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Learning English in Pre-school age – Parents' Beliefs

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Abstract:

The main topic of the bachelor thesis is parents' beliefs about early English language learning. The theoretical part starts with a look into the origin and development of the pre-school institutions in the Czech Republic. Then the focus is on a Framework Education Programme for Pre-primary Education and its conception and contribution to the English pre-school classes. An emphasis is placed on overall description of psychological development of the pre-school age child and also mainly on the first and the second language acquisition. At the end of this paper benefits and possible risks of early language learning are described as well as introduction into the belief system. The practical part is dedicated to the research that was conducted in order to discover parents' reasons for early language learning.

Key words: pre-school learners, framework education programme, second language acquisition, parents' beliefs

Abstrakt:

Hlavním tématem této bakalářské práce jsou názory rodičů na ranou výuku anglického jazyka. Teoretická část začíná nahlédnutím do původu a vývoje předškolních zařízení v České republice. Poté se práce zaměřuje na definování Rámcového vzdělávacího programu pro předškolní vzdělávání a jeho přínos do výuky anglického jazyka. Důraz je kladen na celkový vývoj dítěte předškolního věku a hlavně také na osvojování mateřského a cizího jazyka. Ke konci této práce jsou popsány nejen klady a zápory rané výuky, ale je zde možno také nalézt úvod do systému názorů. Praktická část je věnována výzkumu, který byl proveden ke zjištění důvodů rodičů pro raný začátek cizojazyčné výuky svých dětí.

Klíčová slova: předškolní žák, rámcový vzdělávací program, osvojování si druhého jazyka, názory rodičů

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0 INTRODUCTION

A very popular tendency in the last few years (not only in the Czech Republic, but also in other countries) has been learning the English language from a very young age. I observed this trend just last year in my home town when I met a woman who organizes English courses in the local pre-schools. I had a chance to visit her courses, and got the impulse to think about this 21st century possibility. As a future teacher I started to think about this relatively new trend and its consequences; what it brings to the children and what lead parents to support it. Parents might realize that knowing another language may mean a lot for their children's future. For example they could get a good job or better education, or it can broaden their cultural horizons. But I would like to deal with this question in my practical part.

As already mentioned the aim of this work is to have a closer look into parents' beliefs and opinions on early language learning. Therefore the work begins with the theoretical part where the reader can get an overall overview about the development and origin of pre-school institutions, and where the pre-school education, its tasks and aims are introduced. Also the Framework Education Programme and the description how the English language teaching is incorporated in the Education programme structure can be found there.

Then the second chapter talks about the pre-school learner and his/her overall development. It covers the description of the cognitive processes, and at the end of this chapter the theories and the conclusions of the first and the second language acquisition are made.

The third chapter gives evidence of reasons for and against of the early start and possible risks that might occur.

And the last chapter of the theoretical part is devoted to the specification of beliefs. What beliefs are and where they can be found. Mainly teachers' and learners' beliefs are introduced as they are widely described in the literature. This chapter is meant to be as a bridge to the practical part concerning parents' beliefs.

Finally, the theoretical part describes a research that was conducted in order to ascertain parents' beliefs about the English language learning since the pre-school age. Parents of the pre-school children were chosen as they are participants of a learning process, and their belief system is certainly influential upon their children. This research should help to comprehend their reasons in order to facilitate further cooperation, and improve effectiveness of this education.

1 PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

This chapter looks into the history of pre-school institutions and explains the development of thinking about education and how it is connected with today's Framework Education Programme.

1.1 Development and origin

Nowadays it is well known that a child is very vulnerable since birth and therefore needs help and support not only in its first days of life, but also in the first several years. According to Opravilová (2001, p. 123), it is necessary to furnish the child with supporting and developing activities and creating a space where it can fulfil its developmental requirements because this early period is significant in one life. This point of view was not always true and had to be formed.

As Opravilová (2001, p. 125) describes, in the 16th century, childhood was considered as something imperfect, but from the 17th century the interest in the child grew with significant contribution of J.A. Komenský, who stressed that education established on understanding of the child guarantees correct evolution of the whole society. He found the first tradition which understands the importance of the pre-school education. However, his proposal still did not help to be more sensitive to the child, but the turn that became important came at the end of the 19th century with the release of the Basic Education Act. This Act supported the expansion of institutions for pre-school education in the Bohemian countries (Váňová, 2007, p. 78). Nevertheless, the historic origin of these institutions is connected with a German teacher Friderich Fröbel, who laid the ground for them and named them "kindergarten" (Průcha, 1999, p. 52).

Průcha (1999, p. 62) and Opravilová (2001, p. 127) agree that as a result of growing employment of women during 60's and 70's in our country, the pre-school education became more important. Opravilová (2001, p. 127) also states that the need for such institutions was justified by a social-nursing role, and their aim was to stand in for the family care. A pedagogical dictionary defines pre-school education as "education ensuring the satisfaction of intellectual and social abilities and skills of the child that takes place in cooperation with family and pre-school institution" (Průcha, Walterová, Mareš 1995, p. 175, my translation). The way the thinking on education was developing, opinions changed, too. The original function of the Bohemian pre-school institutions was nursing that dominated over educational

function. But as time passed preconditions for further children's education started to be created (Opravilová, 2001, p. 128). The predecessor of the pre-school in the 19th century is presented as an institution so called "opatrovna" that also served as a place for the training of the future pre-school teachers (Ibid.). However, Váňová (2007, p. 78) states that there existed three types of pre-school institutions that were in development. They were called "mateřská škola", "opatrovna" and "dětská zahrádka". In fact, the term "mateřská škola" stayed in the use until today.

The 20th century brought the development of science, and therefore a lot of knowledge about importance of the first years of the child's life was collected. The goal of the education at that time became a formation of the child as an object along agreed model using organization and external control (Opravilová, 2001, p. 128). To understand today's aims of pre-school institutions three main pedagogical trends are needed to be mentioned. The first was *sociocentric* which preferred the interest of the society and the preparation for school through daily program without any sensitivity to the child (Ibid.). Similarly, Jůva (1995, p.36) writes about Sociological pedagogy where an individual is formed for social benefits, and it leads him to obtain the knowledge of moral values. Opravilová (2001, p. 128-131) continues that the second trend was *pedocentric* which was the exact opposite of the socially oriented one. The objective was derived from internal conditions of the child's development. The child was at the center of attention, and the emphasis was put on spontaneity and freedom. Finally, the *convergent* trend was aiming at balancing both previous ones, and it stood up for individual approach to each child. It preferred to develop the child's emotional and social connections rather than intellect, and it supposed to provide an environment with balanced child's free personality development. However, an essential degree of developmental restriction in a social group was necessary.

It follows that today's pre-school has the right and duty to prepare the child for different life situations. Its expansion of experiences, skills and habits function as a resource for adequate development of personality, and that is the reason why this institution is becoming a necessary part of the specific education which fulfil the sense and function of pre-school period (Ibid.).

There had been a lot of changes dependent on political events which had a great influence on Czech education. For instance, Smolíková (2006a) writes that until the year 1989 our education had a notion of uniformity. The sociocentric trend mentioned above is reflected here. Then, many important changes took place after the year 1990 including the changes in

education that were declared by National Programme for the Development of Education – the “White Paper” (MŠMT, 2001). These changes contributed to the creation of school autonomy and also to individual freedom of the teacher and the child. The convergent trend became more powerful as it declared an individual approach to the child and educational methods were adapted to the natural development of the pre-school age group (Smolíková, 2006a). A wide range of options had to be organized in order to formulate common requirements of educational goals. This need gave rise to Framework Education Programme for Pre-primary Education (Opravilová, 2001, p. 137) that is going to be discussed.

1.2 Framework Education Programme for Pre-primary Education

In the Czech Republic the Framework Education Programmes (hereinafter FEP) are subordinated to the National Programme for the Development of Education and define binding frameworks for each level of education (pre-primary, elementary and secondary). According to relevant FEP each school has to create own School education program (hereinafter SEP) following its principles (VÚP, 2006, p. 5). In this paper the interest is mainly in Framework Educational Programme for Pre-primary education (hereinafter FEP for Pre-primary Education).

Pre-school education is organized for children from the age of three to the age of six or seven. Institutional education functioning along Education Act is a public service (VÚP, 2006, p. 7). Also some private pre-schools are in operation. According to the pedagogical dictionary those pre-schools were formed after 1990 and are functioning on the basis of the regulation issued by Ministry of Education (Průcha, Walterová, Mareš 1995, p. 207). Each pre-school is supposed to take into account FEP for a Pre-primary Education document. Its First edition was published in 2001, but it was continually adjusted to fit the needs of teachers, new legislations and to curricular reform. Second edition was released in 2004, and became obligatory for pre-school institutions with entering of a new Education Act in 2007 (Smolíková, 2006a). It delimits the main requirements, conditions and rules for institutional education of pre-school age children, and provides elementary learning bases on which the elementary education can be established (VÚP, 2006, p. 6). Bečvářová (2008) adds that the function of FEP for Pre-primary Education expresses “general idea about education, describes optimal conditions, forms and methods, as well as optimal results that can be expected; along FEP the school designs and writes own SEP”.

The following two points will explain tasks and aims that are defined in FEP for Pre-primary Education.

1.3 Tasks of early education

The general task is to guide the child so that it acquires bases of the key competencies that are vital for life (Opravilová, 2001, p. 138). Smolíková (2006b) defines key competencies as general educational aims with expected outcomes that express what an individual should reach at a certain level. FEP for Pre-primary Education defines other tasks such as to complement the family education and with its cooperation to provide an environment supporting active development and learning of the child. Moreover, it should meaningfully enrich the program of the child's day and provide it with the professional care, and make the child's future life and education journey easier. And last but not least, it should create good preconditions for future education supporting individual developmental possibilities of children (VÚP, 2006, p. 7, 8).

1.4 Aims of early education

The general aims of the preschool education are to support the child's development, its learning and knowledge in order to acquire basic social values, personal independence and ability to behave as an individual. Partial aims are closely connected to the general aims, and are expressed in more detailed form that is reflected in five educational areas. Those areas are biological, psychological, interpersonal, social and environmental. They tell the teacher on what she should focus, and what is important to develop gradually. If those aims are fulfilled, the education head towards formation of key competencies (VÚP, 2006, p. 10, 11, 46).

1.5 Space for Foreign Language Learning in FEP for Pre-primary Education

The interest in English language learning in the pre-school can be supported by seeking references in FEP for Pre-primary education. Unfortunately, this document does not include one separate area about foreign language learning, but the reference can be found under the communicative competence where is written “ the child knows that people can communicate in other languages and that it is possible to learn them; has developed

elementary preconditions for learning a foreign language” (VÚP, 2006, p. 13, my translation). Looking closely, there are two more references that can be found in the socio-cultural and the environmental education areas. The socio-cultural area refers to “creating awareness of other cultures and nationalities” and the environmental area point out “learning about different cultures” (Ibid., 2006, p. 26, 29, my translation). There are two very interesting inconsistent views of Czech educational institutions. According to the Ministry of Education, if some pre-school institution wants to mediate an introduction into the foreign language, it has to be included in its SEP even if lessons are managed by an external lector. On the other hand, the Czech School Inspection expressed that if the foreign language is included in SEP, the education is as per Educational Act, and therefore the pre-school has to guarantee this education, take the responsibility and be free of charge. If it is not included in SEP, the education is beyond the SEP, and it is as a paid service provided by language school or agency (Těhalová, 2012).

