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The role of the Internet in ELT

Lukáš Chadima

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Jméno a příjmení:	**Lukáš CHADIMA**
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Zásady pro vypracování:

Autor se ve své bakalářské práci zaměří na prozkoumání role internetu v cizojazyčném vzdělávání, především pak ve vyučování anglického jazyka. V teoretické části práce autor charakterizuje pozici internetu v cizojazyčném vyučování, výhody a nevýhody tohoto didaktického prostředku, možnosti jeho využití pro rozvoj řečových dovedností a popisuje obecná kritéria hodnocení vybraných webových stránek. Praktická část pak zkoumá a hodnotí kvalitu vybraných webových stránek.

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Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Irena Reimannová, Ph.D.**
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

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L.S.

prof. PhDr. Petr Vorel, CSc.

děkan

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Abstract:

This bachelor paper deals with the role of the Internet in ELT. It primarily focuses on the development of skills with the use of ICT tools and in the practical part, it evaluates two websites, examines how the skills are developed with the use of sites and whether these websites could be used in a classroom environment.

The theoretical part contains seven chapters. The first chapter briefly describes the history of the Internet. The next chapter examines the history of CALL. The third chapter is aimed at advantages and the fourth at disadvantages of using the Net in ELT. The Development of the skills is the name of the fifth chapter and it examines reading, writing, speaking and listening, and all the areas and receptive skills we need to focus on if we wish to improve them. The sixth chapter discusses several ICT tools which enable us to improve the productive and receptive skills of the English language. It analyses email, chat, blogs, wikis, email journals, voice and video chat, audio email, audio dialogue journals, and audio and video blogs. The last chapter deals with the screening process and criteria for evaluating websites.

The other part is practical. It contains two chapters. In the first chapter, we evaluate two selected websites. The other chapter examines the possibilities of using these sites in a classroom environment.

Key words: the Internet, reading, writing, speaking, listening, ICT tools, evaluation of websites

Souhrn:

Tato práce se zabývá rolí internetu ve výuce anglického jazyka. Pojednává především o rozvoji řečových dovedností s pomocí informačních a komunikačních technologií. V praktické části se zaměřuje na hodnocení dvou vybraných internetových stránek rozvíjejících řečové dovednosti a řeší otázku, zda-li by se tyto webové stránky daly použít ve školním prostředí při vyučování anglického jazyka.

Teoretická část se skládá ze sedmi kapitol. První kapitola popisuje historii internetu. Další zkoumá historii používání počítačové technologie ve výuce anglického jazyka. Třetí kapitola se zaměřuje na výhody a čtvrtá na nevýhody používání internetu při výuce anglického jazyka. Rozvoj řečových dovedností je název páté kapitoly v niž jsou zkoumány čtení, psaní, mluvení, poslech, a také části, na které se musíme zaměřit, abychom tyto řečové dovednosti mohli zlepšit. Šestá kapitola se zabývá vybranými informačními a komunikačními technologiemi, které nám umožňují vylepšit produktivní a receptivní řečové dovednosti. Zaměřuje se především na email, chat, blog, wiki, psaní deníků pomocí emailu, hlasový chat, video chat, hlasový email, audio deníky a audio a video blogy. Poslední kapitola se zabývá kritérii, která jsou nutná pro hodnocení webových stránek.

Druhá část je praktická a skládá se ze dvou částí. V první kapitole hodnotíme dvě vybrané webové stránky. Druhá kapitola řeší otázku, zda je možné tyto materiály používat ve školním prostředí v hodinách anglického jazyka.

Klíčová slova: Internet, čtení, psaní, mluvení, poslech, informační a komunikační technologie, hodnocení webových stránek

Content:

THEORETICAL PART:

THEORETICAL PART

Introduction

The Internet represents a vast amount of things making it extremely difficult to define what exactly the Internet really is. Each expert perceives the term individually. William J. Stepien defines the Internet as:

> a vast worldwide collection of linked computers which are connected by simple telephone lines and complicated cables, and by transmission between satellites and Earth. The reason why they are connected into a network is to allow people to share information. (Stepien 2002, 129)

Whether we like it or not, the Internet plays an important role in our everyday life. Whenever we need to quickly find information, we turn on the computer and browse the Internet. Whenever we are asked to write an essay or do a research on a given topic, we seek help in a library as well as on the Internet. However, what is the role of the Internet in English language teaching (ELT)? This bachelor paper tries to answer this question. It mainly examines the possibilities of improving English language skills - reading, writing, speaking and listening with the use of communication tools available on the Internet, particularly ICT tools and social software, and with the use of selected websites. The Internet was originally a text-based medium enabling us to improve reading and writing. However, with the invention of ICT tools, it has also become a place where we might enhance our speaking and listening skills and strategies. Therefore, this paper is mainly concern about what the possibilities of improving the skills on the Internet are and it does not deal with the communicative competence.

The thesis is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part contains seven chapters. The first chapter briefly describes the history of the Internet. The Next chapter deals with the history of Computer-assisted language learning (CALL). Advantages of using the Internet in ELT is the name of the third chapter and it discusses the benefits of the Internet in terms information and materials, cooperation and collaboration, creativity and production, problem-solving, autonomy, and motivation. Following chapter, on the contrary, is concerned about the disadvantages of

using the Internet in ELT and deals with lack of the Internet access and technical limitations; administrative, curricular and personal needs; meeting the needs of differently abled students; the impact of culture; and legal issues. The chapter five examines reading, writing, speaking, listening and describes what we need to focus on in order to enhance them. Next chapter concerns ICT tools and social software, characterizes them, and deals with the possibilities of skills improvement with the use of these tools and software. Last chapter describes the screening process and the criteria for evaluating websites.

In the practical part, we evaluate two selected websites and discuss the possibilities of using these sites in a classroom environment. The primary aim of the practical part is to find two websites which develop reading, writing, listening and speaking and evaluate them according to selected criteria. The secondary aim is to examine whether the sites can be used in a classroom environment without any modification.

1. THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNET

Many people associate the beginning of the Internet with the invention of the World Wide Web in 1991. Yet, the idea of sharing knowledge through some technology is several years older. The first actual predecessor of the Internet is believed to be the ARPANET, a communication system invented in 1965 by the US army. Its primary goal was to maintain a connection between military bases in case of a nuclear war. (Bellis) Gradually, the ARPANET developed into the Internet. Nevertheless, before it became the system we know today, several pieces of hardware such as the PC modem and software such as Internet Explorer had to be created. We have already mentioned the importance of the first email programs that were shortly followed by other inventions. In 1977 "the first PC modem was developed by Denis C. Hayes and Dave Heatherington." (Chapman) Consequently, the bulletin board system, an application that made it possible to "share or exchange files," was created one year later. (Chapman) Nonetheless, the first really important device for ESL learners called Usenet was invented in 1979. It was considered valuable as it allowed "people from around the globe to converse about the same topics by posting public messages categorized by newsgroups." (Chapman) Nine years later, the first IRC (Internet Relay Chat) was

launched. (Stenberg) In 1991, the World Wide Web was introduced to the public. CERN (The European Laboratory of Practical Physics) had been working on the World Wide Web for quite some time in Switzerland and it significantly changed the perception of the Internet among its users. (A Short History of the Web) Since the invention of the first web page, the Internet has become a widely-used source of information. As a result, the first web browsers called Mosaic and Netscape Navigator were released in 1993 and 1994. Furthermore, the first webmail service, Hotmail, started being used in 1996. During the next two years, several blogs and the first online news appeared. (Chapman) In 1998 the Google, the current most popular search engine, was launched. Consequently, the most popular social networks such as MySpace and Facebook and the Internet encyclopaedia called Wikipedia were introduced in the next decade. (Chapman)

2. THE HISTORY OF COMPUTER-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (CALL)

Due to the rapid development of computer technology that has been going on since the 1960s, some alternative teaching approaches have been incorporated into the ELT process. As time went by, ELT experts began to realize the necessity of including new technologies in education. That is the reason why a new approach to ELT called Computer-Assisted Language Learning emerged in the 1960s. (Davies Graham) Graham Davies perceives CALL as "an approach to language teaching and learning in which the computer is used as an aid to presentation, reinforcement and assessment of material to be learned, usually including a substantial interactive element."

(Davies Graham) His colleague Michael Levy defines it as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning." (Levy 1997, 1) Computer-Assisted Language Learning has gone through many changes to become what it is nowadays. There have been three significant phases of CALL so far, "behaviouristic CALL, communicative CALL and integrative CALL." (Warschauer)

The behaviourist approach in CALL used mainly in the 1960s and the 1970s has a lot in common with behaviourism itself. Behaviourists believe that an individual mainly learns through imitation, repetition, drills and practice. Learning is simply perceived as a transmission of knowledge. According to Warschauer "the computer serves as a vehicle for delivering instructional materials for students" in this approach.

(Warschauer) However, this theory turned out to be insufficient as it does not fully explain how a human being acquires languages. Nevertheless, a lot of exercises, especially those focused on grammar, which can be found on the Net, are still drill-based. (Fotos, Brown 2004, 289) Experts found out that there are certain situations in which drilling can be helpful for improving learners' skills. It is a useful way especially for young learners to practise pronunciation. "As they are exactly told what to say, they can focus on pronunciation and usage." (Davies Ben) That is the reason why behaviourism is sometimes still used in ELT. Warschauer believes that:

> A computer is ideal for carrying out repeated drills, since the machine does not get bored with presenting the same material and since it can provide immediate non-judgmental feedback. What is more, a computer can present such material on an individualized basis, allowing students to proceed at their own pace and freeing up class time for other activities (Warschauer).

With the course of time, the behaviouristic approach in ELT was replaced by communicative CALL (Davies Graham).

