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SPEAKING SKILL DEVELOPMENT
Diplomová práce

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Declaration

       I hereby declare that I worked on the thesis on my own and used only the sources listed in the bibliography.

Olomouc, 15th April 2014   …..

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Abstract

The thesis explores teaching speaking fluency as an important part of teaching speaking within English lessons. First it describes theoretical and practical teaching aspects as well as distinguishes accuracy and fluency aiming, considering various conditions of the whole teaching speaking process. The analysis in the research part focus on various kinds of speaking development support, the amount of time devoted to speaking development, the usage of different organizational forms of work, teachers' feedback and proposals of particular fluency developing activities are made.

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I. Introduction

The topic of this work is 'Speaking skill development' within the process of teaching English, which includes various aspects, however, the attention is not paid to teaching pronunciation, intonation, grammar or vocabulary, but I concentrate mainly on the area of the speaking fluency development, which means the development of learners' ability to transfer information clearly, the development of each learner's ability to express himself or herself in English, on his or her own level of knowledge.

I remember my own school years when a teacher, standing in the front of the classroom, made long speeches containing mainly grammar rules and what was required from us, was either oral or written precise translation. Oral production, based on the abilities to convey meaning, was not supported. However, the opinions changed radically during the nineties of the last century, when Czechs realized the importance of practical usage of English knowledge. The subject matter of the practical part of this work is the support of the development of such speaking abilities, to communicate in terms of conveying meaning, not only the faultless expressions, at Czech lower-secondary schools.

The first part of the thesis compiles of the theoretical preparation for the following observation involving chapters on the differences between theoretical knowledge and practical usage of the language, between teaching accuracy and fluency, how various conditions influence speech production, what strategies, principles and organizational forms are recommended by linguists. Subsequently the work deals with particular communicative opportunities, divided by many authors into role-plays, simulations and discussions, which highly support language production and finally the importance of teaching speaking fluency feedback.

The practical section explores the current situation at lower-secondary schools in

the region of Zlín from the fluency speaking development point of view and deals with

the following research questions:

1. Do teachers include various forms of speaking development support in the lessons?

2. How much time during a lesson is devoted to the development of speaking skills?

3. What are common organizational forms of work used for the speaking development,

including their advantages and disadvantages?

4. Does the feedback contain emphasis on fluency besides accuracy?

The research questions are answered by using the data obtained in an observation

method and are followed by several sample activities, developing speaking fluency.

II. Theoretical part

Introduction to the theoretical part

The theoretical part explores speaking fluency development within English lessons presented by linguists in literary works as a very important part of teaching speaking and serves as the basis for the following research in lower-secondary school environment in the practical part of the thesis.

First it investigates theoretical knowledge and the practical language usage as well as defines accuracy and fluency aiming of teaching. The next part describes the influence of various conditions on speech production including the usage of different organizational forms of work within the process of teaching. Subsequently particular fluency developing activities are presented and finally the significance of teaching speaking fluency feedback is explored.

1. Knowledge and skill

The first part of the theoretical section outlines two aspects of the process of learning in general. Subsequently it concentrates on teaching English dealing with a theoretical aspect as well as a practical one. Both are described as important and inseparable parts within the process of teaching English.

1. 1 Theory and practice

A term learning[1] or studying, and especially that connected with schools, is usually associated with gaining some theoretical knowledge. Only some people would probably add practice as well. Although various attitudes and opinions can differ from one teacher to

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    Learning - the activity or process of gaining knowledge or skill by studying, practising, being taught (Merriam-webster, online).

another and of course from one period to another one, we must admit that learning some school subjects is more theoretical and learning others more practical.

Anyone who has ever tried to learn a foreign language must agree with Widowson (1978) who claims it is just the case of this subject where theory and practice must go hand in hand. Concerning the topic 'Teaching speaking', a fact is that teaching practice, as well as theory, belongs unavoidably to this category. Bygate (1987, p.3) compares learning speaking to learning to drive. No matter how much theory a learner gets to know about the car controls, but if he does not gain a skill to be able to use them as well, he will never manage it. Similarly it is not enough to know how to make a sentence in theory, when learning speaking, but we must start to produce sentences.

A well-known sentence, not only among people who speak English, is a question: 'Can you speak English?'. But what does this sentence mean? It may depend on situation. It can mean knowledge of some vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation or an ability to use English to communicate or everything together.

1. 2 Two aspects of teaching[2] speaking

Regarding such communicative competence as one of the main goals of English lessons, it makes English teachers concentrate on two main areas: WHAT knowledge learners need to gain for speaking and HOW to make students use this knowledge (Thornbury, 2007). Either one must not be neglected. Similarly Bygate (1987) admits the necessity of devoting a part of teaching to grammar and vocabulary, however, he stresses the second aspect, which is using the knowledge. Likewise Rivers and Temperley (in Bygate 1987, p.56) distinguish two processes involved in learning to communicate. The

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2 Teaching - to cause or help a person to learn how to do something by giving lessons (Merriam-webster, online)

first one is 'skill getting', including cognition of knowledge and production (articulation and practice in formulating communications) and the second one is 'skill using', which represents interaction[3], real communication.

1. 2. 1 Theoretical aspect

Among main knowledge, which a learner must acquire, there is undoubtedly basic knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Without knowing the right sounds, there will not be right contrast between the phonemes, without knowing the right words and grammar, there will not be a sentence. Discourse and register awareness, such as f.e. distinguishing between more or less formal language, also contribute to the whole process of speaking. Thornbury, (2007) mentions also the value of sociocultural knowledge and speech acts (functions) which are distinctively encoded. What can surprise a lot of us is a fact, that 'native speakers employ only about 2,500 words to cover 95% of their needs, which is not a lot and English learners even manage with half that number for their casual conversation (Thornbury, 2007, p.34).

In contrast to Thornbury's division, Widowson (1978, p.18) calls this first language aspect as language usage, which he explains as having knowledge. However, it is in no use on its own, but it has to be complemented by language use, which he describes as using the theoretical language knowledge in practice. He criticizes the past tendency in teaching a foreign language (see also Chapter 2.1.1 - Past approach to teaching speaking), which was to concentrate on language usage, in other words the theory, assuming that learners would gain the language use, in other words the practice, by themselves.

1. 2. 2 Practical aspect

Apart from the above mentioned importance of language knowledge for learning there is another large area in learning speaking, which draws our attention in this work, and it is using the knowledge. How the knowledge can be used in practice. Learners can study

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3 Interaction - reciprocal action or influence (Oxford dictionary, online)

plenty of vocabulary by heart, they can have some knowledge of pronunciation and often very good knowledge of grammar, but as Bygate (1987, p.4) emphasizes 'Knowledge itself is not enough: knowledge has to be used in action'.

A crucial division, knowledge about a language and a skill in using a language, is described by Bygate (1987, p.3) who starts his book by a sentence 'One of the basic problems in foreign-language teaching is to prepare learners to be able to use the language'. As can be seen from his statement he finds it difficult, but at the same time important to include using the knowledge in teaching.

1.2.2.1 Language learning stages

Thornbury, (2007, p.38) regards speaking skill as 'a movement from controlled to automatic processing.' Of course learners cannot jump over control practise but the knowledge must be made available for use through repeated activation. There are many different theories of language learning, nevertheless, each of the theories includes a stage where a learner encounters something new, then a stage when this knowledge is integrated into the student's existing knowledge and finally the stage when it becomes usable (Thornbury, 2007). And such a communicative competence, which is the result of those three stages, is understood by Widowson (1978, p.163) as the 'language knowledge realized as use in social contexts'. Rejmankova (2001) explains communicative competence as a term which does not emphasize correctness but an ability. An ability to communicate.

1.2.2.2 Speaking opportunities

Gaining any skills, not only language ones, bring along practice. No matter how much talented a person is, without regular, frequent and repetitive practice he will not go far. Learning speaking is not an exception. Weather considering Harmer's (2007) distinguishing between interactive and non-interactive, planned and unplanned speaking or

Thornbury's (2007) between transactional and interpersonal, the more opportunities for speaking students have, the better they will be at speaking, refers to all kinds of speaking practice in general. And of course it is true vice versa, which means the fewer opportunities for speaking students have, the worse they will speak (see also Chapter 4.2 - The amount of time devoted to the speaking skill development).

1.2.2.3 Unpredictability

In contrast to writing, to another language productive skill[4], speaking is disadvantaged by the limited time. It demands an ability to mobilize the words, phrases and the whole sentences very fast (Bygate, 1987, p.33). It is one of the things which must be also learnt by students of a foreign language, to learn to use some kind of communication strategies (see Chapter 2.2.5), which are used either to fill the time, when thinking, or paraphrasing, formulaic expressions or simply leaving out unnecessary elements.

As speaking is a reciprocal activity, it includes also an ability to deal with unpredictable problems, which interaction brings. Pupils can carefully learn some phrases which they expect to use in some interaction, however, the situation can change and they get easily lost. What helps English learners is to develop an ability of asking for clarification if they get lost or for slowing down the speech.

1.2.2.4 From knowledge to a real language using situation

Rivers and Temperley (in Bygate 1987, p.58) believe that a bridge from knowledge towards communication[5] skills leads through pseudo-communication practice, that is an exercise where the content is arranged by the learning situation. Using such structured practices we can bridge the gap to real communication. The process, leading from

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4 Productive, receptive skills - language skills are often divided into 2 groups: receptive, which are listening and reading and productive, which are speaking and writing (Seznámení s komunikativním způsobem vyučování angličtiny, 1998)
5Communication - exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium (Oxford dictionary, online)

knowledge towards communication skills, is in a similar way described by Littlewood (in Bygate 1987, p.61) who suggests to practise specific elements of knowledge or skill in pre-communicative activities and afterwards to integrate this pre-communicative knowledge and skills into the full communicative activity.

Bygate (1987, p.7) divides speaking skills into motor-perceptive and interactive. The first one is a context-free kind of skill which involves perceiving, recalling and articulation, in other words choosing the correct word forms and meanings and putting them into the correct order and sounds. Exercises practising motor-perceptive skills would be e.g. model dialogues, pattern practice, drills. On the other hand, interaction skills are those which enable learners to transfer classroom motor-perceptive skills to real-life use of the skill, transfer knowledge to a real language using situation. Practice of such skills would include e.g. making decisions, what and how to say something. Interaction skills must cope with the pressure of time as well as reciprocity conditions, which means to adjust reacting to the listener, which of course requires to be flexible in communication.

To sum up, it can be said that the methodologists, although they do not always use the same terms, agree that teaching speaking involves both theoretical and practical aspects, which means gaining knowledge and the skill of using knowledge. It brings along aiming speaking development at accuracy as well as at fluency.

2 Fluency and its improvement

The following part of the thesis deals with the fluency speaking development within the teaching process. At first it describes differences between accuracy and fluency aiming, looks into the use of language from the perspective of speech production up to recommended communicative strategies. Subsequently various organizational forms of work as well as fluency developing activities within English lessons are explored and the final part is devoted to speaking fluency feedback.

2.1 Accuracy and Fluency

This chapter defines teaching focused on accuracy in contrast to teaching focused on fluency, including past approach to teaching speaking as well as a contemporary communicative approach.

Ur (1996) looks at teaching speaking similarly as the mentioned linguists so far, that is from two main aspects. She distinguishes teaching accuracy and teaching fluency.

Accurate stands for correct or precise, which means that teaching speaking accuracy is connected with teaching correctness and precision. The aim here is getting the language right, forming correct sounds, words and sentences, in other words not making mistakes. Accuracy is definitely important when teaching pronunciation, to get the phonemes sound well as well as vocabulary, to get appropriate meaning of words or when teaching grammar where a different form of a word or a different tense could completely change the whole meaning. Considering teaching speaking accuracy, the teaching and practice consist of language-oriented communication consisting of structural exercises where the answers are actually predetermined (Klippel, 1984, p.6).

On the other hand, fluency represents conveying messages with ease (Ur, 2006). The objective in teaching fluency is conveying a message, communicating and receiving

the content. In contrast to accuracy, fluency stresses expressing and understanding messages. Klippel (1984, p.6) calls it message-oriented communication where a target language is not used as a goal but as means of communication.

There will be certainly emphases on fluency when teaching all language skills, i.e. speaking, writing, listening and reading, and its development brings along lowering emphases on accuracy. According to Bygate (1987, p. 30) 'perfectly explicit communication is not only generally unattainable, it is generally unnecessary.'

As this work deals with the development of speaking fluency, it concentrates on this aspect of teaching speaking, but by no means does it mean to underestimate teaching accuracy. What is very important for the teacher is to know what is being taught: either an activity is used to teach accuracy (e.g. grammar, vocabulary) or fluency, communication. Sometimes a fluency stressing activity leads to another one emphasizing accuracy or it combines both. Nevertheless, Ur (1996) claims that a teacher's orientation on one way or another is usually evident.

Ideally, of course, teachers should find a balance between these two emphases. Students also can embrace various coping strategies: 'Some may opt for relying on words rather than grammar to get their meaning across and others will settle for a more analytic, grammar-based approach, but they will pay the price in fluency.' (Thornbury, 2007, p. 31). Whatever prevails, the balance in teaching accuracy and fluency is necessary and belongs among main responsibilities of a teacher. Either too much stress on speaking precisely or ignoring it at all would not be adequate.

2.1.1 Past approach to teaching speaking

Teaching does not concern only a question of the balance but also of order. Many of us in the Czech Republic have experienced that accuracy was not only a goal of learning a foreign language but a starting point as well. Accuracy in spoken language was required

and tested and accenting fluency was postponed and postponed (Thornbury, 2007). Czech students were required to make as few mistakes as possible and were never asked to take a risk at the expense of accuracy.

2.1.1.1 Written and spoken language

It has been for quite a short time since English teachers started to pay attention to teaching speaking fluency, however, what seems to be more interesting, is the fact, that for even much longer time in history teachers did not concentrate on speaking at all. 'For most of its history, language teaching has been concerned with the study of the written language.' (Brown 1983, p.1) That is why written language has been perfectly described in plenty of dictionaries and grammar-books and a written sentence is simply correct or wrong.

At first, teaching spoken language included only teaching pronunciation and later a stress and intonation were added. Gradually also teaching spoken language, including spontaneous spoken language, entered the teaching. However, it has brought along a lot of practical problems, which the teachers must deal with. For some teachers it means a headache, because of noisy classes and for most there is no longer one secure and tested method they can lean upon (Brown 1983).

