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The Ways of Referring to Past Time in English

Thesis

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Vyjadřování minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce

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Zásady pro vypracování:

Studentka se ve své diplomové práci zaměří na charakteristiku jazykových prostředků, zejména složených tvarů slovesných, které se v anglickém jazyce používají při vyjadřování dějů minulých. Na základě analýzy relevantní odborné literatury popíše systém těchto časů, vysvětlí jejich funkce a rozdíly v použití a porovná je s jejich ekvivalenty v jazyce českém. Na základě výzkumu provedeného mezi učiteli a studenty středních škol a svých zkušeností získaných při výuce shrne různé přístupy používané při prezentaci a procvičování slovesných tvarů odkazujících na dobu minulou a poukáže na nejčastější problémy, které se v souvislosti s jejich používáním vyskytují. Dále se pokusí objasnit příčiny těchto problémů a navrhnout efektivní způsob vyučování.

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Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně Univerzity Pardubice.

V Pardubicích dne 30.3.2006

Tereza Kopecká

I would like to thank to my supervisor Mgr. Petra Huschová who has provided me with sufficient information and guidance to write my thesis. I also want to thank to all teachers and students who have participated in filling in the questionnaires and tests needed for my research.

ABSTRACT

The thesis named *The Ways of Referring to Past Time in English* consists of two main sections, the theoretical and the practical one.

The first chapter of the theoretical part discusses the distinction between *tense* and *time*, between *tense* and *aspect*, as well as the number and division of the English tenses. The second part of this section describes and compares the selected English structures referring to the past time. The last part of the theoretical section states the similarities as well as the differences among the English and Czech forms expressing the past actions or events.

The practical part presents, analyzes and evaluates the outcomes of the research carried out among secondary school teachers and students. The final chapter of the practical part suggests the ways of presenting and practising the selected English structures referring to the past time.

Diplomová práce nazvaná *Vyjadřování minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce* se skládá ze dvou částí, teoretické a praktické.

První kapitola teoretické části se zabývá rozdílem mezi *tense* a *time*, mezi *tense* a *aspect*, a také počtem a rozdělením anglických časů. Druhá kapitola teoretické části popisuje a srovnává vybrané anglické tvary odkazující na minulost. Poslední kapitola teoretické části uvádí podobnosti a rozdíly mezi anglickými a českými tvary vyjadřujícími minulé děje.

Praktická část představuje, popisuje a hodnotí výsledky výzkumu, který byl proveden mezi učiteli a studenty středních škol. Poslední kapitola praktické části navrhuje způsoby prezentace a procvičování vybraných anglických tvarů odkazujících na minulost.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

When writing this diploma paper the following types of the books have been consulted.

Grammar Books – such as Aitken (1992), Leech (1989), Bourke (2003), Swan (1993).

Books Dealing with the English Syntax and Morphology – such as Mathesius (1975), Quirk (1985), Kavka (1995), Huddleston (2002), Biber (1999), Huddleston (1993).

Books Comparing the English and Czech Language – such as Dušková (1988, 1999), Mathesius (1975), Knotková (1986).

Methodological Books – such as Harmer (1991), Aitken (1992), Ur (1991), Bell (1996), Close (1992).

Books dealing with the English syntax and morphology became the main source when writing the chapter about the English tense system. These books offered information concerning not only distinction between *tense* and *time*, between *tense* and *aspect* but also the number of the tenses in English and their division. The second chapter of the theoretical part where the selected English structures referring to the past time are discussed and compared is based on grammar books which provided details about the meaning and use of particular structure. Books comparing the English and Czech language have been consulted when writing the third section of the theoretical part which concentrates on stating the similarities as well as the differences between the English and Czech tense systems, especially among the forms referring to the past time.

Methodological books were the main source for writing the practical part of this thesis where the outcomes of the research carried out among secondary school teachers and students are presented, analyzed and evaluated. These books offered ways of presenting and practising the English structures referring to the past time, as well as details about doing the research.

INTRODUCTION

I decided to start my diploma paper by stating the two following reasons explaining why I have chosen to write about the English forms referring to the past time. As a non-native English speaker, I have been having difficulties when deciding which form describing the past action or event to use to express what I have in mind. And as a beginning teacher of English, I have been experiencing students' problems when searching for the most suitable English past structure which corresponds with its meaning in the Czech language.

The English language offers many ways referring to the past time. To be able to use particular form correctly, it is important to learn the form, to know about the use and meaning of this way referring to the past time.

The theoretical part of my thesis concentrates on these ways. The aim is not only to describe each form, but also to point differences among them. Another section of the theoretical part compares the English and Czech structures referring to the past time. Stating the similarities as well as the differences seems important for clarifying the mistakes Czech students make when using the English forms describing the past actions or events.

The practical part of my thesis is based especially on the data collected from the research carried out among secondary school teachers and students, as well as on relevant literature and my teaching experience.

The research was held in order to answer the following questions:

- *Which approach, the inductive or deductive one, and why do teachers and students prefer when presenting and practising the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect?*
- *Which language, Czech or English, and why do they use when presenting and practising these structures referring to the past time?*
- *How do they perceive the presentations of these structures in the textbooks they have been using?*
- *Which exercises and why do teachers and students consider effective for practising these three forms?*
- *What kinds of difficulties and why do students have with the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect?*

At the end of my thesis I have included some of the ways and ideas for presenting and practising the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect which aim at preventing students from making mistakes in these three forms referring to the past time.

As the topic of my diploma paper may be described from many different viewpoints I am aware that I have not managed to cover all the aspects connected with this subject, therefore, I have chosen only those aspects which are relevant for my thesis.

1 The English Tense System

1.1 Tense and Time

The English language distinguishes between the expression of time by the verb and the objective fact of time. Such distinction is evident from the fact that it uses the word *tense* when referring to the grammatical category, and the word *time* when describing the objective time (Mathesius, 1975, 62).

The Czech language, on the other hand, uses the expression *čas* which covers the meaning of English *tense* as well as of *time*.

Quirk suggests that *tense* is “the correspondence between the form of the verb and our concept of time” (Quirk 1973, 40). Mathesius claims that *tense* shows how the speaker classifies an action from the time axis viewpoint (Mathesius 1975, 61). *Time*, on the other hand, is a universal, non-linguistic concept having three divisions: past, present and future (Quirk 1973, 40). Broughton adds that “it is not a grammatical device, but a common concept in the physical world” (Broughton 1990, 294).

Did you want coffee or tea? I hear you are getting married. I am leaving for Madrid next week. The previous sentences illustrate the disagreement between *tense* and *time*. The first example uses the past simple to refer to the present time. The use of this tense suggests speaker’s politeness. The second sentence uses the present simple referring to the past time for introducing something one has heard, while the third one uses the present continuous for referring to the future time which suggests speaker’s definite

plan. As the foregoing sentences show, the past tense does not always refer to the past time, and the present tenses can refer to different times as well, not only to the present.

1.2 The English Tenses

When considering the English tenses the grammarians differ not only in the number of them, but also in the way of dividing them into the groups. Peters (2004, 532), Biber (1999, 453) as well as Greenbaum (1990, 47 – 48) claim that the English language has two tenses: past and present, which are represented by the verb inflection, such as in *rest/rested* and *write/wrote*. As regards the future, Peters states that it is “expressed in English through compound verbs, i. e. ones involving auxiliaries: *will rest/write, shall rest/write, am/is/are going to rest/write*” (Peters 2004, 532). Mathesius suggests that all known languages started to express the future later than the past, therefore, the future is very diverse often including auxiliary verbs (Mathesius 1975, 64). Greenbaum adds that the future meaning in English can be conveyed by various means, for example, by the present tense: *Tomorrow is Tuesday* (Greenbaum 1990, 48).

Huddleston speaks about primary and secondary tenses, the former consisting of past and present: *She went to school. She goes to school*. The latter of perfect and non-perfect: *He may have known her. He may know her* (Huddleston 2002, 116).

Hais divides the tenses into primary and secondary, too, however, he includes the present, past and future tense in the first group, while the present, past and future perfect in the second one (Hais 1991, 123). Dušková shares Hais’s opinion in a way that she labels the present, past and future tenses as primary, but when referring to the present, past and future perfect she uses the expression perfect tenses (Dušková 1988, 217). Both, Dušková as well as Hais add that all tenses consist of the simple and continuous form. Huddleston, on the other hand, includes the progressive and non-progressive in connection with the aspect (Huddleston 2002, 116). Mathesius writes about the present, past, future tense and the present, past and future perfect without dividing them into any groups (Mathesius 1975, 60).

Biber (1999, 460), Greenbaum (1990, 51) as well as Quirk (1985, 189) do not speak about perfect tenses, such as the past perfect or the present perfect, instead they suggest that both tenses, past and present, may be combined with the *aspect* which is discussed in the following chapter.

1.3 The Aspect

Biber (1999, 460), Dušková (1999, 104) as well as Quirk (1985, 189) mention the connection between *aspect* and *tense* when claiming that these two verbal categories relate to time distinction in the verb phrase.

In fact, aspect is so closely connected in meaning with tense, that the distinction in English grammar between tense and aspect is little more than a terminological convenience which helps us to separate in our minds two different kinds of realization: the morphological realization of tense and the syntactic realization of aspect.

(Quirk 1985, 189)

Biber adds that *tense* refers to past and present time orientation, while *aspect* expresses “completion or lack of completion of events or states described by a verb” (Biber 1999, 460). In other words, *aspect* expresses the manner in which the action occurs (Mathesius 1975, 62).

Kavka clarifies the connection between *tense* and *aspect* in the following quotation.

In many languages specific means to distinguish perfectivity and imperfectivity had been created before the category of tense was developed. The original aspectual forms were gradually changed into temporal ones, and therefore the category of aspect is very closely connected with the category of tense.

(Kavka 1995, 69)

The English language consists of two sets of aspects: perfective / non-perfective and progressive / non-progressive.

The perfect aspect designates events or states taking place during a period leading up to the specific time. The progressive aspect designates an event or state of affairs which is in progress, or continuing, at the time indicated by the rest of the verb phrase.

(Biber 1999, 460)

The following sentences aim at illustrating the distinction among the perfective / non-perfective and progressive / non-progressive aspects. *John has lived in Paris for ten years* (perfective), *John lived in Paris for ten years* (non-perfective). As Quirk (1985, 190) points the perfective aspect suggests not only that John's living in Paris has continued to the present time, but also that his living in Paris may continue to the future. On the other hand, the verb in the second example which is in non-perfective aspect indicates that John's living in Paris came to its end.

Joan is singing well (progressive), *Joan sings well* (non-progressive). The use of the progressive aspect in the first sentence refers to Joan's performance "on a particular occasion or during a particular season" (Quirk 1985, 197), while the non-progressive aspect used in the second example "refers to Joan's competence as a singer (that she has a good voice – a relatively permanent attribute)" (Quirk 1985, 197).

Kavka suggests that one of the ways of distinguishing *aspect* in English concerns the forms, either simple or continuous, of tenses (Kavka 1995, 69). He includes descriptions of the simple and continuous form by Jespersen claiming that the continuous form relates more to time, while the simple form refers to state, as well as by Bodelsen pointing that "the simple form is used to refer to a fact, or event, whereas the continuous form aims at the activity proper" (Kavka 1995, 70).

1.4 The Summary

To sum up the statements from the foregoing paragraphs the following conclusions can be drawn. The English language differentiates between *tense* and *time*. While *tense* belongs among English verbal categories, *time* refers to the common concept of the world one lives in. The Czech language, on the other hand, uses the word *čas* not only when referring to the English *tense*, but also to *time*.

As has been proved, the grammarians look at the English tenses differently. Peters (2004), Biber (1999) as well as Greenbaum (1990) speak about two English tenses, past and present. Huddleston (2002) agrees with their opinion adding a category of the secondary tenses consisting of perfect and non-perfect. Hais (1991), Dušková (1988) and Mathesius (1975) claim that the English language distinguishes among six tenses, namely among the past, present, future tense and the past, present and future perfect tense. Biber (1999), Greenbaum (1990) and Quirk (1985), on the other hand, suggest that the past and present tense may be combined with the aspect.

The author of this thesis shares the opinion that the English language consists of two tenses, past and present, which in combination with the aspect form the present and past perfect.

The previous chapter also aimed at stating the difference between *tense* and *aspect*, suggesting that *tense* refers to past and present time orientation, while *aspect* expresses a completion or a lack of completion of action described by the verb. As has been illustrated the choice of the English aspect influences the meaning of the sentence.

2 The Ways of Referring to the Past Time in English

2.1 The Past Simple

One of the tenses used when expressing the past actions or events is the past simple. This tense occurs in different situations. It describes actions or events which happened and ended in the past, having no connection to the present time, therefore, the verb in the past simple is usually accompanied by the following words or phrases to which Peterson refers as the “common time markers” (Peterson 1989, 64). She offers the following time markers: *yesterday* and its combination (*yesterday morning, yesterday afternoon, yesterday evening*), combinations with *last* (*last night, last month, last year*), combinations with *ago* (*two days ago, two weeks ago, three years ago*), and specific points in time with prepositions *in, on* and *at* (*in 1978, on Monday, at 9:10*). Such use of the past simple expresses completed actions or events referring to a single point in the past time.

Quirk suggests that “it is not necessary for the past tense to be accompanied by an overt indicator of time” (Quirk 1985, 184), adding that it is only important to make sure that the hearer has a specific time in mind which he or she understands from the immediate situation. *Did you lock the door?* may be used “in a domestic situation where it is known that the front door is locked at bedtime every night” (Quirk 1985, 184). The past simple here refers to the immediate past. In other words, it describes actions or events which happened a very short time ago.

This tense can also be used when speaking about the habits he or she had, but no longer are true. Such use is known as habitual past. Leech claims that when using the past simple for expressing the past habit a phrase of frequency or a phrase of length of time, such as *always, often, many times, whenever*, etc. are usually used to indicate the regularity or repetition. *Every morning the two men **got up** and **ate** breakfast before they **went** fishing.* (Leech 1989, 341). The past simple is not the only way of expressing the past habits, *would* and *used to* structures can be used, too (see Chapter 2.8).

Kavka (1995, 46) as well as Hais (1991, 133) speak about the use of the past simple when expressing statement of common verity, especially in proverbs. *Faint heart never **won** fair lady.*

The past tense occurs not only in its simple, but also in the continuous form which is described in the following part.

Table 1 – Summary of the Use of the Past Simple

USAGE	EXAMPLE
completed actions or events referring to a single past point	<i>Peter visited Mexico in 1996.</i>
immediate past	<i>Did anybody call?</i>
habitual past	<i>She always bought strawberry ice-cream.</i>
statement of common verity	<i>Faint heart never won fair lady.</i>

2.2 The Past Continuous

The past continuous, sometimes known as the past progressive, uses *was* or *were* and *-ing* form. As Broughton suggests, “the *was / were* marking the tense for past and *-ing* form giving a sense of ongoing activity” (Broughton 1990, 208). The past continuous may be used in different sentences expressing different meanings.