In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the change of approaches in ELT also significantly influenced CALL. Repetition and imitation were changed for a communicative approach. As a result, several programs which provided "skill practice in non-drill format" were developed. (Warschauer) These programs included "text reconstruction, gap-filling, speed-reading, simulation and vocabulary games." (Levy 1997, 23) In this approach, the computer was perceived as a tutor, a provider of feedback but most importantly, as a kind of stimulus that triggers critical thinking and helps users develop productive skills of the English language. (Warschauer) Underwood believes that learners could benefit from this approach because communicative CALL "focuses on using forms rather than on the forms themselves." (Underwood in Warschauer) Moreover, it "teaches grammar implicitly" and "uses the target language exclusively and creates an environment in which using the target language feels natural both on and off the screen." (Underwood in Warschauer) Yet, this approach, as well as its predecessor, was found ineffective and was replaced by integrative CALL. (Davies Graham)

Until recently CALL was mainly associated with the word 'computer'. That

changed with the invention of multimedia computers, the World Wide Web, and the introduction of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). Nowadays, students can interact, and thus develop their skills, with other learners of a foreign language in several ways. (Warschauer) They can improve their writing, reading, listening and speaking skills while communicating via emails, texts or video chats. They can enhance their vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar on countless websites. Moreover, via several ICT tools, it is possible to "share documents, graphics, sounds and videos." (Warschauer) CALL has simply become an indispensable part of ELT which provides us with opportunities to share our knowledge and to improve our skills on many websites and using several ICT tools.

3. ADVANTAGES OF USING THE INTERNET IN ELT

There seems to be little doubt that the Internet and CALL provide us with some advantages in comparison with traditional textbooks. The Net mainly benefits us in areas of gaining information and materials; communication and collaboration; creativity and production; problem-solving; autonomy, and motivation. Since this thesis is primarily focused on learners we are going to discuss the advantages from students' point of view.

3.1 Source of information and materials

Sarah Richards perceives the World Wide Web as "a valuable source of information." (Richards, 11) The "Indexed Web contains at least 2.95 billion pages" and most of the sites are in English. (The Size of The World Wide Web, Muehleisen) This makes the Net the greatest source of authentic materials in the world. (Czubocha, 2) By 'authentic', we mean materials primarily developed for native speakers as well as any text in the target language used by students outside of the classroom. Ewa Czubocha sees the Net as "the library of the poor." (Czubocha, 2) The great benefit of the World Wide Web is that it is in most cases free of costs, "updated on regular basis", easily accessible and available 24 hours a day. (Czubocha, 2) In comparison with other didactic aids such as books or CDs, the Internet enables us to gain and verify information from several sources at one time. "It allows the user to make connections to sites all around the world and hence obtain variety of resource." (Mohtar, Abas)

3.2 Opportunities for communication and collaboration

Another advantage the Internet environment provides us with is space for communication and collaboration. Collaboration in general may be defined as "a process during which learners interact socially to create shared understanding". (Egbert 2005, 53) Communication is rather perceived as an exchange of knowledge between two or more individuals. (Egbert 2005, 53) Victoria Muehleisen believes that the main advantages of cyberspace are opportunities for interaction with other learners of the English language. For the last few years she has supported cross-cultural and bilingual exchanges among students and found out that:

> Students of English want to make contact with native speakers, but many of my students also have a strong interest in communication with people from other countries as well. They are happy to discover that even if they do not know Thai or Chinese, for example, they can use English to communicate with a keypal (e-mail penpal) from Thailand or Hong Kong and to find websites with information about these places. (Muehleisen)

Nowadays, ESL learners may participate in various kinds of forums and discussion boards, and are given opportunities to present their writings on several blogs. They can interact via e-mail, chat or Internet phoning. While doing so, they negotiate meaning with others and that benefits them in many ways. Students "learn to use language appropriately and creatively, focus on language structure and gain new, comprehensible language input." (Egbert 2005, 54) Moreover, when dealing with blogs and wikis, students write with a purpose and for a targeted audience. This form of interaction is considered to enhance learners' motivation. (Eastment) William Ferriter believes that:

> Electronic conversation can challenge the thinking of middle grades students. Students who participate in digital dialogue are forced to clarify their pre-existing notions as they consider alternative positions. This process of mental justification is a higher-level thinking skill, and one of the strongest benefits of electronic conversations. (Ferriter)

3.3 Supporting creativity and production

Many researchers agree that receiving authentic input is the key to language learning. However, it needs to be emphasized that the production of language is equally

important. Egbert believes that having a chance to produce language is vital as "it allows students to test their hypotheses about how language works and encourages students to use their preferred learning styles to gain additional input in the target language." (Egbert 2005, 74) Some of the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) tools such as email "encourage us to produce more and to use our creativity." (Egbert 2005, 75) Whenever learners communicate through email or other ICT tools, they both, receive input and produce output. While engaged in such a conversation, they need to make their utterance comprehensible. Moreover, during communication students are given feedback from others which "can also help them notice the discrete grammatical items that they need to focus on to improve their language." (Egbert 2005, 74) "Creativity implies something more - doing something original, adapting or changing." (Egbert 2005, 47) Egbert notes that:

> To be creative, students need opportunities for intentional cognition; appropriate support, scaffolding, and feedback; and control over language aspects that they will use in their production. Working with others often facilitates creativity. (Egbert 2005, 74)

When discussing possibilities for enhancing creativity, we need to especially mention blogs and wikis which enable us to share our writing as well as collaborate online. (Dudeney 2007, 86)

3.4 Problem-solving

Problem-solving is an active process involving higher order thinking skills which enables students to improve their metacognitive strategies and thus help them become better learners. The Net and particularly a computer may help learners develop their problem-solving skills by providing them with tools such as *Filling the Toolbox* and the *NASA SciFiles Instructional Tools* which gives basics to solve a problem in areas such as politics, sports or geography. Moreover, Egbert notes that computers may "make problem-solving more effective and efficient by enabling learners to use language to develop multimedia presentations; to demonstrate ideas; to calculate, track, and organize; to access information to be transformed; and by facilitating a host of other tasks." (Egbert 2005, 93)

3.5 Autonomy

Provided that the learner is the one in charge of the learning process and the one responsible for decision-making, the activities done on the Net may promote his or her autonomy. Jones believes that "the versatile modern generation of CALL programs, exploiting a gamut of applications from word processing to Virtual Learning Environment, tends to show awareness of the need to give students responsibility over the management tasks in his or her learning." (Jones) The Internet environment and especially CMC (Computer Mediated Communication) provide us with opportunities for autonomous behaviour. Jones believes that:

> an asynchronous tool such as email exchange enhances metacognitive awareness: learners can reflect on their and their interlocutors' responses scrolling back through texts to reconsider grammar, vocabulary and rhetorical strategies; they can refer to resources like an encyclopaedia or dictionary without noticeably disrupting the flow of discourse. (Jones)

3.6 Motivation

The Internet also significantly influences learner's motivation. We have already mentioned the positive impacts of chat, email and other communication tools on individual's attitude towards learning a second language. "Researchers have found that adding these elements to a course increases student's motivation and participation in class discussions and projects" (Educational Benefits of Online Learning, 1). Moreover, the Internet is also often associated with fun and games so pupils are usually very eager to work with it.

However, before we start dealing with disadvantages of using the Internet in ELT, we need to bear in mind that the Internet itself may not make the language learning process more effective or efficient. The success of leaning depends on whether the activities are planned appropriately and whether the websites or ICT tools are used in an appropriate way. If the same activity can be done in a more effective and efficient way with another didactic aid, we should use the aid instead of a computer or the Net. (Egbert 2005, 93)

4. DISADVANTAGES OF USING THE INTERNET IN ELT

"While the internet and its various facets offer a great deal to the language learner, it is not without its problems." (Singhal) The main limitations include lack of Internet access and technical limitations, difficulties with administrative, curricular and personal needs, meeting the needs of differently abled [sic] students, prejudice against computers and the Internet in certain culture, and legal issues. (Egbert 2005, 149-161)

4.1 Lack of Internet access and technical limitations

The main issue, which supporters of the use of this computer network in ELT are not aware of, is that the Internet is simply not accessible to every pupil. According to Internet World Stats only twenty-eight percent of the world population has access to cyberspace. The number of Internet users in Africa or Asia is very small and thus it is extremely difficult to use the Internet for learning or teaching purposes in these countries. (Internet World Stats) To be able to use ICT tools or websites, students need to own several pieces of up-to-date hardware and software. Especially when using video chat, learners need a reliable broadband Internet connection is required for communication to take place successfully. However, there might be several reasons for a network to be disconnected. Not only could there be a poor broadband connection, but also there could be an issue with a computer cable, web server or a virus attacking the computer. Therefore, before we start using any website or ICT tool; we need to ensure that there will be no complications. In case of difficulties, students might become frustrated and de-motivated. (Dudeney 2007, 76-79; Egbert 2005, 135-147)

4.2 Administrative, curricular and personal needs

Another reason why there are opinions against using the Net in ELT is that it is extremely time-consuming. We usually need to invest some extra time for computer or Internet-based activities to work effectively and efficiently. Before beginning to use a website or any ICT tool, we need to acquire some technical skills to be able to operate with them. That is what Warschauer calls computer-mediated communication literacy.

He defines it as "the ability to create, manage and participate in effective online communication in a variety of genres and formats." (Warschauer in Egbert 2005, 136) Moreover, in the case of ICT tools, students also need to learn special rules of communication when they interact in emails, chats, etc. called netiquette. Another argument is that there is a lack of curriculum freedom. Hence it is too complicated to incorporate the Internet into ELT. However, this statement is rather questionable. Egbert believes that the use of computers and the Net can sometimes help us to meet curriculum goals in more effective and efficient ways because "textbook pages and other required curriculum materials can be integrated with the technology in creative ways to give students more opportunities to learn and practise curriculum objectives." (Egbert 2005, 140) Additionally, especially with large classes, there is an issue of equitable access to a computer and the Internet.

4.3 Meeting the needs of differently abled students

When deciding to use the Net in ELT, we have to take into account that not all students are thrilled to use this way of learning. There might be some learners who could have either cognitive or physical difficulties when trying to complete
a task with the use of the Internet and a computer. (Egbert 2005, 137-139) Nonetheless, Egbert suggests that to meet the needs of such pupils, teachers might "apply principles of universal design (UD) as they develop tasks and activities." (Egbert 2005, 137) "Materials designed with such principles in mind can be used by diverse learners, provide choices for learners, are not unnecessary complex" and have many other benefits in comparison with other materials. (Egbert 2005, 137-138) Yet, when dealing with physical difficulties such as migraines resulting from working with a computer and staring into the screen for too long, the use of the above mentioned principles is of no help. Additionally, teachers need to invest some extra time to incorporate UD principles into their tasks and that may be the reason why some of them choose not to use the Internet in ELT. (Egbert 2005, 137-139)

4.4 The impact of culture

Egbert notes that:

culture can have an impact in CALL classrooms in many ways, some of them similar to its impact in nontechnology classrooms and others a factor of the tool. For example, student learning styles on and around computer can be different for learners from different backgrounds, and learners may use different strategies for the same task (e. g. writing) when they use a different tool. (Egbert 2005, 141)

Moreover, the computer itself is perceived differently among people from various cultural backgrounds. Assuming that a certain culture does not support a computer and the Net in ELT, we had better not include them in our lessons.