2.1.1.2 Teaching speaking fluency

A radical opinion change came in the 1990s when the borders opened and the Czech started to realize that if they begin using as little speaking knowledge as they have, it would be better than to wait until they reinforce it. And that was the time when speaking fluency became for the Czech people more important aim than speaking accuracy. The re-thinking influenced of course teaching in our schools and sped up the process of introducing the communicative approach. Concentrating on grammar and translation, was step by step replaced by the approach emphasizing such learning processes which allow

making mistakes, experiments and their possible re-corrections. Such fluency-oriented approach, which is definitely more tolerant to making mistakes, lifts up learner's attempt to communicate and brings along fluency activities to the class (Thornbury, 2007). (See also Chapter 2.4 - Particular fluency developing activities.)

Language teachers and parents realized that 'the skill of speaking is much more than oral production of grammar and vocabulary items' (Thornbury, 2007, p. 116) and therefore the syllabuses of English subjects started to emphasize the functions and skills development as well as the grammar and vocabulary. The textbooks have been designed the same way, however, not only excellently compiled books but also other factors, such as e. g. sufficient amount of time or pupils' willingness to cooperate, are important for reaching the pre-determined goals.

2.1.2 Communicative approach

As it has already been mentioned above, emphases on learning understanding and expressing meaning, which the term fluency represents, come from the philosophy of communicative language teaching (CLT) to teach foreign languages through communicative approach. CLT does not focus on learning pieces of language just because they exist, but on the use of student's ability to communicate where the importance of fluency is elevated (Harmer, 2007).

Widowson (1978, In: Ur, 1996) contrasts this approach with previous grammar translation method, audio-linguism or cognitive code-learning which emphasized accuracy. CLT offers learners many opportunities to use the target language such as pair work, group work, role-plays, simulations where they must fulfill meaningful communication tasks whose realization is important and a teacher's attention is focused on the content rather than the form (Harmer, 2007).

Revell (1991, p.5) realizes the importance of CLT in making a bridge between

linguistic competence and communicative competence when he claims 'theories of communicative competence imply that teachers must do more than just supply learners with a number of language structures to manipulate'.

Among the characteristic principles of CLT, which advocates an opinion that students should actively learn to use English language for communicative purposes, belong: using English in real situations, problem solving in English, such as games, quizzes, puzzles, individual concentration, students' own evaluation of their knowledge, pair work, group work and finally different roles of a teacher, such as an informant, consultant or adviser (Seznámení s komunikativním způsobem vyučování angličtiny, 1998, p. 4).

2.2 The use of language

The following section is divided into several parts. Firstly it discusses the features of basic speech production and the usage of mother tongue and a target language within the teaching process. Subsequently transactional and interactional use of language as well as long and short turns are discussed and eventually the support of fluency speaking development in the form of using various communicative strategies is introduced.

2.2.1 Basic features of speech production

Paying teacher's attention to developing a speaking skill is important as most of our daily communication is carried out just by speaking. As Thornbury (2007) states 'the average person produces tens of thousands of words a day'. Compared to writing, where every word is carefully planned, spoken language is less dense, however, it consists of higher proportion of the 'small words' which are pronouns, discourse markers, conjunctions and auxiliary verbs (Thornbury, 2007, p.54).

What may be an advantage of spoken over written language is the fact that it has

not very complicated syntax and the vocabulary is much easier. Short simple sentences, phrases or even unfinished sentences are typical and if one does not know an exact word he or she can use a more general word (Brown 1983). When teaching speaking, students should not be made to talk like books but should be allowed to speak more naturally, which is not as economically organized speech as writing and it allows more repetitions (Bygate, 1987). It is much easier to understand a real spoken language than a text, reading aloud.

2.2.1.2 Influential factors

When teaching speaking, it is necessary to take into account the conditions, in which speaking takes place, as they play a very important role in the whole teaching process. Thornbury (2007) divides the factors, influencing the speech production, into three groups.

The first one is formed by *cognitive factors*, which is familiarity with the topic and the people you are speaking to. The better a person knows the topic and the people, the easier the speaking. The second group is formed by *affective factors*, which are the feelings towards the topic as well as the participants. If pupils do not like the topic and do not feel well among the participants, they will have greater problems to talk than if the topic and the people are their favourites.

The last group is formed by *performance factors*, which includes mode, discourse control, planning, environmental and time conditions. What role gestures and eye contact play can be realized when speaking face to face or on the telephone. It is also easier if one can control the events direction than if he or she is in the hands of someone else. The time pressure, the time for preparation and acoustic conditions play their roles, too (Thornbury, 2007, p.25).

Brown (1983, p.34) agrees that learners produce the best if they are under the least communicative stress and adds it is more relaxed for a basic schools learner to talk to a

classmate than to an adult and also to talk to one listener than to many. He emphasizes talking to a classmate as convenient also because the learners know approximately the same of the target language. What he also points out is that communicative stress can be imposed by an external examiner and unknown surroundings or simply a situation where a learner does not fully understand what he or she is asked to do.

2.2.1.2 Spoken language

Spoken English is very variable and there is 'no influential description of spoken English, which has the status of grammar of written English' (Brown 1983, p.3) so some teachers are afraid they do not know what exactly is in spoken language correct or not. No matter that a Czech teacher's English is not one hundred percent correct, they should speak it as much as possible because learners need to be exposed to spoken English and they gradually, even long time before they speak, start to understand it (Wingate, 1993, p.27).

Pupils should be encouraged to speak from the very beginning. Of course the level of speaking skills which is demanded by teachers must be according to pupils' level of knowledge, but as any other skill, speaking must be practiced. It does not depend on how many words or grammar the learners know but if they use it for practice. Anderson (1984, p.33) even adds a daring claim that younger learners 'will acquire communicative skills simply by participation, by coming into contact with such skills'.

It is the same with babies. The more opportunities to speak they have the bigger probability is that they get better and better. Just as babies need someone to listen to their speaking, learners as well and preferably individually, which is often a problem in a big class. However, a listener does not necessarily need to be a teacher and pair work or group work could solve this problem at least a little (see Chapter 2.3.1 - Pair work and Group work).

2.2.2 Mother tongue and a target language

Harmer (2007, p.132) admits it is often discussed among methodologists whether to use the target language for the whole time in class or not. The truth is if English is a medium of communication in class, students are more provoked to speak and more attempts to speak means learning speaking.

Considering our basic schools environment where Czech is used for common communication with each other, switching between Czech and English is a natural part of learning, however, Harmer (2007) recommends careful and measured use of mother tongue. Using Czech is certainly suitable to show differences between Czech and English and it also saves time. Translation is even sometimes called the fifth skill of a language (after reading, listening, speaking and writing). Czech can be also used for explaining, instructions and personal things which of course depends on the level of language knowledge.

On the other hand, using Czech restricts exposure to English and teachers often speak Czech more than they had intended and using English is unnecessarily reduced. And what is more, it seems counter-productive if a teacher is not a good example and speaks Czech a lot and at the same time encourages pupils to speak English (Harmer, 2007, p. 132).

To sum up, using Czech may be important when discussing a problem, to show contrasts between Czech and English vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, however, all must be done in the context of using English in class as much as possible. Using classroom English and making use of any opportunities to speak with students informally besides formally indisputably helps to develop learners' speaking skills. Harmer (2007) states that using a mother tongue does not matter so much if it is used under the control of a teacher during, for example, a reading comprehension but it is definitely counter-productive to use

a mother tongue in oral communication activity. (The use of classroom English as well as informal chat between a teacher and students is explored in the practical part in Chapter 4.1.2).

2.2.3 Interactional and transactional use of language

The development of learners' speaking skills is divided by Ur (1996) into interactional talk development, which is listener-oriented talk and transactional talk development, which is a message-oriented talk. The former includes greetings, beginning and ending conversations, apology, thanks or giving compliments in contrast to the latter which is primarily used for communicating information.

Interactional talk, which Anderson (1984, p.10) calls 'chat' means amicable conversation, which is not expected to have outcomes but forms the basis of normal social life. On the other hand transactional talk is information-related as its aim is to transfer information to a listener who needs it for some purpose. That is a case when teachers speak, for example, about a particular topic and learners are asked to answer on that topic.

It is not possible to distinguish between these two kinds of talk and say that teachers are going to teach interactional talk and next lesson transactional. When teacher comes to the class and greets the pupils, says a few English sentences about the weather or a new pullover that someone is wearing, he is, knowingly or not, teaching them interactional kind of talk. Later when he concentrates on some topic, and surely it is the most of the time in the class, that is the information-related talk. As school teaching is mostly about presenting some information to the learners, it seems the interactional talk, although it occurs more often in ordinary life (Brown, 1983, p.10), is somehow neglected.

Brown (1983, p.14) points out that message-oriented speaking does not start when learners are able to make the whole sentences. Also single words such as 'ice-cream' or 'ice-cream, please' means something and we understand the learner's needs. Klippel (1984,

p.6) stresses that 'message-oriented speaking uses a language as means of communication' so if it is only means and not the end it should be also looked at such speaking like that. Teachers can help their pupils to convey messages by providing them with pictures, cartoons or other prompts which do not stop or substitute learner speaking ability, but can improve it.

Language learners usually prefer to speak to someone face to face than on the phone and the reason is that 'The act of speaking involves not only the production of sounds but also the use of gesture, the movements of the muscles of the face and indeed of the whole body' (Widowson 1978, p 59). As can be seen, speaking is both aural and visual and as it is a reciprocal exchange, it is also both productive and receptive so that teachers can help learners to develop their speaking skills by active listening and mimics, gestures with encouraging words as well.

2.2.4 Long and short turns

The following part explores using long and short turns within the teaching process. A turn is viewed as the time when a speaker is talking. Brown (1983, p. 28) explains short turns like short utterances, i.e. Yes. Yes, of course. Not at all. I am sorry. On the other hand long turns, such as telling a story or describing a picture need longer planning (Anderson, 1984, p. 18).

When teaching English, teachers must realize, that it is natural only for them to speak in long turns, however, they should show satisfaction hearing their pupils say at least a few words. Anderson (1984, p. 14) compares the process of learning speaking a foreign language to baby's process of talking. Every mother is happy to hear the first words which come from her baby's mouth and she is far from being disappointed because she is the one who speaks most of the time and her baby says only a few words.

Long turns come gradually later. The longer the turn the longer the planning and as

any other activity it demands practice and that is why long turns need to be explicitly taught (Anderson, 1984, p. 18). Teaching long turns, like describing a route or telling a story must naturally follow after teaching short turns. Nevertheless, it means not to wait with teaching speaking until the learners gain some theoretical knowledge but as a mother with a baby start immediately from the very beginning.

It seems natural for Brown (1983, p. 28) to start teaching speaking with short turns such as Right, Sorry, Nice, Very well etc. which means a learner, although knowing only a little, can participate in speaking with a teacher who does most of the work. On the contrary long turns are very demanding for the learners as they must inform a listener what or who they are speaking about, when and where events happened so that they need adequate models, enough practice and supportive feedback.

2.2.5 Communication strategies and principles

Helping students with learning speaking fluency, they should be acquainted with some coping strategies. Thornbury (2007, p. 29) divides the coping strategies into communication strategies, avoidance strategies and discourse strategies. The first group include e.g. word coinage (a learner thinks of a new word, which does not exist, but others would understand), foreignizing (turning a mother tongue word into English sounding word), using an all-purpose word (such as stuff, thing) or paralinguistics (gestures). Using avoidance strategies means to choose to abandon the originally intended message or replacing it with another one. And the last one, the discourse strategy, is used by borrowing the whole pieces of speech by the other speaker, usually in the form of repetition. Ur (1996) adds improvising strategy which is trying any words learners can come up with and the fact is it does not depend on how much vocabulary or grammar a learner knows but if he is not afraid to improvise.

Of course some learners need fewer words to be able to communicate with than

others and it is always teacher's responsibility to offer learners different possibilities to cope with their personal needs. For some learners it is difficult to find balance between speed and planning and others concentrate more on grammar accuracy and the choice of vocabulary (Thornbury, 2007). No matter what experience the learners have so far, the lack of opportunities for speaking practice contributes to the shortage of success as besides developing speaking skills, any speaking attempts bring along also the practice of interactive skills which increase learner's confidence as well.

Klippel (1984, p. 3-6) points out the following principles of developing speaking fluency. First, he mentions the importance of message-oriented communication, in other words the communication must be aimed at conveying a message.

Second, he recommends to use a foreign language as means of communication, e. g. Classroom English whose usage is dealt with in the practical part in Chapter 4.1.2.

Third, he stresses a natural use of all the situations where real communication occurs plus create many others. (A natural use of English in a form of informal chat between a teacher and students is explored in the practical part in Chapter 4.1.2.)

Then he suggests to concern with the learners themselves in general and to be empathetic. It is not only the rational and fact-oriented stage of teaching the language which should be presented but the real interest in pupils themselves, including sharing feelings and ideas, is necessary.

Finally, pupil's active involvement and cooperation are lifted up (Klippel 1984, p. 3-6). More active way of pupils' involvement within a lesson in a form of pair work, group work or a whole class communicative activity is presented in the practical part in Chapter 4.3 as well as in the theoretical part in Chapter 2.3.

As mentioned above, teaching speaking fluency must comprise such activities

which involve learners in speaking as much as possible. However, basic school classes usually consist of large amounts of students so that such activities must be connected with the different organizational forms of work. The communicative approach is associated mostly with pair work, group work or the whole class communicative activities which the next part of the thesis concentrates on.

2.3 Organizational forms of work

It has already been said that the development of speaking and especially speaking fluency demands the use of activities which involve students in active speaking as much as possible, which can be solved in large lower secondary classes by incorporating different organizational forms of work, such as pair work, group work or whole class speaking activities.

2.3.1 Pair work and Group work

Pair work is probably used in all English language classes, especially in those with a lot of learners in class, which is at basic schools. Group work usually consists of more pupils, usually four to six, and has similar advantages as well as disadvantages as pair work so these two organizational forms of work are discussed together. In both forms the pupils are those who are responsible for work and the teacher takes the role of an observer.

2.3.1.1 Stages of pair and group work activity

Although for uninformed person it can sometimes look as a chaos, it must have its own rules. Both pair work and group work have some stages. Ur (1996) divides the whole process into the following phases:

1) The first one is a presentation which comprises of giving instructions. It is very important for a teacher to explain it clearly for everybody to understand. He or she can either use a mother tongue or English, but must be sure that everybody understands.

Harmer (2007) adds it is helpful if somebody can repeat the instructions or even to demonstrate. No sooner than the instructions are explained the materials are given out. In this phase it is good to go through needed vocabulary if necessary. The teacher must also set time limit or a signal for the ending.

2) During the activity itself, the teacher is in the role of a monitor who either prompts or helps where necessary or just watches and can tactfully regulate using English. To be supportive is important as a teacher does not want to interrupt too much which could ruin the whole process (Ur, 1996).

