UNIVERZITA PARDUBICE

Fakulta filozofická

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Teaching grammar

Diplomová práce

Pardubice 2010

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V Pardubicích dne 30. března 2010   Jaroslav Bareš

PODĚKOVÁNÍ

Anotace

Diplomová práce *Vyučování gramatiky* ve své teoretické části seznamuje čtenáře s problematikou výuky anglického jazyka v historické perspektivě, s metodami, které představovaly určující myšlenkové proudy v daných historických obdobích, a s vývojem výuky gramatiky v těchto obdobích. Dále se v teoretické části zabývá teoriemi týkajícími se kontrastivního přístupu a teoretickými aspekty akčního výzkumu.

Praktickou část tvoří akční výzkum, výběr gramatických prostředků podrobených výzkumu a přehled sběru dat a jejich vyhodnocení. Rovněž je tu představen postup výkladu vybraných gramatických jevů a zvolené transfery pro využití kontrastivního přístupu při jejich předávání studentům. Práce vyhodnocuje získaná data a výsledky dosaženého akčního výzkumu.

Annotation

The diploma thesis *Teaching grammar* informs the reader in its theoretical part of the issues of teaching grammar in historical perspective, of the methods representing the determining trains of thoughts in particular historical periods, and with the development of teaching grammar in these periods. Furthermore, the theoretical part focuses on the theories relating to contrastive approach and on the theoretical aspects of an action research.

The practical part consits of the actual action research, the selection of grammar elements subject to the research and the data collection and their analysis. There is also explained a process of presenting the selected grammar issues and the transfers chosen to be used in the contrastive approach in a course of presenting the grammar elements to the students. The thesis evaluates the data acquired and the results of the completed action research.

Table of Contents:

A.   <u>Introduction</u>

When approching this thesis, I suppose that the first question automatically asked will be *Why to write a diploma thesis on teaching grammar* when this topic seems very general, common and rather unexciting. *Is grammar really important for teaching English as a second language?*, might be another question that borders with opinion of many teachers performing the act of teaching English both theoretically and practically. Some of them say yes, some of them say no, we are lucky enough to be able to express our own opinions and from the point of view of many theoretical approaches that concern this issue no one could say they are right.

Grammar seems to be similar to a skeleton. We do not see it, yet it helps us live. We do not realise it most of the time, yet it is managing our acts either kinetic or mental. Some may say that grammar is a secondary manifestation of language. Like a skeleton which is not the subject of our acts and manifestations, yet it helps them to be realised. As a skeleton gives our body form and support, I suppose grammar provides a language with the same properties. As a body with a defective skeleton cannot operate without certain limits, or not at all, nor can a language with defective grammar. On the other hand, even with the perfect skeleton we may perform very poorly. With error-free grammar we may become very poor users of the actual language of our interest or need, simply because language, as well as our final decisions on where and how to move our bones, or utter some words, come first and without the apparent help of either device mentioned beforehand.

Grammar should provide every language with order and system, as the skeleton gives the same to a body. Realising and considering all of these supportive arguments, I suppose that teaching grammar unambiguously belongs to a field of further research and analysis.

The factual aim of this diploma thesis focuses on *teaching grammar* within the secondary school environment. The thesis consists of both *theoretical* and *practical* parts, each individual part consists of its own contentual elements. The conclusion contains both the verbal and graphical/numerical outputs.

The actual research has been conducted among selected focus groups ranging from 9 to 17 members. They represent the classes I teach and decided to monitor. The research focuses on written language only. I concentrated on written language because I believe that a written work can disclose the most serious or notorious mistakes produced by Czech grammar school students.

The reason for my beliefs lies partly in the range of mistakes they make and partly on the fact that the students have been repeatedly performing the mistakes throughout my teaching career and these mistakes repeat themselves with every new class entering my classroom. In order to suppress this tendency, or minimize the effects of often overlooked „trivial" mistakes, as they are sometimes reffered to, I decided to perform this research and find out whether my pressupositions were based on solid grounds.

The research was performed on three phase basis: at first, the written material was collected and analysed. The second phase was the actual identifying of the most common and serious mistakes (they not unsurprisingly walk hand in hand during the teaching process) and the data analysis and their reflection. The third phase will evaluate the effects of teaching the selected grammar issues in a contrastive approach on the students´ performance during their further writing assignments. The data analysis and their reflection will be an unseparable part of this phase as well. The final report will show the effect of teaching grammar by the contrastive approach on minimizing the mistakes made during the written performance.

B.   Theoretical part

Ba)   Teaching grammar in historical perspective

The word *grammar* derives from Greek *grammatikē technē*, which means "art of letters," from *gramma*, "letter", itself from *graphein*, "to draw, to write"[1]. Constance Weaver responds to concerns about the place of grammar in the curriculum in her book *Teaching Grammar in Context*. She also argues in her book that students need to be *guided in learning and applying grammatical concepts as they revise and edit their writing*[2]. She accentuates that the attention to the structure of sentences and its mechanics during the process of writing would mean better final products.

According to Weaver, the traditional schools of grammar preoccupied themselves with two basic aims: *(1) disciplining and training the mind (and sometimes the soul); and (2) teaching grammatical forms and word usages that were considered correct or socially prestigious*[3]. It basically meant the sheer fact that knowing and using proper grammar formulae could and should help lower classes to move upward into the middle classes and the

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[1] Etymology Dictionary [online] URL: <http:// www.etymonline.com>
[2] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context, *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, xi s.
[3] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context, *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 3 s.

middle classes could more easily move upward to upper classes, provided their knowledge of language – mostly realized through more sophisticated grammar models – was on the level desired for such a position.

David Crystal states in his book *How Language Works* that no other subject in his book elicits so many different reactions and attitudes as grammar. He assumes it is mainly because grammar has been a focal point of scholarly attention over the past fifty years and that it resulted in many widely defining different approaches. He sees three main periods in grammar teaching – the first period he dates before the 1960s where traditional grammar was taught, providing a learner with *a set of techniques for analysing sentences*. The second period is the one between 1960s and mid-1990s where a learner would *be taught little or no grammar at all*. He adds that a learner was left with only a *vague and unsystematic appreciation of sentence structure and little understanding of grammar terminology*. The third period marks the time after the mid-1990s where a resurgence of interest in grammar was found again and grammar rules reintroduced, *underpinned by a concern to explain their meanings and effects in communication, and avoiding the old prescriptive biases*[4].