4.5 Legal issues

With the use of the Internet "come legal responsibilities for teachers, students and technology administrators." (Egbert 2005, 142) Therefore, learners and teachers need to be concerned about "student safe use, potential for plagiarism and fair use." (Egbert 2005, 142) When working on the Net, pupils may come across inappropriate materials that are not related to ELT at all. Egbert notes that whenever students browse cyberspace or use one of the ICT tools, it can result to "exposure to inappropriate material, harassment, lack of privacy and even legal and financial problems." (Egbert 2005, 142)

5. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS

When dealing with the enhancement of skills of the English language on the Internet, we need to first of all know what elements these skills consist of. Only once we truly understand the way we write, read, listen and speak, can we begin to improve our skills.

5.1 Writing

To be able to successfully communicate, we have to "structure our discourse in such a way that it will be understood by our listeners or readers." (Harmer 2001, 246) The primary criteria that need to be taken into account when teaching writing are cohesion and coherency. They are especially important since there are no other

structuring devices such as verbal or visual signals we could rely on while interacting. However, knowing the discourse itself would not be enough. There are many other criteria that we need to consider when teaching productive skills. Among these

we include sociocultural rules, taking turns and rules for writing. In order to successfully communicate and not insult anyone, it is necessary for us to know the cultural habits of the person we are interacting with, what language to use, pay attention to the degree of formality, etc.; in other words, to know the sociocultural rules of that individual. (Harmer 2001, 246-247) Apart from these, "in any conversation decisions have to be taken about when each person should speak." (Harmer 2001, 247) This turn-taking is particularly difficult to control in a written conversation in which we need to have a moderator who is in charge of the discussion and who gives us space to express ourselves. In addition, there are some rules for writing as well. We need to follow them when composing a letter, interacting on the Net or writing an analysis of work of literature. As readers, we come across various kinds of styles and genres which we can learn a lot from if they are incorporated into writing. Harmer believes that:

> in order to speak and write at different levels of intimacy, students need practise in different genres and different styles, so that as their level increases, they can vary the grammar, functions and the lexis that they use. (Harmer 2001, 248)

As Harmer suggests the key to the development of writing skills is therefore to write in as many styles as possible on a regular (daily if possible) basis. However, the writing activities need to be designed carefully to suit the learners' age, interest and language level.

5.2 Reading

Reading is one of the two receptive skills in which "people extract meaning from the discourse they see." (Harmer 2001, 199) Whenever we deal with any written text we "employ our previous knowledge as we approach the process of comprehension and we deploy a range of receptive skills." (Harmer 2001, 199) As we have already mentioned, in real life, we deploy several receptive skills when looking for information in a text. For example, when we need to find a specific telephone number, but are not interested in the other numbers, we quickly read through the text. If students read a novel for

pleasure, they usually read for general understanding. Whenever an individual installs a web camera, he or she reads an instruction manual and thus reads for detailed information. To sum up, whenever we come across a reading material, we:

- scan
- skim
- read for detailed information (Harmer 1998, 69-70)

However, there are several other skills which we need to master to be able to comprehend reading that we are engaged in. These include identifying the topic, predicting and guessing, and interpreting a text. (Harmer 2001, 201-202)

When deciding which of the above mentioned skills we intend to develop, we need to take into account whether the selected text is extensive or intensive reading. The former statement "suggests reading at length, often for pleasure and in a leisurely way." (Harmer 2001, 204) It is usually modified to a learner's language level and we may benefit from it as "an extensive reading programme improve our overall comprehension skills, and give us a wider passive and active vocabulary." (Harmer 2001, 204) The latter "tends to be more concentrated, less relaxed, and often dedicated not so much to pleasure as to achievement of a study goal." (Harmer 2001, 204) It is mostly done in a classroom environment with the teacher's help. Apart from extensive and intensive reading, we may choose to use authentic reading in lessons. However, it is still in question whether it is beneficial to include it in our classes or not. On one hand, it may be vital, especially for more advanced learners who do not have troubles understanding at least the gist of the material they are dealing with, because the language used in these materials is real-life, primarily developed for native audience. On the other hand, as the language in authentic materials is not simplified in any way, it may be too difficult to grasp for some pupils and thus be de-motivating. (Harmer 2001, 204-205)

5.3 Listening

When listening, we "extract meaning from the discourse we hear." (Harmer 2001, 199) As well as when engaged in reading, whenever we listen to our partner, not only do we have to understand the language itself, but we also need to activate our pre-existing knowledge of the world and "deploy a range of receptive skills" to be able

to comprehend the message. (Harmer 2001, 199) Moreover, while we listen to our partner's dialogue, we also need to consider sociocultural rules of that person so that there are no misunderstandings and no feelings hurt. In everyday life, when communication with another human being takes place, several skills are employed. To put it in another way, we listen for:

- general understanding
- specific information
- detailed information (Harmer 2001, 202)

Additionally, these skills also include interpreting, predicting and guessing and identifying a topic (Harmer 2001, 201-202)

The majority of listening activities can be divided into extensive and intensive listening. Extensive listening is usually done for pleasure in a relaxed way and takes place outside of the classroom. It can be, for example, an audio version of simplified readers. The important criterion is that the material should be at the learner's language level. Intensive reading is mainly designed to practise one's listening skills and is done in a classroom environment. When doing intensive listening, teachers may use recorded materials, which nowadays, are included in almost every coursebook, or they can use one of many 'live' listening activities such as reading aloud or story-telling. Students who are more advanced in the language can also listen to authentic material. We have already dealt with the issue of authenticity when we discussed development of reading. However, it needs to be emphasized again that such materials should not be used if they are incomprehensible to students. (Harmer 2001, 228-232)

5.4 Speaking

We have already mentioned how we need to structure discourse while speaking when we dealt with writing. However, we should remember that for spoken communication to be successful, we have to take into account the sociocultural rules of our partner, to be aware of taking turns, and to pay attention to different styles and spoken genres. Additionally, to be able to communicate effectively and efficiently, speakers need to have "a knowledge of language features and the ability to process information and language 'on the spot'." (Harmer 2001, 269) There are several language

features that need to be mastered so that the learner's communication would be effective and efficient. These features are:

- Connected speech
- Expressive devices
- Lexis and grammar
- Negotiation of language (Harmer 2001, 269-270)

To master the area of connected speech, we need to learn pronunciation of individual phonemes as well as to be able to produce fluent connected speech. However, succeeding in that might not be enough. Native speakers of the English language use many other verbal and non-verbal means or expressive devices if you will, to make their utterance comprehensible. They "change the pitch and stress of particular parts of utterances, vary volume and speed." (Harmer 2001, 269) Language features also include grammar and lexis. When producing output, we use "a number of common lexical phrases, especially in the performance of certain language functions." (Harmer 2001, 269) Therefore, it is beneficial for pupils if they are provided with such chunks of language because then they have a better chance to express themselves when agreeing, disagreeing or taking part in any other kind of conversation. Moreover, learners also need to have the ability to "use negotiation language to show the structure of their thoughts, or reformulate what they are saying in order to be clearer, especially when they see that they are not being understood." (Harmer 2001, 270) Nonetheless, there are also some mental and social processes that play an important role in speaking. When communicating with other speakers, we receive an input which needs to be processed and replied to. The effectiveness and efficiency of such a reply depends on how long it takes an individual to put his answer into coherent order so that it would not only be comprehensible, but so that it would also convey the intended meaning. (Harmer 2001, 271)

It is necessary to stress that the productive and receptive skills might be taught separately as well as in an integrated way as we shall see in the practical part of this work. Since we are dealing with the development of the skills on the Net, we are going to primarily focus on the possibilities of improving writing, reading, speaking and

listening with the use of ICT tools and in the practical part of this thesis with the use of websites.

6. ICT TOOLS AND SOCIAL SOFTWARE ENHANCING PRODUCTIVE AND RECEPTIVE SKILLS

"Information and communications technologies (ICT) are a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information." (Blurton, 1)

6.1 Text-based ICT tools and social software

In the majority of text-based ICT tools, reception is closely connected with production. The communication via email or chat is usually a sequence of messages. Therefore, to be able to create a comprehensible reply, we need to understand the message we have been sent. In other words, we need to structure our discourse in a coherent and cohesive way, follow sociocultural rules and rules for writing, and pay attention to taking turns on one hand; and on the other hand we have to deploy several receptive skills such as scanning, skimming, reading for detailed information, predicting and guessing, interpreting the text, etc. (Harmer 2001, 246-251) Egbert believes that apart from these, we also need to pay attention to aspects such as "content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions such as proper spelling and grammar." (Egbert 2005, 21) Therefore, assuming that we communicate in the second language regularly and pay attention to all aspects and skills, we may improve our writing and reading. There are many text-based ICT tools which give us the opportunity to practise and develop our reading and writing skills. We are going to focus on email, chat, blogs, wikis and journal writing.