3) After a pre-arranged ending signal there is a final part which also has its irreplaceable place. It usually takes place as a whole class interaction where pupils present their work, opinions, play a scene or display materials. The teacher must appreciate their effort, comments on the content and also integrates feedback on language or leaves it on later (Ur, 1996, p. 232).

2.3.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages

Undoubtedly a big advantage of pair and group work is the amount of time for speaking per individual pupil, which is, in contrast to whole class teaching, increased multiple times. Thornbury (2007, p.73) distinguishes between open and closed pair work. The first one is when the pair performs a dialogue before the class in contrast to the second when all pairs are working at the same time. In the beginning the work might be performed by a teacher and a pupil, then there would be closed pair work which can be followed by the open work. The awareness that the last phase would follow can help pupils to concentrate during the closed practice.

Learners' fear of speaking decreases when they are in interaction only with one or a couple of persons, not a whole class and what is more, the classmates' English abilities are approximately at the same level so they do not have to fear of not saying things right as

much as before a teacher.

Concerning relationships, Harmer (2007) thinks that group work is less problematic than pair work and pupils even work more readily. However, he admits it is sometimes more chaotic than pair work and another disadvantage is longer preparation.

Either learners' disability to cooperate or too deep concentration may bring along noise, which can be another disadvantage in a form of disturbing others. Another drawback can appear when a task is so interesting that pupils' enthusiasm to fulfill the task gets learners' temptation to use Czech more than necessary (see also Chapter 4.3.2).

2.3.1.3 Putting learners into pairs

Pair work is quick to organize as the pupils are usually seated at the desks in pairs. A complication, which can appear, is if there are two pupils who do not get on well with each other and simply do not cooperate. It can be either bad relationships or one thinks his English is at a higher level. However, if a teacher foresees possible problems, he can use various strategies for dividing pupils. They can be given numbers or can be divided according to their height, date of birth, a colour of their trousers or hair. If the behaviour problems appear during an activity, a teacher can change the groups or even change the pair or group activity into whole class teaching (Harmer, 2007).

One possibility how to divide pupils is to do it according to their abilities. However, working together is usually quite challenging only for stronger students but weaker students can easily lose effort and motivation to become better when working in one pair or group permanently. Harmer (2007) suggests teachers to make pairs or groups semi-permanent because also weaker and stronger pupils together can benefit from each other help.

2.3.1.3 The role of a teacher

A concern, which could be mentioned by teachers or parents, is the fact that a teacher does not hear all the mistakes. It is true but he can hear at least some, note them down and deal with them later during the feedback (see Chapters 2.5 and 4.4). A better possibility is if the mistakes are spontaneously corrected by a classmate within the pair.

As the work is directed by the pupils themselves, it is also up to them to manage their time. Some pairs or groups are quicker and are able to do more, other do less but more precisely. A problem can appear if some pairs or groups finish earlier. They will not probably sit quietly until the rest finishes so the teacher must have some task related extensions to use in that spare time (Harmer, 2007).

Pair and group work atmosphere is more relaxed and shared responsibility increases cooperation and independence. However, some pupils can take over the whole group responsibility and others stay passive or some classes seem to be too competitive and it takes time for them to learn to cooperate. It is up to the teacher's pedagogical abilities to teach learners to get used to such work. The teacher's role changes from a formal informant to an observer and a facilitator. To help pupils to cooperate in a group work, a teacher can give them some roles. Hess (1995, p.8) offers a leader who leads the discussion, a secretary who records and summarizes the main ideas, a language monitor who is responsible for using English during work, a dictionary person who looks up necessary words, a grammar monitor who is in charge of using grammar appropriately and a spokesman who will report before the class.

To conclude, there are both advantages and disadvantages when using pair work or group work, however, Hess (1995, p.8) recommends teachers to discuss both with the learners and believes that they will soon see that the positives outweigh the negatives. (The use of pair work and group work in lower-secondary schools is explored in Chapter 4.3)

2.3.2 Whole class teaching

At first glance this form of teaching, usually understood as frontal teaching, seems not very convenient for teaching speaking fluency, especially considering large basic school classes. Individual students have certainly less chance to say something so they spend less time speaking, however, sharing happiness or amusement among eighteen people is eighteen times more laughing. An activity can really be a success if it draws everybody in because such collective effort certainly unifies the whole class. Also a teacher can better see into the class mood as a whole which can help in solving behavior or other problems (Harmer 2007).

Working under the teacher authority all the time may seem more secure for both, the teacher and the class. Students often prefer a stronger partner, which is a teacher, not a weak student. However, it is up to the teacher to involve all, to direct the speaking as evenly as possible. Harmer (2007) advises a more equal position for the teacher and it is making a circle where a better eye contact among the pupils can help to concentrate.

Nevertheless, most of the advantages for teaching speaking fluency in pair work and group work (see above) seem to be disadvantages in the whole class teaching. Only minority of pupils feel easy to talk fluently before the whole class, for most of them it is still too formal and they feel inhibitions and fear of public failure which of course blocks speaking fluently. For many adults it is also unusual when speaking before eighteen people, after all most of the daily speaking takes place among a few people.

2.3.2.1 A whole class speaking activity.

In contrast to the whole class teaching, associated with frontal teaching as discussed above, there should be mentioned another form of the whole class teaching, which is understood in a sense of the whole class speaking activity. It requires students to speak to everyone in class in order to complete a communicative task, which discourages students

from dwelling on the language precisions and makes them draw on automated routines (Thornbury2007). Such speaking activities may have a form of questionnaires, survey or information gap activities where all the students are involved in speaking when going from one classmate to another with the purpose to find the required information.

Sheils (1988) distinguishes three parts where the first is a pre-speaking activity, with an aim to prepare the pupils for the following activity by brainstorming, questions, pictures or using short texts. The purpose is to gather as many ideas as possible and instruct pupils for the while-speaking activity where pupils solve a communication task or play a communication game. Post-speaking activity provides opportunities for making the communication more effective or the development of integrated skills (Sheils, 1988).

A disadvantage, which is brought along whole class speaking activities, is a noise in class but as the activity is usually much more interesting than mindless drilling, pupils usually cooperate well. Communicative stress is lowered and the speaking itself, which includes the desire to reveal secrets or work out a mystery, leads naturally to strengthening speaking without realizing it (Perclova, 1997). As well as during pair work or group work some pupils finish earlier so a teacher must be prepared to engage them in either helping others or in another spare activity.

Learners' speaking during a whole class speaking activity, which is not under the constant control of the teacher, is of course not without learners' mistakes, however, as well as people learn sowing by sowing, they learn speaking English by speaking English, which means that not all the stitches are absolutely perfect from the very beginning but step by step they get better and better (Perclova, 1997, p.7).

To sum up, whole class speaking activities definitely increase time for speaking practice multiple times and should find their place in large basic school classes (see their usage at lower-secondary schools in practical part in chapter 4.3). However, fronted

teaching, the most commonly used organizational form of work and often not much supported in connection with communicative approach, may also bring along advantages, such as better behavioral control or providing a necessary language model by a teacher.

2.4 Particular fluency developing activities

The following part outlines different kinds of speaking activities which can highly support speaking fluency development in class.

The thesis has already discussed the view that speaking skill is knowledge which becomes activated and automated through practice (for more details see Chapter 1 - Knowledge and skill). Practice makes speaking fluent. A consequence of this view is that teaching speaking fluency requires providing students with such communicative tasks where the participants must achieve some outcome, which is not 100 per cent predictable and where using English is the means, not the aim itself. Such tasks help to enforce automation and therefore develop fluency (Thornbury, 2007).

2.4.1 Information gap activities

A typical communicative task is an information gap activity. Some knowledge, which is required for completing the task, is distributed between the participants and therefore they must use the language to achieve the goal. Two pictures where learners must spot the differences is a classic example (Thornbury, 2007, p. 80). See its usage in practical part in Chapter 5.

Klippel (1984) believes that two devices help students not to be afraid of speaking. The first is already mentioned information gap which means to speak in order to find solution and the other is opinion gap where students must describe or defend their opinion. In both cases pupils need some content which is worth talking about.

Thornbury (2007, p.81) presents more complicated information gap activities which

involve several participants and calls them jigsaw activities. Four pictures of a story are distributed to four learners who must, using English, compile the story (see also Chapter 5 in practical part).

Another task is info-gap race where 2 teams attempt to describe a picture to their representative who is required to draw it according to given instructions. The first team, whose representative draws it successfully is the winner (ibid., p.82).

2.4.2 Whole class activities

A whole class speaking activity which can be used repeatedly in various ways is Line-ups. Learners are asked to make a line, according to the day and month of their birthday. The line will start at January and finish at December. Other versions could be alphabetical order of the first names, age, the distance from your home to school etc. (Baudains, 1990, p.47)

According to its name, delightful drilling seems not to belong to developing speaking fluency but the opposite is true. A question is the part which is only slightly changed but the answers require using real fantasy. A game reminds us of baby's ceaselessly repeated questions WHY?. A dialogue in pairs could look like this:

Why do you have homework? Because we need more practice.

Why do you need more practice? Because we want to learn quickly.

Why do you want to learn quickly? Etc. (Hess, 1995, p.13). See also Chapter 5 in practical part.

Surveys are communicative activities where learners ask and answer questions in order to complete a questionnaire, which can be based on a topic which occurs in learners' textbooks. This can involve the whole class when learners stand up and going from one to another fill their prepared forms (Thornbury, p.83).

If teachers want to recall unintentional practice questions, which is often difficult

for learners because they are mostly asked to answer, no to ask, they can use a guessing game in which a learner thinks of something, e. g. an object in the classroom or a job, and others have to ask yes/no questions to find out what or who it is. As in other communicative tasks the focus is on the outcome, not the language used (ibid.).

One of the factors which helps to develop fluency is repetition, not exact repetition, but an element of it. The onion is an activity in which you arrange chairs in two circles, the inner one facing the outer one and learners, sitting on the chairs, tell each other e. g. about last weekend. After a while they move one chair round so that they have a new partner and the activity is repeated. Not to make students bored, you can insert an element of finding out e. g. how many did the same or similar activities (ibid., p.86).

2.4.3 Pair and group work activities

The following set of activities intends to practise sharing information in pairs or groups. Pair work with a map, called Discovering locations is an activity where one pupil has to discover the place where the other is standing by asking him or her questions. Discovering identical pairs is a group work where one learner has to find another learner with the same picture. Another activity with a map is 'Following directions' where one learner follows instructions of the other to find the requested position or place (Littlewood, in Bygate, 1987, p. 67)

One possibility how to break the habit of translating is a rapid speaking activity. A teacher speaks very quickly with no pauses, e. g. Stand up, Sit down, Look at the door, and learners demonstrate. Then in pairs each learner prepares in his head or writes it down a few sentences and each learner orders the other learner speaking very quickly, with no pauses, which decreases the possibility of translating. Wingate (1993, p. 28)

2.4.4 Using pictures

Different possibilities how to use pictures for developing speaking fluency are

described by Bygate (1987, p. 71). A similar game as Picture differences is a game Finding similarities. You hand out two different pictures per pair and the aim is, not looking at each other picture, to find as many similarities as possible. An activity Describe and arrange uses a picture story, consisting from four pictures, where one learner has the pictures in the right order and the other must listen to the story to arrange his pictures in the same way. In a Story construction activity four members of a group are given a different picture and are to compile a story together.

Identifying a picture from a set is an activity where one learner from a pair has a set of pictures and has to identify just one of them which the other one is holding (Littlewood, in Bygate, 1987, p. 67).

2.4.5 Role plays, simulations and discussions

A division of communicative tasks, which is used by many authors, is role-play, simulation and discussion. In a role-play learners pretend to be someone else and do what is set for them to do, e. g. an unwilling shop assistant. A teacher can hand out the roles in a form of role-cards where each learner reads the role which he will play.

On the other hand, in a simulation learners play themselves in a simulated situation and do what has been set for them to do. They might be e. g. phoning to arrange a meeting.

In discussion each one is himself or herself and does not have a set task what to say, e.g. Balloon debate – a popular discussion game where learners are pretending being balloon passengers which is overloaded and must persuade the others why they should be saved and not sacrificed (Thornbury 2007, p. 98). See an example of discussion in practice in practical part in Chapter 5.

Wingate (1993, p. 43) recommends all of these three kinds of tasks because they 'protect your students' inner selves from suffering any blows to their confidence and morale while getting to use the new items of language'. Bygate (1987, p. 59) stresses the

importance of using such activities because they are opportunities for learners to use English for various purposes of language, for the situation outside the class.

All the activities, mentioned in this chapter, serve as examples of the activities whose application in English lessons greatly contributes to learners' fluency speaking development, however, an overall teacher's support within the lessons, aiming at the usage of all the opportunities to activate learners' speaking as much as possible, is also undoubtedly an inseparable component of learners' fluency speaking development. Using classroom English, warm up and follow up speaking activities as well as informal chat in a form of teachers' comments on what is going on during lessons (see Chapter 4.1) highly contribute to the whole process just as teacher's feedback which is discussed in the final chapter of the theoretical part of the thesis.

2.5 Feedback and oral testing

The last chapter of the theoretical part explores a very important component of teaching speaking fluency, which is feedback, the way how teachers react to learners' oral production. Although it is some kind of judgment, according to Ur (1996), the aim should be to improve learners' performance, to reinforce correct responses and not a punishment.

2.5.1 Feedback variety

Harmer (2007) sees a clear difference between feedback during 'non-communicative' activities, which intends to measure correctness (e.g. grammar, vocabulary), and 'communicative activities', whose aim is to improve fluency. A clear difference is understood also by Brown (1983, p.53), who claims 'when a student is trying to formulate and structure a long turn in a foreign language, the last thing a teacher should be thinking of is correcting that student's pronunciation'.

2.5.2 Who corrects

There are many ways how mistakes can be pointed out and corrected. Thornbury (2007, p.60) claims that learners are able to identify many of their own mistakes themselves. One way, how it could be done, is to record their performance and when playing back, they have a chance to evaluate it.

Another way of correcting learners' mistakes is noting them down by a teacher during fluency speaking activities and subsequent analysis either with a whole class or an individual. Correct forms can be elicited from the students, or be written on the board or a teacher can prepare some kind of extra practice, which help learners with their difficulties. Any kind of correcting is chosen, teachers should always regard as very important not to let awareness of errors outweigh the importance of the whole speaking activity (Ladousse,1987, p.15).