To sum up, as it is mentioned above the aim of pre-school education is to equip each child with a set of key competencies necessary for their life. According to Najvar (2010, p. 17, 43), in terms of the English language, it was not until the beginning of the 21st century when many European school systems started to implement foreign language teaching since the third grade of primary education into their curriculum. For pre-primary education and first grade of the primary education there are experimental projects that will verify if this education is integrated into the curriculum too. For now in the Czech Republic the pre-school curriculum does not specify foreign language teaching, so educational institutions had to deal with it as described above. Those institutions and parents that support foreign language learning since pre-school age can have different aims. Lightbown and Spada (2006, p. 74) write that if the objective is native like mastery of the target language, it is necessary for the learner to be surrounded by the language since the early age, and the learner has to have maximal contact with the language. In contrast, when the aim is basic communicative ability, it is more efficient to start foreign language learning later. Therefore the next chapter is going to deal with pre-school learner and his/her development.

2 PRE-SCHOOL LEARNER

Pre-school period is in many publications considered as the age from three to six years. Development at this stage is smoother, and takes place mostly in a sphere of a child's psyche. Čáp (1993, p. 138) states that many specialists consider the age until six years crucial in human development because the character and intellectual abilities take form. Additionally, Šulová (2004, p. 66) writes that this period is one of the most interesting periods in a human's evolution. It is a time of physical and mental activity, greater interest in surroundings, and time called "a period of game". The greatest share of this development has social environment in which the child lives because as Vágnerová (2005b, p.273 – 275) describes it affects all aspects of the child's personality such as emotional experiences, cognitive processes, language acquisition, behavioural patterns and self-control; moreover, it contributes to the development of ego and self-confidence. Indeed, the most significant social environment is family, but as the child is getting in touch with more people it learns different behaviour that goes with different roles through observation. Then the child applies the roles outside of the family, in most cases in a group of peers or in the pre-school (Šulová, 2004, p. 74). The main intention of this chapter is therefore to focus on children of this age group and guidance through their developmental processes.

2.1 Psychological development

Psychological development of the pre-school child plays a significant role in learning. For example, the teacher needs to know, and be able to recognize various stages of development of children so as to easily plan an effective program. With developmental changes taking place within a week or even within a lesson, an experienced and conscious teacher needs to be flexible in adjusting lesson plans where necessary (Dunn, 1983, p.8). Focus will be mainly on cognitive processes that serve to the cognition of the surrounding world. The concept *cognitive* denotes "all mental abilities connected with thinking and cognition" (Fontana, 1997, p. 63). Then the attention will be paid to the ability of acquisition of the mother tongue and the second language.

2.1.1 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

“Physical development plays important role in determining what activities are right for the young child” (Dunn, 1983, p.14). Coordination is improving and movements are more precise, purposeful, and are connected with consciousness (Trpišovská et al., 1990, p. 32). It is a good time to start recreational sports such as skiing, skating or bike riding (Šulová, 2004, p. 67). Mainly fine motor skills are in a greater development. They are related with the development of games, drawing and other manual skills (Trpišovská et al., 1990, p. 32).

2.1.2 PERCEPTION

Perception is said to be global as children perceive the whole as a sum which is created of single pieces where they cannot distinguish the basic relationships. Their attention can be easily gained by a strong detail, chiefly when this detail has some relationship to their current interest or need. Visual and auditory differentiation is developing as well (Šulová, 2004, p. 68). Perception is controlled by egocentrism and is connected to the experience. Children are very curious (Čačka, 1997, p. 55).

2.1.3 MEMORY

The development of memory is introduced by Shaffer and Kipp (2010, p. 315) as “the process by which we store and retrieve information”. For the pre-school children the imagery, sensibility and spontaneity are typical. They better remember things that have an emotional impact, e.g. joy, admiration, enthusiasm, or a negative experience. At first their memory is mostly unintentional; that is the reason why these children remember things without any effort or intention (Trpišovská et. al., 1990, p. 33). Around their fifth year, intentional memory is in development, where the mechanical memory plays its major part. When these memories connect with the thirst for knowledge, the background for an easy acceptance of information is created. There appears a concrete memory that enables a child to remember particular events better than verbal descriptions. Initially, a short-term memory prevails, and then later - around the sixth year - long-term memory becomes accurate (Šulová, 2004, p. 68). To sum up, Trpišovská (1990, p. 34) adds that the main assumptions for systematic learning are the growth of the range and permanence of the memory.

2.1.4 FANTASY

In relation to the children's growing memory, attention and emotional feelings, their imagination is richer and more colourful. Their reality is interpreted in an understandable and acceptable way for them, and this is the reason that the gaps between individual details are filled with confabulation. This confabulation presents fictions that children believe are true. The adult has to guide them towards understanding and acceptance of the real world, and make a difference to the world of fantasy (Šulová, 2004, p. 69). Fantasy which is still involved in children's thinking is said to be concrete and sensitive. It is used in creative ideas and primarily in thematic plays where fairy tales have their place (Čačka, 1997, p. 57).

2.1.5 THINKING

The preschool age is a time of intensive thinking development. It is influenced by the improvement of the work of the cerebral cortex and also by the improvement of all the cognitive processes. Thought operations such as analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalization are improving. Children examine and discover relationships and mutual connections between things. Furthermore, they are interested in an origin, cause, purpose and meaning (Trpišovská et. al., 1990, p. 34). Children already know that everything around them has some name, and from the question "What is it?" move on to the question "Why?" (Šulová, 2004, p. 69). Piaget's four major stages of cognitive development in children's thinking cannot be omitted. The stage that applies to pre-schoolers is called the preoperational stage. Shaffer and Kipp (2010, p. 55) interpret it in their book as:

" Children use symbolism (images and language) to represent and understand various aspects of the environment. They respond to objects and events according to the way things appear to be. Thought is egocentric, meaning that children think everyone sees the world in much the same way that they do".

Šulová (2004, p. 69) claims that children's thinking is still connected with their activity. Their thoughts are focused on their perceptive activities where optical objects predominate.

2.1.6 ATTENTION

Thanks to the attention, the child can receive a richer information input, but at this age it is still volatile. To strengthen it, the constructive games can be used (Čačka, 1997, p. 56).

2.1.7 SPEECH DEVELOPMENT

Speech development is closely linked with thought, and thought is formed before the speech. Thanks to the ability to speak, the learning process can be faster and shorter because the knowledge can be taken up from other people (Trpišovská et. al., 1990, p. 35). Children's verbal competence improves in its content and form; in addition, they are likely to acquire basic grammatical rules. In the fourth year children start using longer and more complicated clauses; sentences come into use later. Past tense is frequently used, usually when expressing some past events. Egocentric speech is an important component of the development, and is not intended for anyone else than the child himself. This kind of speech does not need a listener as it is linked with thinking, and has a different content and a different form from communication where a partner is involved (Vágnerová, 2005a, p. 195). Šulová (2004, p. 70) writes that there are four functions that exist in the speech development. The first one, which prevails, is a communicative function. The speech is a communicative tool, and has an important role in the process of social integration of an individual. Another one is called the cognitive function, since the speech development has something to do with growth of knowledge and experience. The third function is expressive by which children can express their feelings, experience and needs. And the last one has the regulation function, with which children control their behaviour.

That was the description of the speech development of the pre-school children, but the interest is in the question why and how the children can easily acquire a second language. Undoubtedly, it is necessary to start searching in a question how they acquire their first language. This process will be mentioned in the following chapter although it is related to the speech development.

To summarize this chapter, the description showed the development in the pre-school age, but what does it mean for English Language Teaching (hereinafter ELT)? It means that teachers should be aware of those changes. He/she should bear in mind that every child is an individual and is developing in own pace and way. The teacher can take advantage of this intense development and in his/her English language class use games that, for example, support visual and auditory development. Čačka (1997, p. 56) supports learning of rhymes because he suggests that thanks to their unintentional memory, it is easy for children to learn the rhymes mechanically without concentration on the content. Learning of rhymes or songs goes in hand with the speech development because speech usage develops cognitive

processes. Dunn (1983, p. 3) highlights that when the pre-school child starts to learn a second language at this age, it is still in the process of acquiring the mother language. Šulová (2004, p. 68) adds further that this stage is appropriate to begin to learn a foreign language; but the methodology has to be adequate to the child's age. Nevertheless, rich children's fantasy can contribute to the English language learning by using stories and various costumes, or plush characters in a form of puppets that are associated with foreign language phrases or vocabulary. And with the respect to their thinking, the teacher should use material where children can use their senses, and where they can be physically active. Activities should be constantly changed in order to keep children's attention and more learning can take place. Reilly and Ward (1997, p.7) recommend ringing the changes every five to ten minutes, and if children are really absorbed in the activity, letting it go on a bit longer. They recommend noting down things children really enjoy. After all, the crucial thing is to plan shorter and more frequent lessons because as Černá (2009, p. 9) presents, some studies have found that frequent repetition brings better results.

Finally, a nice quotation from Dunn (1983, p. 16) needs to be presented:

“To understand the children she teaches, a teacher not only has to understand their developmental needs, but also has to be able to be on their level and see things through their eyes”.

2.2 First language acquisition and parent's role

First language (L1), or according to some authors family language or mother tongue, is a subject on which a lot of research has been done. The way how children acquire language has become an interesting question for applied linguists and for foreign language teachers who want to understand this process. Not only Lightbown and Spada (2006, p. 1) mention that it is “one of the most impressive and fascinating aspects of human development”, but other authors such as W. O'Grady or K. Johnson are engaged in this topic. Research on L1 acquisition became the basis for the second language acquisition mentioned below. Acquisition is a process characterized by Johnson (2001, p.75) as “by which individuals ‘pick up’ a language through exposure to it.” He also mentions that L1 acquisition manages every normal child at an early age.

To start from the beginning, children after they are born make gurgling sounds. Gradually they recognize that some sounds are similar to the ones the adults utter and try to imitate them. Those sounds are kept and the rest is lost. At the gurgling stage children were able to imitate any language, but since they lost unimportant sounds, it is difficult for them to learn foreign language containing those lost sounds later. The acquisition of lost sounds is possible, but not perfect, and can be heard in pronunciation that is affected by the mother tongue (Fontana, 1997, p. 84). This claim might be the core key why linguists and researchers started to be interested in the question when the language acquisition is critical. Vágnerová (2005b, p. 116) states that many researchers regard the first five years of life as critical for the speech development. One of the main linguists - Chomsky - was very fascinated by first language acquisition process, and his ideas are attached to Critical Period Hypothesis (CHP). This hypothesis suggests that children without access to language in infancy and early childhood will have difficulty to acquire language beyond this critical period (Lightbown, Spada, 2006, p. 17). This is an opinion explaining why there might be the necessity of the early language learning that is connected to the innatist school of thought.

There were three main theoretical views explaining first language acquisition. The behaviourist perspective proposed that children learn through imitation and form habits of correct language. The innatist perspective, led by Chomsky, believed that the language is innate endowment (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p. 10-19). He proposed that humans have abstract “acquisition device”, a little black box in their brain, that turns experience into knowledge, and this “device” includes Universal Grammar with incorporated grammatical categories and principles suitable to all human languages (O’Grady, 2005, p.183). And interactionist/developmental perspective saw the way in learning language in the child’s ability to learn from experience in interactions with people and objects around them (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p. 10-19).