6.1.1 Email

"Email is one of the most used and useful Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools around today." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 62) By regular interacting with this tool, we may learn to organize text, use grammar and vocabulary actively as well as improve other areas of writing such as spelling. Moreover, when

interacting with other ESL learners, we receive different kinds of input and become culturally aware. Since almost everybody in Europe has an email account nowadays, it is quite easy to use this tool, even with very young students. There are not any special technical skills that the pupils have to master, nor is any other special piece of hardware needed. Yet, not to cause offence, we must follow certain rules called netiquette. A great benefit in using email is that it can be used asynchronously. This means that communication does not happen in real time. (Fotos, Brown 2004, 80-82; Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 62 – 70) This is especially appreciated by lower levels of English proficiency because they have enough time to organize their thoughts "draft and edit before sending." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 63) Electronic mail may be used in various ways. One of the most popular yet most complicated one is the keypal project. "Keypals is the term for pen pals who use email to communicate." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 67) The projects are complicated because a teacher needs to teach his students at least basic netiquette and invest some extra time to help his learners with the emails themselves. Nevertheless, this form of interaction is quite popular among the ESL pupils. Studies have shown that authentic communication with other students of the second language has a positive effect on an individuals' motivation. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 66-67; Fotos, Brown 2004, 80-82) For example for lessons based on the keypal project see Appendix A. However, there are many other ways of using electronic mail during classes. We can, for example, use it for data collection. (Appendix B)

6.1.2 Chat

"Chat is a tool that allows for synchronous, i.e. real-time, communication over the Internet." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 71) Although no research has proved that chat really helps develop students' English, there are certainly many benefits that can be obtained form it. It is emphasized that the key to a learners' improvement is not only to read and write on a regular basis, but to also have an opportunity to express ideas and share writings and that is exactly what chatting gives us the opportunity to do. (Egbert 2005, 21-33) Moreover, some "studies to date seem to point to text chat providing opportunities for negotiating meaning, seen as key to language acquisition by many linguists." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 74) On the other hand, face-to-face communication is slightly different from the written text alternative. "Text chat can often appear

disjointed: conversation threads get lost or questions are ignored; there are overlapping turns and conventions for taking the floor are not automatically clear." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 75) To avoid that, it is quite important to have a moderator who oversees the discussion. There are several types of chat. The one we are interested in is called text chat. However, it is important to emphasize that with the development of hardware and "the increasing access to free voice chatware, audio chat is becoming more common." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 72) Nonetheless, dealing with the development of writing skills, we are going to focus on the two most common types of text chat, free topic chat and practice chat. Free topic chat is less restricted. There is usually neither a moderator of discussion nor one central topic. Users can basically talk about whatever they wish. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 71-85) Practise chat is more useful for lower levels of English proficiency as it enables its users to only practise "a specific function or form of language, or a specific skill or strategy." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 73) There are, of course, some other types of chat such as collaborative or informative chat, but since their primary goal is not related to enhancing the skills we are not going to discuss them more closely. Moreover, each chat can be used either as public or as private chat. Popular instant messaging programs are MSN Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, ICQ, Google Talk, Skype and AOL Instant Messenger. One particularly very interesting site supporting instant messaging is Sharedtalk. Here we can practise our grammar, spelling, and vocabulary as well as our writing skills with some learners who are interested in our mother tongue there. We communicate in English and they reply in Czech, or in whatever our native language is. (Doey; Stone)

6.1.3 Blogs

The definition of a blog is:

a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts. Memos to the world. (What's a blog?)

Studies have shown that such a form of publishing not only develops creative writing, but it also extremely motivates students as they are writing with a purpose and for

a certain audience that hopefully is intriguing for them. (Eastment) However, some teachers are afraid and avoid using this technology in ELT. There are some arguments such as that it requires more advanced technical skills to set up a blog or that it is too difficult for learners to maintain a web log. In reality, it is the other way around. Blogs "provide a real-world tool for learners with which to practise their written English as well as a way of contacting learners from other parts of the world if the blog is used as a part of an international exchange." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 90) We can choose from numerous sites such as Blogger.com, Wordpress.org, and Ezblogworld.com where it is possible to set up a blog for free. For ELT purposes, we can use some of the edublogs. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 86-87) By edublogs, we understand web logs which "cover a wide variety of topics related to education, from musing on educational policy and developments to learner compositions." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 87) A blog set up by a teacher is called a tutor blog. In most cases, teachers use it to stay in touch with their students and most importantly to keep them posted. Another one of the edublogs, which is maintained by learners, is a student blog. Here pupils react on everyday issues or they can give their opinions about a certain topic such as education or relationships. Moreover, if it is not set otherwise, learners are usually allowed to make comments, so even an ordinary description of someone's daily routine can turn into a passionate discussion in which anybody may share their point of view. Additionally, edublog can also be set up and maintained by an entire class. In that case, we are talking about a class blog. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 87) Dudeney and Hockly believe that the main benefit of class blogs is that it "can be used to post comments on certain topics, or on class work or on any other issue, the teacher thinks interesting and relevant to learners." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 87)

6.1.4 Wikis

Other social software which positively influences our writing skills is a wiki. It is "a fully editable kind of user-generated website which allows multiple users to work and create content collaboratively." (Raguseo) In contrast to web logs, anybody can change the content of a wiki. We can simply add some information to a topic, rewrite it or delete a part of an article. Additionally, learners are forced to negotiate content with others there. Researches have shown that such collaborative writing leads not only to

the development of writing skills, but also to the interaction between multiple users and to receiving authentic input. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 93-98) Nevertheless, teachers also need to take into account potential difficulties that may show up while using this social software. "Special care should be taken in providing with enough guidance through an accurate explanation of the available features, clear behaviour guidelines and a relevant, scaffolded [sic] task that allows for authentic and meaningful collaboration." (Raguseo) There are numerous websites where we can set up wikis for free. The most widely used ones are Wikihost.org, Mediawiki.org and Pbwiki.com. Advanced learners of English may contribute to the most famous wiki called Wikipedia, the biggest online encyclopaedia on the Net. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 93-98)

6.1.5 Journal writing

Another great way of practising writing is journal writing, especially challenging is its Internet version called e-mail journals. Through this social software, learners may interact with other ESL students, native speakers, their teachers, parents and with anybody who is interested in what they write about. While doing so, they receive authentic input and "gain insights about different cultures, literatures, and language uses." (Egbert 2005, 33) Moreover, journals do not necessarily have to be written only in the second language. With younger learners or lower level of English proficiency learners, a combination of the mother tongue and the second language can be used.

Before moving on to the development of speaking and listening skills, we need to emphasize that the above mentioned websites and social software are not the only ones helping us enhance our writing skills. There are some other text-based media such as MOO, Twitter or Facebook which has not been explored yet and which if used properly may also help develop students' skills.

6.2 ICT tools and social software focusing on spoken interaction

Before we explore the possibilities of enhancing speaking on the Net, it is necessary to emphasize that listening and speaking are frequently closely connected and ICT tools provide us with opportunities to practise both listening as well as speaking. Therefore, we need to pay attention to the discourse we hear, and deploy a range of receptive skills to be able to comprehend our partner's message on one hand; and on the

other hand we have to structure our discourse so that it would be comprehensible, and we also need to pay attention to language features, turn-taking, sociocultural rules etc. It is unfortunately often assumed that listening as well as speaking can not be improved much on the Internet or at least not in the way in which writing and reading can.

The truth is that practising these skills on the Internet is slightly more complicated than to practise reading and writing. Florez believes that "opportunities for speaking and listening require structure and planning if they are to support language development." (Flores 1999 in Egbert 2005, 40) On the other hand, on the Internet, we can interact with native speakers and ESL students from around the globe and that is a benefit that no classroom environment can provide us with. Moreover, studies have shown that some learners, especially the shy ones, feel more comfortable to speak through the computer as there are a lot of opportunities, the environment is less stressful and less teacher-fronted. (Egbert 2005, 39-42) Egbert believes that speaking on the Internet can be done in various ways. He notes that content that some websites provide "enables students to interact with one another." (Egbert 2005, 41) We are going to examine voice chat, audio email, audio dialogue journals, and audio and video blogs.

6.2.1 Voice and video chat

Unlike text chat, voice and video chat follows similar rules of interaction as face-to-face communication. Therefore, it is a great tool for improving our speaking and listening skills. Studies have shown that "voice chat is more likely to make learners produce more fluent language." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 75) Nonetheless, the most appreciated benefit from this piece of software is that it gives us the opportunity for oral interaction. Such cultural exchange positively influences students' motivation. Not only do we practise and produce the language, but we also receive authentic oral input from other ESL learners and thus acquire the language and improve our listening skills.

In case we communicate with foreign ESL pupils, we usually get to know their habits and traditions and hence develop cultural awareness. However, before using video and voice chat, students need to become familiar with netiquette so that offence would not be caused. Additionally, few pieces of software such as a web camera, microphone and speakers or headphones are necessary. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 62-102; Egbert 2005, 39-69; Son 123-139) We can choose either free topic chat, where there is "no topic or

agenda set for the chat, and no specific moderator role," or practice chat where a specific language such as the past simple, a skill or a strategy is practised. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 73) Both may be used either as public chat where anybody can contribute to a discussion, or as private chat in which only two users interact. Popular audio instant messaging programs are Skype, Google Talk, Yahoo! Messenger and MSN Messenger. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 72-78) Another free chat program included in this group is NetMeeting. When students use this program, not only can they communicate via audio and video conferencing, but they may also share and transfer files while interacting with each other. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 73) Moreover, there are many interesting websites supporting video chat available on the Internet. One of the particularly interesting ones is Speaking24.com where we are provided with a list of people from all over the world interested in practising their speaking skills. Learners just need to choose a program in which they would like to interact (Skype, MSN Messenger or Yahoo! Messenger) and they can begin to practise their English. However, there is still a difficulty with providing feedback. If we use a text chat in a classroom, the teacher has the opportunity to look at the history of the conversation and can easily give feedback. With voice chat, it is slightly more complicated as additional software for recording is usually necessary. Moreover, a teacher can give attention only to a few individuals. Nonetheless, it can still be done. (Egbert 2005, 39-69; Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 77-78)

6.2.2 Audio e-mail

Other social software that can be modified for enhancing our speaking skills is an audio e-mail. Unlike a voice chat, it is an asynchronous communication tool. According to Egbert, the major benefit is that tools supporting audio e-mailing "allow us to record and rerecord until we are satisfied with our result." (Egbert 2005, 42) A popular tool is Talksender. It works with Outlook Express, AOL, Eudora and Netscape Messenger. (Talksender) We can simply record a podcast and send it to another ESL learner. There is no special equipment needed, the only pieces of hardware and software absolutely necessary are a microphone and software such as Audacity in which we can edit our records. (Dudeney, Hockly, 2007, 93) Once we have these we can start interacting.