2.5.3 Feedback timing

Some authors (Ur, 1996, Harmer, 2007) warn teachers not to disturb pupils' oral production in the middle of their speech and not to concentrate on trivial mistakes but recommend to interfere only if learners flounder about or misunderstand each other. Making mistakes is an unavoidable part of any learning process and there is always time after the activity when mistakes should be assessed and corrected.

Some teachers claim that they cannot let errors go even in fluent activities, but it is important if the interventions are economical and effective and the stream of words and thoughts is not threatened. This is probably possible only when dealing with mistakes, which represent momentary failure, not errors, which mean a weak point in a learner's knowledge (Thornbury 2007, p.92). From my point of view it is just errors, which should not remain uncorrected as they could ruin the meaning of the whole activity.

2.5.4 The role of a teacher

Harmer (2007) states that except a prompter and a feedback provider, a teacher's role is also a participant, whose aim should be to comment, keep an eye contact and show facial expressions, which should impress and encourage learners. Ur (1996) and Brown (1983) call such assessment formative evaluation, whose purpose is forming and enhancing in contrast to summative evaluation, which is a result of a long process and takes place at the end of a term.

The atmosphere for the speaking fluency development in a class is highly influenced by teachers' reactions, which are besides formal assessment an important part of teacher's feedback. Klippel (1984, p.6) makes quite a critical remark when he claims that 'a lot of teaching situations never get beyond a rational plus fact oriented stage'. Considering feedback at least some informal sharing of feelings and ideas in a form of oral praise or warning between a teacher and the pupils should take place during the lessons.

Although drilling may not sound suitable for teaching speaking fluency, Thornbury (2007, p. 64) lifts up the importance of repetitive practice, which can follow after pointing out some particular mistakes, as a tool that moves the items into long-term memory. They can later function as a store of memorized phrases or chunks on which a learner can depend. The long-term aim must always be to ask students to demonstrate that they learn to use, not to repeat, what they have been taught (Brown, 1983).

To sum up, teacher's feedback plays a significant role in learner's fluency speaking development. All the teacher's positive reactions and encouragement contribute to the efficient learning process of speaking and on the other hand teacher's impatience or even emphasizing learners' inability can greatly discourage learners from their efforts.

2.5.5 Oral testing

When dealing with oral testing, Ur (1996) mentions some advantages and

disadvantages as well. She is persuaded that testing language knowledge should include all the language skills, including speaking, because besides the fact, that some students can speak well but write badly, if there is an oral test ahead, more attention is paid to its practice. On the other hand, she admits it is a great investment of time and speaking is also very difficult to judge quickly and objectively.

To prevent pupils' and parents' feeling that oral testing can be biased, Anderson (1984, p.76) suggests an assessment procedure which, used by different teachers, leads to agreed scoring. He believes, if concentrating at teaching speaking fluency, teachers' judgement should not be aimed at faultless precision but at transferring all the necessary information slots, such as e. g. colour, size, direction and so on, which would be allocated one point each. Other language aspects, such as pronunciation, choice of vocabulary or rhetorical style are recommended not be assessed (Anderson 1984, p.76).

In contrast to Anderson's (1984) suggestion, Brown (1983) describes assessing spoken English production as a whole. In order to maintain such assessment which would contain different aspects of the learner's speech, he suggests to use an informal chart:

Date	Type of speech required	Grammatical correctness	Appropriate vocabulary	Fluency / pronunciation	Information transfer score	Others

(Brown, 1984, p.104)

As some of the categories in the above table, including fluency, are assessed subjectively, the other possibility, how to support the teacher's objective judgments, is to tape-record students' speech. Moreover, the same principle, of encouraging learners to pay

more attention to their performance, which is used in teaching writing, would be implemented for speaking production.

In my opinion, some kind of oral testing should have its place in English lessons, especially in basic schools where children are considered as beginners. Emphasis on oral production at the beginning of a learning process of a foreign language, as it has already been mentioned in this work, should be a natural part of learning, similarly to the learning process of mother tongue. Although oral testing may seem not so objective as testing written production, it gives learners an opportunity to have all the language skills tested and can serve as a tool which leads to paying more attention to its practice.

Summary of the theoretical part

The theoretical part explores speaking fluency development as an important part of teaching speaking. There are mentioned theoretical and practical aspects as well as the differences in accuracy and fluency aiming within the process of teaching. The thesis subsequently considers various conditions and their influence on speech production comprising different organizational forms of work as well as concentrates on positive impact on speaking fluency development. The next area is interested in particular speaking activities within the English lessons and the final part discusses speaking fluency feedback as a very important part of the whole teaching process.

The theoretical part provides the basis and preparation for the following research in the practical part of the thesis whose aim is to explore the situation at lower secondary schools from the fluency speaking development point of view. The practical part shows which types of speaking activities are represented most and least in the teaching process, how much time is devoted to speaking, which are common organizational forms used for the speaking development and eventually feedback aiming. The practical part uses observation to answer all the above mentioned issues.

III. Practical Part

Introduction to the practical part

The practical part of the thesis concentrates on the fluency speaking development as a part of English lessons at Czech lower-secondary schools. The data, collected in a small scale research in the region of Zlin, are presented as well as a few examples of fluency speaking development activities with their reflections.

The following part of the work deals with the research in lower-secondary schools, for which an observation method has been chosen. The aim of the exploration is to collect, present and interpret the data, concerning four areas, which play a very important role at fluency speaking development in English lessons: the use of various kinds of speaking activities, the amount of time spent on speaking development, the use of different organizational forms and finally the teachers' feedback.

The practical section makes an attempt to find out if the previous theoretical part of the thesis, based on the literature presented theory, emphasizing the importance of teaching speaking fluency besides accuracy, finds its place in Czech lower-secondary school environment.

The lower-secondary school research, which focuses on current situation in English lessons from the fluency speaking development point of view, tries to answer the following research questions:

Do teachers include various forms of speaking development support in the lessons?

How much time during a lesson is devoted to the development of speaking skills?

What are common organizational forms of work used for the speaking development, including their advantages and disadvantages?

Does the feedback contain emphasis on fluency besides accuracy?

The research explores real lower-secondary school environment on the basis of the

the theoretical background of the thesis, which means what kind of recommended fluency speaking support is used a lot, used less or not used at all. The research is followed by several samples of speaking fluency development activities with their reflections, which were carried out during my teaching practice.

3. Description of the research

The exploration method, chosen for carrying out the research, was observation, which took place in the region of Zlín in September and October 2013. The research was conducted in three different lower-secondary schools, two of which are situated in a town of about thirty thousand inhabitants and one is in a small town of about three thousand inhabitants. One of the two town schools is situated in the centre of the town, while the other is located in the suburbs. Two of the three schools are state schools and the last one is a private school.

The observation took place in thirty English lessons in the classes, which involved pupils from the sixth to the ninth grade of lower-secondary schools. The number of the observed teachers was six and the number of the students in the observed classes ranged between eleven and twenty four pupils per group.

Initially, observation sheets for a collection of the data were prepared (see appendix 9). The observation chart is divided into several columns including the following areas: the use of various kinds of speaking activities, the time devoted to the speaking development, the types of organizational forms and finally the teachers' feedback. Other information such as a class, time of the lesson, date and the number of pupils is at the top of the sheet.

First four columns in the observation table distinguish the kinds of speaking activities, such as a warm up when starting a lesson, a warm up when starting a new activity, follow up speaking activities, integrated skills activities including speaking and another table column focuses on the use of classroom English including informal chat between a teacher and students.

The second area is devoted to the time, spent on each speaking activity, which is expressed in minutes.

Thirdly, four main kinds of organizational forms are identified: pair work, group work, teacher fronted work and whole class communication activities. Students' cooperation and the use of Czech by students during different organizational forms are considered, too.

The final part focuses on the teacher's dealing with a pupil's mistake, which distinguishes fluency and accuracy aiming, who is involved in correcting mistakes and when mistakes are corrected.

To be able to present and interpret the obtained data, the tables and charts, depicting individual features in numbers, were constructed. The aim of the data presentation is to show particular features as recorded during the observation and the interpretation makes an attempt to answer the question if the literature presented theory, emphasizing the importance of teaching speaking fluency besides accuracy, is put in practice in Czech lower-secondary schools environment.

4. Data presentation and interpretation

All the data, which is presented and interpreted in the following part of the thesis, is collected from thirty English lessons, observed in three different lower-secondary schools in Zlín region. The lessons were taught by 4 university educated and 2 secondary educated teachers who were all women between 27 and 52 years old. All the classes included pupils of both sexes.

4.1 Various forms of speaking development support

The first research question, stated in the practical part of the small-scale research, concerned the teacher's usage of various types of speaking development support within a lesson. The data, presented in figures 1 to 6 (see appendix1), show the occurrence of activities including speaking, their different kinds and finally speaking fluency support by using classroom English, informal chat between a teacher and students, including the teachers' usage of Czech language.

4.1.1 The occurrence of various activities including speaking within English lessons.

The presence of any speaking activities within an English lesson was investigated at first. . Although speaking is not the only language skill which has to be developed during the lessons, it is interesting to see if teachers inventively incorporate different types of speaking opportunities when planning a lesson.

4.1.1.1 The occurrence of activities including speaking

Looking at figure 1, we can see the total number of observed lessons, which was 30 and the occurrence of 1, 2, 3 or 4 speaking activities within a lesson. Pleasingly every observed lesson contained at least one activity, including speaking and there was only 1 lesson (3.3%), where just 1 speaking activity took place. In 9 lessons (30%) there were 2 activities and in 6 lessons (20%) there occurred 4 speaking activities. The importance of

incorporating speaking activities into the lessons shows the fact that nearly half of the observed lessons, particularly 14 lessons (46.7%), included 3 speaking activities.

Taking into consideration the fact that speaking is not the only language skill, which needs to be developed during the lessons, the results are quite satisfying. Most lessons involved 2 or 3 activities, including speaking, which shows teachers are certainly aware of the importance of developing the speaking skill.

Contemplating the number of students per group in lower secondary schools, which usually went beyond 17 students, and the limited time of 45 minutes per lesson, teachers must be really inventive to incorporate different kinds of speaking opportunities when preparing a lesson.

4.1.1.2 Different kinds of speaking activities

Different kinds of speaking activities, used within a lesson, was the next area of interest. Four types of activities are identified in figure 2 and 3 (see appendix 1), namely

a) warm up activities starting a lesson (included in 13 out of 30 lessons),

b) warm up activities starting a new activity (observed in 6 lessons),

c) follow up speaking activities, which follow after an activity developing another skill (included in 11 out of 30 lessons, observed 13 times),

d) integrated skills activities, which integrate more than one language skill and include speaking (included in 26 out of 30 lessons, in total observed 46 times).

The results clearly show that developing speaking cannot be strictly separated from developing the other language skills as integrated skills definitely predominated. The poorest results of incorporating warm up activities when starting something new may indicate the lack of time, which teachers have, within one lesson when they must cope with all the syllabus requirements. On the other hand, the teachers, who used such activities, naturally focused students attention at what would go on next by short informal

speaking, which was a good opportunity to incorporate another speaking activity into teaching by putting emphasis on fluency.

From my point of view, the usage of warm up activities when starting a lesson was unnecessarily low. In the lessons, where such activities took place, teachers spoke shortly with students about different topics just to make them think in English when an English lesson started. A disadvantage was again the high number of students in class, which meant that during whole class teaching, which prevailed, it represented only listening for most of the students, however, it is an important part of learning speaking as well.

The importance of sufficient amount of speaking opportunities within the English lessons, which brings along bigger chances to succeed in learning speaking as well as interactive skills practice and the increase of learner's confidence, was stressed in the theoretical part of the thesis in chapters Communication strategies and Mother tongue and a target language.

Follow up speaking activities were represented by a similar number as previous activities, which may indicate either the lack of time within a lesson or the fear of some teachers to leave the strict following of the textbooks, which sometimes bring along learners' unpredictable answers, they must cope with.

To sum up, at least some speaking activities appeared in every observed lesson, which indicates that even pupils from lower grades (6th and 7th), who could be considered as beginners, were involved in some speaking activities, which should be an essential part of a young learners' learning process (for details see chapter 2.2.1 Basic features of speech production). A similar emphasis was lifted in chapter Long and short turns, where the thesis also dealt with the importance of involving beginners in participation, although they know only a little and most of work is naturally done by a teacher.

Besides considering the usage of different kinds of speaking activities, an inevitable

part of learner's fluency speaking development is a support in a form of using English by a teacher within the lessons, which is investigated in the following part.

4.1.2 Using mother tongue and the target language

Looking at figure 4, 5 and 6 (see appendix1), we will see speaking development support in a form of using classroom English, the usage of informal chat between a teacher and students and the amount of using Czech by a teacher.

4.1.2.1 Classroom English and informal chat

The data show that the usage of informal chat between a teacher and a student is less frequent than using classroom English (included in 15 and 20 out of 30 lessons respectively, see figures 4 and 5). It is understood from the results that every other lesson did not include any indications of informal English chat, which is alarming. Such a chat in a form of two or three comments can be very short, inevitably increases pupils' confidence and some of the observed teachers found inventively place to incorporate such chat into every lessons.

The teachers integrated a chat about the weather, a new learner's shirt, a pupil's name day or other time they shortly reacted to what was going on in class, such as somebody's disturbing others instead of working, a knock at the door followed by a pupil with a class register book etc.

With regard to the speaking fluency development, the importance of incorporating chat, which is not expected to have outcomes, but forms the basis of social life, was emphasized in the theoretical part of the thesis in chapter Interactional and transactional use of language.

There was not a difference in using Classroom English in lower and higher classes but it was up to the teachers who took an advantage of using communication strategies,

such as gestures, paralinguistics or any other kinds of improvising (for details see chapter 2.2.5 Communication strategies and principles).

Teaching classroom English takes time and should certainly be supported, however, strict demands of using only English by pupils can turn into a problem. During one observed lesson, a boy squeezed a finger between two chairs and was not able to explain it to the teacher in English and it took too long before he finally put it into cold water.

On the other hand, the number of lessons, where no classroom English was used, is in my opinion unnecessarily high. The importance of integrating interactional talk into the teaching process, was emphasized in theoretical part in chapter Interactional and transactional use of language. Learners are able to learn a few classroom phrases within a few lessons and it is a pity if some teachers make no use of it.

4.1.2.2 Using Czech by a teacher

The last chart of this set (figure 6) reveals the facts about using Czech by a teacher and distinguishes three groups: predominant usage, acceptable usage and the lessons, where Czech was not used very much. Predominant usage of Czech meant the teachers used Czech most of the time. English was used very little, only when reading texts, teaching pronunciation and doing exercises from the students books which were translated word by word. Acceptable usage of Czech meant the teachers tried to incorporate using English when teaching, but often unnecessarily slipped into Czech. The lessons where Czech was not used very much were the lessons where the teachers tried to use English as much as possible (classroom English, informal comments and easy instructions).