As Leech claims it is used to show that some action was in progress in the past, continuing for a temporary period, but not to the present time. Usually the past continuous refers to action which was not complete at the time one is thinking about (Leech 1989, 338). *I was **having** a bath at 10 o'clock* (Aitken 1992, 40).

Aitken suggests that the past continuous may refer to the specific past time which is defined by the prepositions *from* and *to* (Aitken 1992, 40). *I was **playing** tennis from 5 to 7 pm yesterday*. The past continuous also describes parallel actions, that is the actions which were continuing at the same time in the past. Such sentences very often use *while* suggesting that the activities were parallel. *Oh, last night we **were doing** different things. My father was **fixing** something in his car as usual, my mother was **setting** the table, Ann was **reading** in her room, while I myself was **writing** letters* (Kavka 1995, 35).

This tense is also used when referring to repeated actions or events. The sentences expressing repetition of some activity include words like *always*, *forever*, *constantly*, *continually*. *She was **always complaining***. Kavka points that “it implies that the activity performed by the subject (usually a person) is something normal, very frequent or usual for him/her to do” (Kavka 1995, 36).

Aitken includes the sentences with the past continuous expressing politeness, claiming that it is used to “introduce a new idea, request or proposal politely and tentatively” (Aitken 1992, 41). *I was wondering if you could help me.*

If used in a sentence with the past simple, the past continuous refers to action which was in progress when some other action or event happened. The past simple interrupts the activity realized by the past continuous. *She was washing up when her daughter came home from school.* In other words, as Leech points, one action was continuing over a period of time and a “second action happened in the middle of that period” (Leech 1989, 38).

Table 2 – Summary of the Use of the Past Continuous

USAGE	EXAMPLE
past actions which were not complete at the time one is thinking about	<i>I was reading newspaper at 6 pm.</i>
past actions which lasted for specific past time	<i>I was playing the guitar from 2 to 3pm.</i>
parallel actions	<i>Lucy was doing homework while her brother was playing tennis.</i>
repeated actions or events	<i>He was always telling jokes.</i>
speaker’s politeness	<i>I was wondering if you could come.</i>
actions which were in progress when something else happened	<i>While we were watching TV, he came in.</i>

2.3 The Present Perfect Simple

The present perfect appears in different situations. As its name suggests, it describes actions having some connection with the present time. When writing about the present perfect Dušková as well as Aitken point that it expresses the situation which took place and ended in some unspecified past time relating to the present time by its result. *The book has been translated into several foreign languages* (Dušková 1964, 147). *Has Paul finished his lunch?* (Aitken 1992, 23). The person asking such question, as Aitken adds, may be curious whether Paul is full or free now. The reason for not including the time may differ, either the time is unknown, or it is unimportant.

Both, Bourke (2003, 29) and Leech (1989, 328) claim that this structure is also used when talking about general experiences. *I have been to some wonderful places* (Bourke 2003, 29). *I have visited Rio, but I have never been to Buenos Aires* (Leech 1989, 328).

Quirk suggests that the present perfect is used for describing the state, for example, *That house has been empty for ages*, the indefinite events, such as in the sentence *All our children have had measles*, and the habit in a period leading up to the present, for example, *Mr Terry has sung in this choir ever since he was a boy* (Quirk 1985, 192). As the foregoing examples show, the present perfect appears in the sentences with *for* used for expressing how long something lasted, and *since* for saying when something started (Bourke 2003, 25).

Aitken includes the time markers *just, yet, already, still* which, as she claims, when used with the present perfect can indicate the speaker's attitude. She points that *just* refers to the immediate past time "whose results are very clear" (Aitken 1992, 24). *I have just washed the floor. So it is still wet.* "Yet suggests that the speaker believes that the result of the action should or could be present now" (24). *Have you repaired the radio yet?* *Already* used with the present perfect "suggests that the speaker believes that the action is over, and that the present result is surprisingly quick" (24). *He has already eaten the cake.* *Still* shows speaker's surprise that the situation continues in affecting the present moment. *He still has not left* (Aitken 1992, 24).

Leech as well as Quirk also point that the time markers, such as *recently, just, already, yet* in connection with this structure express recency. *Has our plane landed? I do not know. It still has not appeared on the Arrivals board. Look!* (Leech 1989, 382). *I have already told Gillian about the party. Have the children come home yet?* (Quirk 1985, 194).

The present perfect does not consist only of the simple, but also of the continuous form which is discussed in the following chapter.

Table 3 – Summary of the Use of the Present Perfect Simple

USAGE	EXAMPLE
results influencing the present	<i>I have spilt the milk.</i>
indefinite past actions	<i>I have met him.</i>
general experiences	<i>She has already used this software.</i>
habits leading to the present	<i>My father has always played chess.</i>

2.4 The Present Perfect Continuous

This structure describes actions or events which started in some unspecified past time, may still be going on, or may recently have finished. *I have been writing emails all day* (Bourke 2003, 29).

Dušková states that the present perfect continuous usually refers to activity which influences the present time by its result. *He cannot drive, he has been drinking* (Dušková 1988, 239).

This structure also refers to the activity which is constant or repeated. *It has been raining* “may describe an extended, single period of rain or a series of short showers” (Parrott 2000, 190).

Kavka claims that the present perfect continuous can express negative evaluation of the activity by the speaker, such as irony or surprise (Kavka 1995, 28). *Gosh, what have you been doing with your new pair of jeans?* (Kavka 1995, 47). As the simple form of the present perfect, the continuous one appears with *for* and *since*, too. *She has been doing her homework for two hours. He has been reading that book since Christmas.*

Table 4 – Summary of the Use of the Present Perfect Continuous

USAGE	EXAMPLE
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activity still going on or recently finished	It has been snowing.
repeated or constant activity	He has been forgetting his keys ever since he got them.

2.4.1 Comparison of the Present Perfect and the Past Simple

As has been mentioned in the foregoing chapters, the present perfect expresses “some relation to the present either in signalling that a consequence of an action completed in the past persists in the present or that a completed past action falls within a period connected with the present” (Mathesius 1975, 63). The past simple, on the other hand, refers to the past without any connection to the present time. *I had a very busy day at the office today*. The speaker talks about all past actions which happened, while in *I have had a very busy day at the office today* the speaker stresses the result of that day, such as his being tired (Dušková 1964, 150). In other words, as Leech states, “the present perfect relates a happening in the past to the present, while the past simple relates a happening in the past to a past time” (Leech 1989, 344).

The sentences in the present perfect usually lack the time reference, while the ones in the past simple mostly indicate that some activity happened at specific time in the past. *Have you ever visited a mosque? Yes, I visited one when I was in Cairo, two years ago* (Leech 1989, 344). *Have you read Middlemarch? Did you read Middlemarch?* (Huddleston 1993, 161). As Huddleston claims the use of the present perfect suggests that the questioning person has no particular time in mind, while the past simple suggests that the person who asks refers to a particular occasion. He adds that the present perfect is used for describing the past actions where the time of occurrence is not important.

Hais illustrates the distinction between these two structures in different sentences. *How did you repair the radio? How have you repaired the radio?* In the first example, as Hais writes, the person who asks is interested in the way of repairing the radio, he or she wants to know about the steps of repairing it. On the other hand, the use of the present perfect in the second sentence suggests that one is curious whether the radio works, he or she cares about the result of repairing the radio (Hais 1991, 137).

Both, Dušková (1964, 150) and Mathesius state that the present perfect is not used when talking about persons who have died, the past simple is used instead. *I have never seen Mr Priestley* which suggests that Mr Priestley is alive, therefore, there is the possibility to see him, while *I never saw G. B. Shaw* stresses that G. B. Shaw died, therefore, nobody can see him anymore (Mathesius 1976, 40).

Hewings mentions the different use of the present perfect and the past simple in the news reports, claiming that the events are often introduced by the present perfect, while details are described using the past simple (Hewings 1999, 8). *The film star Jim Cooper **has died** of cancer. He **was** sixty eight and **lived** in Texas.* The use of these two structures may also be influenced by geography, in other words, by the place where English is spoken. Swan claims that the American English uses the past simple not only to describe details in the news, but also when introducing an event or action (Swan 1993, 495).

2.5 The Past Perfect Simple

This structure is used for describing an action or event finished before the specific time in the past.

Quirk uses the phrase *past-in-the-past* when writing about what the past perfect simple mostly expresses. Aitken suggests that the past moment is usually introduced by the preposition *by*. *By one o'clock he **had cooked** lunch* (Aitken 1992, 47).

When used in a sentence with the past simple, the past perfect describes the earlier past action, while the later one is expressed by the past simple. *After they **had got** home, somebody broke into the flat.* Such sentence suggests that they were at home first, and then somebody broke into their flat.

Leech mentions the use of the past perfect in connection with the preposition *before* and *after* expressing sequence and relationship between the past actions. *The army **had won** an important battle before they crossed the border. The prisoner was released after he **had been** in prison for several years* (Leech 1989, 336). The sentences in the past perfect simple are often accompanied not only by *before* and *after*, but also by *as soon as*, *by the time*. As Aitken points, this structure can also be used “as a narrative device to give background, especially in written English” (Aitken 1992, 48). *It **had been** a good year for Martin.*

The past perfect consists not only of the simple, but also of the continuous form, which is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Table 5 - Summary of the Use of the Past Perfect Simple

USAGE	EXAMPLE
past actions or events finished before a	<i>All children had returned home</i>

specific past time	<i>by six o'clock.</i>
earlier past activities or events	<i>She had washed up before she went outside.</i>
narrative device giving background	<i>It had been a good summer for Paul.</i>

2.6 The Past Perfect Continuous

As Cobuild (1996, 252) and Swan (1993, 467) point the past perfect continuous is used for describing longer actions or situations which had been continuing to a particular past time the speaker is talking about. As they add the use of the past perfect continuous stresses the duration of the action which is mostly introduced by the preposition *for* followed by the specific time, such as *for ten minutes, for three weeks,* etc. *They **had been talking** for an hour before Peter came back from the supermarket.*

In other words, as Aitken claims, the past perfect continuous often draws attention to the length of the activity (Aitken 1992, 52).

When one wants to show the cause and effect of some action or event, the past perfect continuous may be used. The following use of this tense describes the results of activities such as *studying* and *eating*. *Catherine was very tired as she **had been studying** all night. Peter gained weight because he **had been eating** too much.*

Table 6 - Summary of the Use of the Past Perfect Continuous

USAGE	EXAMPLE
longer actions or events lasting to particular past moment	<i>When he came I had been watching TV for two hours.</i>
cause and effect of some action	<i>Claire lost weight because she had been exercising.</i>

2.6.1 Comparison of the Past Perfect and the Past Simple

Both, the past perfect and the past simple describe actions or events which happened in the past. The past perfect, as has been mentioned before, is used to show that some past situation or activity occurred before the particular past time.

The past simple, on the other hand, does not distinguish between *later* and *earlier* past. Swan claims that one may use the past simple instead of the past perfect “when the *earlier* action was a short one” (Swan 1993, 467). *When I **had washed** the cat, it ran off into the bushes with disgust. When I **put** the cat out, it ran off into the bushes with disgust.* The use of the past perfect in the first example suggests that *washing the cat* was not a short activity, it took some time, while the past simple included in the second sentence refers to *putting* as a short action.

Swan continues in listing the situations in which the past simple is more often used than the past perfect by claiming that when describing people’s immediate reactions the past simple is recommended. *When he **saw** a mouse he screamed* (Swan 1993, 467).

Kavka (1995, 37), Swan (1993, 467) as well as Knotková (1986, 151) suggest that the past simple is preferred to the past perfect when the speaker presenting the actions in order refers to them as individual independent facts which do not influence each other. *She **drove** to the station, **closed** the windows, **got out** of the car, **locked** the doors and **went** in to the station hall* (Knotková 1986, 151).

In the following quotation Parrott offering an example with the narration describes in which situations the past simple and the past perfect may occur.

When we tell a story or describe a sequence of events we generally use the past simple to establish the main facts and to move the story forward if we describe the events in order they happened. We use past perfect to describe the background – to introduce events that happened before the main narrative and have some bearing on it. We often use it to show that a character is recollecting something that happened previously.

(Parrott 2000, 197)

2.7 The Present Simple

As has been mentioned in the chapter 1.1, the present tense does not refer only to the present time, it can refer to the future, as well as to the past time. Huddleston suggests that the present tense when

referring to the past time occurs in informal conversational narration or in fiction, and its purpose is making narrative “more vivid by assimilating it to the here-and-now of the speech act” (Huddleston 2002, 130). Such use of the present tense is known as historic present. *Well I, I wanted just a small box like what you made. He wasn't satisfied with it – he goes and makes a big one as well* (Biber 1999, 452).

The present tense referring to the past time also appears in the news headlines. *UN aid reaches the stricken Bosnian town of Srebrenica* (Huddleston 2002, 131).

Huddleston as well as Greenbaum mention the use of the present simple in the sentences including the verbs: *say, tell, inform, hear, gather, understand, see*, to which Greenbaum refers to as the “verbs of communication or reception of communication suggesting that the information communicated is still valid” (Greenbaum 1990, 49). *I understand that the game has been postponed* (Greenbaum 1990, 49). Huddleston including the sentence *Bill tells me you are moving to Sydney* adds that “the focus of attention is not on Bill’s act of communication itself but rather on its content” (Huddleston 1993, 147).

Huddleston offers the following comparison of the present and past tense when referring to the past time. He speaks about the use of the present tense when expressing permanent existence of something created in the past, and about the past tense when one refers to the creation itself (Huddleston 2002, 130). *Describing individuals coping with ordinary life and social pressure, she (Jane Austen) uses a sharp satire to expose follies, hypocrisies and false truths. Jane Austen wrote Emma in 1815.*

And finally, the present tense may be used instead of the past when speaking about the past events or actions “seen as a part of a chronicle forming permanent record of history” (Huddleston 2002, 130). *1438 – Albert I becomes Emperor – the first of Habsburg Emperor.*

Table 7 - Summary of the Use of the Present Simple

USAGE	EXAMPLE
historic present	<i>He hears the bell ringing, and hurries downstairs.</i>
news headlines	<i>Bush becomes the US President again.</i>
with some verbs (<i>say, hear, tell</i> , etc.)	<i>I hear Lucy is going to university.</i>

record in a chronicle	<i>Albert I becomes Emperor.</i>
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2.8 WOULD and USED TO

These two structures may be used when talking about past habits and repeated past actions or events.

