. 96.

Meaningful drill

2 Write true short answers.

- 1 Are you using the computer at the moment?
No, I'm not.
- 2 Is your dad sleeping?
- 3 Is your brother/sister talking on the phone?
- 4 Are your parents sunbathing?
- 5 Is your teacher writing?
- 6 Are you eating?

Adapted from Elsworth, Rose, 2009, p. 96.

Guided, meaningful practice

- 7** Work with a partner. Talk about a typical day in your life.

I get up at quarter past seven.

Adapted from Hutchinson, 1999, p. 43.

(Structure-based) free sentence composition

WHAT TO DO

1 Find some photographs to illustrate your life. Write captions for them. Who is in the photos? Where are they? What are they doing?

2 Describe a year in your life. What do you do each month? Which months do you like best? Which months don't you like? Why? What are the important dates in your year?

3 Imagine that a magazine is interviewing you about your life. Write the interview.

4 Arrange your text, your photographs and your interview in a scrapbook on a poster.

That's the end of my project. Bye! Make a project about your life.

Adapted from Hutchinson, 1999, p. 16.

Résumé

Závěrečná práce je zaměřena na výuku přítomného prostého a průběhového času na 2. stupni základních škol. Analýzou dotazníků pro učitele a žáky bylo především zjištěno, jaké jsou nejčastější chyby žáků při používání obou časů, jestli si žáci myslí, že přítomný a průběhový čas ovládají, jaké aktivity žáci preferují a jaký přístup k výuce gramatiky obsahují učebnice, které se na 2. stupni základních škol používají. Byla také navržena sada cvičení, která by mohly výuku obohatit, aby byla komunikativnější.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Bc. Zuzana Kopecká
Katedra:	Katedra anglického jazyka
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Blanka Babická, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2013

Název práce:	Výuka přítomného prostého a průběhového času na 2. stupni základních škol
Název v angličtině:	Teaching the present simple and continuous at lower secondary schools
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce pojednává o výuce přítomného prostého a průběhového času v hodině anglického jazyka na 2. stupni základních škol. Hlavním cílem je zjistit, který přístup učitelé v hodinách používají, jaké jejich žáci dělají chyby a jaké aktivity žáci v hodinách upřednostňují při procvičování. V teoretické části práce jsou zpracovány poznatky z odborné literatury týkající se gramatiky, metod výuky a fází výuky. Praktická část obsahuje výsledky průzkumu mezi učiteli a žáky anglického jazyka, výsledky analýzy učebnic a sada cvičení určených k procvičování obou časů, vše se zaměřením na přítomný prostý a průběhový čas. Dále byly navrženy způsoby, kterými hodinu anglického jazyka obohatit, aby byla komunikativnější.
Klíčová slova:	Přítomný čas prostý, přítomný čas průběhový, metoda, přístup, induktivní, deduktivní, základní škola, žáci, učebnice
Anotace v angličtině:	The diploma thesis deals with teaching the present simple and continuous in classroom of English language at lower secondary schools. The main aim of is to find out which approach teachers use in grammar teaching, what mistakes their learners make and what types of activities learners prefer when practising the present simple and continuous. The theoretical part is based on relevant background literature concerning grammar, methods and stages of teaching. The practical part is based on the findings of a survey among English teachers and learners, an analysis of the coursebooks, and a set of exercises intended for practising, all focused on the present simple and continuous. Furthermore, the ideas how to enrich an English lessons to be more communicative are suggested.

Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Present simple, present continuous, method, approach, inductive, deductive, primary and lower secondary school, learners, coursebooks
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Appendix I – Find someone who... Appendix II – Interview your partner Appendix III – Picture description Appendix IV – Questionnaire for teachers Appendix V – Questionnaire for learners Appendix VI – Examples of types of exercises
Rozsah práce:	92 stran
Jazyk práce:	anglický