Historically, teaching grammar could be dated as back as to Ancient Greece. There were grammar schools, for boys only, that flourished grammar as a means of *imposing order on language, especially the language of the centuries-old texts they were trying to understand*[5]. This tendency, as Weaver adds, has dominated grammar studies for more than twenty centuries[6].

Training the mind was the main concept of teaching and learning grammar during the Middle Ages. The medieval trivium mentioned by many medieval historical sources[7], lists grammar as one of its chief subjects. Grammar was considered the basis of all knowledge. As Huntsman states, *grammar was thought to discipline the mind and the soul at the same time*[8]. Grammar later became the gateaway not only to secular knowledge but also to sacred knowledge derived from ancient scriptures and the Bible. Weaver highlights the usage of the word grammar for schools with the highest-achieving secondary level students in Great Britain until the late 1960s and early 1970s[9]. This commonly used term that we may view

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[4] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 230-1 s.

[5] HUNTSMAN, J.F.Grammar, In D.L.Wagner (Ed.), The seven liberal arts in the middle ages. *Bloomington: IndianaUniversity Press*, 1983, 61 s.

[6] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Contex. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 3 s.

[7] Encyclopedia Brittanica [online] URL: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/339020/liberal-arts>

[8] HUNTSMAN, J.F.Grammar, In D.L.Wagner (Ed.), The seven liberal arts in the middle ages. *Bloomington: IndianaUniversity Press*, 1983, 59 s.

[9] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 4 s.

without any further etymological analysis more than confirms the relationship between grammar and supreme education.

The Industrial Revolution with its newly created middle class members saw grammar as a means of acquiring social acceptance. The majority of the grammar books were based on and compared with Latin since the time of William Bullokar, whose solemn goal seemed to demonstrate that English was just as rule-bound as Latin and which was published in 1586 under the title *Bref Grammar* [10]. Apart from this trend stands one major work on grammar of English, written in 1653 by John Wallise, called *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae* which attempts to interpret English grammar independently of Latin pattern[11]. The trend to keep to Greek and Latin roots continued even as late as the early 19th century when Lindley Murray, the author of one of the most widely used grammars of the period, felt obliged to quote grammatical authorities to support the opinion that grammatical cases in English are different from those in Ancient Greek or Latin[12].

In the nineteenth century, grammar was considered the tool to understand and apply sets of definitions, rules paradigms, examples, and other grammatical features and slowly brought a change in the teaching strategy of English.

The Grammar Translation Method, derived from the classical method of teaching Greek and Latin was born. The principles and techniques of this method include the emphasis on accuracy, as Richards and Rodgers say. Where grammar is involved, they add, it is *taught deductively – that is, by presentation and study of grammar rules, which are then practised through translation exercises*[13]. David Crystal states that learning by this method mainly *involves the mastery of grammatical rules and the memorizing of long list of literary vocabulary*[14].

Another shift in grammar conception came by the end of the nineteenth century. This aspect of grammar apprehension responds closely to the subject matter of this thesis: *grammar came to be considered a tool for improving writing*[15]. This new role assigned to grammar cumulated at the beginning of the twentieth century where even more emphasis on teaching grammar as a tool for improving writing was laid. Weaver admits that these

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[10] Early Modern English [online] URL:
<http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/english/worldlit/teaching/upperdiv/emodeng1.htm>
[11] PRICE, Glanville. a kol.- *Encyklopedie jazyků Evropy*, Volvox Globator, Praha, 2002, 17 s.
[12] English Grammar [online] URL:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_grammar#History_of_English_grammar_writing>
[13] RICHARDS, Jack C. – RODGERS, Theodor S. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. *Cambridge University Press*, 2005, 6 s.
[14] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 438 s.
[15] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 6 s.

tendencies are still very much with us. She cites Hillocks and Smith who note that grammar at nowadays schools copy or mirror the early Greek emphasis on grammatical paradigms. *Over two thousand years later these are still with us*[16], they complain. The third decade of the twentieth century saw an emergence of a phenomenon called Basic English which found its supporters among the most important politicians and writers of the day, namely Sir Winston Churchill, President Masaryk and H.G.Wells[17]. The project was stopped because the world was occupied with the global war incident, yet its message was quite clear: to enable the whole world talk with the same language which would cover all the needs and functions of such a tool. Charles Ogden, the father of the project, states in his book on Basic the following:

> English is given to the learner as if it was no more regular, and only a little simpler, than French, which is truly a language of complex forms and fixed uses at every turn.
> English is the simplest of all languages in form and structure, but if a start is made with a limited word list in which more than 100 ´strong verbs´ are given a place, it will never seem so.[18]

Ogden further mentions the great advantage of English, concerning the grammar, when he states that one of the main reasons for making English the basis of a universal language is the fact that English *is the only major language in which the analytical tendency has gone far enough for purposes of simplification*[19]. Is not this a refreshing breath of fresh air among the long-established grammar visions based on fosilized-like formulae of Greek and Latin? There is one more item worth mentioning; Ogden writes, in 1930 (the first printing) that *for the last thirty or forty years, teachers in English and American schools have been putting up a great fight against the old forms of ´Grammar´ - against the learning of rules based on the structure of dead languages*[20]. He welcomes the activity of the above mentioned pedagogues and calls their efforts *a step into the right direction*[21]. Ogden´s words only confirm the tendency where the efforts to view and handle grammar differently started a new era in the demands for grammar function in the context of language teaching which eventually resulted in the introduction of Functional Grammar by British linguists Halliday and Hasan in the 1970s. In

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[16] HILLOCKS, G.Jr. & Smith, M.W.Grammar and usage. In J.Flood, J.M. Jensen, D.Lapp, & J.R.Squire Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts, *Macmillan*, 1991, 591 s.
[17] OGDEN, Charles K. Basic English. *London*, 1944, 176 s.
[18] OGDEN, Charles K. Basic English. *London*, 1944, 136 s.
[19] OGDEN, Charles K. Basic English. *London*, 1944, 25 s.
[20] OGDEN, Charles K. Basic English. *London*, 1944, 112 s.
[21] OGDEN, Charles K. Basic English. *London*, 1944, 112 s.

her note on functional grammar, Weaver states that *grammarians in this linguistic tradition claim that functional grammar is more relevant to writing because it emphasizes the functions or uses of grammatical constructions*[22].