When I was a child I would/used to play hide and seek game. As Parrott claims, *used to* and *would* “emphasize both remoteness and duration” (Parrott 2000, 209). Cobuild (1996, 243) suggests that when describing the past states *would* cannot be used, instead *used to* occurs. *I am not quite as mad as I used to be. Actresses used to be very reluctant to wear tight corsets.*

The negative form of *would* refers to the past refusals. *He was angry because I would not lend him any money* (Swan 1993, 636). *I would not ring him, he was quite rude last time we spoke* (Carter and Hughes 2001, 44). As Carter adds, in these cases *would not* is equivalent to *refuse to*.

Another use of *would* when referring to the past time is mentioned by Carter claiming that it can express opinion and volition in the past situations (Carter and Hughes 2001, 43). *I spent New Year pulling my hair out because the baby would not sleep.*

Aitken adds that *used to* may also express a polite way of suggesting that the speaker previously had some skill, and may therefore still have it. *Do you play tennis? I used to play a bit.* (Aitken 1992, 57).

Table 8 - Summary of the Use of *Would* and *Used to*

USAGE	EXAMPLE
past habits	<i>I used to/would watch TV every day.</i>
past states	<i>She is not quite as happy as she used to be.</i>
past refusals	<i>Paul would not lend me his new car.</i>

2.9 The Summary

The aim of the previous pages was to describe and compare different English forms referring to the past time. As has been suggested and illustrated by the included sentences, the English language provides many structures which may be used when describing the past actions or events.

There are the past tense expressing the past actions or events which do not influence the present time, the present perfect referring to the situations which happened in the past, but have connection to the present time, the past perfect emphasizing that one past action or event preceded another past action or event, the present simple used in informal narration, news headlines, as well as *would* and *used to* structures describing the past habits and the past repeated actions or events.

As has been shown, the past tense, the present perfect as well as the past perfect consist of the simple and continuous form. The choice of the form usually influences the meaning of the sentence. If the speaker describes the action in its progress, stressing continuity and duration, the continuous forms of these tenses are used *Kim was opening the parcel* (Huddleston 1993, 153). *He has been running for two hours already* (Bourke 2003, 21). *It had been raining before he crashed the car* (Leech 1989, 337). While if the emphasis is put on the state, completion of the activity, the simple one is preferred. *Kim opened the parcel* (Huddleston 1993, 153). *They have painted the ceiling* (Bourke 2003, 21). *When the play had finished, the audience left quietly* (Leech 1989, 336).

3 Comparison of the English and Czech Forms Referring to the Past Time

3.1 The English and Czech Forms Referring to the Past Time

The lines which follow have been written in order to point the similarities as well as the differences among the English and Czech tenses and structures, especially those used when referring to the past time.

Dušková claims that the English tense system is similar to Czech in a way that both languages may refer to the past, present and future time (Dušková 1988, 217).

English as well as Czech use the past tense for describing activities happened in the past time. *Susan got up late yesterday. Zuzana **vstala** včera pozdě.* The English and Czech language may also use the present tense when referring to the past time. Such use known as the historic present functions as a device making the statement topical or dramatic (see Chapter 2.7). *Napoleon **leaves** France at the head of a great army and **crosses** the frontier of Russia. Napoleon **odchází** z Francie v čele velké armády a **překračuje** hranice Ruska* (Knotková 1986, 138).

The previous section was to show the similarities of the English and Czech forms referring to the past time, while the following ones are to describe their differences.

The English and Czech tense systems differ in number of tenses. The Czech language consists of the past, present and future tense. As regards the English tenses, the

grammarians seem to offer different number of them. Some of them speak about the past and present tense, while others mention the future tense, as well as the past, present and future perfect (see Chapter 1.2).

As far as the sphere of the past is concerned, Dušková points that “English divides the past into past and before-past (the former being further subdivided according to its definite or indefinite nature and the connection with the present) whereas Czech regards the past globally” (Dušková 1999, 98). The above mentioned division of the past suggests the number of tenses connected with the sphere of the past in each language. As Dušková states the English language operates with three tenses in the simple and continuous form, while the Czech language with one past tense which occurs in different aspectual modifications (Dušková 1999, 77).

As has been suggested, the Czech language mostly uses the past tense to express the past actions or events, while English may choose from the past tense, which is connected with the definite past time, the present perfect, which refers to the past time and at the same time connects the past with the present, and the past perfect, which suggests that one past situation preceded another.

Mathesius illustrates how the Czech language lacking the present perfect deals with this tense.

Yesterday I tore my trousers. Tak jsem si včera roztrhl kalhoty. Look, I have torn my trousers. Podívej, jak jsem si roztrhl kalhoty (Mathesius 1975, 63). Both actions are realized by the past tense in the Czech language. As Mathesius shows the sentence in the present perfect may be rendered into Czech not only by the past, but also by the present tense. *I have finished my task* corresponds with the following Czech sentences: *Už jsem úlohu udělal. Jsem s úlohou hotov* (Mathesius 1976, 39).

Mathesius as well as Knotková mention a special Czech perfect type with the verb *mít*. *Mám kalhoty roztržené* (Mathesius 1975, 63). *Měl jsem umyto = Mám umyto. Měl jsem skončeno = Mám skončeno*. (Knotková 1986, 154). Mathesius adds that this perfect is used only in colloquial Czech (Mathesius 1975, 63).

Dušková points that the Czech language does not distinguish between the English past simple and continuous. *At seven-thirty I drove to the station. At seven-thirty I was driving to the station. Czech translation, O půl osmé jsem jel na nádraží*, includes the meanings of both English tenses. It may mean that *o půl osmé jsem odjel na nádraží*, as well as *o půl osmé jsem už jel (jsem byl na cestě) na nádraží* (Dušková 1988, 237).

Dušková states that the Czech language lacking the past perfect uses the past simple when translating it (Dušková 1999, 96). *Peter had washed up before his young wife arrived. Petr umyl nádobí, než přišla jeho mladá žena.*

On the other hand, she mentions the feature shared by these two structures, when writing that they both lack the distinction between definite and indefinite past (Dušková 1999, 96).

As has been shown the Czech past tense corresponds not only with the English present perfect, the past simple and continuous, but also with the past perfect.

Another difference between English and Czech concerns the use of the present simple when referring to the past time. Some English verbs, for example, *hear, see, understand*, etc. take the present tense when expressing the past action or event, while in Czech such past situations are expressed by the past tense (see Chapter 2.7). *I hear you are an expert in cut glass. Slyšel jsem, že jste odborník na broušené sklo* (Knotková 1986, 152).

3.2 The Czech Vid vs. the English Aspect

As has been mentioned the Czech language does not display so many structures referring to the past time as English. On the other hand, it includes *vid*, sometimes translated as *aspect* into English.

The Czech language distinguishes between the perfective and imperfective aspect. As Dušková claims most Czech verbs are either perfective or imperfective (Dušková 1988, 242), the former expresses actions limited by time, such as *dát, přepsat*, while the latter describes actions which are not limited by time, such as *dávat, přepisovat*.

Perfective aspect presents verbal action as a complex or completed act, imperfective aspect being neutral in this respect. Verbal action denoted by perfective verbs implies boundaries (a beginning and/ or an end), while in the case of imperfective verbs it is expressed in its progress (its boundaries recede into the background). In other words, perfective aspect presents verbal action as closed, imperfective aspect expresses it cursorily.

(Dušková 1999, 104)

As regards the opposition of the perfective and imperfective aspects, Dušková states that the unmarked member of this opposition is the imperfective form as it can refer to a completed situation as well. *Proč jsi je zvala?* (imperfective) (Dušková 1999, 105).

Mathesius shows how different aspects influence the meaning of the sentence. *Někdo někam šel. Vyšel sice časně, ale přece až do večera nedošel. Kdyby byl chodil častěji tou cestou, jako chodíval jeho dědeček, byl by ji ušel bez zastávky, ale takhle často popošel kousek a už se musel zastavit a ptát se, jak dál* (Mathesius 1976, 38). The previous sentence consists of several past forms of the verb *jíti*, each of them describing a different action. *Šel* does not express any beginning or end of the action, *ušel*, on the other hand, refers to the action as a completed one, *vyšel* stresses the beginning of the action, while *došel* the end. *Popošel* refers only to a few moments of the action, and finally *chodil* and *chodíval* describe past situation which repeated regularly (Mathesius 1976, 38).

The most important difference between Czech and English, as regards the expression of verbal aspect, however, consists in the fact that the English verb itself is formally not assigned to a particular aspectual type, the same verb in different contexts may express different verbal aspects without any accompanying formal change. Thus in English, verbal aspect is not expressed by the verb alone but by the whole context.

(Mathesius 1975, 71)

Dušková illustrates Mathesius' opinion by including the verbs: *say* which may mean říci, říkat, *learn* učít se, naučit se, *write* psát, napsat, *buy* koupit, kupovat. As she adds the aspect may be realized by the meaning of verb, by its postmodification, as well as by the context. *We drank beer. He drank a glass of beer*. The first example translated into Czech as *Pili jsme pivo* expresses the imperfective aspect, while the second one, *Vypil sklenici piva*, expresses the perfective aspect (Dušková 1988, 242).

3.3 Expressing the Aspect in Czech vs. English

Mathesius compares the ways of expressing the verbal aspects in the Czech and English language. He suggests that in Czech the alternation of the stem consonant influences whether the verb is in the perfective, such as *nesu, nasadím, umru*, or in the imperfective aspect, such as *nosím, nasázím, umírám*. Although claiming that the “indication of verbal aspect by means of alternation does not exist” (Mathesius 1975, 71) in the English language, Mathesius includes a pair of the verbs *drop – droop* which is sometimes mentioned as an example, however, “cannot be compared to such distinctions as *nesu – nosím*” (Mathesius 1975, 71).

Another way of distinguishing between the Czech perfective and imperfective aspects is realized by the use of prefixes: *přinesu, nabodnu, ubodám, přitáhnu, zatahám, popotáhnu* (Mathesius 1975, 70). In English, on the other hand, derivation does not affect the verbal aspect. There are several fixed prefixes

which do not influence the aspectual type, but instead bring about the change in the meaning of the verb, for example, *come – overcome* (Mathesius 1975, 71).

The last way in Czech Mathesius describes concerns the set phrases, such as: *udeřit* (perfective) - *zasazovat ránu* (imperfective), *bodnout koho jehlou* (perfective) – *vrážet jehlu do koho* (imperfective) (Mathesius 1975, 70). In English, the whole phrases may influence the aspectual meaning. “*He talked him deaf and dumb, he shot him dead, she began to cry or she started crying, the lamp began to shine*. In Czech all these meanings are expressed by adding prefixes to the basic verb forms, e. g. *umluvit, zastřelit, rozplakat se, rozzářit se*” (Mathesius 1975, 71).

3.4 Expressing the Perfective and Imperfective Aspect in English

Dušková offers the following ways in English which have similar function as the Czech perfective aspect. The first device she mentions is an adverb particle, such as *down, out, off, through, up*. *Write down* *zapsat* (si), *blow out* *sfouknout*, *try out* *vyzkoušet*, *work out* (*a problem*) *vyřešit* (problém), *eat up* *sníst*, *drink up* *vypít*, etc. As she writes some prefixes suggest that an action is completed as well: *slave* *otročit* – *enslave* *zotročit*, *live* *žít* – *outlive* *přežít*, *eat* *jíst* – *overeate* *přejíst se* (Dušková 1988, 243).

On the other hand, when the above mentioned verbs and structures appear in the continuous form, they are similar to the Czech imperfective aspect: *he was working out a problem* *řešil nějaký problém*, *you were overeating again* *už jsi se zase přejídal* (Dušková 1988, 243).

As Dušková points the English language uses the continuous form to express the imperfective aspect (1988, 242). She believes that the English continuous form and the Czech imperfective aspect are similar, as “both forms present verbal action as such, without indicating its beginning and / or termination, and hence usually as incomplete. The principal feature is progress” (Dušková 1999, 104). She points the difference as well, when suggesting that temporary duration is specific for the continuous form, while the imperfective aspect may refer not only to temporary, but also to general actions (Dušková 1999, 105), as in the sentences *John was smoking* and *John smoked* which are both translated as *Jan kouřil* into the Czech language.

Dušková as well as Kavka suggest that the opposition of the English simple and continuous form is very different from the opposition of the Czech perfective and imperfective aspects. As Dušková shows

“the simple form can replace the progressive even in the case of verbs that denote the specific meaning of the progressive form obligatorily by the progressive form, for example, under conditions of inversion: *There came our bus*” (Dušková 1999, 105). Kavka adds that a Czech learner of the English language cannot see the straightforward parallels between the tense forms and the perfective/imperfective aspects. He supports his opinion by including the imperfective *dělal*, which can be matched with the simple form *did*, as well as with the continuous form *was doing* when translating *Co tam dělal?* into English *What did he do there? What was he doing there?* (Kavka 1995, 70).

As has been mentioned Dušková sees the partial correspondence between the Czech imperfective aspect and the English continuous form. In the lines which follow she writes about Mathesius and his observation concerning the agreement between English tenses and Czech verbal aspect. Mathesius claims that “English perfect tense is rendered into Czech by the perfective and the preterite by the imperfective aspect” (Dušková 1999, 76). *What **have** you **learnt** for today? Co ses na dnešek **naučil** (perfective)? No irregular verbs? Then what **did** you **learn**? Nepravidelná slovesa žádná? Tak co ses vlastně **učil** (imperfective)?* As Dušková later writes, one can find many sentences where Mathesius’s suggestion cannot be applied. *At the moment I’m a man who’s **done** almost everything and knows nothing. Ted’ momentálně jsem někdo, kdo **dělal** (imperfective) skoro všechno a neví nic. Merwin **gained** one per cent and Russell’s lost two per cent. Merwin **získal** (perfective) jedno procento a Russell **ztratil** (perfective) dvě procenta.*

Dušková concludes her discussion concerning the correspondence between the English perfect tense and the Czech perfective aspect by claiming that it depends not only on the temporal system in English and the temporal and aspectual system in Czech, but also on verbal semantics and the context (Dušková 1999, 98).

3.5 The Summary

As has been shown the English and Czech tense systems share some similar characteristics, such as both languages may refer to the past, present and future time, as well as they use the past and present tense when describing the past actions or events.

On the other hand, these two systems differ in number of tenses. The Czech language consists of the past, present and future tense, while as has been suggested, the number of the tenses in English seems not to be a definite one, as different grammarians mention different kinds of the tenses.

As far as the structures referring to the past time are discussed, the English language operates with the past tense, with the present perfect, as well as with the past perfect all appearing in the simple and continuous form, while the Czech language consists only of one past tense.

These two languages also differ in the verbal category known as *vid* in Czech, and *aspect* in English. As has been written, the Czech verbs occur either in the perfective or imperfective aspect, while in English one verb can express different aspect depending on the context. The previous paragraphs described the ways of expressing the perfective and imperfective aspect in English, such as the adverb particle or prefix. It has also been suggested that the Czech imperfective aspect and the English continuous form share a similar feature, as both describe the action in its progress, as well as a different one, which is that the continuous form expresses the temporary duration while the imperfective aspect can refer not only to the temporary, but also to general actions.