In these early years, there is no doubt that parents contribute to the child’s development with a great deal. Their role is fundamental, but it is not clear what they exactly do to support their children’s language learning (Černá, 2009, p. 2). Johnson (2001, p.79) says that there are things parents do not do when giving children language input contrary to language teachers. Parents do not follow a syllabus, do not provide explanations, do not drill and do not correct grammar errors. In fact, their communication is message-focused in order to be understood. Parents modify their language which is called motherese or caretaker talk (Černá, 2009, p. 2).

There is not one single and definite answer to the question how children learn their first language. That is the reason there are more theories that contradict to each other, and try to come up with different views. With expansion of science in the middle of the 20th century came a new focus on second language acquisition (Najvar, 2010, p.17). There can be seen the similarity with the first language acquisition. It is indeed as Johnson (2001, p. 38) writes in his book “new ideas do not just spring out of thin air: they often come out of old ideas and from ideas in other areas of knowledge”.

2.3 Second language acquisition

Second language acquisition is defined by Rod Ellis (1997, p.3) “as the way in which people learn language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom”. Hence the study of this is called “Second Language Acquisition” (SLA). Furthermore, Ellis (1997, p. 3) explains that the term second needs a careful explanation. It “can refer to any language that is learned subsequent to mother tongue and thus it can refer to learning of a third or fourth language.” Although he points out that ‘second’ should not be confused with ‘foreign’, he clearly stands for the opinion that when it is spoken about second language acquisition the learner learns language naturally living in the country, or through instruction in a classroom. Johnson (2001, p. 11) and Dunn (1983, p. 19) present that second language (L2) is used as the lingua franca because it is taught all day or every day, and it serves as a communicative medium, whereas foreign language (FL) does not have this special status, and is taught once or several times per week. Both agree that this distinction is nowadays blurred and they incline to the Ellis’s opinion. Concerning this paper, foreign language will be taken into account because as Černá (2009, p. 6) states Czech children in this case learn the English language in the classroom through instruction, and the experience outside of the classroom is very little.

The main theories that attempt to explain SLA, and that are common to all learners and contexts will be briefly introduced.

To starting with the behaviourist theory, that was very influential between 1940’s and 1970’s. As mentioned in the first language acquisition, those theorists saw language development as habit formation. In the second language acquisition, they emphasize mimicry, memorization and learning patterns by heart because they assume that habits from the first language would interfere with new habits needed for the second language.

On the account of rising criticism, the innatist views began to arise. There are some researchers that are in favour of the application of Chomsky's Universal Grammar into the second language and yet there are some who refuse it. Nevertheless, more influential was Stephen Krashen's language acquisition theory. This model consists of five interconnected hypotheses namely The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, The Monitor Hypothesis, The Natural Order Hypothesis, The Input Hypothesis and The Affective Filter Hypothesis (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p. 34-35). Acquisition-Learning distinction is about two ways of mastering a foreign language. The acquisition is a natural process without intensive concentration on linguistic forms such like in the mother tongue; whereas learning takes place in a classroom, and it is a conscious process focusing on one specific language point (Johnson, 2001, p. 76-77). Pre-school children have desire to communicate, and they are able to experiment with sounds and create situations in which they can acquire L2. To get the maximum language acquisition in the classroom, "young children need to be exposed to a programme rich in meaningful, real-life activities in which communication takes place naturally" (Dunn, 1983, p. 3).

In short, besides the main theories that were mentioned above, it is possible to search for many other theories clarifying SLA. Regrettably, authors agree that there is no one comprehensive theory that would definitely say how children acquire second language (Ellis, 1997, p. 89; Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p. 49); instead linguists and psychologists explain it in relation to their researcher. With the advancement of technology it can be expected that new investigations will be taking place to decode this complicated question. However, as Dunn (1983, p. 16) mentions, research proves one, that is:

"... parents and home are the strongest influence on a child's life. If parents are interested in their children's achievements in English and show appreciation of their success, the children will be motivated".

If parents make a decision that their child will learn the English language, as a first step they should examine the environment, context of learning program and external conditions. The following chapter will make parents aware of benefits and risks of the pre-school foreign language learning.

3 BENEFITS AND POSSIBLE RISKS OF THE EARLY START

Parents who have their children learning the English language in pre-school may see many benefits that this opportunity offers.

Johnson (2001, p. 5) mentions that it is not difficult to understand the importance of foreign language learning in today's world. Millions of children around the world learn multiple languages from earliest childhood, or acquire additional languages at school. "The acquisition and maintenance of more than one language can open doors to many personal, social, and economic opportunities" (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p. 25). It is obvious that parents want to give their children something they did not have, some advantage for their future lives (Šulová, 2007, p. 49). Najvar (2010, p. 25) writes that people who believe in early English learning point out the lightness and naturalness how child acquire first language. Children have an innate potential to acquire language quickly, easily and without effort. Those arguments show suitability to use this potential for learning of the second language at an early age. In addition, the case of linguistically deprived girl name Genie scientifically demonstrates that there is some sensitive period in human life, which brings us back to the CPH mentioned above (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p. 17). Littlewood (1984, in Najvar, 2010, p. 29) adds that children are exposed to easier language, and do not have negative attitudes towards it. Dunn (1983, p. 3) says that "they are willing to use language and to experiment with sounds, without worrying about mistakes" and rarely have the inhibitions typical of adults.

On the other hand, the negative attitude can be developed from the child's bad experience (Najvar, 2010, p. 37). This bad experience might stem from language discontinuity that is not secured by parents (Černá, 2009, p. 9). Another problem can occur when the English lesson does not fulfill children's and parents' expectations. Children "long to be able to talk a lot of English quickly, in a grow-up manner" and parents want to see progress. If those expectations are not accomplished, there comes disappointment and consequently children's loss of interest (Dunn, 1983, p. 2). In addition, Šulová (2007, p. 56) does not clearly support the idea of early exposure because she believes that immense effect has mastering of developmental tasks and mother language rather than overload the child with high demands.

The main benefits and risks of the early language learning that parents should be aware of have been summarized, nevertheless it is up to every parent to take into consideration if their child is ready for new experience. The next chapter relating to the beliefs will be moved on to.

4 BELIEFS

This chapter is going to ascertain general beliefs, and afterwards it will define teachers' and learner' beliefs. On the basis of this determination the practical part will be derived as the aim of this paper is to find out parents' beliefs about the pre-school English language learning. The motive is to understand the reasons for which parents support their child in this kind of education, and thus to promote cooperation between parents and teachers, and streamline this education.

4.1 Introduction to beliefs

Beliefs are difficult to identify and assess. Nevertheless, the ensuing statements present how authors elucidate them. According to Williams and Burden (1997, p. 56), beliefs "tend to be culturally bound, to be formed early in life and to be resistant to change." Beliefs correspond to one's attitude and values about the world and one's place within it. According to Dewey (1933, p. 6 in Kalaja and Barcelos, 2003, p. 10), belief "covers all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet which we are sufficiently confident of to act upon and also the matters that we know accept as certainly true, as knowledge, but which nevertheless may be questioned in the future..." Freeman (1991 in Kalaja and Barcelos, 2003, p. 10) says that beliefs are cognitive concepts and social constructs that are created from our experiences and problems. Generally speaking, beliefs are attitudes by which a man is led, and according to which he/she is convinced that he/she acts properly in a given situation. Unfortunately, these attitudes can be harmful because one does not have to accept the right of others, or does not have to be willing to increase his/her knowledge.

In relation to the English language learning and teaching, beliefs help to collect data about teaching and learning in order to reflect and improve it. Those data can lead to better understanding of one's own assumption about teaching, and better understanding of teaching and learning processes (Richards and Lockhart, 1996, p. 1-2). In those processes not only teachers and learners are involved, but also parents of the young learners.

4.2 Teachers' beliefs

Teachers' beliefs are said to create good background, and to play crucial role in teachers' decisions, judgments, behavior and action (Shavelson and Stern in Woods, 1996, p. 192; Richards and Lockhart, 1996, p. 30). They affect everything what the teacher do in the classroom, and might be established by the time a student gets to college (Williams and

Burden, 1997, p. 56). Getting back to the Freeman's statement mentioned above in this chapter, Richard and Lockhart (1996, p. 30-31) present that their origin comes from teachers' own experience as a language learner, experience of what works best, established practice, personal preference and from an understanding of the learning principle or the method of teaching. Woods (1996, p. 186) states that "language teachers are influenced by the many theoretical claims about what language is, what it consists of and how it works". What is more teachers hold certain beliefs about English, learning, teaching, the program and the curriculum, and lastly about language teaching as a profession (Richards and Lockhart, 1996, p. 32-40). Williams and Burden (1997, p. 57 – 62) add to the list beliefs about learners and about themselves. To put it simply, beliefs are statements such as: *grammar errors should be corrected immediately; teacher has to lead a learner to be autonomous; teacher has to be an authority and model to the child; vocabulary is learnt best when written on the paper*. Those statements are countless, and they are derived from an individual perception of the world.

4.3 Learners' beliefs

Similarly, learners bring to learning their beliefs, attitudes and goals (Richards and Lockhart, 1996, p. 52). But this is especially true for older learners whose beliefs are usually based on previous learning experiences, and assumptions about type of instructions are the best for them (Lightbrown and Spada, 2006, p. 67). On the contrary, young learners do not have any previous experience and therefore they are influenced by their family and social milieu which can have an impact on their attitude toward the language and language learning. Richard and Lockhart (1996, p. 52 – 56) write that older learners' belief system can easily influence their motivation, expectations and perceptions about what is easy or difficult about language. They can hold beliefs about the nature of English, speakers of English, the four language skills, teaching, language learning, appropriate classroom behavior, about themselves and goals. Statements showing learners' opinions are the following examples: *the most difficult part of learning English is learning grammar; the teacher has to explain grammar rules; or to learn with the native speaker is the best way to learn the language*.

Parents as participants of learning process - in this case parents of pre-school age learners - hold certain beliefs that are based on their experience, their attitudes determined by the society or their educational background. Since young learners do not have such experience they are undoubtedly influenced by their parents' opinions. To find out parents' beliefs a questionnaire will be used.

5 RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

The practical part of this paper shall provide an insight into parents' beliefs, and shall be supported by the theory from the previous part of the thesis.

Firstly, the aim of the research is stated. Then a general introduction into the research describing methodology and the theory of the chosen research follow. After that the characteristic of the concrete research, expectations, and limits of the research and questionnaire analysis are included. Finally, the outcomes of the research are presented.

5.2 Aim of the study

As it was mentioned in the theoretical part, parents are participants of the learning process. In this case primarily parents of young children because this age group has not created their own beliefs yet, and therefore it is assumed that they are influenced by their parents' attitudes. Thus the aim of the study is to find out parents' beliefs and opinions about the English language learning since the pre-school age.

5.3 General introduction to the research

This research adopts quantitative approach, and the data collected take the form of numbers (Denscombe, 2007, p. 254). The reason for choosing a questionnaire as a research tool is to find out beliefs, opinions and attitudes (Ibid., 2007, p.155). To achieve the objective of this research, the questionnaire contains a mixture of open, closed, list and scale questions (Bell, 1993, p. 76). The quality of the research is determined by reliability and validity that is achieved to a certain degree. A variety of questions contributes to the reliability, and validity is ensured by questions which are targeted on the aim of the research. Both quality indicators, as suggested in the literature, are ensured by question wording and piloting of the instrument, which is sufficient for the purposes of this research (Ibid., 1993, p. 64 – 65). The object of this research are people. With the help of purposive sampling, parents of pre-school children were chosen as the sampling frame. Since the parents of the pre-school children attending the

English classes in Benátky nad Jizerou were selected as the target group of respondents, the small-scale research is used (Denscombe, 2007, p. 28).