In contrast to former grammar translation method, predominant usage of Czech, observed in 9 lessons (30%), certainly seems to be in remission in comparison with acceptable usage and little usage in 21 lessons (70%). Acceptable usage dominated in 7 lessons and during 14 lessons, out of total 30 observed lessons, teachers did not use Czech

very much.

Chapter 2.2.2 Mother tongue and a target language in the theoretical part dealt with an opinion, to be careful about using a mother tongue, because teachers should be good examples to their pupils as well as the belief, that using a mother tongue can sometimes save time by avoiding long explanation in English and can clearly show the differences between Czech and English.

What could explain the use of Czech more than necessary is the fear of Czech teachers, that their English is not good enough. However, chapter 2.2.1 Basic features of speech production dealt with an opposite opinion which emphasized using English as much as possible although teachers' English is not without any mistakes.

What emerged from the observation lessons, is the fact, that teachers with very good knowledge of English were not afraid to admit they did not know some vocabulary which they were asked for by learners. In contrast to that, teachers whose English was, from my point of view, not very good prevented such situations by stricter lesson management with no opportunities to unpredictable questioning.

Quite an interesting question for the teachers could be to ask them if they used Czech as little as they intended. In my opinion, the answers would reveal the facts, that teachers are working on using English more during their lessons but often, from different reasons, unsuccessfully. One of the causes could be again the time limitation in a form of one lesson and just the area of the time investment in speaking development will be a topic of the following part.

4.2 The amount of time devoted to the speaking skill development

The research data in this part concern the time within a lesson which was devoted to the speaking development by using different speaking activities and integrated skills

activities including speaking. The first part reveals the overall time devoted to all kinds of speaking activities in general, while the second focuses on the time, spent by different speaking activities separately (see appendix 2).

4.2.1 Time devoted to speaking activities including speaking

To begin with, our attention will be focused on time investment into the activities involving speaking within 45 minutes of one lesson (see figure 7). As the time used for speaking activities varied from lesson to lesson, it was sufficient to divide the time of a lesson into three groups. The first group comprises lessons where overall speaking time did not overstep 15 minutes per lesson, the second group is comprised of the lessons where speaking time ranges between 16 and 25 minutes and the last group consists of the lessons where speaking time exceeded 26 minutes.

Concerning the fact, that only 4 lessons (13.3%), out of observed 30 lessons, devoted less than 15 minutes a lesson to speaking development through different activities, we can undoubtedly say that teachers mostly pay a lot of attention to the speaking skill development during their teaching. The time, devoted to speaking development, in half of the lessons (50%) ranged between 16 and 25 minutes and 11 lessons (36.7%) even exceeded 26 minute time, devoted to speaking activities, which is gratifying.

Taking into account that learning a language includes learning also other language skills except speaking, the overall results suggest that teachers realize the importance of learners' speaking skills development as the time devoted to speaking is high. On the other hand, we must realize the most frequent organizational form of teaching within the observation was whole class teaching (see figure 9) so the amount of time, spent by speaking per a pupil, would lower very much.

As discussed in chapter Knowledge and skill, learning any skills requires theory as well as practice, in other words knowledge and the usage of the knowledge, which in the

case of developing speaking requires a necessity of high time investment.

4.2.2 Time spent by different speaking activities

The following table (see appendix 2 – figure 8) presents the data which distinguish the time spent by different kinds of speaking activities. The speaking activities are divided into four groups similarly to previous division in figure 2 and 3 (see appendix 1).

At first, the table visualizes the time of different speaking activities in relation to the lessons where the specific activities really took place. Secondly, the table reveals the time of different speaking activities in relation to the overall number of observed lessons, which was 30.

4.2.2.1 Integrated skills activities

Most of the time was quite naturally devoted to integrated skills activities, which made 28 minutes (62.2%) per lesson within 26 lessons, where these activities took place. Taking into account the total number of observed lessons, which was 30, it is clear that integrated skills activities including speaking did not take place only in 4 observed lessons. The table also shows average time, spent by integrated skills activities within 30 observed lessons (for details see figure 8).

Quite a high time, devoted to integrated skills development, confirms the fact that learning a language means gaining different skills, which can not be strictly divided from each other. What is very important and not always easy in lower secondary school environment, is a balance between particular receptive and productive language skills development, which is teachers' responsibility to deal with (language skills are discussed in chapter 1.2 Two aspects of teaching speaking).

Integrated skills activities comprised usually working with student books, workbooks or other materials, when learners described a picture orally and in a written form as well, checked written homework, worked with reading texts which were either

translated or discussed, filled their tables and questionnaires by asking each other, learned grammar or pronunciation, went through corrected tests together, brainstormed vocabulary and many others.

Some of the activities included more speaking and listening, others more writing or reading. Whole class teaching dominated but some pair work or group work appeared as well.

4.2.2.2 Warm up when starting a lesson

A characteristic feature of all the following activities is their short time. Concerning only the lessons, where various activities really took place, the shortest activities were warm up activities when starting a lesson, whose time was 6.3 minutes (14%) a lesson. To find out the average time of these activities within the overall amount of observed lessons, see figure 8.

The topic of warm up activities at the beginning of a lesson varied from lesson to lesson. Teachers mostly integrated topics of the weather, previous and following day or weekend, topical events going on at school, such as a sport competition or a planned trip on the following day, children's name day or birthday etc. One time a teacher used this activity to make students guess the topic of the following lesson, which was then followed by brainstorming of vocabulary to the discovered topic. Activities, which were really short, but caught attention of everybody immediately, were Total Physical Response activities[6] in a form of a poem.

4.2.2.3 Warm up activities when starting something new

Warm up speaking activities when starting something new were used in the least number of lessons, exactly in 6 lessons out of 30 observed ones. They lasted 8.2 minutes (18.2%) a lesson, which was a bit longer time than warm up when starting a lesson and

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6 Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method where students respond to commands by movements (go to the door, pick up your pen, turn around...) and when they are ready they can give orders themselves (Harmer, 2007).

nearly the same time as follow up activities. Being used only in 6 lessons, the average time of warm up speaking activities when starting a lesson falls sharply to 1.6 minutes (3.6%) a lesson out of total 30 observed lessons.

Teachers used this kind of activity to explain new vocabulary before reading, to teach pronunciation of difficult words before speaking or reading, describing a picture as a pre-listening activity etc. Although there is a possibility of using various organizational forms work, the whole class teaching dominated.

4.2.2.4 Follow up speaking activities

The last group of activities is formed by follow up speaking activities whose length was similar to follow up speaking activities, exactly 9 minutes (20%) a lesson, where they took place. Their usage only in 11 lessons out of total 30 observed ones decreased their average using to 3.3 minutes (7.3%) a lesson.

Sometimes teachers used this kind of activities after doing some grammar exercise in a book, which was followed by practical speaking exercise as a feedback for teachers to get to know if the learners could apply the knowledge from a book into practice. Another time such speaking followed listening, reading or even grammar practice after a test using real objects in the classroom.

Although whole class teaching prevailed in follow up activities, teachers sometimes used different organizational forms of work, such as pair work or group work, which offered learners more active involvement and increased time for speaking per person.

To state the main points, the research suggests that there is a preference for the use of integrated skills activities, taking into consideration the time as well as the number of lessons where they took place. Generally the data about the time spent by speaking activities look very positive, however, the question remains how much time an individual learner spends by speaking within a lesson in such large lower-secondary classes, which

depends on the usage of organizational forms of work and just this area is the following part of this work.

4.3 The usage of various organizational forms

The following section deals with the usage of different organizational forms for speaking activities, concerning students cooperation and the usage of Czech by students (see appendix 3).

What kinds of organizational forms of learning were used and the proportion of their usage will be the purpose of interpretation at first. Looking back at figure 9, the prevalence of whole class teaching was rather obvious. Expressed in percentage, there occurred 73% of this organizational form of work, out of total 52 activities, which took place during the observation. In contrast to 38 activities in a form of whole class teaching, the least representation showed whole class speaking activities, involving all the students in speaking at the same time, which appeared only 3 times (5.8%). More common form of work proved to be pair work and group work, which occurred exactly 11 times (21.2%) out of 52 speaking activities.

Although highly recommended by the linguists, who advocate communicative approach of teaching, which was dealt with in chapter 2.1.2 Communicative approach, pair work, group work and whole class communication activities seem to be somehow neglected. I can only speculate what reasons lead teachers to such high usage of whole class teaching when teaching speaking. It might be the high investment of time in the case of different organizational forms, behavioral problems, disability of learners' to cooperate when not under the permanent teacher's observation or the fear of needlessly high percentage of using Czech by learners.

4.3.1 Learners' cooperation

The investigation of learners' cooperation, considering different organizational

forms of work, was the next area of interest of the research (see figure 10). Surprisingly the least used form of work, which was whole class communication activity, shows the highest learners' cooperation, which was 100% within 3 such activities, used during the observation.

A task in all of these activities was to stand up, go from one student to another and fill in a questionnaire. For the first glance, it could have certainly been viewed as a chaos, but when watched closely, the learners really filled their tasks with no behavioral or other problems. A teacher, as an observer, sometimes helped learners with some vocabulary where it was necessary or other times encouraged shy learners to join in.

The second form of teaching, where learners' cooperation was quite high, was whole class teaching. Out of 38 such activities learners cooperated well in 32 of them, which makes 84.2%, while the rest of the activities, which means 15.8%, was described as the activities where learners did not cooperate.

Although whole class teaching engages pupils in speaking much less than other organizational forms of work, this kind of teaching offers learners a stronger partner to communicate with, which is the teacher. Nevertheless a circle, made of the desks in the classroom instead of classical rows, as it was recommended for a better eye contact among the learners in chapter 2.3.2 Whole class teaching, was used in none of the lessons.

Concerning learners' cooperation, the worst results appeared in pair work and group work. In 4 activities (36.4%) learners' cooperation was classified as low, in comparison with 7 activities (63.6%) which showed good cooperation.

Taking into consideration only a limited number of the data, which served for the research, in my opinion such results do not mean to reduce this kind of organizational work but could be viewed as a challenge for teachers to try to foresee possible problems. As it was dealt with in chapter 2.3.1 Pair work and Group work, it could be solved by using

different strategies when dividing pupils into pairs or groups or by appointing different roles of individual pupils who are then responsible for their assignments.

4.3.2 Using Czech

The next area of our interest was the usage of mother tongue by students during different organizational forms of work (see also Using Czech by the teacher above). A division (see figure 11) used for the investigation was the following: predominant usage of Czech, acceptable usage of Czech and little usage of Czech. The number of speaking activities, which we worked with, was 52 as they appeared during 30 observed lessons.

Predominant usage of Czech was noticed 14 times (36.8%) out of total 38 whole class teaching activities, which is similar ratio to predominant usage of Czech during 4 pair work and group work activities (36.4%) out of total 11 such activities. Very similar ratio of acceptable usage of Czech was found within whole class teaching activities and pair work and group work, specifically acceptable usage within 24 whole class teaching activities (63.2%) and 7 pair work and group work activities (63.6%). Taking into account only the data from our research, it seems that worries of some teachers, that a disadvantage of pair work or group work could be in using more Czech than during whole class teaching, was not proved relevant.

None of the whole class teaching activities or pair work and group work activities was predominated by English, which means in none of these activities Czech was assessed to be used very little. Surprisingly whole class communication activities were evaluated better in favor of using English when predominated using Czech was not found at all, acceptable usage in 2 activities (66.7%) and little usage of Czech in 1 activity (33.3%).

The least used organizational form of work proved the best results in favour of not using Czech, in other words in favour of using English. Whole class communication activities undoubtedly bring along noisy learning, because all learners are involved in

speaking in the same time, but in this case, more noise meant also more English.

To conclude this part, I must say that although the research data show the prevalence of whole class teaching, there was neither found the best percentage of cooperating or least usage of Czech compared to other organizational forms of work. There was no place in this research to distinguish teachers' feedback according to different organizational forms of work, however, teachers' dealing with mistakes on the basis of who corrects, when mistakes are corrected and distinguishing between accuracy and fluency aiming, is the next area of our interest.

4.4 Teachers' feedback

The final area of the research reveals information about giving feedback, specifically who corrects student's mistakes, fluency or accuracy aiming and corrections timing (see appendix 4).

4.4.1 Who corrects

The first part focuses on a person who corrects students mistakes (see figure 12). It distinguishes three possibilities: students themselves led by a teacher, only teachers give the right answers and the combination of both The results show that in 11 lessons (36.7%) out of observed 30, it was the learners who were responsible for the corrections, in 13 (43.3%) lessons learners were corrected by a teacher and the rest of the lessons, exactly 6 (20%), the combination of both occurred.

The data show that many teachers were aware of the importance of learners' involvement in the identification of their own mistakes, as it was recommended in chapter Speaking fluency feedback in the theoretical part. There were many ways, which were used by teachers, such as their facial expressions or body movement, hinting, echoing learner's mistake, questioning, subsequent analysis etc. Sometimes teachers asked a learner who had

just made a mistake, other times they inquired someone else or the whole class.

Nevertheless, quite a big number of teachers have all the corrections in their hands, which certainly saved time in a lesson, but a question remains if it saves time in the long term, in other words how much deeply such corrections were imprinted into learners' minds.

4.4.2 Fluency and accuracy aiming

Fluency and accuracy corrections are visualized in figure 13. The overall number of activities, where some corrections took place, was 32. Most of the activities, exactly 22 activities (68.8%), show teachers' balanced interest in accuracy as well as in fluency, which is a good sign of communicative language teaching, which emphasizes the importance of fluency besides accuracy, as it was described in chapters 2.1.2 Communicative approach and 2.5 Speaking fluency feedback.

As it was suggested in the theoretical part (see chapter 2.5.1 Feedback variety), the linguists who support communicative language teaching see a clear difference between feedback during activities, whose aim is to improve accuracy and feedback after activities whose aim is to improve fluency. Within my research, however, teachers in none of the speaking activities concentrated on corrections of fluency only.

On the other hand, teachers aimed only at accuracy corrections within 10 activities (31.2%), which shows that teachers concentrate on accuracy corrections in some activities, which is right and does not have to disprove communicative aims of the whole teaching process.

4.4.3 Corrections timing

The last figure of this set reveals the facts about the time when mistakes were corrected. Three possibilities are analysed in figure 14: corrections during a speaking activity, after a speaking activity and a combination of both. The total number of speaking

activities, where corrections were made, is 32. The most corrections were made during the activities (in 23 cases). The mistakes occurring in 3 of the activities were corrected afterwards and in 6 activities teachers combined both possibilities.