As will be shown in the practical part of this thesis (chapter 5.5), the foregoing differences among the English and Czech tense systems often lead to difficulties when using the structures referring to the past time.

4 Methodology Section

In this section of my diploma paper, I will concentrate on the results of my research. I will provide the details concerning the aim of my research, the tools of collecting needed information as well as the techniques used to perform the research.

4.1 The Purpose of the Research

The research was held in order to answer the following questions:

- *Which approach, the inductive or deductive one, and why do teachers and students prefer when presenting and practising the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect?*
- *Which language, Czech or English, and why do they use when presenting and practising these structures referring to the past time?*
- *How do they perceive the presentations of these structures in the textbooks they have been using?*
- *Which exercises and why do teachers and students consider effective for practising these three forms?*
- *What kinds of difficulties and why do students have with the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect?*

The purpose of the research was not only to get answers to the above mentioned questions, but also to suggest the ways of presenting and practising the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect which aimed at preventing students from making mistakes in these three forms referring to the past time.

4.2 Description of the Tools and Data Collection

The data were collected from the questionnaires (see Appendix 1 and 2), tests (see Appendix 3), as well as from literature. My teaching experience has also influenced the research.

I have chosen the questionnaires and the tests to obtain needed information, as, on the one hand, they seem more time-saving than other ways of collecting the data, for example, the interviews but, on the other, they have some disadvantages such as the non-response which has appeared in my research, too.

4.2.1 The Questionnaires Distributed to Teachers and Students

I have distributed fifty questionnaires to secondary school teachers in different Czech towns and cities. I sent forty four of them by post, while the remaining six were delivered to the teachers by myself. All the questionnaires I distributed personally have returned which suggests that if I had visited all the respondents I would have received all the questionnaires back. Unfortunately, a faraway location of most schools did not allow me to do so at the end. I was given twenty one completed questionnaires back.

As regards the students I have addressed the secondary school students who have completed not only the questionnaires, but also the tests which are discussed in the following chapter.

As to the structure of the questionnaires it consists of two main parts. The first, introductory part, which is included only in the questionnaires for the teachers, aims at introducing the purpose of the questionnaire to its respondents as well as giving details concerning the date and the way of returning it. While the second section of the questionnaire is to obtain the information about presenting and practising the English forms referring to the past time.

In the introductory part I have included the date to which the teachers were asked to return the completed questionnaires. I decided to provide them with three weeks for filling in and sending them back. Bell claims that if no date is specified, or too long time is given, the respondents tend to put the questionnaires away and never look at them any more. He recommends two weeks which, in his opinion, is a “reasonable time for completion” (Bell 1996, 85).

As Bell later suggests including a self-addressed envelope with a stamp helps to fasten respondents’ returning the questionnaires, too (1996, 85). I have followed Bell’s advice and I have also included my e-mail address and a short note offering teachers to send the completed questionnaires by e-mail. To my surprise, only one of the respondents has taken an advantage of this offer. One of the possible reasons may be that most English teachers are not experienced Internet users yet.

As to the second section of the questionnaire, there appear three different kinds of the questions. The first group is made by the semi-closed questions. The respondent’s task is not only to choose one of the two possible answers, but also to explain his or her choice. The second type of the questions which are open ones provides the respondents with

possibility to express their full opinions. The last group consisting of the closed questions offers only limited number of answers from which one has to be chosen.

Each question type has its advantages, as well as disadvantages. The open questions give respondents space for including everything they believe is important. On the other hand, the person processing such answers may experience difficulties when putting the responses into the categories. The closed questions do not provide space for imagination, as respondents are asked to choose one of the offered answers, on the other hand, processing such answers seems to be easier as one may categorize them more easily.

Most questions for the teachers were the same as the ones for the students. As regards the questions about the deductive vs. inductive, and the English vs. Czech language, the responding teachers were asked which approach and language they use, while the students which approach and language they prefer.

I have decided to write the questionnaires in the Czech language, as I believe most teachers and students would feel uncomfortable with completing it in English. I do not want to underestimate anybody's ability to understand the English instructions, but still, I think that it is easier to describe one's opinions in his or her native language.

4.2.2 The Tests Distributed to Students

As has been mentioned before I have decided to address the secondary school students as they, in my opinion, should already have enough experience with the past simple, the past continuous as well as with the present perfect which are tested by the exercises. I wanted to focus only on these three forms referring to the past time, therefore, I have not included any exercises testing other ways, such as the past perfect or used to/would structure.

I provided the students with forty five minutes, which seemed a sufficient time for finishing all the tasks. I received twenty two completed tests back.

I have written the tasks in English as, in my opinion, the secondary school students should already be used to working with the English instructions when completing the tests.

At the top of each test there was a space for students' name since I believe that they are more motivated to fill in the exercises correctly once they have signed the paper.

The tests distributed to students aim at testing the following skills:

- ❑ *students' ability to recognize sentences in the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect*
- ❑ *learners' knowledge concerning the situations in which these structures occur*
- ❑ *their ability to use these forms in context*
- ❑ *students' ability to complete sentences using these three ways referring to the past time*
- ❑ *their translation skills*

4.3 Processing the Obtained Data

I started with processing the data from the questionnaires as I had received them before the completed tests. First I looked at each question and wrote down all respondents' replies. I was searching for the similarities, as well as for the differences in provided answers. I had to sort out several replies as some respondents included answers not connected with the topic.

When processing the data from the tests, I began with correcting all mistakes students have made. Then I evaluated the results of each exercise and counted how many per cent of the respondents were successful and how many failed. The final stage of processing the data collected from the questionnaires and the tests was describing the outcomes in the diploma paper.

4.4 My Teaching Experience

While teaching English at the elementary and secondary school I have had several opportunities to present and practise the English forms referring to the past time, therefore, the research is also based on my teaching experience.

As I am still searching for the most suitable way of teaching these structures effectively, it was interesting for me to compare the respondents' answers and experience with my own.

Although I have not managed to get all distributed questionnaires back, I have still received interesting and valuable pieces of information which are presented, analyzed and evaluated in the following chapters.

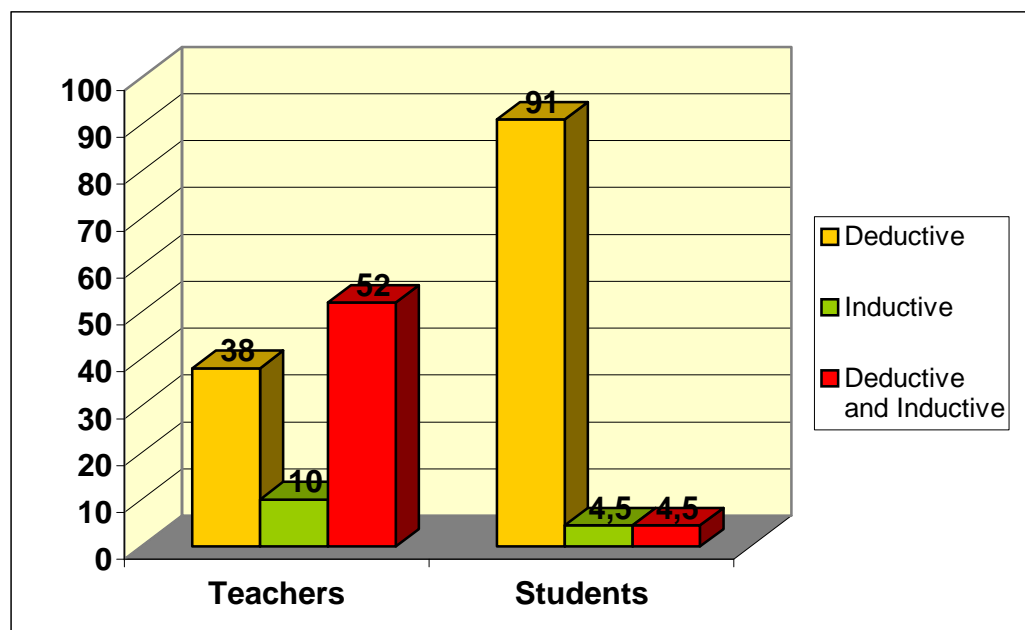
5 The Outcomes of the Research

5.1 The Deductive vs. Inductive Approach

As Stern suggests the basic distinction between the deductive and inductive approach is that “deductive refers to the presentation of rules before practice versus the inference of rules from practice (inductive)” (Stern 1991, 489).

Harmer uses different terms to distinguish between these two ways of presenting grammar. Covert grammar teaching which, as he suggests, “is when grammatical facts are hidden from the students” (Harmer 1991, 3). He adds that this way of teaching is when the students do, for example, an information gap activity or read a text where new grammar, such as the structure referring to the past time, is presented and practised, but students focus on the activity or the text, not on the grammar (Harmer 1991, 3). On the other hand, overt grammar teaching means that the teacher presents the grammar and its rules and the practice is carried out afterwards (Harmer 1991, 4). In other words, as Harmer points, with covert grammar teaching the teachers get their students to work with new language, for example the present perfect, and hope that they will absorb some of it, while with overt grammar teaching teachers are open about the new grammar (Harmer 1991, 4).

Graph 1 - The Use of the Deductive vs. Inductive Approach



As the graph shows, the deductive approach is preferred by thirty eight per cent of the responding teachers and by ninety one per cent of the students. The inductive, on the other hand, is used by ten per cent of the teachers and welcome by four and half per cent of the students. And finally, the combination of both approaches has been chosen by fifty two per cent of the teachers and by four and half per cent of the students.

The teachers combining both approaches claim that the choice of particular approach depends on the learners. When they are able to deduce the rules of using particular structure, the inductive approach is used, on the other hand, when pupils have difficulties with deducing these rules, the deductive approach is preferred.

5.1.1 Using the Deductive Approach

The teachers as well as the students agree that the use of the deductive approach is easier for comprehending the English structure referring to the past time. The teachers add that the weak students are unable to discover the rules of using particular form themselves. Both groups of the respondents suggest that this approach is more time-saving when compared to the inductive one.

A few teachers mention its disadvantage too, when writing that it usually leads to learners' passivity. One of the respondents states that she prefers this approach since the textbook she has been using supports this way of teaching and learning process. Unfortunately, this teacher seems not to be aware that she can use different sources where the inductive approach is preferred, not only her textbook.

Some of the students point that if they study something themselves, they may learn it with a mistake which is not easy to be unlearned later. One of the respondents confesses that if she is not successful in discovering the rules herself, she tends to give it up, not being motivated to continue in searching for the rules any longer.

5.1.2 Using the Inductive Approach

This approach, as the responding teachers and one of the students suggest helps to remember the form, meaning and use of particular structure referring to the past time, as one has to discover the rules him or herself. The positive side of this approach is also seen in learners' participation.

The teachers use this approach when presenting and practising the past simple. One of the respondents prepares a piece of text with words, such as *yesterday, a week ago, two months ago*, the learners read it silently, then they are asked to notice the verbs and its

suffix *-ed*. The students try to translate the text and make rules of forming the past simple of the regular verbs. Later they are given the text with the same adverbs consisting not only of the regular, but also of the irregular verbs and the teacher helps them to realize that not all verbs in the past simple have *-ed* suffix, but some of them have a special form which must be learnt by heart.

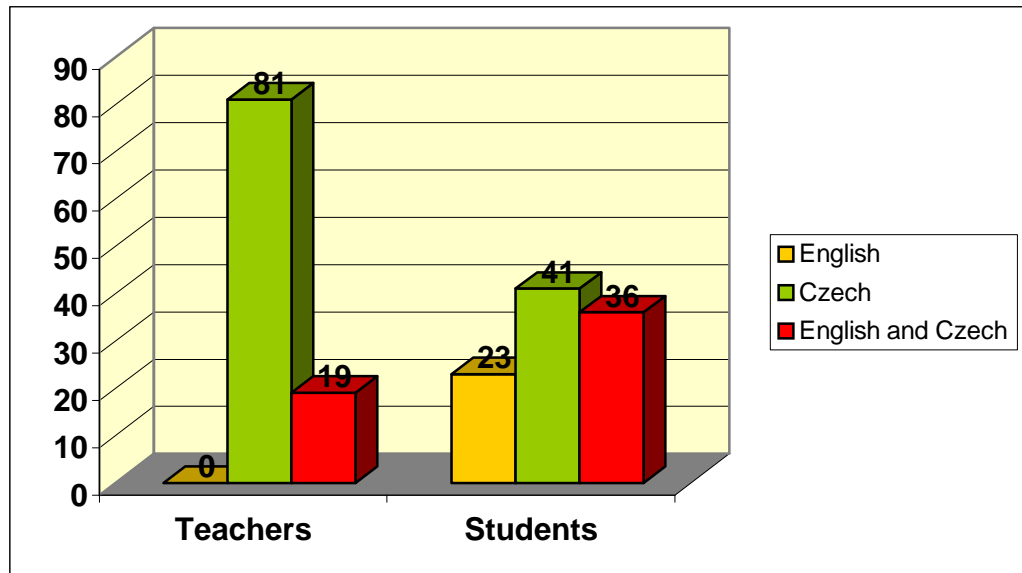
A few responding teachers state that when presenting the past continuous and the past simple, they lead their students to discovering the form of these tenses by comparing it to the present continuous and the present simple, which the learners already know.

I believe that students can be trained in order to be able to use the inductive approach effectively. Teachers should provide their learners with enough opportunities to learn by this approach, they should be patient as they will need time to get used to this way of learning.

The main reasons why the inductive approach is more effective than the deductive one lie in the following advantages. Students not only have to discover the rules themselves which results in their remembering them better, but they are also involved in the process of learning the new language. They have to concentrate fully. Once they discover the rules, they experience a pleasant feeling of achieving something in the foreign language which “can be highly motivating and extremely beneficial for the students’ understanding of English grammar” (Harmer 1991, 39). Harmer also states that this approach is more student-centered than the deductive one (Harmer 1991, 29). On the other hand, I am aware that this approach is not suitable for all the students all the time. Therefore, teacher’s task is to decide *when* to prefer the inductive to the deductive approach, with *what* grammar and with *which* learners (Harmer 1991, 30).

5.2 The English vs. Czech Language

Graph 2 – The Use of the English vs. Czech Language



As the graph shows, most teachers, that is eighty one per cent, and almost half of the students, forty one per cent, have chosen the Czech language when asked which language they use or prefer when presenting and practising the English structures referring to the past time. The English language, on the other hand, is used by none of the responding teachers and preferred by twenty three per cent of the responding students. And finally, the combination of these two languages is welcome by nineteen per cent of the teachers, and thirty six per cent of the students.