6.2.3 Audio dialogue journals

In general, any audio dialogue journal positively effects the development of one's communicative competence. Dr. Elahe Sutude Nama and his colleague Akram Ramazanzadech believe that "through practising dialogue journals, learners of a foreign language can find opportunity for using the language appropriately to express meaning and for being corrected without being evaluated." (Sutude Nama, Ramazanzadech, 2) These journals may have many forms. In a classroom environment, it is usually a conversation between a teacher and a student. However, Egbert suggests that audio dialogue journals can also be used in a different way. He believes that it is more effective for students to exchange audio dialogue journals with other ESL learners. (Egbert 2005, 42) The exchange is simple. Two or more ESL students "record messages and send them to each other in a running stream of conversation." (Egbert 2005, 42) Therefore, we can say that the communication is synchronous as well as asynchronous (Egbert 2005, 39-42)

6.2.4 Audio and video blogs

Another way to improve our speaking as well as listening skills is to set up an audio or a video blog. The idea is simple. Learners are given a topic, which can basically cover anything from my family to issues related to the environment; record themselves while speaking and put it in their blog. Moreover, these blogs sometimes, especially in classroom environments, have are in the style of journal in which students comment on their everyday lives. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 86-92) Studies have proved that audio as well as video blogs "enrich the learning experience: create context for real communication in which learners become active participants, encourage collaboration between the participants and increase students' exposure to L2." (Kleanthous, 7) However, to set up and maintain an audio blog, we need certain parts of hardware and software. To record and to listen to podcasts and videos, we need to own a microphone, a webcam or a video camera and a headset. What is especially important is to have "editing software and sufficient space on a web server to store the multimedia files." (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 93) One of such software available for free is Audacity. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 93) Additionally, there are some web sites such as Audioblog

and Freevlog where we can "upload, record and manage" our podcasts and videos. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 93) To set up a blog, we need to choose from several websites. The popular ones are WordPress.com and Blogger.com. In an ELT environment, the tutor, the student or the class blogs are most widely used. They have all been discussed when we dealt with text blogs. Nevertheless, to work efficiently, students have to be able to use the software we mentioned above, so it is really necessary to invest a lot of time to explain how it all works. (Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 86-92)

Before moving on, we need to emphasize that almost all of these ICT tools and social software require some extra time to be introduced. Moreover, also some additional technical skills must be learned so that we could work with them effectively. We have discussed only a few pieces of social software and ICT tools supporting speaking in this thesis. With the developing technology a new ones are becoming available. Yet, the educational potential of a great majority of them is still in question or it has not been fully explored yet.

7. EVALUATION OF WEBSITES

The World Wide Web has become a very popular source for communication, entertainment such as games and also for teaching language. To be able to fully appreciate the language potential of some websites, we need to carefully distinguish the difference between the sites which enable us to develop our language skills effectively and efficiently from the ones that are ineffective and inefficient. Sandra Fotos and Charles Brown believe that there are two steps in evaluating websites - the screening process and the evaluation itself. For our purposes, it has been decided that we are going to follow the screening process exactly to be able to come up with a list of websites enabling us to practise and develop the four skills. However, I tend to slightly modify the evaluation criteria and consequently the checklist taken from Fotos and Brown to be able to evaluate the sites in the best possible way. Since our main goal in the theoretical part of the thesis is to examine the possibilities of the development of the skills on the Internet, we are going to primarily focus on evaluating skills.

7.1 Screening process

Why do we have to go through the screening process? The answer is simple. There are so many ESL sites on the Internet that it would be next to impossible to evaluate all of them. Therefore it is necessary to find and screen websites "to reduce the evaluation pool to a manageable number" at first. (Fotos, Brown 2004, 280) Sandra Fotos and Charles Brown have selected several criteria that could be included in the process. They have divided them into academic and functional criteria. Academic criteria "include items such as topic, level, type, volume, and feedback." (Fotos, Brown 2004, 281) Functional criteria incorporate items such as "cost, degree of interactivity, level of intrusiveness, access and loading time." (Fotos, Brown 2004, 281)

When we look for websites that are aimed at developing reading skills and strategies that we want our intermediate students to practise outside of the classroom, the academic criteria could be:

1. Reading for development of the skills and strategies
2. Language at an intermediate level
3. Sufficient volume
4. Feedback that provides the correct answers

The functional criteria might be:

- Cost: Free
- Tracking that keeps records of scores and times on the task that are automatically sent to the instructor. (Adapted from Fotos, Brown 2004, 288)

Once the criteria have been established, we need to find the websites that will fulfil our expectations. There are several ways to do it. We can either use some of the search engines such as Google or Yahoo or we may search through several Meta lists for ESL students such as ESL Independent Study Lab. Additionally, there is one more criterion that needs to be taken into account when we screen potential websites. Since we are primarily curious about the possibilities of self-improvement or extra practice in our free time, we are therefore interested in voluntary self-access and guided self-access mode.

7.2 Evaluation criteria

The second step in the evaluation of websites is the evaluation itself. There is usually a modular evaluation framework required. Fotos and Brown note that:

> this framework is a conceptual scheme made up of several modules; the modules are units covering one aspect of evaluation, each containing a body of principles or criteria for that module's topic. The framework is generative in that the principles in each module serve to generate a set of specific checklist items for each case. (Fotos, Brown 2004, 281)

Our framework will consist of the following modules:

Language acquisition

ESL materials design

Learner profile and learning styles

Courseware and multimedia instructional design

Online courseware instructional design (Adopted from Fotos, Brown 2004, 282)

7.2.1 Language Acquisition

"The principles in the first module, language acquisition, are based on Chapelle's (2001) synthesis of language acquisition theories and learner-centered instruction" (Fotos, Brown 2004, 282) Chapel believes that there are several important criteria by which we judge the appropriateness of language learning tasks. These are the following: language learning potential, learner fit, meaning focus, authenticity, positive impact and practicality. (Chapelle 2001, 55-57)

7.2.2 ESL Materials Design

The second module of our framework is not so different from the first one. It "applies the criteria established for evaluation of ESL and EFL textbook materials to courseware and web-based learning sites." (Fotos, Brown 2004, 282) Fotos and Brown emphasize that there must be "the fit between materials and the curriculum, the students and the teacher." (Fotos, Brown 2004, 283) However, there is a slight difference between the first and the second module after all. The first module is mainly "based on research studies on SLA" while the second module is rather dependent on "evaluation of teaching materials based on teacher's practice." (Fotos, Brown 2004, 283) This is the

module that we are going to modify the most as we are primarily focused on the language use and not on the form so we are leaving out the criteria related to the latter. The framework is intended to be based on Cunningsworth's Choosing Your Coursebook and will primarily cover skills, topic, subject content and social values, and some aspects of methodology. (Cunningsworth 1995, 31-107)

7.2.3 Learner Profile and Learning Styles

There is a certain overlap between learner fit, which was one of the criteria in the first module, and learner profile and learning styles. Whereas the first one "takes into account the individual differences in language ability level and non-linguistic characteristics," the term learner profile is much broader. (Chapelle 2001, 55) Hubbard finds several points about the learner quite important. These include the following: purpose, language level, ability to handle metalanguage, technical ability, and receptivity to change. (Hubbard 1996 in Photos, Brown 2004, 284, 291-292)

In addition, it is also important to find "the fit between the instructional material and the learner's language learning styles." (Fotos, Brown 2004, 284)

7.2.4 Courseware and Multimedia Instructional Design

The previous three modules mainly dealt with the language aspects of the evaluation of websites. The module number four, on the other hand, begins to explore the role of design in evaluating websites. There are numerous areas which we can choose from when evaluating the design of Internet sites. Fotos and Brown find these areas most important:

1. Interface
2. Navigation
3. Text quality
4. Graphics and sound
5. Interactivity (Adopted from Fotos, Brown 2004, 284-285, 291-292)

7.2.5 Online Courseware Instructional Design

The topics of the fifth module are very similar to the ones discussed in previous

module. The difference is that "now the criteria are applied specifically to online materials instead of computer-based instructional materials generally." (Fotos, Brown 2004, 285) There are several criteria by which we can evaluate e-learning sites.

We are going to focus on these:

1. The quality of feedback, record keeping and other management aspects

2. Support for human-human and computer-human interactivity

3. Degree of adaptivity [sic] to users' history and preferences

4. Appropriateness and adequacy of multimedia

5. Accessibility to persons with physical disabilities (Adapted from Fotos, Brown 2004)

PRACTICAL PART

1. Screening process

I have decided to find the potential websites enabling us to enhance the four skills using the help of the screening process first. When looking for such sites, I used Krauss's ESL Independent Study Lab. It contained numerous links for practising listening, writing and reading skills, however, there were no websites dedicated to speaking there. I only discovered several sites enabling us to practise one of the subskills of speaking, pronunciation. To be able to distinguish the sites with high and poor quality, I used the academic and functional criteria which were mentioned when we discussed the screening process. Generally, there were no problems to meet the criteria 1, 3, 4, 5, because there are countless sites giving us opportunities to practise writing, listening and reading. Most of these are free and provide us with feedback.

Yet, I had difficulties to find websites which meet the criteria 2, and 6. There are only a few Internet sites covering language levels from beginners to advanced learners. The criterion 6 was also difficult to meet because hardly any websites provide us with tracking that keeps records of scores and times on the task. After screening selected websites and taking into account all of the criteria (Appendix C), I decided to evaluate ESL Study Zone and Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab.

2. Checklist for evaluating websites

Module 1: Language acquisition

      Language learning potential

      Learner fit

      Meaning focus

      Authenticity

      Positive Impact

Module 2: ESL materials design

      Skills

      Topic, subject content and social values

      Methodology

Module 3: Learner profile and learning styles

      Language level

      Ability to handle metalanguage

      Technical ability

 Module 4: Courseware and multimedia instructional design

      Interference

      Navigation

      Text quality

      Graphics and sound

      Interactivity

Module 5: Online courseware instructional design

      The quality of feedback, record keeping, and other management aspects

      Support for human-human and computer-human interactivity

      Degree of adaptivity to user's history and preferences

      Appropriateness and adequacy of multimedia

      Accessibility to persons with physical disabilities

(Adapted from Fotos, Brown 2004, 291-292; Cunningsworth 1995, 67, 90, 92, 97, 101, 103)

3. Evaluation of ELC Study Zone

Description of the site

ELC Study Zone is a website primarily developed for adult learners, which provides its users with practice in extensive as well as intensive reading, speed reading, skimming, scanning, critical reading, cloze and many other areas. Moreover, there is a grammar section and external links for practising vocabulary. More than half of the reading passages are accompanied by writing assignments as well, so learners may also improve their writing skills.