As we folow the tendencies and methods of the twentieth century, we may find out that the preferences to master grammar as the chief aspect of learning foreign language – in this case English – slowly yield to efforts to introduce communication methods, like Audio-Lingual Method, CLT, TPR or CLL.

Bb)   <u>Overview of teaching methods</u>

Teaching methods differ significantly when it comes to utilization of grammar in their schemes. Every method can basically consist of its principles and its techniques. Grammar belongs to the category of language aspects, where it forms more or less a significant part of a particular method. Diane Larsen-Freeman reckons ten basic methods used in the modern way of teaching. Her book *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* lists the most important methods used in language teaching from the eighteenth and nineteenth century up to the most modern and experimental methods.

The earliest method described here is the Grammar Translation Method derived from classical methods of teaching Greek and Latin. Translating word by word, memorizing grammar rules and enormous vocabulary lists were the major techniques that this method utilized. Grammar was a crucial part of this method, leading students to reading skills and not being interested in spoken language[23].

Direct Method, sometimes also called Natural Method came into being around 1900s in France and Germany. Its grammar was taught by an inductive approach which means that the students had to figure out the grammatical rules themselves through the examples of appropriate linguistic forms in the target language. This method was not so strict as to speak of memorizing the rules of grammar without the proper context[24].

The Audio-Lingual Method was another step towards omitting grammar – Crystal writes that this approach was based on intensive training in spoken language given to the soldiers of US Army during the WWII. He states that the method relied on *everyday spoken conversation with particular attention being paid to natural pronunciation*. Crystal

[22] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context, *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 14 s.
[23] LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane.Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. *Oxford*, 2008, 16-17 s.
[24] LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane.Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. *Oxford*, 2008, 18 s.

furthermore adds that there is little discussion of grammatical rules and that this method became less popular during the time by those students who needed *more creative work in speech production*[25]. This approach to grammar learning was similar to the direct method. Even though it as an earlier method than ALM, it laid emphasis on the fact that students should be taught a language directly. There should be absolutely no involvement of the students' native language that would explain new vocabulary or grammar rules. All the communication is in the target language. Compared to ALM, the Direct Method emphasized vocabulary over grammar[26].

There are methods that do not include grammar aspect as one of the main principles of their nature: for example the Silent Way which is put into the category of humanistic approaches[27] by Crystal, which *keeps the amount of teaching to a minimum and encourages learners to develop their own way of using the language elements introduced*[28]. Richards and Rodgers indicate that students learn the grammar rules of the language through largely inductive processes[29].

Desuggestopedia, on the other hand, emphasizes vocabulary and its usage by speaking, reading and writing. Grammar is emphasized only minimally. As Larsen-Freeman points out, *the teacher should present and explain the grammar and vocabulary, but not dwell on them*[30].

The Community Language Learning is based on counseling-learning approach by Charles A.Curran[31]. The teacher becomes a language counselor rather than a tutor; errors are viewed as something natural and teacher/counselor should respond to them in a non-threatening way[32]. It does not mean that grammar would be excluded of this method, on the contrary. As Krashen and Terrell state, it is the last of the three steps of Natural Approach that resembles CLL. The third step is called *Knowledge of rules* and it defines that *the performer must know the rules* and that the rules themselves *must be simple to describe* and *must not require complex movements and rearrangements*[33].

I suppose that two other popular methods that modern teachers make use of are the Total Physical Respons (TPR) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). In both these

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[25] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 439 s.
[26] LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane.Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. *Oxford*, 2008, 29 s.
[27] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 440 s.
[28] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 440 s.
[29] RICHARDS, Jack C. – RODGERS, Theodor S.Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. *Cambridge University Press*, 2005, 82 s.
[30] LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane.Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. *Oxford*, 2008, 79 s.
[31] LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane.Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. *Oxford*, 2008, 89 s.
[32] LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane.Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. *Oxford*, 2008, 102 s.
[33] LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane.Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. *Oxford*, 2008, 183 s.

methods communication yields writing, TPR sees the oral modality as primary goal, even though the imperative is put on vocabulary and grammatical structures to certain limits, CLT in its principle urges the teacher to establish situations that prompt communication[34].

When overviewing methods mentioned in *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*, I think my preferences could be ranged among the Content based, Task based and Participatory Approaches. Not only these approaches favor using the communication process over the linguistic content, they also, and the importance of this is unimpugnable, they integrate learning of a language with learning some other content. As if the students used English to learn it. I have always held the opinion that learning English should mean more than getting to know the most important grammatical features and correctly fill in the entrance exams made by Czech universities that fiercely stick to time-proven models of multiple choice grammar peculiarities, and think that they (the exams) represent the most valid way to choose the best candidates for the particular field of study, with which I personally deeply disagree. The encyclopedic knowledge which these test are prime example of, should not be a part of exams where something living, like language, is being evaluated.

All the three approaches mentioned above do not consider grammar the major feature, yet they do not disdain it. Grammar is explained somehow ´on the way´ through discussions and debates. Moreover, the Participatory Approach is based on issues of concerns to students[35], what they like, what they feel to express, etc. Real life is a perfect setting for the activities which become experience-centered, much-sought intersubject relations and, last but not least, serves as the perfect example of excellent collaboration between the teacher and students.

Even thought the grammar was not the primal concern of the latter mentioned methods and approaches, I still insist that grammar in written skills plays an important role of order and exclusivity. Excellent grammar in business letters or personal profiles speaks of the level of education and seriousness of the applicant/writer that is trying to convey a message. That is why, in my thesis, I analyse and teach grammar of written materials, focusing on the most common and notorious mistakes my students have been making since the time I started teaching in 1994. The further explanation of my motifs and true reasons are dealt with later on.