Most teachers using both languages prefer Czech when presenting the structures referring to the past time, while English is used when practising them, when summarizing them or when writing entries into students' exercise books. Several responding students welcome this way of learning because they do not know needed terminology to comprehend the English presentation, but they prefer using English during practising the forms referring to the past time.

The teachers also claim that the use of the English vs. Czech language depends on the level of their students, when they are able to comprehend the English presentation, they use English, when they are not, Czech is preferred. This statement seems rather peculiar. Students' level of English depends mostly on the teacher. If he or she does not use the English language, learners cannot be prepared to understand the presentation or practice carried out in English. Therefore it seems important to speak English all the time, and from the very first lesson.

First and foremost, it is important to use English yourself as the normal language of communication and to do this from the very first meeting with a new class, making it plain to your students that you want to conduct the whole lesson in English.

(Underwood 1991, 36)

It may be argued that the students having no experience with English will face difficulties with following the lesson conducted in English, however, there exist the ways of making it easier for them. Willis advises to use gestures, demonstrations, miming as well as acting. Teachers, as she suggests, should speak slowly, clearly and simply but with natural stress and intonation. They should provide their learners with many examples and visual aids where possible (Willis 1992, 84).

5.2.1 Using the English Language

As has been mentioned before, the English language itself is not preferred by any of the responding teachers, only by several students saying that when the teacher uses the English language they get used to listening to English, they expand the vocabulary, as well as they understand the particular structure referring to the past time better. And finally, as they suggest, the teachers' speaking English supports their learning the language.

5.2.2 Using the Czech Language

The teachers as well as the students share the opinion that the presentation of the English structures referring to the past time performed in Czech is clear and comprehensible for all students. Both groups of the respondents claim that the students are not familiar with the English terminology, some teachers add that the weaker learners experience difficulties even when presenting grammar in their native language due to their poor knowledge of the Czech terms.

Teachers also point that the presentation carried out in English is rather time-consuming as they have to repeat it several times until all students understand. One of the students claims that when the teacher presents the structure in English, he must think about the words and their meaning, not concentrating on what the teacher is saying about the form and use of particular structure.

And finally, several responding teachers stress that their preference of the Czech language is influenced by the disagreement among the English and Czech tenses and structures referring to the past time. As an example, one of them mentions the present perfect which is difficult not only because the Czech grammar lacks it, but also because its simple form usually corresponds with the Czech past tense, while its continuous one with the Czech present tense. As this respondent adds she uses Czech to make the presentation of this structure clear and comprehensible.

I agree that understanding of the English presentation is more demanding for students than if it is performed in Czech, on the other hand, I believe that it is always better trying

to explain something in English, and, if needed, teacher can always translate it into the Czech language afterwards. Translation may also be done by the learners who understand the English presentation.

The respondents argue that presenting grammar in English is not only more demanding, but also takes more time than in Czech, however, in my opinion and experience, if students are trained they will get used to the English presentations, which will not later take so much time.

Another reason why teachers should prefer English to Czech is that in some textbooks the presentations of the structures referring to the past time are written only in English, therefore teachers can take advantage of it and use the given terminology when presenting and practising particular form. Unfortunately, although forty three per cent of the responding teachers work with the textbooks, such as *Headway* or *Opportunities* (see chapter 5.3) where everything is written in English, they still do not use English when presenting and practising the structures referring to the past time very often.

And finally, teachers should use English even though, as Harmer claims, if something is said in the students' mother tongue it is more comprehensible, but teachers "will want to be careful about the amount of mother tongue that they use in the English class" (Harmer 1991, 27).

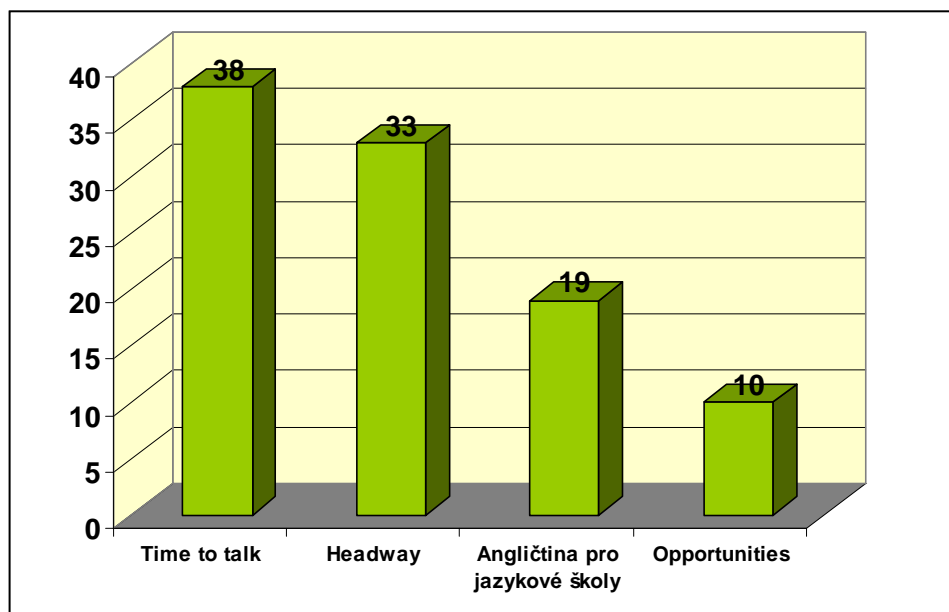
5.3 Presentations of the Structures Referring to the Past Time in Textbooks

Presentation, as Harmer points is "the stage at which students are introduced to the form, meaning and use of a new piece of language" (Harmer 1991, 17). Harmer includes examples such as presenting *did* in the past simple questions, or different endings of the regular past tense verbs, such as *watched* /t/, *earned* /d/ or *landed* /id/. Ur states that the aim of the presentation is getting students "to perceive the structure – its form and meaning – in both speech and writing and to take it into short-term memory" (Ur 1991, 7).

Both groups of the respondents were asked to evaluate the presentations of the English structures referring to the past time in the textbook they have been using. The responding teachers use the following textbooks: *Time to Talk* (Peters, Gráf), *Headway* (Soars), *Angličtina pro jazykové školy* (Zábojová,

Peprník, Nangonová), *Opportunities* (Harris, Mower, Sikorzynska) while all the responding students who have participated in the research use *Time to Talk* (Peters, Gráf).

Graph 3 – Textbooks Used at Secondary Schools



The evaluation was performed by choosing from various adjectives suggesting how the presentations are perceived by the respondents.

As regards the adjectives which were ticked most, both groups of the respondents believe that the presentations are *comprehensible*, which the teachers chose eleven times and the students thirteen times. The second most used adjective by the teachers was *sufficient*, ten times, while by the students it was *well-arranged*, twelve times. And finally, the teachers ticked the adjective *well-arranged* six times, while the students chose *sufficient* seven times. As the results show, the teachers as well as the students agree on the same three adjectives all of them evaluating the presentations of the English structures referring to the past time quite positively.

Harmer (1991, 18) uses the following adjectives when defining a good presentation:

- ❑ *clear* – students should have no difficulty in understanding the situation or what the new language means.
- ❑ *efficient* – the aim is to get to the personalisation stage, that is the time when learners use the new grammar to speak about their own experience or lives (Harmer 1991, 17), as soon as students can manipulate the new language. The more efficiently we can do this the better.
- ❑ *lively and interesting* – we want students to get interested and be involved during a presentation stage. With the help of a good situation and lively teaching it can be one of the most memorable parts of a language course. And

if it is, there is a good chance that students will remember the new grammar more easily.

- *appropriate* – however interesting, funny, or demonstrative a situation is, it should be appropriate for the language that is being presented. In other words it should be a good vehicle for the presentation of meaning and use.
- *productive* – in other words the situation the teacher introduces should allow students to make many sentences and/or questions with the new language.

To sum up, after a good presentation students should not only know the form, meaning and use of given structure but also be able to remember it and use it when expressing the past action or event.

5.4 The Most Effective Exercises

The respondents were asked to number given exercises in order to suggest which are the most and least effective as far as they help learners to learn the structures referring to the past time. The smallest number, the more effective the exercise is.

The teachers put the exercises in the following order:

1. filling exercise
2. multiple choice exercise
3. translating from Czech to English
4. sequencing exercise
5. matching exercise
6. translation from English to Czech
7. true x false exercise

The students put the exercises in the following order:

1. translating from Czech to English
2. translating from English to Czech
3. filling exercise
4. matching exercise
5. sequencing exercise
6. multiple choice exercise
7. true x false exercise

The respondents' task was not only to number the exercises, but also to explain why they believe that the particular exercise is the most and the least effective for learning the English forms referring to the past time.

Most teachers believe that the most effective is the *filling exercise* as the students have to sort the words and by sorting them they apply the rules they have learnt. They seem not to be afraid of the failure, as they are not aware of applying these rules. One of the responding teachers adds that the students see the incomplete English sentences, and therefore, have to think about the meaning of the words and search for the correct form of the structure referring to the past time. The students perceive this type of exercise rather difficult, as they have to choose the right structures, on the other hand, they confess that the filling exercise helps them learn particular way of referring to the past time.

The *translation exercise*, especially from Czech to English, is popular with the students as they believe that they learn a lot when translating. They confess that this type of exercise is the most difficult one, but at the same time the most effective as they have to think about the sentence structure and the correct form referring to the past time. Some of the students add that they enjoy searching for the most suitable structure expressing their thought. The students as well as the teachers agree that translating from Czech to English simulates the situation which a non-native user of English can expect when speaking English with a foreigner. The teachers see the advantage of this exercise not only in students' thinking in a foreign language, but also in comparing it to their native language and realizing the differences among the English and Czech structures referring to the past time.

On the other hand, the *true x false exercise* is considered to be the least effective by both groups of the respondents suggesting that when completing this exercise the students usually do not think too much whether the answer is correct or not, instead they usually just guess it. Besides, as the responding teachers as well as the students point the *true x false exercise* is used for checking the understanding of a text, and not for practising the English structures referring to the past time.

Twenty four per cent of the responding teachers add that all the exercises are effective in a way, therefore, the teacher's task should be combining them in order to meet his or her students needs and help with learning the structure referring to the past time effectively.

As a beginning teacher of the English language I have had several opportunities to practise the English structures referring to the past time with my students, and I believe

that there is no ideal exercise, therefore a combination of various exercises seems to be the best way of practising these structures.

5.5 Students' Difficulties with the Past Simple, the Past Continuous and the Present Perfect

This chapter presents and analyzes the learners' difficulties when using the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect. The first paragraphs describe the outcomes of the questionnaires where both groups of the respondents were asked to write down the most frequent mistakes in these three English structures referring to the past time. The biggest problem, as the results suggested, lies in choosing the correct structure. The teachers point that the students have difficulties especially with the past continuous and the present perfect, in other words, with the structures their native language does not consist of. The students confess that they are usually not sure whether the past action realized by the verb finished or influences the present time which results in incorrect use of the past simple vs. the present perfect. They also, as the teachers add, are sometimes not able to understand whether the action was or was not continuing for some period of time which usually leads to a mistake in the past continuous vs. the past simple.

The second problem the students encounter regards forming the structures referring to the past time correctly. When constructing the past continuous, some students use *was* instead of *were* and vice versa, for example, **Monika and her father was travelling*, some of them do not include the auxiliary verb *to be* at all, **while my brother doing homework*, while others mix the past continuous with the past simple together, **last month they were visited a tournament in Australia*.

As far as forming the past simple is concerned learners often make mistakes when dividing the English verbs into the regular and irregular ones. Once they learn about forming the past simple of the regular verbs by attaching the *-ed* suffix to the infinitive, they tend to apply this rule when constructing the past simple of the irregular verbs as well, such as in **puted*, **speaked*.

We come to the third reason why English seems difficult for speakers of other languages: it is full of exceptions to grammar rules. That's the way it appears to many people, anyway. For example, when students think that they have worked out that the English past tense is formed by adding *-ed* to a verb, they are somewhat surprised to come across *went*, *ran* and *put*.

(Harmer 1991, 13)

The students also have problems with making the questions and negative sentences in the past simple, **Did you went to school?* **Went you to school?* **I did not went to*

school. As these sentences illustrate they use the verb in the past simple after *did*, or forget about *did* and start a question with the verb in the past simple. These mistakes may be caused by students' thinking in their native language when constructing such questions. As other respondents suggest their learners not only have difficulties with the use of *did* in the past simple questions, but also once a while use *do* or *does* instead of *did*. One of the responding student confesses that she sometimes adds the *-s* suffix to the verb in the past simple in the third person singular, **she wents to school*, which suggests that she mixes the rules of forming the present and past simple together.

The lines which follow describe the outcomes of the tests (see Appendix 3) consisting of five different exercises. The first recognition one tested whether the respondents are able to find sentences in these three structures referring to the past time. This exercise was included at the beginning since as Harmer states seeing particular way of describing the past activity in action will help students "to deal with it when they have to study it later" (Harmer 1991, 30).

The second exercise was written in order to see whether the respondents are able to describe situations in which each structure occurs. The students were here instructed to read the given text which aimed at helping them managing this activity.

In the third task the learners were asked to fill in the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect in context. Here the students looking at the answers from previous two exercises could prove that they can use their theoretical knowledge in practical examples.

The fourth exercise was the production one, as the respondents' task was to use the three structures referring to the past time and produce something on their own. As Harmer claims the "students who complete this task successfully show that they have a lot of grammatical knowledge and that they are able to use the right vocabulary and grammar to complete the task" (Harmer 1991, 62).

And finally, in the fifth exercise the participants were to translate three sentences using the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect. This last activity aimed at showing whether the students can choose the correct structure referring to the past time when transforming the sentences from Czech to English.

5.5.1 The Recognition Exercise

The first task seemed not to be a difficult one, as all students were successful in finding the sentences in the present perfect, only one student wrote down the sentence in the past continuous instead of the past simple. And finally, as regards the past continuous two students did not complete the task successfully, one of them did not include any sentence, while the other wrote down *It was really boring*. This student being aware of forming the past continuous by *to be* and the verb in the progressive aspect probably did not translate the sentence, and confused the adjective *boring* with the verb in the progressive aspect.

5.5.2 The Situations Where These Structures Occur

The second exercise did not cause much difficulties either. Only one of the students did not write any situation of using the past continuous, two of them were not sure when the past simple occurs, and three of them did not describe any situation in which the present perfect appears.

As far as the use of the past simple is concerned, the respondents especially point that this tense describes an action or event which usually happened at specific past time and was completed. Some of them also stress that this tense does not influence the present time.

When describing the situations in which the past continuous occurs, the students claim that it refers to an incomplete past action which was happening for a longer period of time. The students suggest that the past continuous refers to parallel actions, to actions defined by the prepositions *from* and *to*, as well as to activity which was interrupted by another past action realized by the past simple. They also add that this tense refers to activities not influencing the present time.