Some linguists (see chapter 2.5 Speaking fluency feedback) recommended teachers not to disturb pupils' oral production during an activity, whose aim is fluency, but saw enough time for subsequent analysis after an activity. However, it was discovered by observation in this research, that no teacher's feedback was aimed only at fluency corrections (see above) so the results of quite a low number of the activities, where corrections took place after or during and after an activity, was not a big surprise.

Nevertheless, not all the linguists' attitude to subsequent dealing with mistakes after a fluency speaking activity is the same. As mentioned in chapter 2.5.3 (see a difference between a mistake and an error), economical and effective interventions which solve momentary learner's failure, not errors, were recommended to have their place during an activity. However, according to my experience, it is just the case of errors, when it is necessary to intervene because they can lead to misunderstanding.

To sum up, there were the teachers within the research who engaged students in corrections of their own mistakes or combined students' involvement with their own intervention as well as the teachers who preferred dealing with mistakes of oral production themselves. The majority of the activities were dealt with as the activities where accuracy corrections were important as well as fluency and most of the teachers preferred mistake corrections during the activities.

5. Particular fluency developing activities

This chapter presents four activities which were used during my teaching practice at lower secondary schools and were chosen because of their great benefits to speaking fluency development of the learners.

First, a brief introduction to each activity is presented in a form of basic information about the number of participants, level of English, approximate time, necessary materials and the source of a game.

Subsequently the description of each game follows as well as my personal comments and reflections.

After every activity the learners were requested to fill in a short questionnaire, consisting of three questions, where their opinions about an activity were expressed. First, they were asked if they liked the activity and circled 1 to 5 according to their opinion. 1 meant I liked the activity very much, 5 meant I did not like it at all. The second question made them express how much they thought the activity was suitable for speaking practice. 1 meant it is suitable a lot, 5 not at all. Finally, the pupils were asked if they would like to repeat such an activity in future. The possible answers were YES or NO. The questions were written in Czech for better understanding (see appendix 8).

5.1 Jigsaw activity

Number of pupils	Whole class
Level	8th Grade
Time	25 minutes
Materials	Copies of pictures
Source of a game	Thornbury 2007, p. 81, Brown 1983, p. 155

Description

The copies of four pictures of a story are brought to the class (see appendix 5). First, the class is divided into four groups and the teacher hands out the first picture of a story to one group, the second to another group and so on. When each of the groups has its picture the learners are asked to describe the picture together using as many details as possible. This stage is useful for recalling vocabulary plus getting to know new words from a teacher. After a few minutes, the pictures are given back to a teacher, the pupils in each group are given a number 1,2,3 and 4 and are asked to form the new groups so that new groups comprise one pupil from each of the former groups. Subsequently they talk to each other about their pictures and the aim is to find out the right sequence of the events in the story. The group that arranges the whole story and is able to retell the content is given a chance to look at all the four pictures to check.

Reflection

The activity was enjoyed by the learners. As this class is used to working in groups or pairs, it did not take long to prepare the activity. The groups were formed from the pupils sitting next to and behind each other so that no large organizing took place. Before the pictures were handed out the students had been acquainted with the whole activity which meant they knew they had to try to describe a picture as much as possible as well as to remember it for the following stage. The vocabulary which I was asked for was written on the board so everyone could see. Some pupils started to guess the rest of the story on the basis of that vocabulary which did not disturb the activity but brought an element of a greater mystery.

The time when the pictures were collected by a teacher and the pupils were rearranged was too long as the pupils were a little afraid of the next part. The beginning of the second part was characterized by the attempts of speaking Czech in order to find out the plot quickly so I had to set a penalty for using Czech.

As some of the groups worked more quickly and finished earlier I added one stage to

the previous activity. The learners were given a chance to continue the story according to their own ideas. They had to agree on one version in the group and then to tell the rest of the class. It was quite fun for everybody to listen to various endings of the same story.

I used to do a similar activity with pupils in the past where the pictures of one story were distributed to a group and the pupils keeping the pictures in their hands were describing the pictures trying to arrange the sequence of the story. However, pupils were not able to work in a disciplined way, they looked at each other's pictures, which did not force them to speak so I found the above described activity much helpful.

Pupils' opinions

After the activity the learners were given the set of three questions (see above) to express their opinions about the activity. According to their answers (see appendix 8) most of the pupils (thirteen out of sixteen) liked it and only three did not express their opinions. Pleasingly all but one realized the main aim of the activity which was making them speak and would like to repeat such an activity in future.

5.2 Discussion – an interpretation activity

Number of pupils	The whole class, 17 pupils
Level	9th grade
Time	35 minutes
Materials	Copies of the pictures
Source of a game	Bryne, 1987, p. 80

Description

The pictures (see appendix 6) have to be copied in advance by a teacher and at the beginning of the activity they are handed out to the learners. The whole activity can be presented as whole class discussion as well as a combination of discussion and group work. The latter was chosen in our case.

First, the learners are acquainted with the picture by looking at it and are asked by a teacher what they think the scene of the picture is about. The learners' opinions will of course vary so after several suggestions they are asked to work in groups of four and try to agree on one interpretation. They tell each other their opinions and try to agree on one version of the story. The teacher goes from one group to another helping with vocabulary where necessary.

The next stage is to ask the students to put their ideas in some sort of a story which could be presented to the rest of the class. Finally, the whole class works together again when individual volunteers present their interpretations.

Reflection

To be honest, discussions are not my favourites when teaching because learners often do not know how to contribute to the discussed topic, even in Czech, and only a few brave and smart pupils really participate. However, I was recommended this activity by my colleague and I was really pleasantly surprised how such a simple picture can attract the teenagers' attention and make them speak.

The learners made up different stories and mostly they all were about unfaithful husbands and wives or engaged couples. If the group consisted of the girls they of course talked about a cheated woman and on the other hand the boys made up stories about deceived men. If the group consisted of mixed sexes the girls' suggestions won. Only one of the group made up a story in which the people in the picture had not known each other before, had been deceived by their counterparts and made friends with each other that afternoon on the bench. The topic was really interesting for the age of 15 and 16 so I often had to remind them of speaking English because they slipped into Czech from time to time. One of the group, which was comprised of boys and girls, was so imaginative they prepared to act the story before the whole class. It brought a lot of laughter and it was not a great surprise that the acted story won when voting for the best version at the end.

I was happy I put the activity right after checking homework at the beginning of the lesson because the time, which I had planned for the activity, was too short. I left out other prepared parts of the lesson and including the following questionnaires for the pupils it took nearly the whole lesson, which I did not regret as the activity really made learners speak English and that was the aim. Except recalling English words and putting them in the right order in a sentence when trying to express themselves, the learners' thinking and mutual agreement was supported. Considering fluency, some pupils of course expressed themselves with ease and the others used only short simple sentences or only a few words, however, in my opinion this activity made everyone talk on his or her level of knowledge and maybe not realizing the fact, because the fun it brought along, the learners spoke English for quite a long time.

Pupils' opinions

Not surprisingly, most pupils liked the activity (fourteen out of seventeen), however, two had no opinion and one did not like it at all. Although all but one pupils think the activity is very or quite suitable for speaking practice, only ten pupils answered they would like to repeat such an activity in future (see also Appendix 8).

5.3 Little child's why

Number of pupils	Whole class
Level	7th grade
Time	10 minutes
Materials	none
Source of a game	Hess, 1995, p. 13

Description

An activity is intended for the whole class teaching. A teacher demonstrates the activity by asking and answering WHY questions her or himself or elicits the answers from the pupils.

Then the pupils are asked to form the next question in the chain (one after each other) so that the activity looks as follows: Why do we have homework? Because we need more practice. Why do we need more practice? Because...

Reflection

This activity was loved by the pupils because the answers were often funny or even absurd and we were able to continue and continue speaking so that the topic of our talk changed very much during the activity. The main aim was to make the pupils speak and what more, asking questions, which is mainly done by a teacher, was practised as well. Most of the questions were formed according to an example on the board, which meant present simple tense as it was really hard work for the learners to make questions. Answers were much easier. It was a challenge for me to prepare more speaking activities where the pupils are forced to ask, not only answer.

My idea how to modify the activity is to put the learners into pairs so that they would have bigger chance to speak. Then the pairs start with the same question for everybody (written on board for everybody to see) and make up their own stories. They can note down a hint for each question and answer so that they can present it before the class afterwards. Noting down the hints is appreciated mainly in the 6th and the 7th grades where creating the questions and answers demand more time and energy. The activity usually consists of the cooperation of both members in the pair when making the questions and answers and the competitive element is to create as many questions and answers as possible.

Pupils' opinions

As I expected, most of the pupils (fifteen out of seventeen) liked the activity and only two did not express their opinion. Also, fourteen pupils appreciated the activity as one which contributed to the development of speaking skills and none thought it was not suitable for

speaking practice. Although the activity looks a bit like drilling, all of the pupils would like to repeat it sometimes in future (see also appendix 8).

5.4 Spot the differences

Number of pupils	Whole class
Level	7th grade
Time	10 minutes
Materials	The copies of the pictures
Source of a game	Thornbury, 2007, p. 80

Description

The pupils are divided into pairs and each person is given a picture A or B. There are two very similar pictures (see appendix 7) and the aim of the activity is to find the differences. Learners can either describe their own pictures by indicative sentences and when they spot a difference, they make a cross on that spot or ask each other questions if the required object is also in the picture of his or her classmate's picture.

Reflection

The activity was greatly welcomed. The pupils had already been familiar with such activities from children magazines as well as from previous English lessons. Before the pictures were handed out, the phrases such as in the picture, on the left, in the top left hand corner as well as the prepositions of place were recalled. As I could see the learners were not very sure about some of the words so we wrote them on the board for everyone to see.

Then the pictures were handed out and finding the differences started. The learners mostly said a sentence and added: Is it the same? Do you agree? Finding the differences was easy at the beginning but as the activity progressed and there were just two or three differences left, some of the learners gave up and looked at each other's picture to be able to finish. Although not without mistakes, learners were interested in the activity and spoke

English for quite long, not realizing they were learning. During the activity I realized most of them forgot ordinal numbers when counting the differences so we revised them together afterwards.

There is a similar activity which is called Finding similarities where the pairs without looking at each other's picture try to find out as many similarities between the pictures as possible (Bygate1987, p.71). As I found out when trying this activity, looking for similarities is not as easy as looking for differences. It looks easier but the learners need a bit more imagination as well as inventiveness. In the beginning of the activity the pupils started to describe the pictures quite easily and noted down a few similarities quickly. However, as the activity continued for a few minutes, only a few pairs were still talking and the others looked lost. They needed teacher's encouragement but still the activity is very useful.

Pupils' opinions

Fourteen pupils out of eighteen liked the activity, three did not express their opinion, and one did not like it. Nearly all of the pupils admitted the activity helped them speak a lot and only two did not express themselves. I found it quite satisfying that thirteen out of eighteen pupils would like to do such an activity in future again (for details see appendix 8).

Summary of the practical part

The practical part of the work dealt with the development of speaking fluency within English lessons at lower-secondary schools. The research data, collected in a research in the region of Zlín, were presented as well as some fluency developing activities were described.

The aim of the research was to present and interpret the data, collected by an observation method, concerning four areas which were chosen as crucial at fluency speaking development within teaching English.

First, various forms of speaking development support was explored, including the use of different kinds of speaking activities within a lesson as well as the usage of classroom English and informal chat between the teachers and students.

Second, the research concentrated on the amount of time spent on speaking development within a lesson, comprising the overall time investment as well as the different kinds of speaking activities time investment.

The third area dealt with the use of different organizational forms of teaching focused on pupils' cooperation and also the usage of Czech.

The final part of the research concentrated on the teachers' feedback on pupils' speaking, paying attention to accuracy and fluency aiming, a person who corrected and the time when the corrections took place.

Subsequently a few speaking fluency development activities, recommended in the theoretical part, were chosen and tried out in lower-secondary school environment. Each of the activities was described and was followed by the reflection of a teacher as well as the pupils.

IV Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of the diploma thesis was to investigate the area of speaking fluency development as one of the important parts of teaching speaking within English lessons at lower secondary schools.

Therefore the theoretical part emphasizes the importance of practical usage of theoretical language knowledge, stresses teaching speaking fluency besides accuracy and explores various conditions, strategies and organizational forms with their impact on the process of teaching speaking. Subsequently particular activities, which highly support speaking fluency development are suggested and finally the importance of supportive teacher's feedback is stressed.

The answers to the research questions, which were formulated according to the theoretical input set in the theoretical part of the thesis, are the following:

Do teachers include various forms of speaking development support in the lessons? According to the research, the use of two or three various speaking activities within a lesson prevails and the most frequent kind of activities, where speaking is developed, are integrated skills activities. The overall results show bigger teachers' involvement in using classroom English than in using informal chat between the teacher and students, however, both results are quite low. The support in a form of using English by the teacher predominates over using Czech, which is, however, quite high, too.

How much time during a lesson is devoted to the development of speaking skills? Taking into account speaking is not the only skill, which needs to be developed within a lesson, the findings about the great time investment into the speaking development look certainly positive. Looking separately at different kinds of speaking activities, time investment in integrated skills activities is the biggest. Despite such a great investment of time into various speaking activities, a question remains, how much time is spent by

an individual person if whole class teaching prevails.

What are common organizational forms of work used for the speaking development, including their advantages and disadvantages? The prevalence of whole class teaching is obvious, however, there are not found the best results concerning learners' cooperation as well as little usage of Czech in this kind of work in comparison with other organizational forms of work.

Does the feedback contain emphasis on fluency besides accuracy? The number of lessons, where learners or teachers together with learners are responsible for correcting mistakes slightly prevail over the lessons where only teachers are in charge of the correcting. The combination of accuracy and fluency correcting is the aim in the bigger number of speaking activities than just accuracy aiming and only fluency concentration seems not to be applied at all.

As it is clear from the pupils' questionnaires, the speaking activities, which were tried out at lower-secondary school English lessons and described in the practical part, were found as a very useful tool of speaking fluency development not only by a teacher but the pupils as well. Carrying out such activities within English lessons highly involve pupils in speaking and greatly support speaking fluency development.

The limited scale of the research conducted for this thesis, which consisted of four areas, provides only a general insight into the area of teaching speaking fluency. In order to gain a more in depth understanding of any particular aspect of the teaching of speaking fluency, similar studies focussed on specific areas would have to be undertaken. In addition, the research would have to be carried out on larger samples of teachers.