As a conclusion to this chapter, I would quote the words of David Crystal, whose book I read with great admiration and which I cannot but recommend to every serious amateur or

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[34] LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane. Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. *Oxford*, 2008, 95-6 s.
[35] LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane. Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. *Oxford*, 2008, 150 s.

professional in linguistic studies. At the end of his chapter called *How we study grammar*, he presents his readers with some brilliant remarks:

> The techniques of grammatical analysis can be used to
> demonstrate the enormous creative power of language – how,
> from a finite set of grammatical patterns, even a young child
> can express an infinite set of sentences. They can help us all
> to identify the fascinating ´edges´ of language, where we find
> the many kinds of humorous and dramatic effects…we inevitably
> sharpen our individual sense of style, and thus promote our abilities
> to handle more complex constructions, both in speaking/listening
> and in reading/writing. Grammar need not be dry, arcane, pointless:
> it can be alive, entertaining, relevant. As with so many subjects, it
> depends only on how it is put across[36].

Crystal´s final remark has a great power to astonish our teachers of second languages. It did astonish me and spoke right out of my heart. I do believe these words will serve as an occasional self-reflective reminder that we are seldom perfect and spotless and that our own, individual performance is a critical part of conveying our teaching skills to our students:

> That is the modern way: discovery first, definitions of terms
> last. But grammar always suffered, in many schools, by being
> taught the other way round. A hypothetical sentence would be
> put on the board, and the required grammatical terminology would
> be learned, before any attempt would be made to grapple with
> real sentences in a real world. Often, even, no attempt at all would
> be made to go searching for interesting, real sentence specimens. It is
> as if the children´s knowledge of plants were to remain forever solely
> on the blackboard. No one would tolerate such a bizzare pedagogical
> approach for biology. But for over 200 years, just such an approach was
> actively practised for grammar. The only thing that surprises me is why
> it took so long for educational practice to get rid of it.[37]

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[36] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 234 s.
[37] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 235 s.

Bc)   Contrastive approach/analysis

Contrastive analysis (CA) is *the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities*[38]. The definition I used might be considered academically unfit since it comes from Wikipedia source[39]. That is why I include the definition used by Lawrence F Warhall Jr. who describes CA as *a tool for language teachers to use in helping students avoid common pitfalls due to the „pull of the mother tongue"* [40]. Charles C. Fries described the possibility to apply CA to language teaching *as a scientific description of the language to be learned carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner*[41]. I find the contrastive approach/analysis a very useful way of presenting grammatical differences in front of a class. This approach, although criticised that *there appeared to be strong disconnection between what CA predicted and what actually occurred in the language classroom*[42]*,* offers a certain way of looking at the grammar phenomenons entirely distincts from Czech equivalents. Warhall also adds that there are limitations to CA, especially when it comes to *limits to the numbers of contrasts that a teacher can keep in mind, however*, he explains, *this generally applies to newer teachers rather than more experienced teachers*. He states that when it comes to a newer teacher, *it*

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[38] Contrastive Analysis [online]

[39] I understand certain circumspection when it comes to Wikipedia sources, yet recently I believe the reputation and credibility of Wikipedia has grown. In his article *The Wikipedia Project* published in *Ways to Teaching and Learning*, Hradec Králové 2006, 72-74 s., (Proceedings of the 5th International and 9th National Conference of the Association of Teachers of the Czech Republic) organized by PF Hradec Králové in September 2006, Pavel Kurfurst writes about the Wikipedia Project and compares the accuracy of Wikipedia with that of Encyclopaedia Britannica, stating that *among 42 entries tested, the difference in accuracy was not particularly great: the average science entry in Wikipedia contained around four inaccuracies; Britannica, about three* and adds that *to ELT, Wikipedia may be of great value*. In *English Teaching Forum Journal*, Volume 48, Number 1, 2010, 12-19 s., an American teacher Christine M.Tardy published her research called *Writing for the World: Wikipedia as an Introduction to Academic Writing*, where, I believe, the word academic is crucial. Even though Tardy mentions that *Wikipedia has become a popular reference source for general information on a wide range of topics*, she is well aware of the fact that *many of my students had been told by their teachers not to use Wikipedia*, and she concludes that *acquanting students with Wikipedia and its procedures for content creation and editing has the additional benefit of raising their awarness about the credibility and reliability of information*. I personally support the view that *it is difficult to deny the usefulness of the site as a general reference*, which a simple, general definition can easily provide.

[40] WARHALL Jr., Lawrence F. A Survey of Contrastive Analysis, error analysis, and, interlanguage; and their relation to language teaching. *[online]* 2003, 2 s.

[41] WARHALL Jr., Lawrence F. A Survey of Contrastive Analysis, error analysis, and, interlanguage; and their relation to language teaching. *[online]* 2 s., quoting Croft, K. (1980), *Readings on English as a second language*, Cambridge University Press.

[42] WARHALL Jr., Lawrence F. A Survey of Contrastive Analysis, error analysis, and, interlanguage; and their relation to language teaching. *[online]* 2003, 4 s.

may be better for them overall, to learn of the contrastive differences of their learners´ languages than to learn of them later via their repeated mistakes or errors in certain areas[43]. I strongly support this view and believe there is a certain message hidden for all of us teachers with extensive experience and skills to use the particular language to spread this idea further. Warhall presents three major topics in his essay – contrastive analysis, error analysis and interlanguage. He states that *while one topic´s approach seems to replace its predecessor´s, there are certain valuable aspects of each topic that carry forward to the newer ones[44]*. I noticed the character of my work resembles more to the error analysis, since it includes many points like collection of data, identification of errors, classification into error types, statement of relative frequency of error types, identification of the areas of difficulty in the target language, and therapy[45]. With a closer look at the issue of CA/EA relationship, it occurred to me that those two do not show any contradictory goals. As Mihalache states *contrastive analysis has laid the emphasis on error analysis as a way to study the difficulties encountered by foreign – language learners. The findings of such studies can be very helpful in setting up teaching devices. Contrastive analysis and error analysis are complementary to one another, in the sense that the results obtained and the predictions made by the contrastive studies are to be checked up and corrected by the results obtained in the error analysis[46]*.

The contrastive analysis was based on behaviourist theory made by Burrhus Frederick Skinner in order to use the formal distinctions between the learners' first and second languages to predict errors. He laid out his theoretical fundamentals in his book *Verbal Behavior* (1957). The key term of this approach is *´language transfer´*, which describes learner's effort to apply rules and forms of his mother tongue into the language he/she is trying to master.