The present perfect, as most students write, expresses activities which happened in the past, but influence the present time. One of the respondents states that these actions usually happened at unspecified past time, or, for example, *today* which illustrates the connection between the past and the present time.

5.5.3 The Context Exercise

In the third exercise students were asked to fill in the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect in context. The past simple should have been used in the following sentences:

3. She ***started*** playing tennis with her father when she was three years old.
4. Two years ago she ***went*** to America to a famous tennis school in California.
6. She ***liked*** it there very much.
8. Last month they ***visited*** a tournament in Australia.
11. After playing tennis she ***went*** to the swimming pool.

The third and the sixth sentence were the most problematic ones as each was filled in incorrectly by thirty per cent of the students. Twenty five per cent of the learners did not choose the past simple when completing the eighth sentence, and finally, only fifteen per cent of the students were not successful when filling in the fourth and the eleventh

sentence. Fifty per cent of the students who made a mistake in the third sentence used the past continuous which suggests that they considered the activity as continuing having no beginning and end. As regards the incorrect filling of the sixth sentence, fifty per cent of the respondents chose the present perfect which shows that they believe that the activity still influences the present time.

On the other hand, few mistakes made in completing the fourth and the eleventh sentence may be caused by the presence of the phrases *two years ago* and *after playing tennis* which suggest that the activity was finished not influencing the present time.

The past continuous should have been used in the following sentences:

5. She ***was playing*** for many hours every day.
10. Last Saturday Monika ***was playing*** tennis from 10am to 2pm.
12. She ***was swimming*** for two hours.
15. Monika ***was talking*** to Lucy.
16. while her father ***was watching*** TV.

Forty five per cent of the students chose incorrect structure when completing the sixteenth sentence, thirty five per cent of them made a mistake in the fifth and tenth sentence, fifteen per cent was not successful in the fifteenth and, finally, the twelfth sentence was filled in incorrectly by ten per cent of the students.

Fifty six per cent of the students chose the past simple instead of the past continuous in the sixteenth sentence which shows that they did not consider this activity as taking some time, not perceiving it as a parallel action with *Monika was talking*. They did not perhaps notice the conjunction *while* suggesting that the activities were happening at one time.

Eighty per cent of the students who did not choose the past continuous in the tenth sentence, and seventy one per cent of them who did not fill in this tense in the fifth sentence used the past simple instead. Their choice of the tense suggests that they consider *Monika's playing tennis* as a finished past activity not continuing for some period of time although both sentences include phrases *for many hours* and *from 10am to 2pm* suggesting that the activity took some time.

On the other hand, the twelfth sentence in which the phrase *for two hours* appears, too, did not cause many problems as only ten per cent of the students completed it incorrectly. As these results show, the students sometimes use the past continuous with the phrases, such as *for many hours*, *from 10am to 2pm* or *for two hours*, while

sometimes they do not. It suggests that they are not sure about the use of this tense in connection with the phrase expressing the length of some activity.

The present perfect should have been used in the following sentences:

2. She is fourteen years old, but she *has* already *won* many tournaments in her life.
7. Monika and her father *have travelled* to many countries.
9. She *has not played* at Wimbledon yet, but she hopes to play there next year.
14. They *have not talked* to each other for a long time.

Ninety five per cent of the students chose incorrect tense when completing the seventh sentence, ninety per cent made a mistake in the fourteenth, fifty five per cent was not successful in the ninth, and forty per cent in the second sentence.

As regards the incorrect filling of the seventh and the fourteenth sentence, the past simple was filled in the seventh sentence by sixty three per cent of the students and in the fourteenth sentence by thirty nine per cent. The preference of the past simple to the present perfect in these sentences suggests that the students viewed these activities as finished having no connection to the present time. As Aitken (1992, 27) claims students fail to understand the concept of the present perfect, they tend to avoid using it except in set expressions, such as *Have you ever...?* They usually substitute this structure with the past simple which, as she adds, is closer to American usage.

The fewest mistakes made in the second sentence may be caused by the sentence *She is fourteen years old* referring to the present time.

As regards students' success in filling in particular structure, the past simple was the least problematic one, as only twenty three per cent of the answers were wrong. The second least difficult form was the past continuous which was not filled in successfully in twenty eight per cent of the answers, and finally seventy per cent of the sentences which should have been completed by the present perfect were filled in incorrectly. The foregoing numbers suggest that the students experience the least difficulties with the past simple which is similar to the Czech past tense, while they have more problems with the past continuous and the present perfect which, as has been discussed in chapter 3.1, the Czech language lacks.

5.5.4 The Sentence Completion

In the fourth exercise the students were completing six sentences using the past simple, the past continuous or the present perfect. The past simple should have been used in the sentences *Yesterday my friend...* and *I...three days ago. I was playing the piano while my friend ...* and *My parents were...when I came home yesterday* should have been completed by the past continuous, while the present perfect should have been filled in *Have you ever ...?* and *My sister has never...* .

The most problematic was the sentence *I was playing the piano while my friend..*, in which fifty per cent of the students did not use the past continuous, instead they either finished the sentence by the verb in the past simple, such as *read book, came, arrived home, watched TV*, or some of them included the verb in the present simple, *reads book*. The students again did not notice the conjunction *while* suggesting that the actions were parallel, happening at the same time in the past, although in the second exercise of the test they claimed that the past continuous refers to parallel actions.

The second most problematic sentence was *Ithree days ago*, which was filled in incorrectly by fifteen per cent of the students who either left the space empty, or used the present simple *play the piano*, or even the present perfect **I have been to Italy three days ago*, although the phrase *three days ago* suggests that the activity ended and does not influence the present time.

The sentence *Yesterday my friend.....* was filled in by the past simple in ninety eight per cent of the tests, the remaining two per cent of the students did not write any completion. Students' little failure shows that they are aware of the past simple and its expressing the past activity which is here defined by the word *yesterday*.

And the two sentences in the present perfect *Have you ever.....?* and *My sister has never.....* were completed correctly both by ninety eight per cent of the students, again two per cent left the spaces empty. Such results suggest that the student can complete the sentences in the present perfect, but, on the other hand, when they are to fill in this structure in the context, they usually fail as the third exercise has shown. It seems easy for them to complete these two sentences in the present perfect as there is the auxiliary *have* or *has* which reminds them of the way of forming this structure.

And finally, the least problematic sentence was *My parents were.....when I came home yesterday* which all the students completed by the verb in the past continuous.

Such results show that the learners are aware of the use of the past continuous in a situation where one activity realized by the past continuous is interrupted by a shorter action described by the past simple.

5.5.5 The Translation Exercise

As far as the fifth exercise from the test is concerned the students experienced most difficulties with the sentence *Díval jsem se na televizi, zatímco můj bratr dělal domácí úkoly* – *I was watching TV while my brother was doing his homework*, as fifty per cent of them did not again consider the two activities as parallel and, therefore, did not translate it by the past continuous. Some of them forgot about the auxiliary *to be*, and wrote *I was watching television *while my brother doing homework*, some used the past continuous in the first part of the sentence, and the past simple in the second, while others put both verbs into the past simple.

The second most difficult sentence seemed *Nikdy jsem nebyl v Americe* – *I have never been to America*, which thirty per cent of the students did not complete with the present perfect, but used the past simple instead. Such use shows that they consider this activity as not influencing the present time although there is no definite time referring to the past time while, on the other hand, there is the word *nikdy* which suggests that something has not happened yet, but might happen later.

And finally, the least problematic sentence was *Včera jsem šel do kina* – *I went to cinema yesterday*, which was filled in by the past simple by eighty per cent of the students. The rest of the learners used the past continuous, or they either did not put the verb into the continuous form, **I was go the the cinema yesterday*, while others included the infinitive after the verb in the past simple, **I went go to the cinema yesterday*.

5.5.6 The Summary

To sum up the results of the tasks and exercises testing the past simple, most students were successful in finding the two sentences in this tense. They are also aware of the situations in which the past simple usually occurs. As to filling in this tense in the context, the respondents did not experience much difficulties which may be caused by the similar use of this tense and the Czech past tense. The students were also quite successful when completing and translating the sentences with this tense.

As regards students' knowledge of the past continuous, most of them are able to recognize the sentences in this tense, as well as they know about the situations where this

structure is used. The respondents did not fail when filling in this tense in the context so much, although they were more successful when filling in the past simple. When completing the sentences in the past continuous the first of the two sentences was filled in incorrectly by half of the respondents, while the second was completed successfully by all the students. And finally, half of the respondents translated the sentence in the past continuous correctly.

Finding the sentences in the present perfect was not a problematic task for any of the respondents, as well as describing the situations in which this structure usually appears. On the other hand, when filling in the present perfect in the context, the respondents failed much more than when filling in the past simple or the past continuous. When completing the sentences by this form the students were successful almost in all cases, while when translating into English, they made more mistakes than when translating the sentence into the past simple, but fewer mistakes than when translating into the past continuous.

The foregoing paragraphs support teachers' statement from chapter 5.5 where they have said that the students have difficulties especially with the past continuous and the present perfect which their native language does not consist of.

As far as the results of each exercise are concerned, the least problematic were the recognition one and the one where the respondents were asked to describe in which situations these three structures appear. The remaining three exercises caused much more difficulties, especially the third one. In other words, the respondents have theoretical knowledge as the outcomes of the first two tasks have shown, but they fail when they are to use this knowledge in practical situations, as the results of the last three exercises have proved.

When summarizing the presentations of the structures referring to the past time (see chapter 5.3) it has been stated that after a good presentation students should know the form, meaning and use of given structure as well as they should be able to use it correctly. The outcomes of the tests suggested that the respondents know the form, meaning and use of the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect, but they experience difficulties when using these forms. Therefore the teachers should improve both, the presentation as well as the practice stage of their lessons. The chapter which follows offers some of the ideas for presenting and practising these three forms referring to the past time.

6 Suggested Ways of Presenting and Practising the Past Simple, the Past Continuous and the Present Perfect

The results of the tests as well as of the questionnaires have outlined some of the difficulties the learners usually encounter, therefore this chapter aims at suggesting ways and ideas helping learners to eliminate mistakes in these three English forms referring to the past time.

Before stating ways or ideas it seems useful to summarize what was the most difficult for students when filling in the tests. Students have experienced most problems with filling in the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect in context, as well as when completing and translating the sentences by these forms. Such results are supported not only by the tests, but also by the questionnaires where both groups of the respondents claimed that the biggest difficulty lies in choosing the correct structure referring to the past time.

6.1 The Past Simple

As the results of the tests have shown the students used the past continuous or the present perfect instead of the past simple in the following sentences.

* *She **was starting** playing tennis with her father when she was three years old.*

* *She **has liked** it there very much.*

* *I **have been** to Italy three days ago.*

To prevent learners from making a similar mistake as in the first sentence it is important to emphasize the difference between the progressive and non-progressive aspect. In other words, a teacher can say that when the continuity or duration are stressed the progressive aspect is used, while when the emphasis is put on the state or completion the non-progressive is preferred. In this particular situation the non-progressive aspect should be used as when *somebody **started** something* it refers to a finished completed activity, while if we say *somebody **was starting** something* it suggests that the activity was a repetitive one as if something was starting over and over again.

To help students differentiate whether to use the past simple or the present perfect, a teacher should point that the past simple describes activities which happened and finished in the past not influencing the present time. For illustrating this statement it is helpful to use the sentence with the past time marker, such as in *I **went** to Italy three days ago.*

Another practice is a written activity based on a historical or biographical date-list of persons or period. Students are given information about somebody famous and describe his or her life using the past simple (Aitken 1992, 37). It can be somebody who died so that the learners when writing about this person realize the connection between this tense and actions not influencing the present time.

Ur recommends to give each student a verb in the past simple, such as *sat*, *stood* or *gave* and then a teacher starts a simple chain of events by saying *Yesterday I **went** to town and I **bought** a loaf of bread*, the first student continues by repeating this sentence and adding a new one including his or her verb, such as *Yesterday I **went** to town and I **bought** a loaf of bread and I **sat** on a park bench* (Ur 1991, 213). After finishing this activity students may be asked to write down as much as they can remember. Once they have

experience with this repetition exercise, a teacher does not have to provide them with the verbs in the past simple, but he or she lets them make up the whole sentences on their own (Ur 1991, 213).

6.2 The Past Continuous

When working with this tense the students especially were not aware of its use in sentences with the conjunction *while* putting parallel past activities together.

*Monika was talking to Lucy *while her father **watched** television.*

*I was playing the piano *while my friend **read** book.*

*Díval jsem se na televizi, zatímco můj bratr dělal domácí úkoly – I was watching television *while my brother **did** his homework.*

To help learners with getting used to the conjunction *while* connecting uncompleted past action a teacher can prepare the following exercise. 1) *Peter – read newspaper, his mom – wash up*, 2) *she – watch television, he – sleep*, 3) *I – play tennis, my sister – work in the garden*, 4) *Tom – pick strawberries, his girlfriend – pick flowers*. Students' tasks is to use *while* and make sentences such as, *Peter **was reading** newspaper while his mom **was washing** up. She **was watching** television while he **was sleeping**.*

Another way of practising the past continuous with *while* can be a picture description (see Appendix 4). Students are asked to describe what somebody was doing while somebody else was doing something different, such as *The boy **was riding** a horse while the lady with the dog **was crossing** the street*. Comparison of historic events or people, or the early lives of members of pop groups, teams, for example, *While team A **was warming up**, team B **was discussing** tactics* can help to practise this tense as well (Aitken 1992, 43).

Another difficulty the students experienced with the past continuous was that they had not used it in connection with the phrases expressing length.

** She **played** for many hour every day.*

** Last Saturday Monika **played** tennis from 10am to 2pm.*

A teacher can explain that the past continuous refers to activities which were happening for a longer period of time in the past, therefore, the phrases suggesting how long this activity lasted may be included. He or she prepares an exercise consisting of different activities and times such as: *watch television – for 2 hours, ski – from 11am to 4pm, do homework – for half an hour*. Students create sentences in the past continuous, for example, *I **was watching** television for two hours yesterday. My sister **was skiing** from 11am to 4pm every day.*

As Harmer suggests a good way of practising this tense is presenting students with examples of incorrect use of the past continuous (Harmer 1991, 38). A teacher can either think up the sentences with mistakes alone, such as: ** Susan **played** happily with her toys while her brother **watched** The Simpsons. * I **listened** to radio while I **cooked** lunch*, or he or she can use the mistakes made by the learners themselves during oral or written activities.