Module 1:

Since the website focuses on using both the language use, which is emphasized the most, as well as language form, we can say that there is some language learning potential. In the grammar section, learners can study grammatical items and practise what they have learned in numerous exercises. Some of the items learned are used later on when students do some of the tasks focused on language use such as writing a summary of a reading passage. In my opinion, the input provided by reading is slightly beyond the user's grasp, so it is challenging enough and pupils have a chance to develop their language. There is some space for meaning focus as well on the site. We use the language purposefully to construct the meaning in several writing assignments such as a summary of the stories. Additionally, the language is used to interpret the meaning of the stories in exercises focused on recreating the story. A few of the learning tasks are authentic. By authentic, we mean activities that we are likely to experience outside of the classroom. The website offers several of these kinds of activities. For example, the interview in which we take the role of Romulus and answer the questions of the interviewer or the task in which we assume the role of Tarzan and write a personal letter to Jane, are both examples of these activities. Moreover, ELC Study Zone provides us not only with the reading for development of the skills and strategies, presentation of new grammatical items, extending vocabulary and presenting models for writing, but also links for other subjects such as biology with information of interest for students, which has a positive impact on students' learning as well.

Module 2

We are primarily offered to improve our language use in the area of reading on the website. However, the reading material is linked to other skills as well. Some of the reading passages are accompanied by guided, semi-guided and free writing activities. In several pre-reading exercises, we can also practise speaking. However, it needs to be emphasized that these pre-reading exercises serve rather as a lead-in to discussion. Although the reading texts are primarily used for developing reading skills and strategies, the material also serves for presenting grammar items, extending vocabulary, providing models for writing, giving information of interest to students and in a few cases it also function as a stimulus for oral work. In total, there are twenty-five reading passages which vary in length, authenticity, genre and subject. In general, we can say that the higher the level of a learner's proficiency, the more complex the grammatical and discourse structure is, and the longer and more authentic the texts are. The topics are interesting, challenging, varied and culturally appropriate. Various social groups are mentioned in the text, and even though there are more male characters than female ones in the texts, it can be said that both genders are portrayed equally. However, the disabled are not mentioned in any article at all. The comprehension questions accompanying the reading passages vary according to the level of language proficiency. Users answer literal, inference and discourse-processing questions. Since the website provides us mainly with extra practise material, we can not find out much about guiding principles, learning-teaching procedure and learners' needs. Nonetheless, when examining ELC Study Zone, I managed to gather at least some information. Firstly, the site encourages a deductive approach to learning. We can also say that there is some balance between accuracy, which is given priority in grammar exercises, and fluency, which is preferred in the writing assignments. In addition, wrong answers are dealt with immediately after clicking on the 'check' button. Secondly, new grammar items are usually presented in the grammar section and then practised in the following exercises. In contrast, the vocabulary is presented in context. It is either pre-taught in pre-reading exercises or it is dealt with in the texts. Students learn the meaning of a new lexical item by matching it to its definition or synonym.

Module 3

ELC Study Zone provides practise for almost all levels of language proficiency. The only exception are the real beginners. (Krauss) It can be said that the site presentational scheme fits students' learning styles and strategies. Since the websites is primarily used for self-practice, it is more appreciated by students who can study independently, are confident in their abilities and are interested in language use as well as learning about the language itself. Additionally, the site is also more appropriate for visual than for auditory learners as the majority activities are related to reading and there is not a single listening activity on the website. Some users, especially advanced beginners and lower-intermediate students, might also encounter some difficulties with the metalanguage. The language used in the grammar section is fairly complex and the lower levels would need to be pre-taught the metalanguage to be able to work with the site on their own. Provided that learners can write on the computer and browse the Internet, they do not need any further technical abilities to be able to do the activities.

Module 4

It was no trouble to navigate throughout the website. On the home page, we can find an illustration which explains how the site works. In case learners are lost, they may click on the 'help' button and are given more information about the goals of the website and its navigation. The exits leaving of a page and the way to go back or forward are clearly marked. The instructions are simple and clear. We are also offered a possibility to delete entered answers. No problems with the text quality were encountered. The font is large and easy to read and the illustrations are clearly labelled and do not interfere with the texts at all. The Feedback is sufficient and immediate. In some exercises, we are just given a comment that the answer is correct or incorrect, in others we are provided with our score. In the third kind of exercises, users are only given an indication of correctness or incorrectness.

Module 5

Even though ELC Study Zone does not have any sophisticated software for keeping records, we can print out our results, so there is at least a basic record keeping available for students. Although the website primarily supports human-computer

interactivity, there is also a possibility to communicate asynchronously with authors of the website and with other users on the ELC Study Zone Blog. There is no adaptavity to users' history on the site only minor adaptivity to their preferences. Nevertheless, ELC Study Zone presents the information without any barriers related to technology design and implementation. It is legal, ethical and culturally appropriate. However, it is not accessible to people with physical disabilities.

4. Evaluation of Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab

Description of the website

Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab is a website which primarily enables us to practise and develop listening skills and strategies. The site provides us with practice in intensive listening, listening for specific information, listening for detailed information and listening for general understanding. A majority of the listening passages also serve as material for presenting vocabulary and a few for presenting grammar. Each listening passage is accompanied with a transcript so we can also practise our reading skills. Moreover, some of the recordings serve as a lead-in to discussion. On the website, there is also a link to Randall's ESL blog where we are provided with opportunities to enhance our writing skills.

Module 1

A great majority of listening exercises is not only used for developing reading skills and strategies, but they also serve as material for presenting vocabulary, provide us with some grammar and pronunciation exercises, so we can say that there is some language learning potential. The listening activities are divided according to a language level, so they are challenging enough for a majority of language learners. The only exceptions are advanced learners who might find them too easy. Since the site is primarily designed for enhancing listening skills and strategies there is almost no space for meaning focus. However, Randall's Cyber Listening Lab is a great source of authentic listening activities which we are likely to experience outside of the classroom. We can listen to recordings which range from topics such as shopping to topics such as the World cup. Moreover, the website enables us to develop our metacognitive

strategies. We are provided with some useful tips in the study tips section. In pre-listening exercises, there is usually a helpful tip section which helps us focus our attention on the topic of the passage and enables us to develop skills related to predicting and guessing.

Module 2

The primary aim of the website is to provide us with practice for developing listening skills. Nevertheless, the listening passages are also linked to other skills. We can read along while listening to the recording and thus develop our reading skills.

In some post listening activities, we are asked to write our ideas about the listening passage to Randall's ESL blog, so we can practise our writing skills. Some listening activities serve as a lead-in to discussion, so speaking skills may be practised as well.

In total, there are one hundred and eighteen listening passages which vary in length, speed and accent. They are accompanied by comprehension questions which vary in difficulty according to language level. Some of them only check the understanding of some facts; in others we are required to infer meaning from the information we are provided with. The topics are interesting, challenging, varied and culturally appropriate. There are several social groups mentioned in the listening passages. Even though male characters seem to appear more often, we can say that both genders are portrayed in

an equal way. However, the disabled are not mentioned in the passages at all. There is not much we could say about methodology, guiding principles, learners' needs and learning-teaching procedure on the website. Nonetheless, when examining Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab, I found out that the site encourages a rather deductive approach to learning because at first we are provided with lexical items and then we use them to complete the tasks. The vocabulary is presented in the transcript of the recording and practised in context. Wrong answers are dealt with either immediately or at the end of the exercise. The majority activities are focused on accuracy. The only exception is Randall's ESL blog where we are asked to comment on listening topics and where there is more emphasis on fluency.

Module 3

As it has been already mentioned, the site is appropriate for levels ranging from

advanced beginners to advanced students. (Krauss) We can not really say whether the presentational scheme fits students' learning style and strategies since we do not know for what type of learners the site was originally designed for. However, it is more appropriate for those who can study independently, are confident in their abilities and wish to discover more about the language use. Moreover, the website can be used by auditory as well as visual learners as the listening passages are accompanied by texts. Yet, the lower levels of proficiency might have some troubles with the metalanguage which is sometimes complex and could be beyond their grasp. Provided that we can work with the computer and manage to browse the Internet, we do not need any further technical skills to be able to do the exercises on the website.

Module 4

No difficulties were encountered with the layout and navigation of the website. We can find instructions on how to operate with the site when clicking on the 'first-time users' link. The exits and ways to go forward and back are clearly marked.
The instructions are mostly simple and clear. Some answers can be changed; however, the other ones can not. No troubles with text quality were experienced. The font is large enough and the few illustrations do not interfere with the text. Nevertheless, there are some advertisements which are not pleasant to look at and which might disturb some users. The quality of recordings is good, natural-sounding. The feedback is sufficient and in most cases immediate. In a majority of exercises we are provided with a score, correct answers and explanations for the answers. In other exercises, we are only given an indication of correctness or incorrectness.

Module 5

There is no software for keeping records on Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab and we can not print out our results either. The website primarily supports human-computer interactivity. The human-human interactivity is supported only on the Randall's ESL blog. Additionally, there is no adaptivity to user's history and to their preferences. The website presents the information without any barriers related to technology design and implementation. It is culturally appropriate, legal and ethical. However, it is almost impossible for people with physical disabilities to use since all of

the activities require the use of the keyboard or a mouse.

5. Analysis of websites in a classroom environment

We have evaluated two websites which are intended to be used for self-improvement. However, can they be used in a classroom environment without any modifications? The answer is rather complicated. On one hand, the materials and activities on the evaluated websites are challenging, encourage curiosity, and are valuable since we are likely to encounter them in real life; but on the other hand, they can hardly be used in a classroom environment without any modification. (Cunningsworth 1995, 86-90) As the websites are primarily designed to enhance the skills, there is not much space for language content. Cunnigsworth believes that "the actual items of language taught - grammar, vocabulary and phonology - form the foundation of everything else that contributes to the complex process of language teaching." (Cunnigsworth 1995, 31) Therefore, there is a good chance that students will not be familiar with some grammatical, lexical and phonological items presented in the exercises. The solution to this problem is to pre-teach these items. However, doing so is very time-consuming. Another problem with these sites is metalanguage and the language of instructions. Since they are both in English and sometimes very complex, the lower levels of proficiency will need to be pre-taught the vocabulary related to the metalanguage and the language of instructions in order to work efficiently and effectively with the website. (Hubbard 1996 in Photos, Brown 2004, 284, 291-292) When deciding whether to use these websites in the classroom environment, we also need to consider the curriculum and ask ourselves a question whether the activities on these sites help us meet the curriculum objectives. (Egbert 2005, 140) These websites should be used only if they enable us to improve our skills and strategies in an effective and efficient way, if they do not; we need to consider using more appropriate tools instead. (Egbert 2005, 93) Moreover, there is also an issue with technology. Students need to posses some technical skills to be able to work with the computer. Even though we live in a world where browsing on the Internet is as common as making a sandwich, some pupils might not be skilled at operating with the computer and will need to be taught how to do that. (Egbert 2005, 136) Additionally, the exercises must suit learners' needs, age, interest, and language level. It is important to find the balance between the

material available on the websites and learner's language learning style.