The questionnaire was created in the Czech language because it could not be assumed that the target group of parents would understand the questions in the English language. The questionnaires were distributed by the pre-school teachers.

The general methodology was described, and the following chapter gears towards the research itself.

5.4 Characteristics of the research

The research was carried out in five pre-schools in Benátky nad Jizerou where the courses of the English language are provided by an external company. The courses are not compulsory therefore the number of children attending them is lower than children attending normal pre-school classes. The town, Benátky nad Jizerou, has about eight thousand citizens, and there are approximately two hundred children attending six public pre-school institutions managed by the town.

The material for processing the research into parents' beliefs was, as mentioned above, collected by means of the questionnaire, enclosed in Appendix 1. A foreword situated at the beginning of the research paper informs parents about its purpose, anonymity, a deadline, and provides instructions for its correct completion. The letter is ended by providing researcher's e-mail address in case of some misunderstanding, and a word of thanks. Then twenty-eight questions are presented. Four questions are open; eight closed - some of them offering a list of items, and the remaining sixteen questions are based on the Likert Scale where respondents state the degree of their agreement or disagreement.

After piloting the questionnaire by two independent women from the target group, the questionnaire was not adapted according to their comments, but according to the author's consideration. The correction of one question that seemed to be duplicated, and another minor change in the question order were made.

As this pilot version was done, the questionnaire was distributed in to the families of forty-two children who attend the courses. The best way to transmit the questionnaires to the parents was with the help of the pre-school teachers because the courses took place during the

pre-school hours, and after the lesson the children went home or back to the pre-school classes. The researcher received a list of names of the children attending the English language courses which was then distributed together with the questionnaires to the teachers so that the teachers could distribute the questionnaire to the right parent.

Three weeks after the distribution, twenty-one questionnaires out of the original forty-two, returned back. That was the final number of respondents even after an attempt to follow up non-respondents by polite e-mail from the course provider in which she thanked to those who supplied their answers, and appealed to those who did not do so. According to Gavora (2000, p. 107), due to various influences, the return rate can never be 100%. He writes about minimum response rate of 75%, but that is also hard to reach, so sometimes it is admitted even lower. In this case a return/response rate is 50%.

5.5 Expectations and limits of the research

Expectations were different than the reality. The return/response rate was expected to be higher because the target group was secured by the parents of the children from one particular course provided by one particular company. As the researcher worked with the course provider before, the opportunity to help was offered because the results can be used for their own purposes. However, to obtain an access to parents of the pre-school children was not easy.

On top of that, conditions described above limit the research due to the small size of the sample. Therefore the results are applicable only to this sample and that is: the parents whose pre-school children attend the English courses in Benátky nad Jizerou (Gavora, 2000, p. 59).

5.6 Questionnaire analysis

The header of the questionnaire was mentioned in the part 5.3, and now the analysis of the questionnaire will be provided. Generally, the research questions can be divided into two parts. The first one explores the background information about the parents and the course. Opinions that parents have about their English language knowledge and the views on the course can be found here. The second section refers to the theoretical part concerning parents'

beliefs. The imaginary division line starts with the statements that are measured by five-point Likert Scale.

The research paper begins with the question: *How old is your son/daughter?* Although it is known that it is a pre-school child, it can be a child of any age from three to seven years. With reference to Dunn in the part 2.1, an experienced teacher needs to be flexible in adjusting lesson plans and when he/she knows the age group; it is easier to prepare lessons. Also he/she knows what he/she can require from children and what to expect from them. The interest here is what age mostly prevails. The question was not intended to find out the gender of the child, but some respondents might reveal that detail.

Subsequently, the level of the respondent's education is searched for using question: *What level of education have you achieved?* Three options can be chosen: elementary, secondary and university. The purpose of this question was to gain some information about the respondents, and perhaps to prove a link between their achieved education and their beliefs. The parents might find the question personal which it indeed is.

To what extent can you understand and communicate in the English language? Please, evaluate your skill level on the basis of the Common European Framework. By answering the question further information about parents will be discovered. It provides the list of levels according to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which enables the parent to find their own level. Detailed descriptions of each level are added to simplify their assessment. Their language level can have an influence upon their attitude towards the English language and therefore upon the child.

Similarly, the question *How often do you use the English language?* with the three options provided: *I do not use it at all; I use it sometimes or I use it every day.* This question is connected to the previous one, and is designed to find out their frequency of their language use.

What does English represent for you? This is another question with the listed options that analyse parent's perception of the English language. According to Richards and Lockhart (1996, p.32)

“English represents different things to different people. Peoples’ views of English, or of any other language, are influenced by contacts they have had with the language and its speakers.”

The options in the questionnaire contains answers such as: *the language of the English literature, the language of the English-speaking world, international social contacts, better employment, travelling or a professional communication tool*. The last point is left free so the parents can express their own opinion if they do not find the relevant answer in the list. Just the research will show what is the most influential. Regarding the correct completion of this question it is precisely stated that they are allowed to tick more than one answer so that the results will be more interesting.

Before you decided to register your child in an English course, what was important for you to know? This question probes some information about the course, and the reason for enrolling their child into it. They could choose from *the content of the course, the teacher’s language level, the number of children in the course or the price*. In the last point parents give their answers in an empty space provided as in the previous question. Although it is specified in the introduction to tick only one answer if it is not stated differently, it is likely to happen that some parents might mark with a tick more answers as in the previous question. If so, those answers will be also taken into consideration and will be included in the research. Thereby the range of the answers will be extended.

Who influenced you decision? Parents can be easily influenced by their surroundings and that is what is going to be monitored here. They have a choice between *family, friends, media or the course provider or their own answer*. Again, there might be encountered the problem with the number of answers allowed to be ticked as in the previous question, but it will be dealt with in the same way as in the previous question.

Are you interested in what your child has learned? It is a question that is concerned with parent’s interest in the success of their child in the language learning. If they show their interest, it motivates the child to continue in the learning.

How often are you in contact with the teacher? By asking it is supposed to be ascertained parent’s interest in his/her child. If the parent is interested he/she would do anything to be

given feedback on their child from the teacher. On the basis of the feedback they can for example decide whether their child will continue or not. Moreover, it can show if the parents take those lessons seriously, or as some additional activity.

The question, *Do you attend the classes together with your child? If you do, how often?*, apart from exploring parent's interest, it shows that their presence at the course can make their child feel more secure and thus increase its confidence to learn.

The eleventh question, *How often are the lessons repeated during the week?*, identifies the occurrence of the English lessons per week. This question seemed to be important because, as it was mentioned in the chapter 2.1 of the theoretical part, the shorter and more frequent lessons the better results are achieved. Nevertheless, it might not have any effect as the target course takes place only at a particular hour in a week. But there might be a possibility that the child attends not only its course, but is present at another course taking place on a different day.

The first statement, *Enrolling my child into the course of the English language already at this age will mean for him/her better education.*, is trying to detect to what extent the parent sees it as truthful. The education represents the academic education, or higher levels of education. The English language is supposed to be of great help to children because it is the recent trend to have to learn the English language in the pre-school. Nowadays children have great possibilities to become knowledgeable sooner.

In a similar way, questions - *Knowledge of the English language means better job for my child in the future.*; *These early lessons bring to my child the opportunity for future expansions of personal contacts*; and *Thanks to this experience, my child will create a positive attitude towards different culture.* - attempt to see how parents speculate about their child's future, and how they perceive the trend of the 21st century. Moreover, if they regard this possibility as opening the doors to many opportunities just as Lightbown and Spada indicate in Chapter 3.

I believe that children learn faster, more efficiently, effortlessly and without negative attitudes than adults. By the statement the researcher wants to know if the target group of parents believe in the early English learning as Najvar suggests, and if they support Littlewood's and Dunn's claims about more positive attitude towards the language, which all refer to Chapter 3.

The claims that inspect parent's perception of the learning objectives of their children are: *My goal is that my child reaches the level of a native speaker, and therefore he/she must start with the language early and be surrounded by it as much as possible.*; *My goal is that my child masters the language on the communicative level.* The attractive point is how strong opinions are on the native-like mastery of the target language and on basic communicative ability with reference back to the assertion by Lightbown and Spada at the end of Chapter 1.

The next statement: *As an English teacher in the pre-school, I prefer:* continues with five answers such as: *Czech teacher of primary school, secondary school or university who is qualified in English language teaching. Czech teacher with GCSE exam or state English Exam who is qualified for teaching in the pre-school. A student who is in the process of receiving the qualification for English language teaching. Czech unqualified user of the English language or native speaker.* Respondents are required to mark the level of their agreement for each point. The purpose is to observe the degree of their opinion on different kinds of teachers who can occur in the Czech pre-school environment.

It is important that after finishing the pre-school, my child will continue in English lessons for two years (before its compulsory classes of the English language begin in the 3rd grade of the elementary school).; *It is important that after finishing the pre-school, my child will continue in after-school lessons of the English language throughout the nine years of schooling and possibly further.* are assertions by which it is interesting to verify whether parents are aware of the Czech education system relating to transferring the child from pre-school to elementary school. What is their attitude towards ensuring the language input, and if they are willing to support it only until the child's compulsory classes, or throughout the whole compulsory schooling. A stimulus to those findings is specified at the end of part 1 in the thesis. Those statements can be connected with bad experience that can rise from intended discontinuity of lessons suggested by Černá in Chapter 3.

I consider it important to revise with my child at home according to instructions provided by the teacher.; *I revise with my child according to materials chosen by myself.* imply parent's view on the importance of the home revision. How important does it appear to them to practice spelling and speaking at home according to the teacher's recommendation? Or do they prefer to practice at home from the material chosen by themselves?

I believe that learning of English songs and rhymes at this age will help to my child to gain correct pronunciation less influenced by mother tongue. This declaration wants to uncover parent's views that are already insinuated by Čačka in part 2.1 and Fontana in part 2.2.

I believe that this early language learning will prepare the ground for child's better future life than I had. is concerned with the extent to which parents believe that this extra lesson can form the basis for their children's future life than they had. In addition, the statement attempts to reveal what was their experience as English language students. It can be expected that when they do not have any experience, their attitude will incline to the negative part of the scale and vice versa.

I believe that the early English language learning is beneficial even though the progress is only slightly noticeable. The claim is supposed to determine how parents cope with the fact that progress is not always visible. As mentioned in Chapter 3 in the theoretical part, parents want to see progress, and if any progress is made they become great stimuli for the child.

I think that to start with the English language learning in the school age is more difficult for the child than to start already in the pre-school age. The statement number twenty-seven tries to ascertain whether parents acknowledge that to start to learn the English language is easier in the pre-school age than in the school age.

And after all, final question *Do you have any comments on lessons? Which?* gives parents space to express their opinion, or comment on the English course.

The list of detailed explication of each item was administrated; the next step is to release the research outcomes.