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Appendices

<u>Appendix 1</u>: Observation - Various forms of speaking development support

Figure 1: The occurrence of activities including speaking

1) The occurrence of activities including speaking		
speaking activities	number of lessons	%
one activity a lesson	1	3.3
two activities a lesson	9	30
three activities a lesson	14	46.7
four activities a lesson	6	20
total	30	100
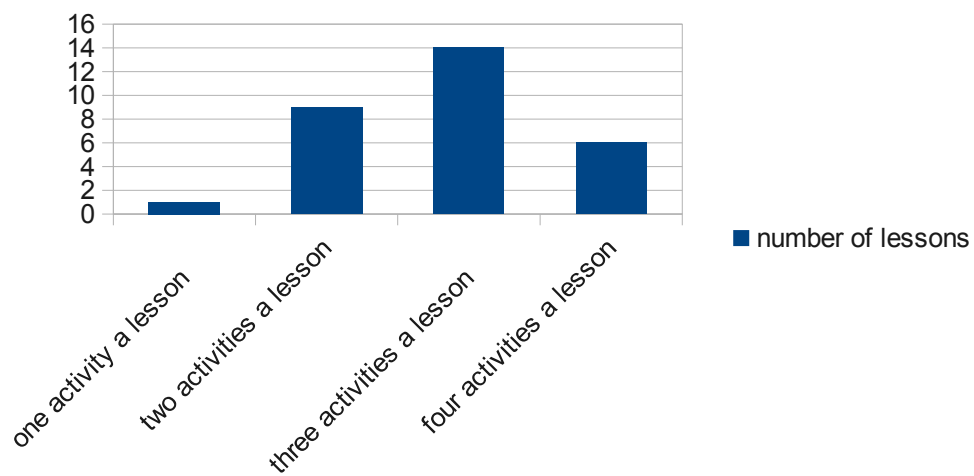
Figure 2: Different kinds of speaking activities

2) Different kinds of speaking activities		
	activities	%
warm up starting of lesson	13	16.7
warm up starting something new	6	7.7
follow up activities	13	16.7
integrating skills	46	58.9
speaking activities during 30 lessons	78	100
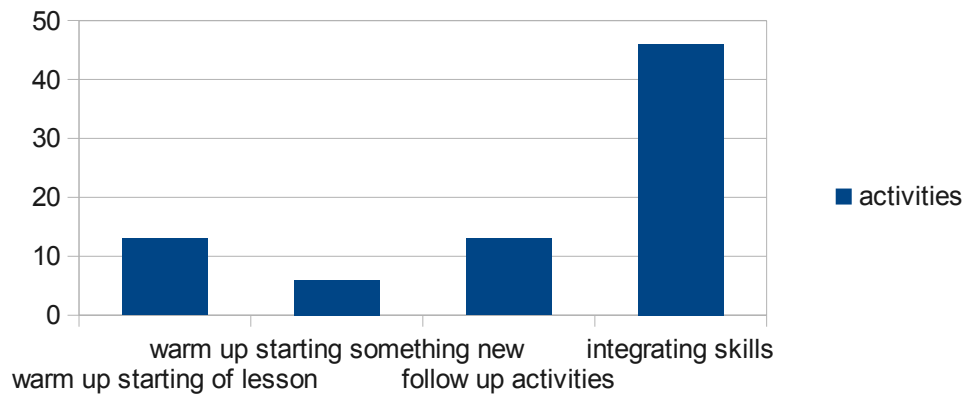
Figure 3: Different kinds of speaking activities

3) Different kinds of speaking activities					
	yes	%	no	%	total number of lessons
warm up starting of lesson	13	43.3	17	56.7	30
warm up starting something new	6	20	24	80	30
follow up activities	11	36.7	19	63.3	30
integrating skills	26	86.7	4	13.3	30
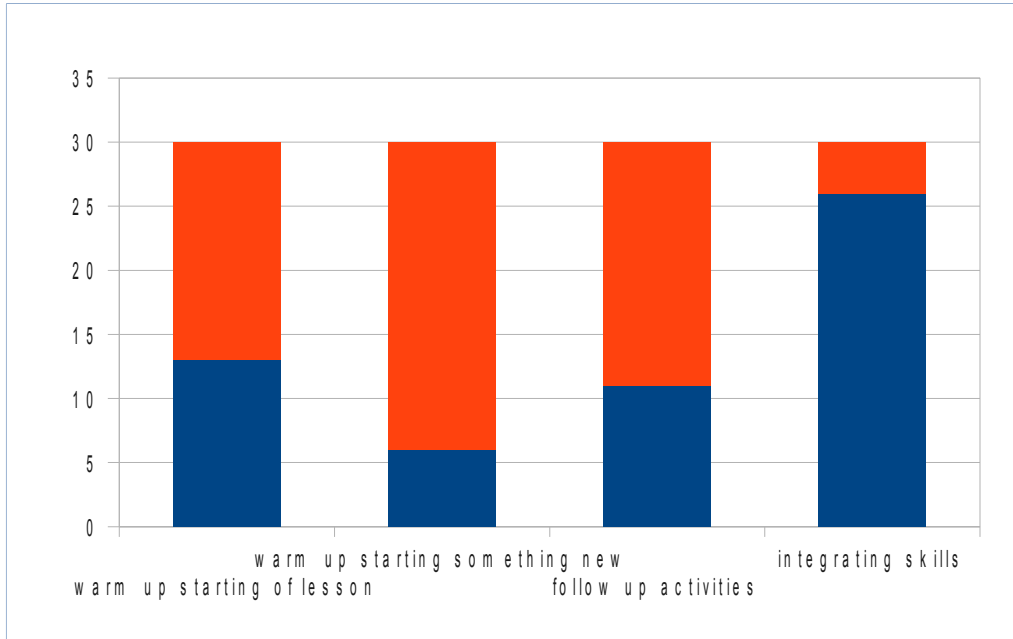
Figure 4: Informal chat between a teacher and students

4) Informal chat between a teacher and students		
chat	the number of lessons	%
yes	15	50
no	15	50
total	30	100
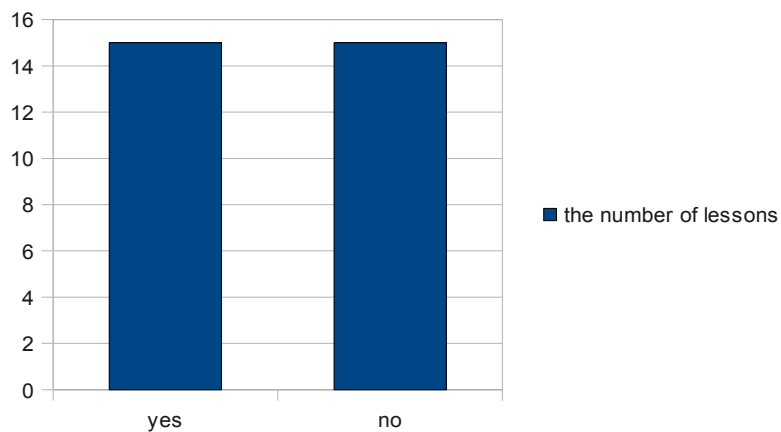
Figure 5: Classroom English

5) Classroom English		
	the number of lessons	%
yes	20	66.7
no	10	33.3
total	30	100
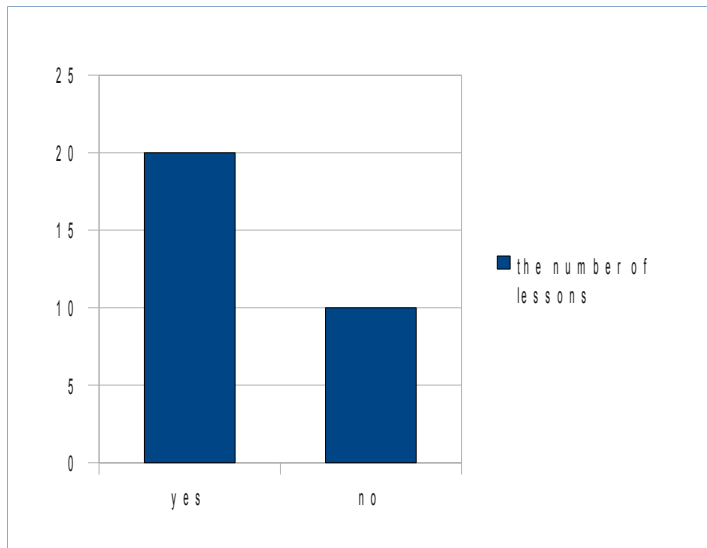
Figure 6: Using Czech by a teacher

6) Using Czech by a teacher		
	the number of lessons	%
predominant	9	30
acceptable	7	23.3
not very much	14	46.7
total	30	100
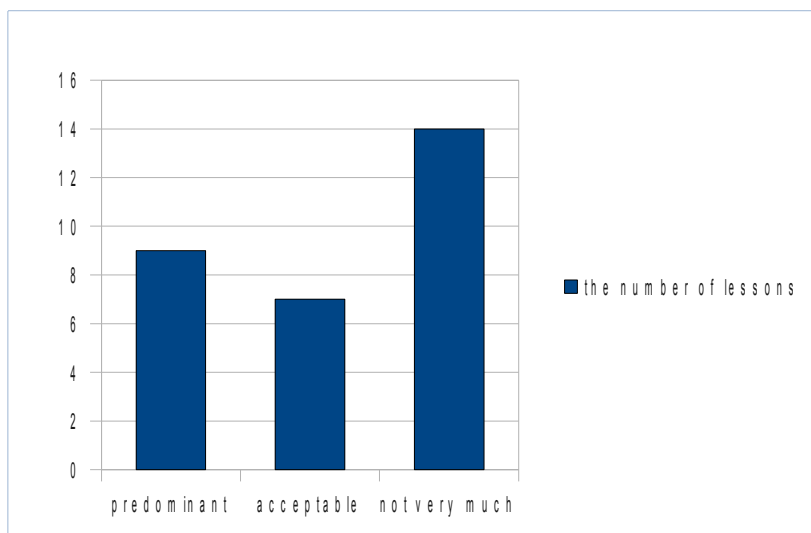
Appendix 2: Observation - The amount of time devoted to the speaking skill development

Figure 7: Time devoted to activities including speaking

7) Time devoted to activities including speaking		
minutes a lesson	the number of lessons	%
10 – 15 min	4	13.3
16 – 25 min	15	50
26 min and more	11	36.7
total	30	100
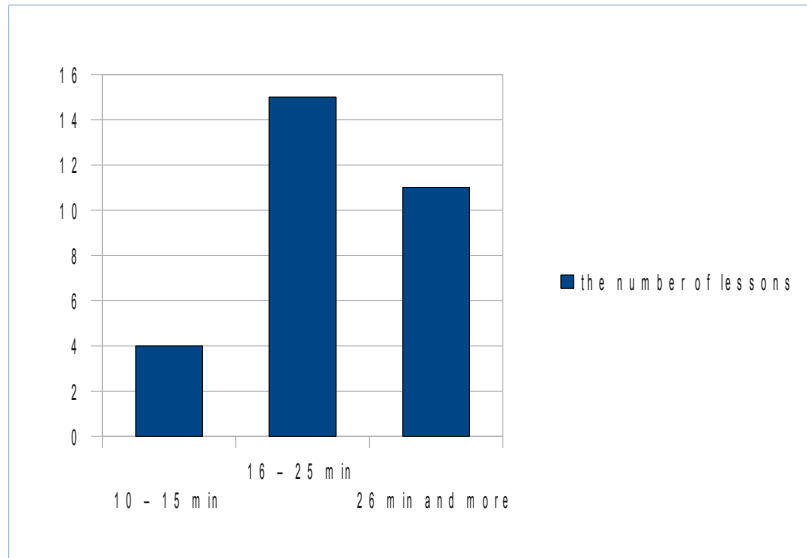
Figure 8: Time devoted to different speaking activities

8) Time devoted to different speaking activities					
	the number of observed lessons	the number of lessons where an activity took place	total time	average time a lesson where activities took place	average time of activities a lesson within all observed lessons
warm up starting a lesson	30	13	82 min	6.3 min 14%	2.73 min 6%
warm up starting something new	30	6	49 min	8.2 min 18.22%	1.63 min 3,6%
follow up	30	11	99 min	9 min 20%	3.3 min 7.3%
integrating skills	30	26	729 min	28 min 62.22%	24.3 min 54%

Appendix 3: Observation - The usage of various organizational forms

Figure 9: Different organizational forms

9) Different organizational forms		
	the number	%
WCT	38	73
PW, GW	11	21.2
WCA	3	5.8
total	52	100
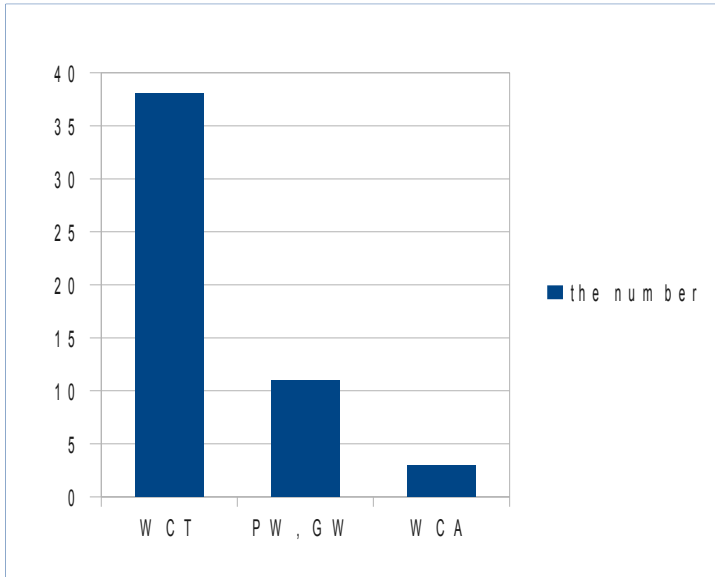
Figure 10: Students' cooperation