To sum up, it is possible to use the exercises available on these websites in a classroom environment; however, we need to modify them so that they would fit our students' needs, age, interest, style, and language level. Students also have to be pre-taught the metalanguage, language of instructions, vocabulary, grammar and phonology to be able to work with these websites. It is also important to make sure that these exercises actually help us meet our curriculum objectives. Additionally we need to ensure that learners possess the technical skills necessary for completing exercises on the websites and make other necessary modifications so that the exercises would suit a learner's needs, age, interest, style, and language level.

Conclusion

This thesis deals with the role of the Internet in ELT. As discussed in this thesis and shown in several examples, the Internet and the tools available there have great potential not only in skills development, but also in language acquisition. There are, of course, some benefits as well as disadvantages related to this medium as we had a chance to see in chapters three and four. However, the practical part of this work is mainly concerned about the skills and the possibilities of their enhancement with the use of the Internet, particularly ICT tools and websites. In order to improve the skills efficiently and effectively, we need to understand the complex process of reading, writing, listening and speaking, and we also need to be familiar with the ICT tools, social software and websites. To be able to distinguish the good websites, which actually help us practise and develop the skills, from the ones with poor quality, we need to go through the screening process. Once completing this, we need to state relevant criteria by which these websites can be judged. The skills and ICT tools is what we deal with in the chapters five and six. Chapter seven is concerned about the screening process and about the evaluation criteria. The outcomes of the theoretical part of the thesis are the criteria for the screening process and the criteria which we use when evaluating websites in the practical part of this work.

The practical part is based on the criteria discussed in chapter seven in the theoretical part. The primary aim of the practical part is to evaluate two selected websites enabling us to improve the skills. As soon as we go through the first stage, the screening process, we need to create a checklist based on the criteria which we dealt

with in the practical part. Then there is the evaluation of websites itself. On the basis of the screening process, we decided to evaluate The ELC Study Zone and Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab. Even though Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab does not meet the criterion of tracking that keeps records of scores and time on task that are automatically sent to the instructor, we decide to evaluate it because there is a huge amount of listening exercises which enable us to enhance our listening skills and strategies. The secondary aim of the research was to find out whether these websites and activities available on the Internet can be used in a classroom environment.

The outcomes of the research prove that both websites enable us to practise and improve the skills. The Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab mainly provides us with practise in listening, but also reading, writing and speaking can be enhanced there.
The ELC Study Zone site primarily gives us opportunities to enhance reading, but we may also practise writing and speaking there. However, we need to emphasize that the activities concerning speaking rather serve as a lead-in to discussion. It has already been mentioned that we did no find any Internet sites that would enable us to practise speaking the way it is practised in face-to-face communication. The other outcome is that these websites can hardly be used in a classroom environment without any modification. Not all of the activities may suit to learners' needs, age, learning style and language level. Additionally, they may not meet our curriculum objectives, the language of instruction might be beyond some users' grasp and some students may lack the technical skills to operate with these websites.

Resumé

Tato práce se zabývá rolí internetu ve výuce anglického jazyka. Především ale zkoumá řečové dovednosti - čtení, psaní, poslech a mluvení a pojednává o tom, jak mohou být tyto dovednosti rozvíjeny pomocí internetu, zvláště pak pomocí informačních a komunikačních technologií a webových stránek. Snaží se určitým způsobem zmapovat výhody a nevýhody tohoto média, dále zkoumá kritéria vhodná pro hodnocení webových stránek a následně hodnotí dvě vybrané webové stránky. V neposlední řadě taktéž prověřuje možnosti použití těchto stránek ve školním prostředí při výuce anglického jazyka.

Teoretická část je rozdělena do sedmi kapitol a zaměřuje se především na řečové dovednosti, které jsou zde představeny a rozebrány. Dále charakterizuje vybrané informační a komunikační technologie, mapuje jejich výhody a také se do určité míry zmiňuje o problémech s nimi spojenými. Kromě toho, se ještě zabývá kritérii, která jsou důležitá pro hodnocení webových stránek.

První kapitola nám osvětluje pojem internet, stručně hovoří o jeho historii a mimo jiné pojednává o datech vzniku některých informačních a komunikačních technologií. Některým se později věnuje v kapitole informační a komunikační technologie.

Používaní počítačové technologie a internetu není výdobytkem moderní doby, ale je záležitostí sahající několik desítek let do minulosti. Druhá kapitola se zabývá historií používání této technologie ve výuce anglického jazyka. Především pak popisuje všechna důležitá období spojená s používáním počítače a internetu.

Mezi učiteli, ale nejenom mezi nimi, nepanuje všeobecná shoda o používání internetu ve výuce anglického jazyka. Jedni jsou více méně skeptičtí k jeho používání a raději se spoléhají na osvědčené didaktické pomůcky. Druzí se naopak snaží toto médium zahrnovat do svých hodin.Ve třetí kapitole jsou proto představeny výhody spojené s používáním internetu ve výuce anglického jazyka. Především se zde rozebírá jeho pozitivní vliv na získávání informací, na komunikaci, na učení se spolupráci, kreativitu, produkci jazyka, řešení problémů, samostatnost jedince a na jeho motivaci. Čtvrtá kapitola se na druhou stranu zabývá nevýhodami spojenými s používáním tohoto média. Pozornost je věnována problémům s nedostatečným přístupem k internetu a technických problémům. Dále se zde řeší administrativní, kurikulární a osobní potřeby,

problémy jedinců, kteří nemohou používat počítač kvůli fyzickým či psychickým potížím, nedůvěra určitých kultur k používání této technologie a právní potíže.

Pátá kapitola pojednává o řečových dovednostech. Jsou zde představeny jednotlivé řečové dovednosti, kterými jsou čtení, psaní, poslech, mluvení. Abychom mohli zlepšit své řečové dovednosti nejenom na internetu ale i v prostředí třídy, musíme jim nejprve porozumět a dále pochopit, jak samotný proces komunikace funguje. Toto je předmětem zkoumání této kapitoly. Zabýváme se produktivními řečovými dovednostmi, strategiemi, a vším, na co se musíme zaměřit abychom je mohli rozvinout. Také vysvětlujeme rozdíly mezi intenzivním, extenzivním a autentickým poslechem a čtením, a zabýváme se různými typy čtení a poslechu.

Šestá kapitola částečně navazuje na zjištění, kterých jsme dosáhli v kapitole páté. Nejprve se v ní zabýváme rozvojem řečových dovedností s použitím informačních a komunikačních technologií a poté tyto technologie charakterizujeme. Celá kapitola je rozdělena na textové informační a komunikační technologie a na technologie, které nám umožňují ústní interakci. Pod textové informační a komunikační technologie spadají email, chat, blog, wiki a psaní deníku pomocí emailu. Při představování těchto komunikačních nástrojů poukazujeme na jejich výhody i na potíže, které mohou být spojeny s jejich používáním. Vysvětlujeme také rozdíly mezi synchronní a asynchronní komunikací. V případě chatu také uvádíme různé druhy chatu a způsoby jejich použití. V souvislosti s blogy uvádíme několik příkladů, definujeme rozdíly mezi nimi a zmiňujeme několik stránek, na nichž je možné založit si svůj vlastní blog. Informační a komunikační technologie umožňující ústní interakci, zahrnují hlasový chat a video chat, hlasový email, audio deníky a audio a video blogy. Tyto komunikační nástroje se přeci jenom nepatrně liší od těch textových, potřebují speciální hardware a software, na což je brán zřetel v této kapitole.

Poslední kapitola teoretické části se zabývá kritérii pro evaluaci webových stránek. Hodnocení webových stránek je náročný a komplexní proces. Je nutné pečlivě stanovit kritéria, která nám pomohou odlišit kvalitní webové stránky rozvíjející naše řečové dovednosti od těch nekvalitních. Ty jsou často neefektivní a nevhodné. Tímto se zabýváme v první části kapitoly sedm. Ve druhé části už se věnujeme samotným kritériím pro hodnocení vybraných webových stránek. Samotná evaluace je založena na pěti modulech. První tři se zabývají hodnocením z pohledu jazyka. První modul

pojednává především o možnostech osvojování si jazyka na dané stránce. Druhý modul pak spíše zkoumá rozvoj řečových dovedností na daných stránkách, zabývá se vhodností zvolených témat a částečně řeší metodologii. Třetí modul se týká žáka a jeho stylů učení. Další dva moduly spíše hodnotí stránky z technického úhlu pohledu.

Stěžejním bodem praktické části této bakalářské práce je navržení kritérií pro selekci kvalitních webových stránek od těch nekvalitních. Vybrané kvalitní webové stránky nám pomohou zhodnotit kritéria pro evaluaci.

Jak už bylo řečeno praktická část této bakalářské práce je z velké části založena na kritériích, která jsme probírali v sedmé kapitole teoretické části. Skládá se z pěti kapitol a jejím hlavním cílem je zhodnocení dvou vybraných webových stránek, které nám pomáhají zlepšit naše řečové dovedností. Dalším cílem je pak posoudit, zda by se vybrané internetové stránky daly použít ve školním prostředí při výuce anglického jazyka.

V první kapitole praktické části se zaobíráme fakty, která jsme získali při aplikaci kritérii, jenž jsme prezentovali v první části kapitoly sedm. Konkrétně hovoříme o procesu úzce spjatým s výběrem webových stránek. Dále komentujeme zjištění, ke kterým jsme došli při samotném procesu výběru potenciálních internetových stránek a zmiňujeme stránky vybrané pro evaluaci.