5.7 Research

The purpose of the study is to explore beliefs about the early English language learning of those parents whose children attend the English courses. Since the response rate was twenty-one questionnaires (50% from 42), this number was used as a base for further figures. The result was sufficient, and could be brought to light in order to help the course provider and the teacher to enhance and increase the efficiency of this type of education in the future. Apart

from the below description of each research question, there is a brief overview in the form of tables in Appendix 4. There can be found all tables that are also presented in this part, except questions number 9, 10 and 11 that are only described here.

The first question concerned the age of the child. According to the survey, the age that entirely prevails with 48% was six years. The second largest group is five years old with 38%, and there remain two children at the age of four, which is 10%, and one child at the age of seven i.e. 5%. The result can be beneficial for the teacher to know which age group prevails, and accordingly she/he can adapt the methodology.

The second question asked the respondents to provide their level of education. None of the parents showed a basic level of education, 33% achieved a university degree, and 67% reached secondary education. Although the question was rather simplified, it can give an evidence of good education of the parents, and thus they have high expectations of their children.

The third question searched for the level of the parent's ability in the English language. 29% assessed themselves as pre-intermediate. Then 24% respondents identified themselves as beginners, and 24% respondents as intermediate. 14% respondents think that they are elementary, 5% upper-intermediate and 5% advanced. None of the respondents is proficient. The high number of parents at pre-intermediate level can probably be the reason why most of the parents wish to help his/her child at home as it will be suggested in the following questions number twenty-two and twenty-three of the questionnaire.

The question number four investigated the frequency of parents' use of the English language. Eleven respondents picked for the option "I use it sometimes", nine respondents do not use the English language at all, and only one respondent confessed that he/she uses it every day. This question and the previous one show parent's language ability, and therefore their influence upon child can be derived.

The question number five inquired what the English language represents for the parents. The figure no 1 illustrates the list of defined answers. It can be seen that on the first place the English language means to the parents better employment. The second area is travelling, which is closely connected suggestion to the English speaking world. The English language as

a professional tool was opted for seven times, and five times the respondents benefited from international social contacts. None of them thought about the English literature.

What does the English language represents for the parents.

The representation of the English language	No of replies
Better employment	18
Travelling	17
The language of the English speaking world	12
A professional communication tool	7
International social contacts	5
The language of the English literature	0

Figure 1

In the question number six, as it was predicted in the questionnaire analysis, parents ticked off more questions than they were supposed to. Thus all of the answers are also included in the evaluation. The most important thing for parents to know was *the content of the course* chosen sixteen times. The second prominent thing for them was *the price*, which was selected six times. Then the same number of votes i.e. five had *the teacher's language level* and *the number of children in the course*. One respondent took advantage of the column other where he/she stated: "whether my daughter wants to attend the course".

The seventh question examined external influences upon the parent. More answers than allowed were received again. *Family* influence was placed first with ten votes. Subsequently, respondents used the column for a free answer in which five of them opted for *own decision*, which is, indeed, very intriguing. Four points received the option *friends*, and two points were assigned the option *the course provider*. Finally, one point received *media*.

Question number eight checks parent's interest. The question may not be sufficient because which parent would confess that he/she is not interested in his/her child. But they might become aware of its importance. Nevertheless, eighteen parents marked the answer *yes*, and three *sometimes*. As it was expected none of them opted for *no*.

Number nine asked about the frequency of the contact between the parents and the teacher. Generally, the answers were mostly negative. Answers such as *not at all*, *never*, *minimally*, *no*

or rarely were very often repeated. Positive answers as: *once a month, twice a year, once a year* could be found as well, but there were not many of them. It follows from those findings that there is a very little cooperation between the teacher and the parents. However, negative finding can be caused by the course timing, as it was referred in the part 5.3; the courses take place during the school hours, so some parents can be at work at this time.

The question number ten was similar to the previous one, but it tried to grasp some initiative from the parents' side. There was a query about their attendance at the classes, which was answered in a negative way. One query contained the answer: *is not possible*. It might be a problem from on the providers' side that there is not possibility for parents to visit the class.

The eleventh question explored the lesson occurrence per week. As it was expected in the part 5.6, all of the respondents agreed with the option once a week. That means that there is no child that would attend more courses during the week. Unfortunately, with this frequency possible success is slowly going to be met.

With *the statement number twelve*, the majority of the respondents, that is 67%, agreed and saw positively their child's academic future thanks to the English course they attend. 10% belonged to each degree - strongly agreed, disagreed and neutral. And only 5% were inclined to strongly disagree. It confirms Lightbown and Spada's claim that acquisition of more than one language can open the door to the personal opportunity.

After the administration of all answers the *statement number thirteen* about a better job, met with only two positive reactions. 52% of the respondents agree and 48% of the respondents strongly agree. This statement definitely matches with Lightbown and Spada's claim that acquisition of more than one language can lead to the economic opportunity and parents believe in it. It is interesting parents adopted two stances, whereas in the statement above they made use of all degrees.

Parents were dubious about *the statement fourteen* concerning the expansion of personal contacts. 48% opted for a neutral attitude, but surprisingly 24% strongly agreed. 14% disagreed, 10% agreed and 5% strongly disagreed. It can be concluded that the target group of parents are rather sceptical about Lightbown and Spada's claim that acquisition of more than one language can open up many social opportunities.

Number fifteen detected whether the parents believe that their child will form a good opinion of different culture thanks to the course. 43% agreed, 29% was neutral, 24% strongly agreed and 5% strongly disagreed. None of the respondents disagreed.

The Number sixteen turned out surprisingly. 86% of the respondents strongly agreed that children learn faster, more efficiently, effortlessly and without negative attitudes than adults. Moreover, 14% agreed, and the rest of the levels were left blank. The outcome confirms the positive attitude as Najvar, Littlewood and Dunn had. For the better comprehension of the findings, the figure no 2 serve.

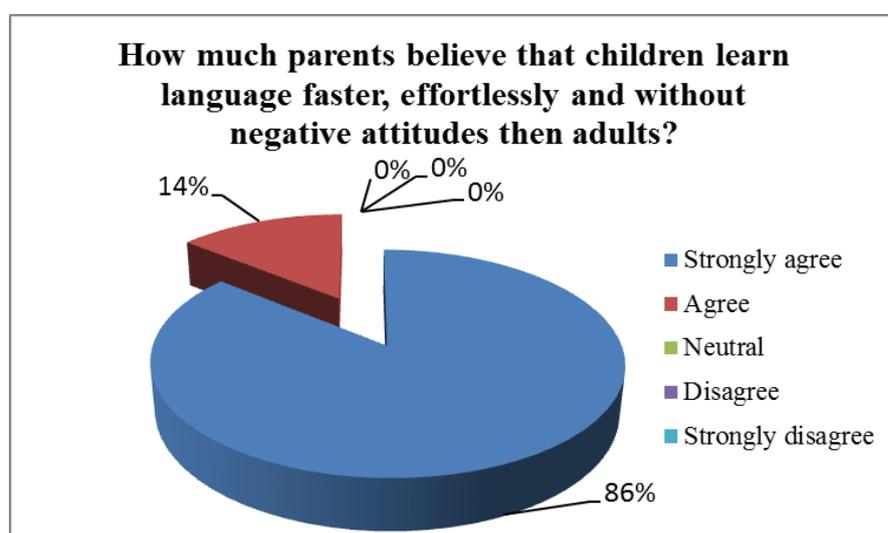


Figure 2

In comparison to the previous statement, it seemed harder for parents to make a definite decision about *the statement number seventeen* - my goal is that my child reaches the level of a native speaker. 33% agreed, 24% disagreed, 19% strongly agreed, 14% were neutral and 10% strongly disagreed.

On the other hand more obvious conclusions were drawn from *the statement number eighteen* - my goal is that my child masters the language on the communicative level. 67% strongly agreed, 29% agreed and 5% strongly disagreed. Although Lightbown and Spada in Chapter 1 suggest that to achieve the communicative level it is best to start learning the language later, many parents surveyed agree with the statement even if their children are already learning the English language in the pre-school.

The nineteenth statement dealt with teacher's qualifications. From the figure no 3 below that present the data researched, it is evident that parents mostly prefer the teacher of type 1 and type 2. On the contrary, they reject the teacher of type 4. It is apparent that they are rather hesitant about teachers of type 3 and 5.

Type 1: Czech teacher of primary school, secondary school or university who is qualified in English language teaching

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Totals
6	9	0	5	1	21
(29)%	(43)%	(0)%	(24)%	(5)%	(100)%

Type 2: Czech teacher with GCSE exam or state English Exam who is qualified for teaching in the pre-school

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Totals
5	13	1	1	1	21
(24)%	(62)%	(5)%	(5)%	(5)%	(100)%

Type 3: A student who is in the process of receiving the qualification for English language teaching.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Totals
2	9	3	5	2	21
(10)%	(43)%	(14)%	(24)%	(10)%	(100)%

Type 4: Czech unqualified user of the English language

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Totals
2	0	2	5	12	21
(10)%	(0)%	(10)%	(24)%	(57)%	(100)%

Type 5: Native speaker

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Totals
5	5	7	3	1	21
(24)%	(24)%	(33)%	(14)%	(5)%	(100)%

Figure 3

The twentieth statement focused on the gap years between English learning in the pre-school and compulsory schooling in the primary school. Markedly, parents believe that it is important to secure lessons until the third grade of the elementary school. 71% strongly agreed and 29% agreed.

In the *twenty-first statement* parents were not convinced whether to support their child in English lessons as an after school activity. 43% agreed, 33% strongly agreed, 14% were neutral, 5% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed.

The statement twenty-two wanted to ascertain how essential it is to revise at home. 62% strongly agreed, 29% agreed, 5% were neutral and 5% disagreed. It appears that the parents would like to get more involved, which might be connected with the question number 3 that showed the prevailing level of parents' ability in the English language was pre-intermediate.

The number twenty-three was similar to the preceding statement, but it was aimed at finding out whether the parents believe in revision with children according to their own material. Unexpectedly, 57% agreed and 10% strongly agreed, while 24% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed. The statement had clearly two contradictions without any respondent to be neutral. The positive believe obviously dominated.

The statement number twenty-four aimed at identifying the parents' stance on English rhymes and songs. The total result happened to be more positive because 29% of the respondents strongly agreed and 29% of the respondents agreed. But 33% of the respondents were neutral and 10% disagreed.

As it was suggested in part 5.6, *the statement number twenty-five* wanted to show whether the parents see the English lesson as a better basis for the future of their children. 57% strongly agreed, 24% agreed, 10% were neutral and 10% strongly disagreed. To sum up, positive viewpoints outnumbered both negative and neutral ones, and the parents had generally positive experience themselves.

The twenty-sixth statement detected very positive attitude towards parent's coping with sometimes not much visible progress of their children. 67% strongly agreed and 29% agreed. Only 5% disagreed. Therefore it can be assumed that parents are aware of this hidden progress and motivate children.