10) Students cooperation						
	WCT	%	PW / GW	%	WCA	%
cooperating	32	84.2	7	63.6	3	100
not cooperating	6	15.8	4	36.4	0	
total	38	100	11	100	3	100
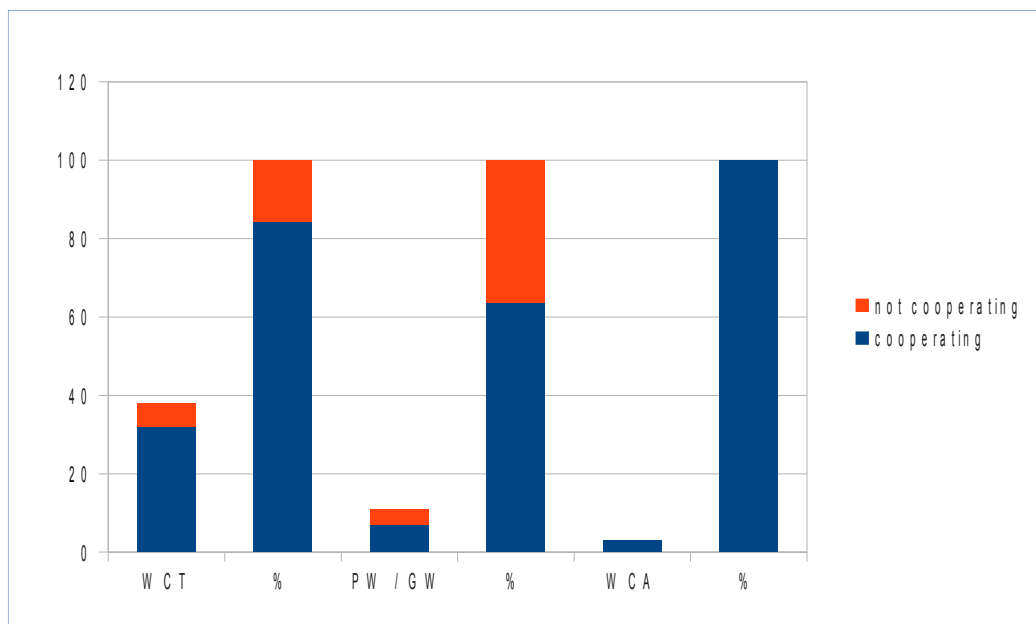
Figure 11: Using Czech by a student

11) Using Czech by a student						
	WCT	%	PW / GW	%	WCA	%
predominant	14	36.8	4	36.4	0	0
acceptable	24	63.2	7	63.6	2	66.7
not very much	0	0	0	0	1	33.3
total	38	100	11	100	3	100
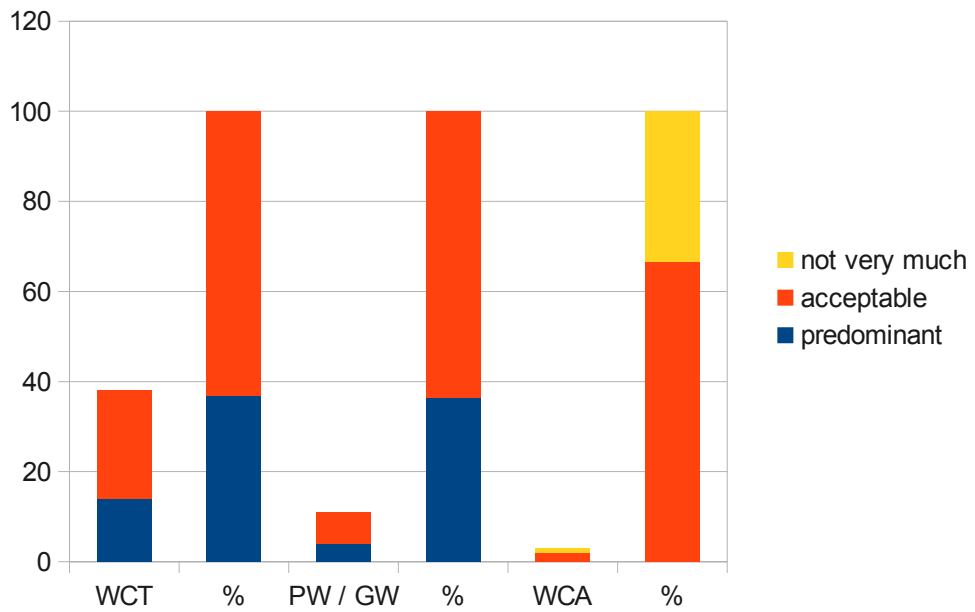
Appendix 4: Observation - Teachers' feedback

Figure 12: Mistakes – who corrects

12) Mistakes – who corrects		
who corrects	the number of lessons	%
students	11	36.7
teacher	13	43.3
both	6	20
total	30	100
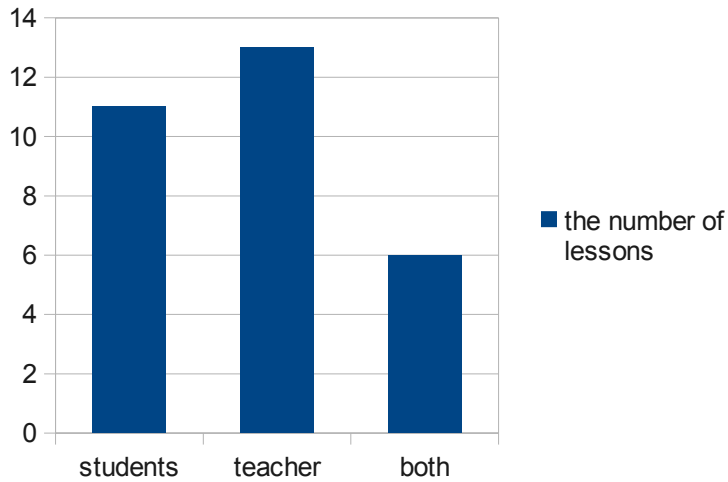
Figure 13: Fluency/accuracy corrections

13) Fluency / accuracy corrections		
corrections	the number of activities	%
fluency only	0	0
accuracy only	10	31.2
accuracy / fluency	22	68.8
total	32	100
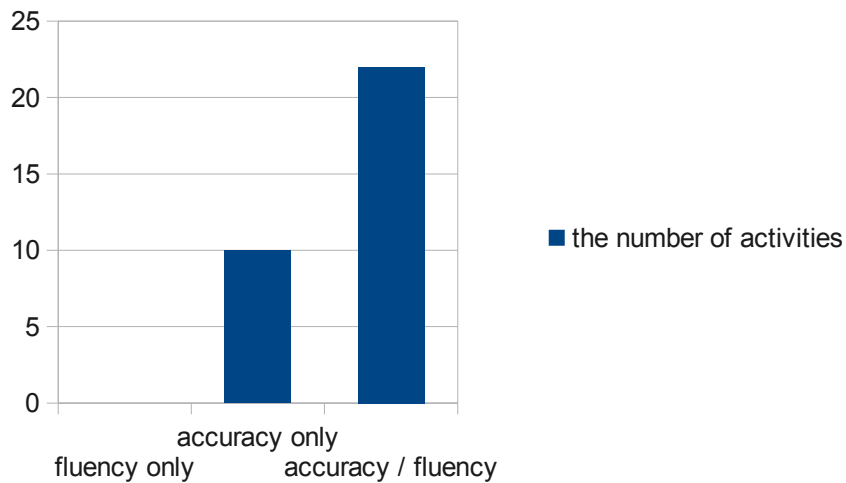
Figure 14: When corrected

| 14) When corrected		
when	the number of activities	%
during an activity	23	71.9
after an activity	3	9.4
during /after	6	18.7
total	32	100
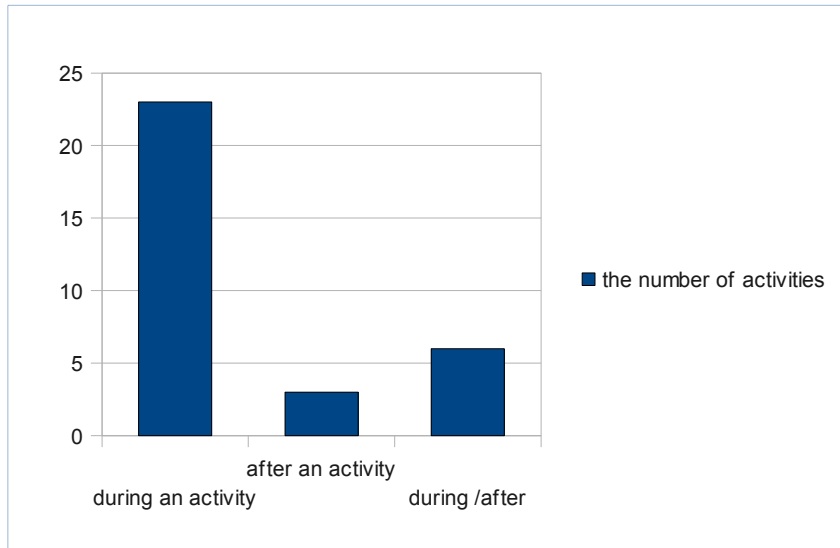
Appendix 5: Jigsaw activity– Brown 1983, p. 155

Appendix 6: Discussion – an interpretation activity - Bryne, 1987, p. 80
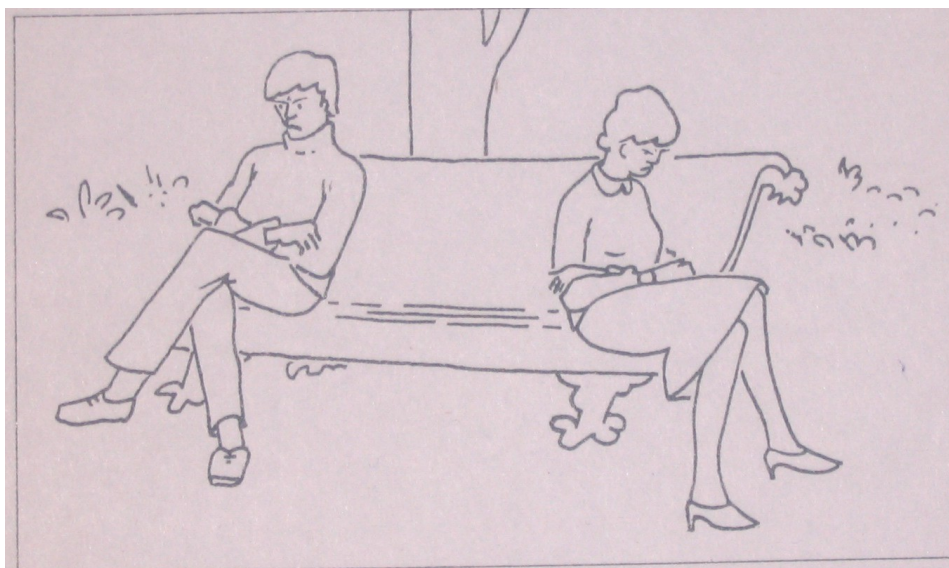
Appendix 7: Spot the differences - Thornbury, 2007, p. 80

Appendix 8: Pupils' questionnaire for speaking activities 1-4:

1 Líbila se ti aktivita? Zakroužkuj 1-5, 1 znamená líbila hodně, 5 nelíbila vůbec.

<p align="center">1   2   3   4   5</p>

2. Je podle tebe aktivita vhodná k procvičování mluvení anglicky? Zakroužkuj 1-5, 1 znamená je vhodná hodně, 5 není vhodná vůbec.

<p align="center">1   2   3   4   5</p>

3. Chtěl/a bys někdy aktivitu v hodinách angličtiny zopakovat?

<p align="center">Ano / Ne</p>

Activity 5.1: Jigsaw activity

	1	2	3	4	5
1st questin	8	2	3	-	-
2nd question	6	6	-	1	-
3rd question	Yes - 15				No - 1

Activvity 5.2: Discussion – an interpretation activity

	1	2	3	4	5
1st questin	6	8	2	-	1
2nd question	11	5	-	-	1
3rd question	Yes - 10				No - 7

Activity 5.3: Little child's why

	1	2	3	4	5
1st questin	10	5	2	-	-
2nd question	7	4	4	-	-
3rd question	Yes - 15				No - 0

Activity 5.4: Spot the differences

	1	2	3	4	5
1st questin	9	5	3	-	1
2nd question	8	8	2	-	-
3rd question	Yes - 13				No - 5

Appendix 9: Observation sheet

Structured observation - focused on the speaking fluency development

Class: ....   Date: ....
Time(lesson):   ....   Number of learners: ....

Speaking activities

	Warm up Starting of lesson	Warm up Starting sth new	Follow up activities	Integrating skills	The use of Czech	Students' attitude towards speaking	Informal English chat between teacher and students	Dealing with a mistake
	Yes/No min work well, average, not well	Yes/No min work well, average, not well	Yes/No min work well, average, not well	Yes/No min work well, average, not well	P-predominant A-acceptable N-not used at all	I-inhibitions R-relaxed N-not-cooperating	Yes/No	who–teacher, student What - fluency, accuracy When – during, after
pair work								
group work								
teacher fronted work								
whole class activities								

Other comments:

Resumé

Diplomová práce se zabývá rozvojem dovednosti mluvení v hodinách anglického jazyka. Teoretická část se zaměřuje na praktické používání jazykových znalostí, zabývá se podmínkami výukového procesu, používáním různých strategií a organizačních forem práce v souvislosti s výukou plynulého vyjadřování se v angličtině. Praktická část se skládá z výzkumu, který se zabývá situací na druhém stupni základních škol z hlediska rozvoje dovednosti plynulého se vyjadřování v angličtině. Práce též nabízí konkrétní aktivity, které tuto dovednost rozvíjí.

Anotace

Jméno a příjmení:	Bc. Jitka Fáberová
Katedra:	Katedra Anglického jazyka
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Josef Nevařil, PhD.
Rok obhajoby:	2014

Název práce:	Rozvoj dovednosti mluvení
Název v angličtině:	Speaking Skill development
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce se zabývá rozvojem dovednosti mluvení v hodinách anglického jazyka. Teoretická část se zaměřuje na praktické používání jazykových znalostí, zabývá se podmínkami výukového procesu, používáním různých strategií a organizačních forem práce v souvislosti s výukou plynulého vyjadřování se v angličtině. Praktická část se skládá z výzkumu, který se zabývá situací na druhém stupni základních škol z hlediska rozvoje dovednosti plynulého se vyjadřování v angličtině. Také práce nabízí konkrétní aktivity, které tuto dovednost rozvíjí.
Klíčová slova:	Plynulé vyjadřování, mluvení, rozvoj, hodiny angličtiny, žáci
Anotace v angličtině:	The diploma thesis deals with the development of speaking fluency within English lessons. The theoretical part focuses on practical usage of language knowledge and explores using various conditions, strategies and different organizational forms of work with their impact on the process of teaching speaking fluency. The practical part consists of a research whose aim is to explore the situation at lower-secondary schools from the fluency speaking development point of view. This work also proposes particular activities which develop speaking fluency.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Fluency, speaking, development, English lessons, learners
Přílohy vázané k práci:	Appendices 1-4: Research figures Appendices 5-7: Activities' pictures Appendix 8: Pupils' questionnaire Appendix 9: Observation sheet
Rozsah práce:	72 s.
Jazyk práce:	anglický