Další kapitola navazuje na druhou část kapitoly sedm a jejím výsledkem je seznam kritérií pro hodnocení webových stránek. Seznam je úzce založen na kritériích probraných v sedmé kapitole. Nejde však o přesnou kopii, ale o materiál modifikovaný pro potřeby evaluace.

Kapitola číslo tři se již zabývá samotným hodnocením. Konkrétně pak hodnotí ELC Study Zone. Hodnocení je prováděno podle seznamu kritérií, která byla diskutována v předchozí kapitole. Zabývá se jak jazykovou i technickou stránkou věci.

Ve čtvrté kapitole hodnotíme stejně jako v té předchozí vybranou webovou stránku. V tomto případě se jedná o evaluaci Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab. Při hodnocení bereme v potaz stejná kritéria jako v třetí kapitole.

Závěrečná část zkoumá, možnost využití vybraných webových stránek ve školním prostředí při výuce anglického jazyka. V potaz jsou pak především brány potřeby studentů, jejich věk, zájmy, styly učení a dále také kurikulum, jazyk instrukcí, metajazyk a technické dovednosti nutné pro práci s počítačem.

Závěry plynoucí z výzkumu prokázaly, že obě webové stránky nám pomáhají procvičovat a zlepšovat řečové dovednosti. Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab umožňuje především procvičovat a zlepšovat poslech, ale kromě toho také čtení, psaní a částečně i mluvení. Na ELC Study Zone můžeme zlepšovat hlavně čtení, ale i psaní a v malé míře taktéž mluvení. Přesto by mělo být zdůrazněno, že aktivity týkající se mluvení slouží zejména jako impulz pro diskuzi. Nelze ji ovšem srovnávat s běžnou slovní komunikací (z očí do očí). Stránky, které by nám umožnily procvičovat výše zmíněnou formu interakce jsme na internetu bohužel neobjevili. Dalším závěrem je, že obě hodnocené webové stránky sice mohou být používány ve školním prostředí při výuce anglického jazyka, avšak musí být upraveny tak, aby vyhovovaly potřebám žáků, jejich zájmům, stylům učení, jejich věku a v neposlední řadě musí odpovídat jejich jazykové úrovni. Navíc by měly být v souladu s cíli kurikula. Jazyk instrukcí musí být na úrovni, která je pro studenty pochopitelná. Další nutnou podmínkou je znalost práce s počítačem a schopnost pohybovat se na internetu.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A

Keypal project: Learners around the world	
Theme	learning English, other countries and cultures
Aim	to find out about another country and what it's like learning English there
Learners	young learners (aged 12+) and adult learners, elementary level and higher
Suggested time frame	5 lessons of 1 hour each
Procedure	
Before starting the project	a Contact a teacher in another country with a similar class via email. The easiest way to find another teacher is via an online professional development group. (See Chapter 11 for more information about making contact with other teachers.)
	b Exchange detailed information about your classes – number of learners, level of English, interests and ages.
	c Decide exactly how you will pair up your learners with the other teacher's learners. Who will work with whom?
	d Decide whether pairs will be using their own email accounts, or one main class email account – for example the teacher's email. This latter option works well for the single computer classroom.
	e Decide on a time frame. When exactly will the first email be sent? When will a reply email be sent? For this project, you will need five one-hour classes.
	f Compile a short list of websites which contain the information that your learners will need to complete the pre-project work below.
Lesson 1	a **Pairwork using the Internet.** Tell your learners that they will be contacting learners in another country. First, they will need to find out some basic information about that country.
	b As a class, brainstorm what learners already know about the country, and put it on the board.
	c Divide the class into small groups so that each group has access to a computer.

	d Give each group a topic to research (e.g. geography, typical food, languages, tourist attractions), and provide each group with a website address where they can find this information. Give them a time limit (e.g. 10 minutes) to find out as much as they can.
	e Regroup the learners to share what they have found out. Now each of these groups needs to write two or three more questions that they would like to ask someone who lives in the other country.
Lesson 2	**a** **Writing an introductory email.** Tell your learners the name of the keypal they will be sending their email to. Learners (individually or in pairs) compose an email to this keypal, including the following information: • introduce yourself (name, age, gender, interests). • describe what it's like living in your country. • describe what it's like learning English in your country (number of hours per week, types of activities, what you like/don't like about your English classes, how much English is present – or not – outside the classroom, e.g. subtitled films, TV, magazines). • include the questions from the pre-project phase above. As this email is a first draft, it can be done either on paper, or more effectively in a word processing program.
	b **Checking and revising the emails.** Learners now exchange their draft email with another student in the same class for checking. As the email will be sent to another country and to someone they don't yet know, learners are usually very keen for their email to be as 'correct' as possible.
	c Learners give feedback to each other on their emails.
	d Learners correct/revise their email until they are satisfied that it is ready to be sent.
	e Learners send the email to their keypal.
	Note: It is important that you have previously agreed a timeframe with the other teacher in the project. Learners should receive an introductory email from their keypal in time for the next class.
Lesson 3	**a** Learners receive and read their emails.
	b Learners write a short reply thanking their keypal, and answering the questions in the email. Again, learners spend time in class checking and revising their emails before sending.
Lesson 4	**a** Learners receive and read their second emails.
	b In small groups, they need to prepare a poster or presentation describing what they have learnt about the other country. They need to include two main sections: • what they have learnt about the country itself. • what they have learnt about learning English in that country. Give learners class time to prepare their poster/presentation. You may want to allow them to download photos from the Internet sites in the pre-project phase to decorate their posters. Allow them some rehearsal time.
Lesson 5	**a** Learners in their small groups now present their poster/findings to the class. If you have very large classes, you could divide the learners into two large groups, so that you have two presentations happening simultaneously.
	b At the end of all the presentations, you could have the class vote 'prizes' for whose presentation was the most: • full of facts. • visually attractive. • amusingly presented. • well researched. Make sure that there is a prize category for all of the presentations.

Suggested follow-up activities	a Information on what learners have found out about the other country can be presented using other ICT tools such as a blog, a wiki or a podcast, and shared with the keypals. The initial email contact established by a keypal project such as this also provides a good base on which to build more complex follow-up projects using tools such as blogs and wikis.
	b A 'culture box' of real objects can be posted to the partner class, and might include audio tapes of favourite English songs, advertising from magazines, food labels containing English and photos of the group. This simply makes the partner groups more 'real' to each other.

(Adopted from Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 67-69)

Appendix B

Data collection project 1: Language courses in Australia	
Theme	language learning, study abroad, travel, cultures
Aim	to collate information about English language courses in Australia
Learners	adult learners, intermediate and higher levels
Suggested time frame	2 lessons of 60 to 90 minutes each

Procedure	
Lesson 1	a The teacher provides pairs of learners with one language school website each in Australia (or another English-speaking country). These schools can be in one geographical area, e.g. New South Wales or Queensland, or all over Australia.
	b Pairs visit the website, read the information available, find an email address for further enquiries and compile a series of questions to email to the school about the language course on offer. These might include asking for further information about accommodation, transport, local sights, attractions and activities, food, fees and course content.
	c Pairs write an email, which can then be checked by another pair and/or the teacher, and send it to the language school. To minimise the risk of learners not receiving an answer to their enquiry, the teacher can supply each pair with two websites to write to.
Lesson 2	d Once all of the pairs have received an answer to their enquiries, learners are regrouped to share what they have found out. Each new group decides which course they think is the 'best' and why. If one pair is without an email reply, the pair can be split up and each learner join a pair who has received a reply, to help them with their presentation.
	e Follow-up activities might include a spoken presentation on each language course to the class, or a written report, or findings can be presented using other ICT tools such as a blog, or a podcast (see Chapter 7).

(Adopted from Dudeney, Hockly 2007, 65-66)

Appendix C

The screening process

The websites providing us with practice in listening

The name of the website	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	Criterion 5	Criterion 6
Randall's Cyber Listening Lab	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no
About.com English as 2nd language	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no
English Teachers Everywhere	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Eslus.com	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
English Bites	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
English Listening Room	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
Light Up Your Brain	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
LingualNet	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
The Moonlit Road	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
UEfAP	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no

Legend:

Criterion 1:   Listening skills practice

Criterion 2:   Language level ranging from advanced beginners to advanced learners

Criterion 3:   Sufficient volume (at least 20 listening activities)

Criterion 4:   Feedback that provides the correct answer

Criterion 5:   Cost: Free

Criterion 6:   Tracking that keeps record of scores and time on task that are automatically sent to the instructor

Yes - criterion is met

No - criterion is not met

Sources: Krauss

                Reading Skills

The websites providing us with practice in reading

The name of the website	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	Criterion 5	Criterion 6
Absolutely Whootie	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Culture shock	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
ELC Study Zone	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
MysteryNet's Kids Mysteries	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
InterLink Reading	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no
TV411 Reading	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
Daily News Quiz	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no
Short Stories at East of the Web	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Culture Capsules	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Adult Learning Activities	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no

Legend:

Criterion 1:   Reading skills practice

Criterion 2:   Language level ranging from advanced beginners to advanced learners

Criterion 3:   Sufficient volume (at least 20 reading activities)

Criterion 4:   Feedback that provides the correct answer

Criterion 5:   Cost: Free

Criterion 6:   Tracking that keeps record of scores and time on task that are
                automatically sent to the instructor

Yes - criterion is met

No - criterion is not met

Sources: Krauss

The websites providing us with practice in writing

The name of the website	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	Criterion 5	Criterion 6
Art Safari	yes	no	no	no	yes	no
D.FILM MovieMaker	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes
Electronic Postcards	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Free Greeting Cards	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Java Lake Effects Greeting Cards	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Pacific Products Gallery	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes
Purdue University On-line Writing Lab	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no
TV411 Writing	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no

Legend:

Criterion 1:   Writing skills practice

Criterion 2:   Language level ranging from advanced beginners to advanced learners

Criterion 3:   Sufficient volume (at least 10 writing activities)

Criterion 4:   Feedback that provides the correct answer

Criterion 5:   Cost: Free

Criterion 6:   Tracking that keeps record of scores and time on task that are
                automatically sent to the instructor

Yes - criterion is met

No - criterion is not met

Sources: Krauss