Aitken (1992, 42) suggests to introduce this tense with the specific past time, for example *6pm*, and stress that the activity usually continues after this point, *he **was having** a bath at 6pm*. Another way of practising this tense may be done in the situation where some crime was committed at a given time. The

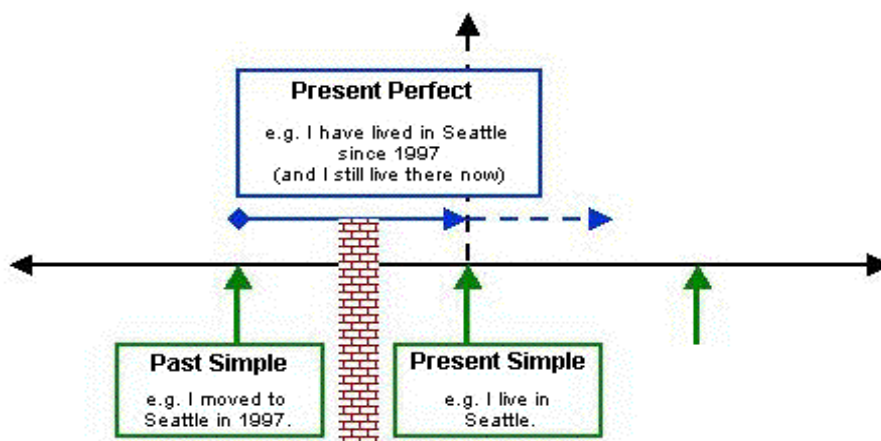
residents of the house were doing different activities which had started at different past times. One person becomes a detective asking the persons *What were you doing at 8pm yesterday?* (Aitken 1992, 42).

6.3 The Present Perfect

When filling in and translating the sentences where the present perfect should have been used the students made mistake by using the past simple in the following situations.

- 1 * *Monika and her father travelled to many countries.*
- 2 * *They did not talk to each other for a long time.*
- 3 * *She did not play at Wimbledon yet, but she hopes to play there next year.*
- 4 *Nikdy jsem nebyl v Americe – * I was never in America.*

When presenting the present perfect a teacher can start by drawing a time line showing the place of this form referring to the past time. “The present perfect is the bridge between the past and the present” (<http://www.impact-english.com>). This opinion is illustrated by the following picture:



(<http://www.impact-english.com>)

Looking at this diagram, students are described situations in which the present perfect usually appears, such as when referring to actions which happened in the past but still influence the present time as in, *Monika and her father have travelled to many countries, I have never been to America.*

Aitken describes a visual demonstration with a piece of elastic, with a drawing pin attaching it to a “now” marker. She later suggests that this visual aid may also help when teaching *for* which is “represented by the elastic, which can stretch to any length” (Aitken 1992, 25). In other words, a teacher can stress that the use of *for* in connection with the present perfect expresses how long some activity has lasted, such as in *They have not talked to each other for a long time.*

When explaining the use of this structure in connection with *yet*, such as in *She has not played at Wimbledon yet, but she hopes to play there next year*, a teacher can point that it expresses an activity which has not happened yet, but might happen later.

Another activity practising the present perfect is *Find someone who...*, for example, *has been to Disneyland* or *has had a car accident* (see Appendix 5). Students having a paper with the sentences in the present perfect move around the classroom asking their classmates questions in this structure, such as

*Have you ever **been** to Disneyland?* Afterwards the students can be told to take a paper each, and try to find the person in the class who has or has not done the activities indicated on it (Ur 1991, 237).

Pictures showing horror, surprise, delight make a good practice too, as students explain why something has happened, for example, *He **has seen** a ghost.* Aitken (1992, 26) offers another idea when suggesting that students make a list of activities which are to be done before going on holidays, then students are asking *Which tasks **have we done** yet? What **have we forgotten**?*

Ur offers another activity practising this structure when describing happenings or processes during a period leading up to the present. Teacher presents some of the important things that have happened in the world in recent years, such as *Man **has landed** on the moon. English **has become** the most important international language.* Then the students are asked to think of things which have happened or changed within their own memories, such as the ones concerning *fashion, means of transport, eating habits, the political scene, science and technology,* etc. Or to make it more personal, students are asked to describe changes in their own lives (Ur 1991, 243).

6.4 The Summary

To sum up, there are many ways and ideas for presenting and practising the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect. As has been suggested in the theoretical part of this thesis (see chapters 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4.1) each structure appears in a typical context, however, there exist situations where both, for example, the past simple and the present perfect may be used depending on speaker's perceiving the situation. Close offers an episode from real life, when one morning before getting up he and his wife heard somebody going downstairs. Later there appeared their son at the door of their room holding a newspaper. Both parents spoke at the same time. Father said: "*Oh, it is you. Good, you **have brought** the paper*", while mother uttered: "*Oh, it is you. You **went** down for the paper*" (Close 1992, 72). As this episode illustrates one situation may be seen from different viewpoints which results in the use of a different structure. Father was interested in the paper before him, while mother was concerned about the moment in the past when she had heard steps on the stairs (Close 1992, 72).

In other words, when presenting and practising the English structures referring to the past time students should be provided not only with typical situations where given form occurs, but also with the ones where more possible structures may be used.

CONCLUSION

In the *Introduction* part I have mentioned that my thesis consists of two main sections, the theoretical and practical one.

The first chapter of the theoretical part aimed at stating the difference between *tense*, *time* as well as between *tense* and *aspect*. As has been suggested *tense* refers to the grammatical category, while *time* refers to the objective time. When compared to *aspect*, *tense* distinguishes between the past and present time orientation, while *aspect* expresses a completion or a lack of completion of the action described by the verb. This chapter

has also shown that different grammarians look at the number and division of the English tenses differently, as some of them claim that English consists only of the past and present tense, while others believe that it consists not only of these two, but also of the future, the present perfect, the past perfect and the future perfect.

The aim of the second chapter of the theoretical part was to describe and compare the selected English structures referring to the past time. As has been illustrated the English language uses the past simple and continuous expressing the past actions which do not influence the present time, the present perfect simple and continuous referring to the situations which happened in the past but influence the present time, the past perfect simple and continuous emphasizing that one past activity preceded another past action or event, the present simple used in informal narration as well as *would* and *used to* structures describing the past habits or repeated past actions.

The last chapter of the theoretical part stated the similarities as well as the differences among the English and Czech forms referring to the past time. As has been written the English language uses all the above mentioned structures, while the Czech language operates only with the past and present tense when expressing the past actions or events. The comparison of the English and Czech structures referring to the past time was also written in order to clarify possible mistakes the Czech students make when practising these structures. This chapter also stated the distinction between the English *aspect* and the Czech *vid* suggesting that one verb in English can express different *aspect* depending on the context, while in Czech the verb is either in the perfective or imperfective *vid*.

After describing the ways of expressing the past actions and events in English and comparing them with those in the Czech language, the practical part followed.

The aim of the practical section was to present, analyze and evaluate the outcomes of the research carried out among the Czech secondary school teachers and students. Before describing the results, the purpose of the research as well as the description of the tools and data collection were stated.

The research was held in order to answer the following questions:

- *Which approach, the inductive or deductive one, and why do teachers and students prefer when presenting and practising the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect?*

- *Which language, Czech or English, and why do they use when presenting and practising these structures referring to the past time?*
- *How do they perceive the presentations of these structures in the textbooks they have been using?*
- *What kinds of difficulties and why do students have with the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect?*
- *Which exercises and why do teachers and students consider effective for practising these three forms?*

As far as the preference of the deductive vs. inductive approach is concerned the deductive approach is welcome by ninety one per cent of the students and by thirty eight per cent of the teachers. As the respondents claim this way of presenting and practising is easier and more time-saving when compared to the inductive one. Its main disadvantage, as some teachers admit lies in learners' passivity. On the other hand, the inductive approach which is preferred by ten per cent of the teachers and four and half per cent of the students helps to remember particular form referring to the past time better as the learners must discover its use and meaning themselves. The positive side of this approach is also seen in students' participation and full concentration.

As regards the preference of the English vs. Czech language most teachers, that is eighty one per cent, and almost half of the students, that is forty one per cent, prefer Czech when presenting and practising the English structures describing the past actions or events. The main reasons, as the respondents claim are that it is comprehensible for all the students, and less time-consuming than when the presentation or the practice is carried out in English. Several students welcome when a teacher uses English for presenting and practising the structures referring to the past time since, as they claim by listening to English they expand the vocabulary as well as they actually learn the language.

Another chapter of the practical part states how the presentations of the structures referring to the past time in the textbook the respondents have been using are perceived. Both groups of the participants chose the adjectives *comprehensible*, *sufficient* and *well-arranged*.

The chapter which follows discusses the most and the least effective exercises used for practising the English structures referring to the past time. As regards the most

effective one, in most teachers' opinion it is the *filling exercise*, while most students chose *translation from Czech to English*. Both groups of the respondents claim that these exercises are effective as the learners must search for the correct structure referring to the past time. The least effective, on the other hand, is *true x false exercise* as the teachers as well as the students suggested. The main reason is that this kind of exercise is not useful for practising the English structures referring to the past time, but instead, for example, for checking if the students understand a piece of text.

The last part of the fifth chapter describes and analyzes the most frequent difficulties the students have with the structures referring to the past time, especially with the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect. As the outcomes of the tests have shown, the students experience problems particularly with the past continuous and the present perfect, in other words, with the forms which the Czech language does not consist of. As regards the most difficult tasks the respondents made most mistakes when filling in these three structures in context as well as when completing and translating sentences by these three forms referring to the past time.

The last chapter of the practical part suggests the ways of presenting and practising the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect. These ideas aim at preventing the students from making similar mistakes which appeared in the tests.

SOUHRN

Diplomová práce nazvaná *Vyjadřování minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce* obsahuje dvě hlavní části, část teoretickou a část praktickou.

Před částí teoretickou je vložen přehled literatury, kde jsou shrnuty hlavní zdroje použité v části teoretické i praktické, a úvod, který plní funkci seznámení čtenáře nejen s důvody, jež mě vedly k napsání této práce, ale také se stručným obsahem práce.

Po úvodu následuje část teoretická, která je rozdělena na tři podkapitoly: *Systém anglických časů*, *Vyjadřování minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce* a *Srovnání anglických a českých tvarů odkazujících na minulost*.

Kapitola *Systém anglických časů* se zabývá nejen rozlišením mezi *tense* a *time*, ale také mezi *tense* a *aspect*. Je zde uvedeno, že *tense* patří mezi gramatické kategorie anglického slovesa, zatímco *time* odkazuje na čas, ve kterém žijeme. Pokud je srovnáván *tense* a *aspect*, *tense* rozlišuje mezi minulou a přítomnou časovou orientací, přičemž *aspect* vyjadřuje, zda popisovaný děj byl nebo nebyl dokončen. Je zde také ilustrováno, že čas minulý ne vždy odkazuje pouze na minulost, zatímco čas přítomný ne vždy vyjadřuje děje odehrávající se pouze v přítomnosti. Tato kapitola také poukazuje na skutečnost, že různé zdroje uvádí různý počet a rozdělení anglických časů. Někteří autoři mluví pouze o čase minulém a přítomném, zatímco jiní uvádí, že anglický jazyk disponuje nejen těmito časy, ale také časem budoucím, předminulým, předpřítomným a předbudoucím.

V kapitole *Vyjadřování minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce* se zabývám časy minulým prostým a průběhovým, předpřítomným prostým a průběhovým, předminulým prostým a průběhovým, přítomným prostým, *would* a *used to*. Pořadí těchto tvarů odkazujících na minulost není náhodné. Tvary, které se při vyjadřování minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce používají nejčastěji, jsou popsány na začátku kapitoly, zatímco například čas přítomný prostý, jenž není obvyklý při odkazech na minulost, se vyskytuje ke konci této kapitoly.

Cílem této kapitoly je nejen popsat formu, význam a užití daného tvaru odkazujícího na minulost, ale také srovnat tyto tvary mezi sebou. Popisování jednotlivého způsobu vyjadřování minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce je doplněno tabulkou, která přehledně shrnuje užití daného tvaru.

Na konci této podkapitoly je stručný souhrn, kde je zrekapitulováno užití popisovaných tvarů. Je zde uvedeno, že časy minulý prostý a průběhový vyjadřují minulé děje ukončené v minulosti, předpřítomný prostý a průběhový poukazují na minulé děje, které ovlivňují přítomnost, předminulý prostý a průběhový odkazují na minulé události, jež se staly před jinými minulými ději, čas přítomný prostý odkazuje na minulost zejména při neformálním vyprávění, zatímco *would* a *used to* vyjadřují minulé opakující se děje a zvyklosti.

Po části *Vyjadřování minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce* následuje kapitola nazvaná *Srovnání anglických a českých tvarů odkazujících na minulost*, která popisuje podobnosti a rozdíly mezi tvary, jimiž tyto dva jazyky disponují. Hlavní rozdíl se týká počtu časů. Zatímco český jazyk rozlišuje čas minulý, přítomný a budoucí, anglický jazyk se skládá pouze z času minulého a přítomného. I přes toto tvrzení disponuje anglický jazyk více tvary, jež se dají použít při vyjadřování minulých dějů. Český jazyk využívá čas minulý a přítomný, přičemž jazyk anglický minulý prostý a průběhový, předpřítomný prostý a průběhový, předminulý prostý a průběhový, čas přítomný prostý a *would* a *used to*. V této kapitole se zabývám nejen rozdílem mezi *videm* a *aspectem*, ale také způsoby, jak se v anglickém jazyce vyjadřuje český vid dokonavý a nedokonavý. Je zde uvedeno, že anglické sloveso může vyjadřovat různý *aspect* dle kontextu, zatímco v českém jazyce je sloveso ve vidu dokonavém, či nedokonavém.

Jak již bylo zmíněno na začátku tohoto *Souhrnu*, diplomová práce nazvaná *Vyjadřování minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce* se skládá nejen z části teoretické, ale také z části praktické. Podkladem pro napsání části teoretické byla převážně odborná literatura zabývající se způsoby odkazování na minulost v anglickém jazyce a zdroje srovnávající anglické a české tvary, zatímco část praktická je založena na výsledcích výzkumu, který byl uskutečněn mezi učiteli a studenty středních škol, na odborné literatuře a mých zkušenostech získaných při vyučování anglického jazyka na základní a střední škole.

Tato část se skládá nejen z textu, ale také z grafů dokumentujících popisované skutečnosti. Praktická část začíná popisem cílů výzkumu a nástrojů, které byly použity k získání potřebných údajů. Výzkum měl nabídnout odpovědi k následujícím otázkám.

Který přístup, induktivní nebo deduktivní, a proč učitelé a studenti preferují při vysvětlování a procvičování minulého času prostého, průběhového a předpřítomného prostého?

Který jazyk a proč upřednostňují při prezentování a procvičování těchto tvarů?

Jak učitelé a studenti vnímají prezentace těchto tvarů v učebnicích, které používají?

Která cvičení a proč učitelé a studenti považují za nejvíce efektivní při procvičování těchto tvarů odkazujících na minulost?

Jaké chyby studenti dělají v minulém čase prostém, průběhovém a předpřítomném prostém?