In *A Forum Anthology*, *Volume IV*, Margherita Ulrych gives the following example of how a language transfer may work. She uses the Italian word *ciao* as a form of greeting used in Italy in the same way, for both arriving and departing. Ulrych states that in translating this simple sounding and notoriously known word into English may end in a difficulty when presented to students without a further context. She says that *students must first analyze the*

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[43] WARHALL Jr., Lawrence F. A Survey of Contrastive Analysis, error analysis, and, interlanguage; and their relation to language teaching. *[online]* 2003, 6 s.
[44] WARHALL Jr., Lawrence F. A Survey of Contrastive Analysis, error analysis, and, interlanguage; and their relation to language teaching. *[online]* 2003, 2 s.
[45] MIHALACHE, Roxana.Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis- Implications for the teaching of English. *[online]* 1076-7 s.
[46] MIHALACHE, Roxana.Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis- Implications for the teaching of English. *[online]* 1078 s.

source-language text to establish whether the context is one of coming or one of going. The notion of greeting is then transferred into the target language and restructured as <u>hello</u> or <u>goodbye</u>[47]. I suppose the graphic chart[48] may be more transparent.

by Eugene Nida, 1974[49]

<div align="center">

SOURCE   RECEPTOR

LANGUAGE   LANGUAGE

↓   ↑

analysis   restructuring

transfer

</div>

Language transfer typically refers to the learner's trying to apply rules and forms of the first language into the second language. As further research in error analysis and interlanguage structure showed, this assumption was faulty: *most errors do not appear because of transfer, but to faulty derivations of the rules of the target language. Transfer plays an important role in all levels of language acquisitions: from the very first sound transfers on phonetic level, later meaning transfers on semantic level, up to various rules concerning more advanced language features like word order or the usage of articles.* However, it is important to note here that *as learners progress and gain more experience with the target language, the role of transfer typically diminishes*[50].

I believe that this statement is true because transfer offers a student something I would most likely describe as ´a crutch´ that will be ´thrown off´ at the moment when a student gains enough independence to lose it unconsciously. This persuasion of mine is based on my psychology tutor I met at Masaryk University in Brno twenty-two years ago and whose book I still use in cases when needing spiritual advice. He mentions the following oriental saying in his book *Duševní hygiena* the translation of which I took the liberty of performing for this purpose:

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[47] ULRYCH, Margherita.Teaching Translation in the Advanced EFL Class. *AFA IV*, 1989, 316 s.
[48] ULRYCH, Margherita.Teaching Translation in the Advanced EFL Class. *AFA IV*, 1989, 316 s.
[49] NIDA, E.A. – Taber, C. The theory and practice of translation. *Leiden: Brill*, 1974, 33 s.
[50] Second Language Acquisition *[online]* URL:<http://wordiq.com/definition/Second_language_acquisition >

Sow a deed – and you reap a habit

Sow a habit – and you reap character

Sow character – and you reap destiny[51]

I believe these words may be stretched far enough to capture the essence of the good practice of using language transfer for good deeds (individual language transfer rules) that later become character (proper manifestation of language) and finally the destiny of a proficient language user.

In the book called *Contrastive Analysis*, Carl James explains the theoretical basis of this field of studies. James uses a graphic chart (C.James, 1980) to bring closer the relations between the native/source language and foreign/target language:

by C.James, 1980
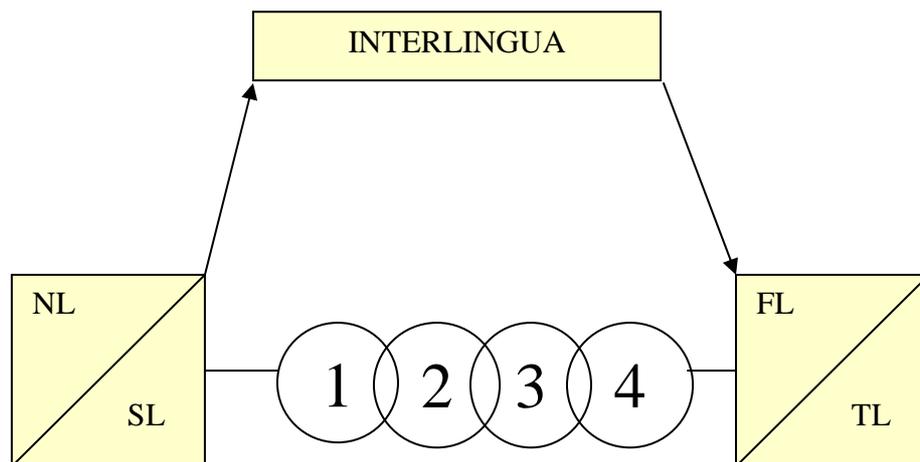
SL, TL – Source and Target language – translation point of view
NL, FL – Native and Foreign language – language learner´s p.o.v.

The intermediate stage in between the NL/SL and FL/TL positions is what Mel´chuk calls an interlingua[52]. It is a system of transitional language that features the analysis characteristics of the SL and the synthesis characteristics of the TL text. For each pair of text there is one interlingua. The error analysts suggest that the learner, approaching the stage FL, creates a series of *approximate systems or transitional dialects*[53] that are consecutive and interfering and that each stage represents unique features which are shared with the immediately

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[51] MÍČEK, Libor.Duševní hygiena. *SPN, Praha*, 1984, 161 s.
[52] JAMES, Carl.Contrastive Analysis. *Addison Wesley Publishing Company*, 1980, 4 s.
[53] JAMES, Carl.Contrastive Analysis. *Addison Wesley Publishing Company*, 1980, 5 s.

preceding and succeding approximative system. I suppose this shows the logical development of language-creation on the basis of contrastive approach. The individual steps, or systems as called by James, may be realized individually and in different time intervals. But it is impossible, I suppose, to ignore their creation and existence, if we speak of mastering any second language. The role of language transfers, I think, is to provide safe and trustworthy steps needed for every student to proceed into the next approximate system and simultaneously provide such a student with enough self-confidence in his/her own proficiency that he/she is ready to abandon the previous system and is comfortable to enter the system above. On the level of communication skills, Krashen´s I + 1[54] may be considered one of these language transfers. For the purpose of this thesis, I will present the language transfers intended for writing skills, or performance, and they will consist of grammar rules applicable for English language, but explained on the basis of Czech language.