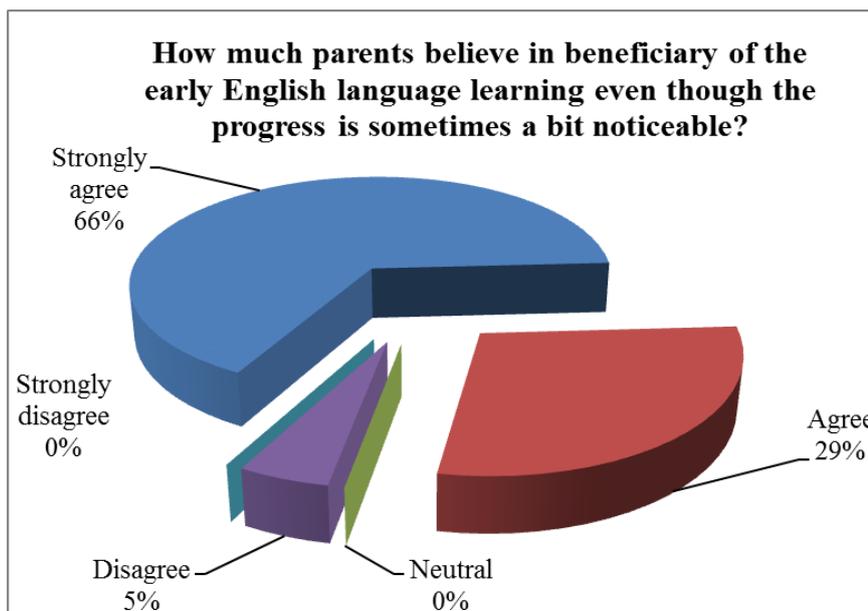


Figure 4

Last but not one, *the statement number twenty-seven* about the difficulty of learning the English language at school than pre-school seemed to be evenly distributed among the five degrees, but the positive agreement still prevails. 48% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 19% were neutral, 14% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed.

Although the final question provided space for free expression, only 43% of the respondents took advantage of this possibility. But between these answers there can be discovered interesting findings. The majority of the parents who expressed their own opinion would welcome to receive material from lessons, and would like to have more frequent contact with the teacher. For illustration, one respondent nicely recapitulated the opinion of all 43% respondents:

“More information about the lessons, or what words they learned so as we can discuss them and repeat them at home. The ideal option would be to purchase a CD with songs they work with. In my opinion, one half an hour per week is not enough, so I would welcome an opportunity to repeat at home with the child anytime it has a desire to do so. And my daughter has the desire. Alternatively, more frequent communication with the teacher to tell me whether the child likes it; what we should practise; in what form so that it does not discourage the child from the learning and what to do with pronunciation.”
(see Appendix 3: Sample A)

Or for example, another respondent is complaining about the course and children's behavior:

“The course is attended by some children that are enormously misbehaving, and it is hard for the teacher to calm them down. She should talk to the parents, and in the case of uncontrollable behaviour exclude the child from the course. That disappointed me terribly. I expected more.” (see Appendix 3: Sample B)

The last example which impressed the researcher with its sophisticated approach was:

“The mere knowledge of the language does not suffice; in the case of the pre-school education the lecturer must also be an excellent teacher so as he/she is able to hold the attention of the pre-school children.” (see Appendix: Sample C)

From those examples it can be seen that parents are not concerned only about the English language, but also about the social environment. In the end, those findings can be profitable for the concrete course provider and the teacher to learn a lesson from them.

5.8 Conclusion

The research showed interesting findings that can help the course provider and the teacher to focus on areas that need to be improved. Besides that, the research revealed parents' views on the English language learning in the pre-school age. The objects of the research were the parents of the children who attend the English course in Benátky nad Jizerou.

The first part of the questionnaire explored the background information about the parents and the course. The education level and the level of the English language ability might be considered as the source of their beliefs. According to the research, the major influence on the parents' decision to sign up the child in the English language course had immediate family and their own decisions. Regarding the course itself, a surprising finding was that when they were making judgement about the course they took into account the content of the course, rather than the teacher's language level, or expected price.

What do parents think about the pre-school English language learning? What are their reasons for supporting their children in the early English language learning? These questions were tried to be detected from the second part of the questionnaire with the help of the Likert Scale. It can be said that the target group of parents do believe that the course can facilitate a

higher education of their children. They do believe that the knowledge of the English language will ensure a better job for their children. Also, they do believe that children learn in an easier way than adults. And they do believe that those lessons are beneficial although the success is sometimes hardly visible.

On the contrary, they do not prefer the Czech unqualified user of the English language, which might influence their decision about the English language course for their child. Another interesting fact was discovered by the statement about learning by means of english songs and rhymes. The majority of respondents were not sure whether songs and rhymes contribute to better pronunciation which would be then less influenced by the mother tongue. The part 5.7 as well as the tables in Appendix 3 can serve as a broad overview of the results.

Nevertheless, the results obtained proved to be more positive, the limitation of the research did not allow for laying the ground for more intense search which would be certainly interesting.

6 CONCLUSION OF THE THESIS

The thesis dealt with parents' beliefs about English language learning since the pre-school age. The target group of the research were parents of the children that are already attending the English language course.

The theoretical part started with the description of the pre-school origin and development, and the changes in the perception of the child. To understand today's aims of pre-school institutions three main pedagogical trends were mentioned. The main emphasis was put on the convergent trend that affected the Framework Education Programme for Pre-primary Education. Consequently, the background information for understanding the National Programme for the Development of Education and its importance was provided as well as the aim of the pre-school education. The second chapter attempted to summarise an overall development of the pre-school child, and thus to point out its importance for the English language learning. Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development is mentioned here. Then different views concerning the first and the second language acquisition are commented on. The Last two chapters were dedicated specifying pros and cons of the early language learning, and elucidating the concept belief and its presence in the teachers' and learners' life. Hereby, the theoretical ground convenient for the transition from the theory to the survey was laid.

The practical part was based on the small-scale research that attempted to look into parents' beliefs. The research was carried out with the help of the questionnaire, and the results confirmed that there are reasons why parents opt for the English language lessons for their children since the pre-school age. The results are available in the part 5.7 as well as in Appendix 3.

Despite the fact that the research was not too extensive, it was possible to collect some data about the English language learning in the pre-school age. The research may be useful by giving piece of advice to parents and teachers on mutual cooperation so as to make the English classes effective for young learners.

7 RESUMÉ

V současné době je trend začínat s výukou anglického jazyka již od předškolního věku, ne-li od narození. Jde tu o děti ve věku od tří do šesti nebo sedmi let, ale jelikož samy za sebe ještě nerozhodují, cílovou skupinou jsou jejich rodiče. Co tedy vede rodiče k tomu, že zapisují své děti do kurzu anglického jazyka již v předškolním věku? Co si z toho dítě podle nich odnese? Jaký mají rodiče názor na tento druh výuky? Cílem této bakalářské práce je nalézt odpovědi pro výše uvedené otázky.

První kapitola poskytuje stručný náhled do vývoje názorů na společenskou hodnotu a postavení dítěte v předškolním věku, a také zmiňuje Jana Amose Komenského, který již v 17. století vyzdvihoval důležitost správného vývoje společnosti. Byl zastáncem názoru, že tento vývoj začíná správným porozuměním dětským potřebám a správné výchově. V práci je také popsán vývoj prvních předškolních institucí i důvod k jejich založení. K pochopení cílů dnešní předškolní výuky slouží zmínka o hlavních směrech vývoje názorů, které se měnily v závislosti na politických událostech české země. V návaznosti na poslední směr tj. osobnostní orientace výchovy, je v dalších třech bodech popsán předškolní vzdělávací program. Je uvedeno jeho zařazení v Národním programu pro rozvoj vzdělávání v ČR, jeho rámcové a dílčí cíle, klíčové kompetence a oblasti, ve kterých je možno nalézt alespoň malé zmínky týkající se cizího jazyka. Pro zajímavost jsou ke konci této kapitoly uvedeny dva názory na předškolní výuku anglického jazyka. Jeden je z pohledu Ministerstva školství a druhý z pohledu České školní inspekce.

Druhá kapitola se zabývá celkovým vývojem dítěte předškolního věku. Toto období je jistě nejzajímavějším obdobím člověka. Dítě je velice aktivní a zajímá se o vše kolem sebe, což může naznačovat i příslib zájmu o jiný jazyk než mateřský. Proto je nezbytné uvést jejich jak celkový, tak i kognitivní vývoj. Nejprve je zmíněn fyzický vývoj a dále následují stručné popisy kognitivních procesů, jako jsou vnímání, paměť, fantazie, myšlení, pozornost a řeč. Je zde zmíněn Jean Piaget, švýcarský psycholog, který se zabýval myšlenkovým vývojem člověka od narození po dospělost. Jeho teorie kognitivního vývoje popisuje stádia, kterými člověk prochází, a které ohraničil určitým věkovým obdobím. Předškolní věk nazval obdobím názorného a intuitivního myšlení. Po stručné charakteristice všech kognitivních procesů je v závěru této kapitoly popsán správný přístup učitele anglického jazyka s přihlédnutím k vývojovému stádiu dítěte. První podkapitola této sekce seznamuje čtenáře s osvojováním mateřského jazyka a vysvětlením toho, jak rodiče k tomuto procesu přispívají. Je zde také

vysvětleno, proč poměrně hodně badatelů poukazuje na prvních pět let života dítěte, jako na kritické období pro rozvoj řeči. Proto je zde zmíněn jeden z nejvlivnějších lingvistů Noam Chomsky, který je spjat s hypotézou kritického období. Dále jsou zde uvedeny tři hlavní teorie zasvěcující do možností osvojování si mateřského jazyka. Druhá podkapitola této části definuje osvojování si druhého jazyka a upřesňuje rozdíl mezi druhým a cizím jazykem. Podobně jako předchozí podkapitola uvádí tři teorie, které se snaží vysvětlit proces osvojování si cizího jazyka a vyzdvihuje hypotézy Stephena Krashena. Jak na osvojování mateřského, ale i cizího jazyka, je možno nalézt mnoho teorií, avšak stále neexistuje jedna, která by tyto procesy přesně identifikovala.

Třetí, stěžejní kapitola, vyzdvihuje klady a zápory brzkého začátku výuky anglického jazyka. Jsou zde různé názory autorů, jako jsou například Najvar, Lightbown a Spada, Dunn. Tyto názory jsou uvedeny jako teoretický podklad důvodů, kterými mohou rodiče být ovlivněni, a které jsou použity i v samotné výzkumné části.

A poslední kapitola teoretické části si klade za cíl popsat a přiblížit co to jsou „beliefs“ neboli v překladu postoje, názory nebo přesvědčení. Odkud se berou, a jak jsou většinou formulovány. Jelikož se v literatuře nevyskytují názory rodičů, je nutno vycházet z dostupných zdrojů. Z názorů učitelů a poté studentů. Tato kapitola je pomyslným přechodem na praktickou část. Cílem této kapitoly je pochopit tyto názory, neboť se dají aplikovat na cílovou skupinu rodičů, a tím zjistit jejich postoj k rané výuce anglického jazyka.

Empirická část zjišťuje názory rodičů na předškolní výuku anglického jazyka. Výzkum se uskutečnil pomocí dotazovacích technik v předškolních zařízeních v Benátkách nad Jizerou, kde již tato výuka probíhá. Objektem výzkumu byli rodiče dětí, které tento kurz již navštěvují. Dotazník byl vyhotoven v české verzi, jelikož nemohlo být předpokládáno, že všichni rodiče budou anglické verzi rozumět. Otázky se daly pomyslně rozdělit do dvou částí. První část zjišťovala informace o rodičích a kurzu, a druhá část se pomocí Likertovy škály snažila zjistit jejich postoje a názory na ranou výuku anglického jazyka. Díky bližšímu kontaktu, který byl navázán s poskytovatelem kurzu, bylo možno dotazník rozdat všem čtyřiceti dvěma rodičům dětí navštěvujících kurz. Formuláře byly rozdány prostřednictvím vyučujících v předškolních zařízeních, protože anglická výuka probíhala během školních hodin, po kterých děti šly domů, nebo šly zpět do třídy. Zastihnout osobně rodiče bylo tedy obtížné. Vzhledem k dobrovolnému poskytnutí informací se vrátilo nazpět dvacet jedna dotazníků. Přesto i tento počet byl relevantní ke zjištění názorů cílové skupiny.