Nástroj výzkumu se staly dotazník a soubor cvičení. Dotazníky, které byly adresovány učitelům a studentům středních škol, byly vybrány, neboť jejich vyplnění není tolik časově náročné jako například osobní setkání. Na druhou stranu má tento nástroj výzkumu i nedostatky. Jedná se především o nízkou návratnost, která se projevila i u mého výzkumu. Z padesáti odeslaných dotazníků mi bylo posláno zpět dvacet jedna. I přes nízký počet navrácených dotazníků jsem obdržela užitečné a zajímavé informace, které byly zpracovány v kapitole nazvané *Výsledky výzkumu*.

Soubor cvičení určený pro studenty středních škol se skládal z pěti cvičení testujících čas minulý prostý, minulý průběhový a předpřítomný prostý. Tyto tři časy byly vybrány záměrně, neboť, dle mého názoru, by středoškolští studenti s nimi měli již mít dostatek zkušeností. Úspěšnost a neúspěšnost studentů s vyplňováním těchto cvičení jsou popsány v kapitole *Výsledky výzkumu*.

Kapitola *Výsledky výzkumu*, která je předposlední podkapitolou části praktické, popisuje, rozebírá a hodnotí informace získané na základě dotazníků, testů, literatury a mých zkušeností.

V podkapitole nazvané *Deduktivní vs. induktivní přístup* se zabývám rozlišením těchto způsobů prezentování a procvičování tvarů odkazujících na minulost. Dále je zde zmíněno, že devadesát jedna procent studentů a třicet osm procent učitelů dává přednost deduktivnímu před induktivním přístupem. Jak dotázaní tvrdí, tento přístup je méně obtížný a zabere méně času než přístup induktivní. Učitelé však na druhou stranu zmiňují i nevýhodu této metody, kterou je pasivita studentů. Induktivní přístup, který používá deset procent učitelů a vítá čtyři a půl procenta studentů, vede k tomu, že si jedinec daný tvar odkazující na minulost zapamatuje lépe, neboť si jeho užití a význam musí sám odvodit. Výhodou této metody, jak respondenti píší, je aktivita a soustředěnost studentů.

V podkapitole nesoucí název *Anglický vs. český jazyk* je zmíněno, že osmdesát jedna procent učitelů a čtyřicet jedna procent studentů preferuje český jazyk při prezentování a

procvičování anglických tvarů odkazujících na minulost. Respondenti uvádí, že používají český jazyk, neboť je srozumitelný všem studentům. Také tvrdí, že pokud mluví česky, prezentace a procvičování trvá kratší dobu, než pokud používají anglický jazyk. Několik studentů vítá, když vyučující vysvětluje daný tvar anglicky, neboť díky tomu si rozšiřují slovní zásobu a učí se jazyk.

Na kapitolu zabývající se anglickým a českým jazykem navazuje část nazvaná *Prezentace tvarů odkazujících na minulost v učebnicích*, které učitelé a studenti využívají při prezentování a procvičování anglických tvarů popisujících minulé děje. Obě skupiny respondentů se shodly, že tyto prezentace jsou *srozumitelné, dostačující a přehledné*.

Další kapitola, která rozebírá výsledky výzkumu, se nazývá *Nejefektivnější cvičení* pro procvičování anglických tvarů odkazujících na minulost. Tato kapitola uvádí, která cvičení učitelé a studenti považují za nejvíce a nejméně efektivní. Podle učitelů je nejvíce efektivní doplňovací cvičení, neboť studenti vidí neúplné věty a musí hledat nejvhodnější tvar odkazující na minulost. Studenti, na druhou stranu, věří, že nejefektivnější je překlad z českého do anglického jazyka, neboť při tomto procvičování studenti nejen hledají způsob, jak danou větu přeložit, ale také srovnávají, jak se minulé děje v obou jazycích vyjadřují. Za nejméně potřebné při procvičování tvarů odkazujících na minulost považují obě skupiny respondentů shodně cvičení, ve kterém má student rozhodnout, zda je daná informace pravdivá či nikoliv.

V další části nazvané *Problémy studentů s minulým časem prostým, průběhovým a předpřítomným prostým* jsou uvedeny nejčastější chyby, kterých se studenti středních škol dopouští při používání těchto tří tvarů odkazujících na minulost. Jsou zde rozebrány výsledky testů zkoumající následující okruhy.

Jsou studenti schopni poznat věty v čase minulém prostém, minulém průběhovém a předpřítomném prostém?

Vědí, ve které situaci se dané tvary používají?

Dokáží použít daný tvar v kontextu ?

Umí studenti doplnit věty těmito tvary?

Dokáží minulý čas prostý, průběhový a předpřítomný prostý použít při překládání z českého do anglického jazyka?

Výsledky těchto cvičení ukázaly, že studenti dokáží nejen poznat věty v daných třech tvarech, ale také popsat situace, kdy se minulý čas prostý, minulý čas průběhový a

předpřítomný prostý používá. Na druhou stranu, pokud mají tyto tvary použít v kontextu, v doplňování vět a v překládání z českého do anglického jazyka, studenti chybují. Nejvíce obtížné jsou pro ně minulý čas průběhový a předpřítomný prostý, zatímco minulý čas prostý nepůsobí takové potíže.

Předposlední kapitola této diplomové práce nesoucí název *Doporučené způsoby prezentování a procvičování minulého času prostého, průběhového a předpřítomného prostého* navrhuje takové způsoby, jež mají vést ke snížení chyb v těchto tvarech.

Poslední kapitola nazvaná *Závěr* shrnuje obě hlavní části této diplomové práce. Jsou zde popsány cíle teoretické a praktické části, časy a tvary, jež anglický a český jazyk používá při odkazování na minulé děje a také výsledky výzkumu provedeného mezi učiteli a studenty středních škol. Na konci je zmíněna kapitola navrhuující způsoby prezentace a procvičování vybraných anglických tvarů popisujících minulé děje.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

V Litomyšli 24. 10. 2005

Vážená paní učitelko,
Vážený pane učiteli,

jsem studentkou 5. ročníku Fakulty humanitních studií Univerzity Pardubice. Dovoluji si Vám poslat dotazník s prosbou o jeho vyplnění a odeslání nejpozději do **18. 11. 2005**. Údaje, které dotazník poskytne, budou zpracovány v mé diplomové práci, kde se zabývám anglickými časy odkazujícími na minulost.

Pokud dáváte přednost elektronické poště, napište mi, a já Vám dotazník pošlu e-mailem.

Předem děkuji za vyplnění a odeslání dotazníku.

S pozdravem

Tereza Kopecká

terezakopecka@yahoo.com

Označte, který přístup používáte při vysvětlování a procvičování anglických časů odkazujících na minulost:

a) Deduktivní přístup (tzn. seznámím studenty s formou a pravidly užívání daného času a poté čas procvičujeme).

b) Induktivní přístup (tzn. studenti sami objeví pravidla a formu, ze kterých vyvodí užití daného času).

Vysvětlete, proč tento přístup používáte.

Pokud používáte induktivní přístup, uveďte situaci, aktivitu, při které ho používáte.

Označte, jaký jazyk při vysvětlování a procvičování anglických časů odkazujících na minulost používáte:

a) anglický jazyk

□

b) český jazyk

□

Vysvětlete, proč tento jazyk používáte.

Popište problémy, které studenti mají při vysvětlování a procvičování časů odkazujících na minulost (***minulý čas prostý a průběhový, předpřítomný čas***).

Uved'te 3 nejčastější chyby, které studenti dělají.

Uved'te název a autora učebnice, kterou používáte:

Zaškrtněte, která slova vystihují prezentaci časů odkazujících na minulost v dané učebnici.

- výborná
- dostačující
- srozumitelná
- přehledná
- zábavná
- neúplná
- nepřesná
- nepřehledná
- nevyhovující
- nudná
-
-
-

Přřazením čřsła k daným cvičením určete, která považujete za nejvíce efektivní, pokud jde o žákovo osvojení si užívání časů odkazujících na minulost. (1 = nejvíce efektivní, atd.)

Překladová cvičení (translation)

a) z anglického do českého jazyka

b) z českého do anglického jazyka.....

Dichotomická cv. (př. true/false).....

Cvičení s výběrem odpovědi (multiple choice).....

Doplňovací cv. (filling).....

Spojovací cv. (matching).....

Uspořádací cv. (sequencing).....

Jiná:.....

Vysvětlete, proč považujete Vámi zvolené první cvičení za nejvíce efektivní.

Vysvětlete, proč považujete za nejméně efektivní cvičení, které jste dali na poslední místo.

Appendix 2

Označte, který přístup Vám více vyhovuje, když se učíte a procvičujete anglické časy odkazující na minulost (***minulý čas prostý, průběhový, předpřítomný čas***).

a) Deduktivní přístup (tzn. vyučující vám řekne, jak se daný čas tvoří, kdy se používá, a potom čas procvičujete).

b) Induktivní přístup (tzn. vy sami objevíte pravidla používání a formu daného času, z čehož potom vyvodíte užití daného času).

Vysvětlete, v čem je Vámi zvolený přístup lepší.

Označte, který jazyk Vám více vyhovuje při vysvětlování a procvičování anglických časů odkazujících na minulost.

a) anglický jazyk

b) český jazyk

Proč vám tento jazyk vyhovuje více?

Popište, jaké děláte nejčastější chyby při procvičování časů odkazujících na minulost (***minulý čas prostý a průběhový, předpřítomný čas***).

Zaškrtněte, která slova vystihují prezentaci časů odkazujících na minulost ve Vaší učebnici.

- výborná**
- dostačující**
- srozumitelná**
- přehledná**
- zábavná**
- neúplná**
- nepřesná**

- nepřehledná**
- nevyhovující**
- nudná**
-
-
-

Přiřazením čísla k daným cvičením určete, která Vám nejvíce pomáhají pochopit daný čas.

(1 = nejvíce, atd.)

Překladová cvičení (translation)

a) z anglického do českého jazyka

b) z českého do anglického jazyka.....

Dichotomická cv. (př. true/false).....

Cvičení s výběrem odpovědi (multiple choice).....

Doplňovací cv. (filling).....

Spojovací cv. (matching).....

Uspořádací cv. (sequencing).....

Jiná:.....

Vysvětlete, proč Vám nejvíce pomáhá cvičení, které jste dali na první místo.

Vysvětlete, proč Vám nejméně pomáhá cvičení, které jste dali na poslední místo.

Appendix 3

Name:

A SAD STORY OF A SAD MAN

It was Sunday evening. One man was walking at the town center when he saw a new pub. He walked in and sat down by a man who was very unhappy. The man was drinking beer and eating chips.

“Life is very terrible, everything in the world is really boring”, he said.

“Don’t say that,” said the other man. “Life is wonderful! The world is exciting. Think about Italy. It’s a wonderful country. Have you ever been there?”

“Oh, yes. I went there last year and I did not like it. I was driving my car 12 hours to get there. It was a terrible trip.”

“Well, have you been to Norway? Have you ever seen the midnight sun?”

“Oh, yes. I went there for my honeymoon and we saw the midnight sun. I did not like it.”

“Well, I have just come from a safari in Africa. Have you visited Africa yet?”

“Yes, I went on safari last year and I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. It was really boring.”

“Well,” said the other man, “I think you are very ill. Only the best psychiatrist can help you. Go to see Dr. Greenbaum in Harley Street.

“But I am Dr. Greenbaum,” answered the man sadly.

1. In the text "A sad story of a sad man" find 2 sentences in the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect and write them down:

- the past simple:

- 1.
- 2.

- the past continuous:

- 1.
- 2.

- the present perfect:

- 1.
- 2.

2. After reading the text "A sad story of a sad man" try to describe the situations in which the past simple, the past continuous and the present perfect are used.

3. Fill in the past simple, the past continuous or the present perfect.

MONIKA KOVAK – A TENNIS PLAYER

- 1) Monika Kovak is a tennis player.
- 2) She is only 14 years old, but she (win).....already many tournaments in her life.
- 3) She (start).....playing tennis with her father when she was three years old.
- 4) Two years ago she (go).....to America to a famous tennis school in California.
- 5) She (play)..... for many hours every day.
- 6) She (like)it there very much.
- 7) Monika and her father (travel).....to many countries.
- 8) Last month they (visit).....a tournament in Australia.
- 9) She (not/play).....at Wimbledon yet, but she hopes to play there next year.
- 10) Last Saturday Monika (play).....tennis from 10am to 2pm.
- 11) After playing tennis she (go).....to the swimming pool.
- 12) She (swim)..... for two hours.
- 13) When Monika came home she called to her friend Lucy.
- 14) They (not/talk).....to each other for a long time.
- 15) Monika (talk).....to Lucy
- 16) while her father (watch).....TV.

4. Complete the following sentences using the past simple, the past continuous or the present perfect.

- a) Yesterday my friend.....
- b) Have you ever.....?
- c) I was playing the piano while my friend.....

- d) My sister has never.....
- e) I3 days ago.
- f) My parents were.....when I came home yesterday.

5. Translate the following sentences into English using the past simple, the past continuous or the present perfect.

- a) Včera jsem šel do kina.
- b) Díval jsem se na televizi, zatímco můj bratr dělal domácí úkoly.
- c) Nikdy jsem nebyl v Americe.

Appendix 4

(Ur 1991, 210)

Appendix 5

(Ur 1991, 238-239)

FIND SOMEONE WHO...

1. Find someone who has had a car accident.

NAME:

2. Find someone who has written a letter to a newspaper.

NAME:

3. Find someone who has read *A Tale of Two Cities*.

NAME:

4. Find someone who has eaten a frog.

NAME:

5. Find someone who has slept in a cave.

NAME:

6. Find someone who has been to Disneyland.

NAME:

7. Find someone who has spoken to a famous person.

NAME:

8. Find someone who has done all their homework this term.

NAME:

9. Find someone who has spent more than a month in hospital.

NAME:

10. Find someone who has driven a tractor.

NAME:

ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

Název práce	Vyjadřování minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce
Autor práce	Tereza Kopecká
Obor	Učitelství anglického jazyka
Rok obhajoby	2006
Vedoucí práce	Mgr. Petra Huschová
Anotace	<p>Tato práce se zabývá vyjadřováním minulých dějů v anglickém jazyce. Má dvě části, teoretickou a praktickou. V teoretické části je čtenář seznámen s anglickými tvary odkazujícími na minulost. Praktická část, jež je věnována prezentování a procvičování těchto tvarů, je založena na výzkumu, který byl proveden mezi učiteli a studenty středních škol.</p> <p>Na konci práce je navržen způsob prezentace a procvičování, který má snížit chyby žáků v anglických tvarech odkazujících na minulost.</p>
Klíčová slova	past simple, past continuous, present perfect simple, present perfect continuous, past perfect simple, past perfect continuous, present simple, would, used to, inductive and deductive approach, learners' mistakes, effective exercises