James also mentions three dimensions or axes that must be considered when the nature of contrastive analysis is being discussed: the first dimension is whether CA is of generalist or particularist approach, which means whether the language analysed is treated as an individual language or as a human language in general. The second dimension depends largely on the actual user of the language – whether the user studies a language in isolation or whether the user has ambitions to compare more languages and desire to classify its features into types /linguistic typology). The final, third dimension lies in the fact that the user can view the language either from diachronic point of view or synchronic point of view[55]. When deciding what is the nature of CA, we must ask three questions that may help us to clarify our position in the CA analysis: 1) is CA generalist or particularist?, 2) is it concerned with immanence or comparison?, and 3) is it diachronic or synchronic?

The answers cannot be clear-cut. CA is neither generalist nor particularist but somehow intermediate on the scale between the two extremes. CA is also interested in the genius as well as in the comparability of a particular language. It is not concerned with classification and, as term ´contrastive´ implies, more interested in differences between languages than in their likenesses. Although it is not concerned with language families or other factors of language history, it is not sufficiently committed to the study of static linguistic phenomena to be called synchronic. CA then seems to be a hybrid linguistic element aimed at producing inverted two-valued typologies (CA is always concerned with a pair of languages), and working with the pressumption that languages can be compared. It is also

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[54] LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane.Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. *Oxford*, 2008, 180 s.
[55] JAMES, Carl.Contrastive Analysis. *Addison Wesley Publishing Company*, 1980, 2 s.

possible to state that CA is a part of *Interlanguage Studies which are concerned with the emergence of languages in the sense of ontogeny, or change within the human individual. CA is included into two-valued Interlingual linguistics which are part of broader cathegory of Interlingual diachronic study. The field of TV Interlingual linguistics consists of 3 theories - translational theory (text conversion), error analysis and contrastive analysis, both concerned with turning a monolingual into a bilingual*[56]. Interlingual linguistics then are represented by three ultimate branches: the translation theory that is concerned with the process of text conversion, the error analysis and the contrastive analysis which are both concerned with the means that are used to help a monolingual personality to become a bilingual. The interlingual studies illustrated in the graphic chart at the beginning of this chapter may then bring closer the multilateral aspect of the problematics described above.

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[56] JAMES, Carl. Contrastive Analysis. *Addison Wesley Publishing Company*, 1980, 4 s.

Bd)   Action research in theory

There are several models of AR that could be used as the basis for the thesis. The term ´action research´ was first used by MIT professor Kurt Lewin in about 1944. Since then, many other followers of Kurt Lewin updated or improved the AR research model – we may mention Stringer´s action research interacting spiral, or Bachman´s action research spiral, Piggot-Irvine´s action research model or Hendricks´s action research process[57].

What actually is action research and what are its main purposes, properties and characteristics? Zeynep Onel from Baskent University in Ankara describes its advantages for a teacher who wants to initiate his own research and is looking for a reliable tool to perform it. Onel cites Kemmis and McTaggert (1982) and their definition of action research which states that *action research can be defined as a combination of terms „action" and „research"* and that *it puts ideas into practice for the purposes of self-improvement and increasing knowledge about curriculum, teaching, and learning. The ultimate result*, she futher cites, *is improvement in what happens in the classroom and school*[58].

The action research method I chose to follow is a four-stage procedural model by Craig Mertler, which is furthermore subdivided into 9 steps, each of which belongs to one of the above mentioned categories. Teachers repeat some steps several times or do them in different order. The level of the AR I intend to perform will be of a school-level.

The Mertler´s model is composed of four stages –

    a)   Planning stage

    b)   Acting stage

    c)   Developing stage and

    d)   Reflecting stage

which all together contain nine steps that comprise the process of action research.

The Planning stage contains four subordinate steps:
a) Identifying and limiting topic procedure,
b) Gathering information,
c) Reviewing related literature, and

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[57] MERTLER, Craig A. Action Research. *Sage Publication*, Inc., 2009, 13-17 s.
[58] *English Teaching Forum*, Jan.1997, 56-7 s.

d) developing a research plan.

Acting stage covers two subordinate steps:

a) Collecting data, and

b) Analyzing data.

Developing stage focuses on:

a) Developing an action plan.

Reflecting stage provides:

a) Sharing and communicating results, and

b) Reflecting on the process

Johnson[59] reminds the users to bear in mind that these steps should be considered guidelines that serve the users to conduct the AR properly. Every particular research problem or topic should be adapted to these guidelines during the process of research. The individual steps will then take on specific importance depending on the emphasis put on the particular key area of the research. Some of the steps may, at first sight, show out more valued information than other steps, however they only work as a closed system where all the steps are counted in and engaged as one.

Onel states that the key to action research is having a theme to concetrate on[60]. My theme has been determined on the basis of my students´ needs resulting from the analysis of written essays on different topics and the most frequent errors made by the students during the process of writing. The actual collecting of the essays was the initial step of my action plan. It provided me with data collected for special purposes, the data were collected and sorted out. The errors were processed to the form of graphic charts and numeral outputs that made clear were the problems arised during the act of writing occured.

After the key elements have been determined, different tranfers were used to help students to get rid off the errors in their further writings. That is where the contrastive approach steps in and where L1 should be a basis for better understanding, or easier analysis, of a selected grammar element in interest, and the transfer that helps the students to restructure a desired L2 output so that the meaning of the output responds to the meaning of

[59] JOHNSON, Richard A. A short guide to Action Research. *Pearson Education*, 2008
[60] ONEL, Zeynep.Teacher Initiated Research: Action Research. *English Teaching Forum,* January 1997, 56-58 s.

the input. To achieve this effect, the students should be aware of the *different stylistic and registral variations of both the source language (SL) and target language (TL)*[61]. Roman Jakobson distinguishes three ways of interpreting a verbal sign: it may be translated into *other signs of the same language (intralingual translation), into another language (interlingual translation), or in another, non-verbal system of symbols (intersemiotic translation)*[62]. Since the theme of this topic concerns Czech language as L1 and English as L2, the second, interlingual translation, is the way of interpreting we are interested in as seen in note [50].

The third step of the process of teaching grammar elements for these special essay-writing purposes, is to conduct a second data collecting, this time after the transfers providing better understanding of the critical grammar elements. This was done in the same way as the first collecting, data collected were processed and presented in the form of the very same graphic charts and numeral outputs, this time bearing new information which could be compared, analysed, or simply used as indicator on how the actual learning through this method was efficient.