Výzkum poskytl zajímavá zjištění. Například, že velký vliv na rozhodnutí rodičů zařadit dítě do kurzu anglického jazyka, mají hlavně nejbližší příbuzní, a dále jejich vlastní rozhodnutí. Co se týče samotného kurzu, překvapujícím zjištěním bylo, že rodiče při rozhodování více přihlíželi k náplni kurzu, nežli k učitelově jazykové úrovni, nebo podle očekávání k ceně. Názory a postoje, které byly zjišťovány výše zmíněnou Likertovou škálou ukázaly, že dotázaní rodiče věří, že tato výuka přinese jejich dítěti lepší vzdělání a lepší pracovní uplatnění. Také věří, že děti se učí jazyk lehčeji nežli dospělí, a že lekce anglického jazyka jsou prospěšné, i když pokrok je někdy málo znatelný. Nepreferují však českého nekvalifikovaného uživatele anglického jazyka jako učitele v mateřské škole, což by s největší pravděpodobností ovlivnilo jejich rozhodnutí k přihlášení dítěte do kurzu. Veškeré výsledky výzkumu jsou k dispozici v části 5.7 nebo také v příloze č. 3.

Ačkoliv byl výzkum limitován, bylo by jistě zajímavé provést tuto studii ve větším měřítku. Nicméně věřím, že tato práce bude malý, ale prospěšný krok k nahlédnutí do problematiky výuky anglického jazyka v předškolním věku. Považuji za vhodné navrhnout, aby rodiče měli možnost více se zapojit do vzdělávání svého dítěte, a tím se následně zefektivnila výuka anglického jazyka tak, aby si děti odnesly co nejvíce a co nej kvalitněji.

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9 APPENDIX 1 – Questionnaire in the Czech language

DOTAZNÍK – Názory rodičů na ranou výuku anglického jazyka v mateřských školách

Milí rodiče,

obracím se na Vás s prosbou o vyplnění tohoto dotazníku. Jde o výzkum, který bude použit pro mou praktickou část bakalářské práce s názvem „Názory rodičů na výuku anglického jazyka u dětí v předškolním věku“.

Jedná se o otázky zjišťující Váš názor na ranou výuku anglického jazyka v mateřských školách a důvody k přihlášení Vašich dětí do této výuky.

Přečtěte si prosím každou otázku, a pokud není uvedeno jinak, zaškrtněte jednu odpověď, která odpovídá Vašemu názoru.

Dotazník je anonymní, neuvádějte své jméno, bude použit pouze pro výše uvedený účel. Prosím o vyplnění všech otázek, jinak je dotazník neplatný.

V případě nejasností mě neváhejte kontaktovat na e-mailu lucie_tepla@seznam.cz.

Předem děkuji za Vaši pomoc. Lucie Teplá

- 1) Jak starý je Váš syn/dcera? _____ let
- 2) Jaké je Vaše nejvyšší dosažené vzdělání?
 - základní
 - středoškolské
 - vysokoškolské
- 3) Do jaké míry rozumíte a dokážete komunikovat v anglickém jazyce? Prosím ohodnoťte svou jazykovou úroveň na základě Evropského referenčního rámce.
 - úplný začátečník (Starter/Beginner)
 - pokročilý začátečník/falešný začátečník (Elementary A1)
(Rozumím a používám každodenní výrazy i základní fráze nutné k uspokojení potřeb určitého druhu. Umím představit sebe i jiné lidi. Umím klást i odpovídat na otázky týkající se osobního života. Komunikuji jednoduše a jsem připraven/a pomoci, pokud druhá osoba mluví zřetelně a pomalu.)
 - mírně pokročilý (Pre-Intermediate A2)
(Rozumím větám a používám výrazy, které se vztahují k oblastem, které se mě týkají (rodina, nakupování, zaměstnání). Komunikuji v jednoduchých a rutinních záležitostech a dokáži jednoduše popsat svou rodinu a okolí.)
 - středně pokročilý (Intermediate B1)
(Rozumím hlavním bodům v běžných tématech, se kterými se setkávám v práci, škole, ve volném čase atd. Umím si poradit se situacemi, které mohou nastat při cestování do oblastí, v kterých daným jazykem mluví. Dokáži napsat jednoduchý text na známé téma a umím popsat zážitky, události, sny, naděje a vysvětlit své názory a plány.)
 - vyšší pokročilý (Upper-Intermediate B2)
(Rozumím hlavním myšlenkám složitých textů jak na konkrétní, tak abstraktní téma včetně technických diskusí z mého oboru. Dokáži plynule a spontánně vést běžný rozhovor s rodilým mluvčím. A dokáži napsat srozumitelný podrobný text na velké množství témat a vysvětlit svůj postoj.)
 - pokročilý (Advanced C1)

(Rozumím široké škále náročných a dlouhých textů a chápu jejich přesný význam. Dokáži se vyjádřit plynule a spontánně bez významnější potřeby hledat výrazy. Jazyk používám flexibilně a efektivně pro sociální, akademické a pracovní účely. Produkuji jasný a dobře strukturovaný, podrobný text na složitá témata.)

jazykově způsobilý (Proficient C2)

(Snadno rozumím všemu, co slyším nebo čtu. Dokáži shrnout informace z různých mluvených i psaných zdrojů. Dokáži se vyjádřit naprosto spontánně, plynule a přesně. Chápu význam nesložitějších textů.)

nerozumím, nekomunikuji

4) Jak často používáte anglický jazyk?

nepoužívám ho vůbec

občas ho používám

používám ho každý den

5) Co pro Vás anglický jazyk představuje?

Možné zaškrtnout více odpovědí.

jazyk anglické literatury

jazyk anglicky mluvícího světa

mezinárodní sociální kontakty

lepší uplatnění na trhu práce

cestování

nástroj profesní komunikace

jiné – uveďte: _____

6) Než jste se rozhodli přihlásit Vaše dítě do anglického kurzu, co bylo pro Vás důležité vědět?

náplň kurzu

učitelova jazyková úroveň

počet dětí v kurzu

cena

jiné – uveďte: _____

7) Kdo ovlivnil Vaše rozhodnutí?

rodina

přátelé

média

poskytovatel anglického kurzu

někdo jiný – uveďte: _____

8) Zajímáte se o to, co se Vaše dítě naučilo?

ano

ne

občas

9) Jak často jste v kontaktu s vyučujícím? _____

10) Zúčastňujete se výuky společně se svým dítětem? Pokud ano, jak často? _____

11) Jak často probíhá výuka anglického jazyka?

1 x do týdne

2 x do týdne

3 x do týdne

jiné – uveďte: _____

Nyní prosím zakřížkujte jeden, Vám nejbližší stupeň, znázorňující míru Vašeho souhlasu s daným výrokiem.

12) Přihlášení mého dítěte do kurzu anglického jazyka již v tomto věku mu přinese lepší vzdělání.

naprosto spíše nevím spíše naprosto
 souhlasím souhlasím nesouhlasím nesouhlasím

13) Znalost anglického jazyka bude v budoucnu pro mé dítě znamenat lepší pracovní místo.

naprosto spíše nevím spíše naprosto
 souhlasím souhlasím nesouhlasím nesouhlasím

14) Tato raná výuka přinese mému dítěti možnost rozšíření budoucích osobních kontaktů.

naprosto spíše nevím spíše naprosto
 souhlasím souhlasím nesouhlasím nesouhlasím

15) Díky této zkušenosti si mé dítě vytvoří pozitivní vztah k jiné kultuře.

naprosto spíše nevím spíše naprosto
 souhlasím souhlasím nesouhlasím nesouhlasím

16) Věřím, že děti se učí rychleji, efektivněji, bez námahy a bez negativních předsudků nežli dospělí.

naprosto spíše nevím spíše naprosto
 souhlasím souhlasím nesouhlasím nesouhlasím

17) Mým cílem je, aby dítě dosáhlo úrovně roditělského mluvčího a tudíž musí s jazykem začít brzy a být jím co nejvíce obklopen.

naprosto spíše nevím spíše naprosto
 souhlasím souhlasím nesouhlasím nesouhlasím

18) Mým cílem je, aby dítě zvládlo jazyk na komunikativní úrovni.

naprosto spíše nevím spíše naprosto
 souhlasím souhlasím nesouhlasím nesouhlasím

19) Jako učitele anglického jazyka v mateřské škole preferuji:

- českého učitele ZŠ, SŠ, VŠ, který je aprobován pro výuku anglického jazyka

naprosto spíše nevím spíše naprosto
 souhlasím souhlasím nesouhlasím nesouhlasím

- českého učitele, který je kvalifikován pro výuku v mateřské škole s maturitou či státní zkouškou z anglického jazyka

naprosto spíše nevím spíše naprosto
 souhlasím souhlasím nesouhlasím nesouhlasím

- studenta/ku, který/á je v procesu získávání kvalifikace pro výuku anglického jazyka

naprosto spíše nevím spíše naprosto

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| souhlasím | souhlasím | nesouhlasím | nesouhlasím | |
| českého nekvalifikovaného uživatele anglického jazyka | | | | |
| O | O | O | O | O |
| naprosto
souhlasím | spíše
souhlasím | nevím | spíše
nesouhlasím | naprosto
nesouhlasím |

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| rodilého mluvčího | | | | |
| O | O | O | O | O |
| naprosto
souhlasím | spíše
souhlasím | nevím | spíše
nesouhlasím | naprosto
nesouhlasím |

20) Je důležité, aby po ukončení docházky do MŠ, mé dítě pokračovalo ve výuce anglického jazyka po dobu dvou let (než začne povinná výuka anglického jazyka ve 3. ročníku ZŠ)

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| O | O | O | O | O |
| naprosto
souhlasím | spíše
souhlasím | nevím | spíše
nesouhlasím | naprosto
nesouhlasím |

21) Je důležité, aby po ukončení docházky do MŠ, mé dítě pokračovalo v mimoškolní výuce anglického jazyka po celou dobu 9. leté školní docházky event. dále.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| O | O | O | O | O |
| naprosto
souhlasím | spíše
souhlasím | nevím | spíše
nesouhlasím | naprosto
nesouhlasím |

22) Považuji za důležité s mým dítětem doma opakovat dle udělených instrukcí od lektora.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| O | O | O | O | O |
| naprosto
souhlasím | spíše
souhlasím | nevím | spíše
nesouhlasím | naprosto
nesouhlasím |

23) S mým dítětem doma opakujeme z dle mnou vybraných materiálů.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| O | O | O | O | O |
| naprosto
souhlasím | spíše
souhlasím | nevím | spíše
nesouhlasím | naprosto
nesouhlasím |

24) Věřím, že při učení se anglických písniček a rýmů v tomto věku, mé dítě získá správnou výslovnost méně ovlivněnou mateřským jazykem.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| O | O | O | O | O |
| naprosto
souhlasím | spíše
souhlasím | nevím | spíše
nesouhlasím | naprosto
nesouhlasím |

25) Věřím, že tato raná výuka přinese mému dítěti lepší základ do života, než jsem měl/a já.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| O | O | O | O | O |
| naprosto
souhlasím | spíše
souhlasím | nevím | spíše
nesouhlasím | naprosto
nesouhlasím |

26) Věřím, že raná výuka anglického jazyka je přínosná i přesto, že pokrok je někdy málo znatelný.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| O | O | O | O | O |
| naprosto
souhlasím | spíše
souhlasím | nevím | spíše
nesouhlasím | naprosto
nesouhlasím |

27) Myslím si, že začít s výukou anglického jazyka až ve školním věku je pro dítě obtížnější nežli začít již ve věku předškolním.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| O | O | O | O | O |
| naprosto
souhlasím | spíše
souhlasím | nevím | spíše
nesouhlasím | naprosto
nesouhlasím |

28) Máte k probíhající výuce zásadní připomínky? Jaké?

10 APPENDIX 2 – Questionnaire in the English language

QUESTIONNAIRE – Parents' beliefs about English language learning since the pre-school age

Dear parents,

I would like you to fill in this questionnaire. This research will be used for the practical part of my bachelor thesis titled "Learning English in Pre-school age – Parents' Beliefs"

The questions explore your opinion on the early English language learning in pre-school and reasons for enrolling your children to this course.

Please read each question, and unless otherwise specified, check the one response that corresponds to your opinion.

The questionnaire is anonymous, do not include your name, it will be used only for the above specified purpose. Please complete all questions, the questionnaire is otherwise invalid.

In case of any problem, please contact me at the e-mail lucie_teppla@seznam.cz.

Thank you in advance for your help. Lucie Teplá

- 1) How old is your son/daughter? _____ years
- 2) What level of education have you achieved?
 - elementary
 - secondary
 - university
- 3) To what extent can you understand and communicate in the English language? Please, evaluate your skill level on the basis of the Common European Framework.
 - Starter/Beginner
 - Elementary (A1)
(I understand and use everyday expressions and very basic phrases necessary to meet the needs of a particular kind. I can introduce myself and other people. I can ask and answer questions about personal life. I can communicate easily and I am ready to help if the other person talks slowly and clearly.)
 - Pre-Intermediate (A2)
(I understand sentences and use terms that relate to the areas that concern me (family, job, shopping). I can communicate in simple and routine matters and I can simply describe my family and neighbourhood.)
 - Intermediate (B1)
(I understand to the main points in familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can deal with situations that may occur when traveling to areas where the language is spoken. I can write simple text on a familiar topic, and I can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and explanations for opinions and plans.)
 - Upper-Intermediate (B2)
(I understand to the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topic, including technical discussions in my field. I can fluently and spontaneously lead a normal conversation with native speakers. And I can write clear, detailed text on many subjects and explain its position.)
 - Advanced (C1)
(I understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and understand their precise meaning. I am able to express myself fluently and spontaneously without significant need to seek expressions. I use language flexibly and

effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. And I produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects.)

Proficient (C2)

(I easily understand everything I hear or read. I can summarize information from different spoken and written sources. I am able to express myself spontaneously, fluently and accurately. I understand to the importance of most complex texts.)

I do not understand./I do not communicate.

4) How often do you use the English language?

I do not use it at all.

I use it sometimes.

I use it every day.

5) What does English language represents for you?

You can tick more than one answer.

language of the English literature

language of the English-speaking world

international social contacts

better employment

travelling

a professional communication tool

other – please state: _____

6) Before you decided to register your child in an English course, what was important for you to know?

the content of the course

the teacher's language level

the number of children in the course

the price

other – please state: _____

7) Who influenced your decision?

family

friends

media

the course provider

other – please state: _____

8) Are you interested in what your child has learned?

yes

no

sometimes

9) How often are you in contact with the teacher? _____

10) Do you attend the classes together with your child? If you do, how often? _____

11) How often are the lessons repeated during the week?

1 x per week

2 x per week

3 x per week

- other – please state: _____

Now please tick one level that shows the degree of your agreement.

- 12) Enrolling my child into the course of the English language already at this age will mean for him/her better education.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
 strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- 13) Knowledge of the English language means better job for my child in the future.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
 strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- 14) These early lessons bring to my child the opportunity for future expansions of personal contacts.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
 strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- 15) Thanks to this experience, my child will create a positive attitude towards different culture.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
 strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- 16) I believe that children learn faster, more efficiently, effortlessly and without negative attitudes than adults.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
 strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- 17) My goal is that my child reaches the level of a native speaker and therefore he/she must start with the language early and be surrounded by it as much as possible.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
 strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- 18) My goal is that my child masters the language on the communicative level.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
 strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- 19) As an English teacher in the pre-school, I prefer:

- Czech teacher of primary school, secondary school or university who is qualified in English language teaching

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
 strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- Czech teacher with GCSE exam or state English Exam who is qualified for teaching in the pre-school

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
 strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- a student who is in the process of receiving the qualification for English language teaching

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- Czech unqualified user of the English language

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

- native speaker

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

20) It is important that after finishing the pre-school, my child will continue in English lessons for two years (before its compulsory classes of the English language begin in the 3rd grade of the elementary school).

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

21) It is important that after finishing the pre-school, my child will continue in the after-school lessons of the English language, throughout the nine years of schooling and possibly further.

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

22) I consider it important to revise with my child at home according to instructions provided by the teacher.

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

23) I revise with my child according to materials chosen by myself.

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

24) I believe that learning of English songs and rhymes at this age will help to my child to gain correct pronunciation less influenced by mother tongue.

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

25) I believe that this early language learning will prepare the ground for my child's better future life than I had.

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

26) I believe that the early English language learning is beneficial even though the progress is only slightly noticeable.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

27) I think that to start with the English language learning in the school age is more difficult for the child than to start already in the pre-school age.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

28) Do you have any comments on lessons? Which?

11 APPENDIX 3 – Research results

1)

Věk/ Age	Počet dětí/ No of children	%
4	2	10
5	8	38
6	10	48
7	1	5
Total	21	100

2)

Vzdělání / Education	Počet rodičů/ No of parents	%
základní/elementary	0	0
střední/secondary	14	67
vysokoškolské/university	7	33
Total	21	100

3)

Jazyková úroveň/Language level	Počet rodičů/ No of parents	%
Beginner	5	24
A1	3	14
A2	6	29
B1	5	24
B2	1	5
C1	1	5
C2	0	0
Total	21	100

4)

Frekvence používání jazyka/ The frequency of the language use	Počet rodičů/ No of parents
Nepoužívám ho vůbec/I do not use it	9
Občas ho používám/I use it sometimes	11
Používám ho každý den/ I use it every day	1
Total	21

5)

Co anglický jazyk pro rodiče představuje/ The representation of the English language	Počet hlasů/ No of replies
Lepší zaměstnání/Better employment	18
Cestování/Travelling	17
Jazyk anglické literatury/The language of the English speaking world	12
Nástroj profesní komunikace/ A professional communication tool	7

International social contacts	5
The language of the English literature	0

6)

Informace o kurzu/information about the course	Počet hlasů/No of votes
Náplň kurzu/The content of the course	16
Učitelova jazyková úroveň/The teacher's language level	5
Počet dětí v kruhu/The number of children in the course	5
Cena/The price	6
Jiné/Other	zda chce dcera do kurzu chodit/whether my daughter wants to attend the course

7)

Vnější vliv/external influence	Počet hlasů/No of votes
Rodina/Family	10
Přátelé/Friends	4
Média/Media	1
Poskytovatel kurzu/The course provider	2
Jiné/Other	5 x Vlastní rozhodnutí/Own decision

8)

Zájem rodičů/parent's interest	No of replies
Ano/Yes	18
Ne/No	0
Občas/sometimes	3

Otázky č. 9, 10, 11 jsou vysvětleny v analýze. Questions number 9, 10 and 11 are described in the research analysis.

12)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
2	14	2	2	1	21
(10)%	(67)%	(10)%	(10)%	(5)%	(100)%

13)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
10	11	0	0	0	21
(48)%	(52)%	(0)%	(0)%	(0)%	(100)%

14)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
5	2	10	3	1	21
(24)%	(10)%	(48)%	(14)%	(5)%	(100)%

15)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
	5	9	6	0	1	21
	(24)%	(43)%	(29)%	(0)%	(5)%	(100)%

16)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
	18	3	0	0	0	21
	(86)%	(14)%	(0)%	(0)%	(0)%	(100)%

17)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
	4	7	3	5	2	21
	(19)%	(33)%	(14)%	(24)%	(10)%	(100)%

18)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
	14	6	0	0	1	21
	(67)%	(29)%	(0)%	(0)%	(5)%	(100)%

19) Type 1	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
	6	9	0	5	1	21
	(29)%	(43)%	(0)%	(24)%	(5)%	(100)%

b) Type 2	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
	5	13	1	1	1	21
	(24)%	(62)%	(5)%	(5)%	(5)%	(100)%

c) Type 3	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
	2	9	3	5	2	21
	(10)%	(43)%	(14)%	(24)%	(10)%	(100)%

d) Type 4	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
	2	0	2	5	12	21
	(10)%	(0)%	(10)%	(24)%	(57)%	(100)%

e) Type 5

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
5	5	7	3	1	21
(24)%	(24)%	(33)%	(14)%	(5)%	(100)%

20)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
15	6	0	0	0	21
(71)%	(29)%	(0)%	(0)%	(0)%	(100)%

21)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
7	9	3	1	1	21
(33)%	(43)%	(14)%	(5)%	(5)%	(100)%

22)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
13	6	1	1	0	21
(62)%	(29)%	(5)%	(5)%	(0)%	(100)%

23)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
2	12	0	5	2	21
(10)%	(57)%	(0)%	(24)%	(10)%	(100)%

24)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
6	6	7	2	0	21
(29)%	(29)%	(33)%	(10)%	(0)%	(100)%

25)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
12	5	2	0	2	21
(57)%	(24)%	(10)%	(0)%	(10)%	(100)%

26)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
14	6	0	1	0	21
(67)%	(29)%	(0)%	(5)%	(0)%	(100)%

27)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	totals
10	3	4	3	1	21
(48)%	(14)%	(19)%	(14)%	(5)%	(100)%

12 APPENDIX 3 – Answers from the questionnaires

Sample A

28) Máte k probíhající výuce zásadní připomínky? Jaké?

Více informací o tom, co či jaké slovíčka probírali a co si můžeme doma zopakovat. Ideální by bylo možnost si zakoupit CD s písničkami, podle kterých se učí.
Jedna příhodná věc je ole mého rásovu málo, tak bych přivítala větší možnost si výuku doma s dítětem zopakovat, kdykoliv bude mít chuť a deera tu chuť má.
Případně i častější komunikaci s vyučujícím → zda to dítě baví, co by mělo procvičovat - jakou formou, abychom od výuky neodtrhali, co vyslovnost.

Sample B

28) Máte k probíhající výuce zásadní připomínky? Jaké?

Na kurz chodí i děti kteří strašně zlobí a paní učitelce dá hodně práce je usměrnit. Měla by to říci rodičům a v případě, že je dítě nezvladatelné ho vyřadit z kurzu.
Toto mě strašně zklamalo.
Očekávala jsem více.

Sample C

28) Máte k probíhající výuce zásadní připomínky? Jaké?

Nestačí pouhá znalost jazyka, lektor musí být v případě výuky v MŠ i výborným pedagogem, aby dokázal udržet pozornost předškolních dětí.