Onel also emphasizes the importance of a written record that would give clear indication of the results achieved during the research. *To be able to report any change*, Onel states, *teachers need a record, which will enable them to compare before and after. What specific variables are of concern, what is the current situation?*[63]

Action plan does not seem to be only a tool for analysing students´ errors and make them aware of what they do wrong or well. It offers the teacher much broader viewport of what is going on in his lessons. The teacher must be well aware of the effects a good action research may bring and should incline to perform such a research, or a research of similar type, during his teaching career repeatedly. *Although there are various means of gathering information about the actual teaching that takes place*, Onel writes, *the research carried out by the teachers themselves is the most practical since it allows teachers to be involved in their own development*[64], or as it may be said otherwise – it helps teachers improve their own way of teaching, their teaching philosophy, habits or any other aspect of teaching that may seem stiff or rigid by long-term usage which does not reflect and react to students´ current needs or the specific situations that may arise at any point in any class we can imagine.

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[61] ULRYCH, Margherita. Teaching Translation in the Advanced EFL Class. *AFA IV*, 1989, 316 s.
[62] ULRYCH, Margherita. Teaching Translation in the Advanced EFL Class. *AFA IV*, 1989, 316 s.
[63] ONEL, Zeynep. Teacher Initiated Research: Action Research. *English Teaching Forum,* January 1997, 57 s.
[64] ONEL, Zeynep. Teacher Initiated Research: Action Research. *English Teaching Forum,* January 1997, 56 s.

C.   <u>Practical part</u>

Ca)   <u>Planning for Action Research</u>

According to Mertler and Charles, there are several categories of topics that could be considered for AR studies. My topic seems to belong very close to the category of *Instructional methods*. Topics enlisted in this method might include *the effect of a particular teaching method on student learning, the impact that different teacher personality styles can have on student learning or motivation to learn, or methods of providing effective feedback to students on their academic performance*[65]. The word *instructional* here means, I do believe, the process of what lies behind any good teaching, grammar not excluding – the art of instruct somebody to acquire knowledge or perform better in any possible area of learning/teaching interaction. Such instructions move the personal level of knowledge, or education, further and are what I personally call the drive to know more.

In his book about action research, Mertler suggest to examine every researcher´s beliefs in the process called *reconnaissance*[66], which he adopts from G.E.Mills. Mertler supports this process since it involves taking time to reflect on your own beliefs and to gain a better understanding of the nature and context of your research problem. This process features three additional steps, or forms: self-reflection, description and explanation[67]. Each of these forms should provide more detailed insight into the area of a particular action research, or groundwork upon which every researcher´s ideas to solve the paticular problem or answer are built. The items I feel I am supposed to answer prior my own research, and those that fit the purpose of this thesis, are:

1) What are the educational theories that impact my instructional practice
2) What are the values I hold about education?
3) In which ways does my work in school contribute to the larger context of schooling?
4) What is the historical context about how and why I hold the beliefs that I do about teaching and learning?

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[65] MERTLER, Craig A. Action Research. *Sage Publication*, Inc., 2009, 47 s.
[66] MERTLER, Craig A. Action Research. *Sage Publication*, Inc., 2009, 50 s.
[67] MERTLER, Craig A. Action Research. *Sage Publication*, Inc., 2009, 50 s.

I pondered about these self-reflective issues and answered them as follows:

Thinking of my own view of teaching English, I came to understanding that I have been using, sometimes and very often unconsciously, the model that responds most to the cognitive/constructivist model. The traditional learning, largely used at our schools, *reflect a transmission model of education, based upon principles from behavioral psychology*[68]. The transmission model lies in contrast with cognitive, or constructivist, model and the comparison of both and their main principles may show some significant and substantial differences. Let us mention few to illustrate the differences in the both models.

Transmission model (TM) views, for example, contrary to the contrastivist model (CM), errors as phenomena preventing formation of habits. CM sees errors necessary for encouraging more sophisticated hypotheses. TM provides students with *passive practice skills and memorizing facts* while CM, on the level, encourages students to *pursue learning and to construct knowledge*[69]. I think the most useful difference for the purpose of this thesis lies in the way CM handles teaching grammar. It uses *mini-lessons*[70] as a means of presenting grammatical elements to students. TM presupposes that grammar should be taught, practised or applied, and finally tested in a strict order as mentioned here. Weaver presents the basic principles in a very clear and understandable, easily grasped individual theses.

Realizing all of the facts resulting from the differencies between the two models, I could not but incline to the opinion that my way of teaching is much closer to CM than to TM. I also think that I understood this preference was caused by an element I would operatively called *Practical Me* which has been my great advantage in the classroom. I have always felt the discrepancy between the demands the traditional system requires from nowadays students, and the real language as I experienced when living abroad. The goals of the curricula were the same, so were the final grades on the school reports, but the real language, arising from students needs and from the modern usage of the langue as I understand it, was missing. The practical ability to respond correctly in specific situations arising from practical context was at its minimum, if not lower.

I may now understand the differences and some misconceptions that I held against some of my colleagues when I felt the apparent difference between *what* I do and *how* I do things, and their own approach based on the principles described in Weaver´s book as transmissional/behavioral principles of teaching. When realizing these completely

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[68] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 148 s.
[69] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 149 s.
[70] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 150 s.

antagonistic approaches and their effects on our individual way of teaching, I see now that we may be able to teach differently, on our own and individual way, without any feelings of performing bad work or not fulfilling the aims and goals of second language teaching. There are more ways to convey a message and we should only be messengers, not judges, I think. And thanks to my further education which, sometimes seemed to be not really purposeful, my eyes were literally opened in the field where a great deal of neglect blurred my limited vision. I wish all teachers could come to a similar conclusion and were encouraged if not to study, then to broaden their visions and knowledge to be able to become more tolerant not only to each other, but also to the ones who sit in front of them. It reminds me of the lines I read in *The Prophet* which I cite from time to time to my students, where Gibran is dealing with teachers and their main role. Even though Gibran may have not be taken as a pure pedagogical authority, on the strength of these lines he undoubtedly deserves it.

> The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness. If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.[71]

I further realized that most of the grammar teaching I have been doing has had a form rather of mini-lessons than real grammatical lessons performed and used by the traditional (TM) approach. That is why I chose mini-lessons as a practical and useful form for the transfers I will be using to present grammar through. The strengths of a mini-lesson are[72]:

- brevity - it does not last more than 5 minutes.
- its direct explanation without much if any overt interaction with students - the teacher is presenting „*tips*" he thinks will be valuable to students.
- a mini-lesson can be presented to the whole class when the teacher thinks that several students could profit from it
- the teacher does not assume that everyone will or should be able to apply what has been taught; *the ideas are simply added „to the class pot," as Caulkin (1986) puts it*[73].

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[71] GIBRAN, Khalil.The Prophet *[online]* 23 s.
[72] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 150-1 s.
[73] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 150 s.

- a key feature of a mini-lesson is that the students are not given follow-up exercises to practice what has been taught. The teacher simply helps them use the information if their writing suggests a need for the skill and they seem ready for it.

- both need and readiness are important, *in other words, teachers must be „kidwatchers" (Y. Goodman, 1978) in order to decide when to teach mini-lessons*[74].

As Weaver states at the end of this chapter, many of these principles are captured as aspects of an active, transactional model of learning and teaching[75]. I welcome the idea of a mini-lesson, and I must admit that my way of presenting grammatical elements to my students have always been very much alike. I feel the above mentioned principle number five, mentioning the writing context, proves this technique more than suitable for the purpose of this thesis. Weaver herself calls the cognitive/constructivist learning theory more adequate and states that mini-lessons reflect that theory[76]. I will present the grammar elements through mini-lessons concept, because it responds to my way of presenting grammar the most. Even though there may be some minor dissimilarities, the core of the concept is fully compatible with the actual performance of mine when presenting a particular grammar element to the class.

The follow-through is performed by teacher and peer assistance in applying the lesson taught. But as said before, *need* and *readiness* are crucial points in the presentation of any mini-lesson. Students do not practise exercises – not even exercises dealing with pieces of writing. One of the driving impulses may be spontaneously occuring grammar elements requiring a mini-lesson during individual teaching units. And the amount of mini-lessons regarding one grammar element, especially if it is more complex, is not limited in number. *It may take several mini-lessons, perhaps taught in different ways, for learners to construct the concepts being introduced*[77], concludes Weaver.

My personal interest in the topic is based on the fact that for the time I have been teaching English, students in general, have always had problems within the certain areas of English grammar where the Czech mechanisms, or paradigms, were in contrast to English paradigms. I am able to find at least twelve critical areas where errors are notoriously predictable, or expected, no matter what age group the students belong to, or what kind of school they came from. This grammar epidemy has never been eradicated, and the reasons

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[74] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 150 s.
[75] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 151 s.
[76] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 150 s.
[77] WEAVER, Constance. Teaching Grammar in Context. *Heinemann*, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 157 s.

may be several. I personally think one of the reasons is the behavioural model described further on, and its devoted followers among teacherhood of our country. The structure of our current English textbooks very much supports this model, since it offers a lot of techniques responding to the model mentioned. Students´ own needs are very often presented as general needs thought by the author to be „the real needs" of the age group for which the particular textbook was written. The methods of drills are also very much included in the textbooks in our country, since I believe they are still welcome by the teachers used to work with similar books in the past times. I understand these times seemed to be very peaceful and students seemed to perform well, but the effect of my twelve year learning of Russian language resulted in my incompetence to speak in a satisfactory manner; I understood more than I could put together which made me extremely low self-confident every time I had a chance to speak the language. I never had any proper lesson of English, except the lesson at University in Pardubice, but the fluency in the language I gathered from the actual speaking and using the language. Of course, my motifs were completely different from the motifs of my students, but why not to use the advantage of my own experience to transfer some of these motifs on my students. The connection between the real world and what I call *the artificial world of a green-house* where things are different than outside, is one of the most important factors influencing the quality of teaching. To build this bridge, we have to be aware of how the subject matter of the subject we teach really works outside, the way it is used there, and not take everything a textbook says for granted. We must critically revise all the information we pass on our students, otherwise we could become story-tellers rather than teachers[78]. Even if we pass on only a small error, we build a false knowledge. If we do it due to our ignorance, it may be understandable (although I do not approve of teachers having this luxury of ignorance), but if we do it even if we could avoid it by looking in a dictionary, or in a case I witnessed, on any video source like U-Tube where there are many occasion how to find out proper meaning of many questionable terms and lexical items, it is a crime the teacher commits. No exception.

Regarding question in which ways my work in school contributes to the larger context of schooling, I must admit that I feel the largest portion of my contribution lies in the

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[78] I recently witnessed a dispute between a student and a teacher who corrected the student on how to use the word *kousek pizzy* in English. The student used the correct term *slice*, while the teacher, insisting on the regulation that it should be called *a piece of*, was trying to shift the student into the proper limits, explaining that the term slice is only used when a knife cuts something through, making it thin. I later took the teacher aside and corrected her vision in a very friendly way. Even though she admitted my point, she said it could be said the way she had said it before. When I asked her why to call things differently than they really are, she smiled and said that it did not matter, actually, and that it was only a minor error which would not change the boy´s grade so much. I did not continue in the conversation any further.

acceptance of English by my students. I have always tried to present English as a tool to *know-more*, rather than *no-more*, as it is very often happening due to the dullness the lessons of foreign language bring. I do believe in healing power of a good example, since as we know *Verba movent, exempla trahunt*. My vision, sometimes idealistic, leads me to classes of students that are ovewhelmed by English, by my subject, and I am the medium through which they can share it with me. They *share*, not only *adopt*. I have never felt myself as a simple information-passer, there is much more in teaching for me, and my contribution also lies, I think, in the way they find my subject practical, maybe the only subject at our schools that they would be able to benefit from in their further lives. And last, but not the least, English in my conception should not become only the goal of learning it, but rather an open gate to find out more about the world around. English as a means of knowing more by reading books in original, by reading newspapers and thus not relying only on biased information from our domestic sources, a tool to travel free, to communicate through internet and to become a complete, competent and competitive human being.

What is the historical context about how and why I hold the beliefs that I do about teaching and learning? In the process of my learning at schools, I witnessed not only excellent teachers, but also teachers who became my worst nigtmare. These both characters served well my intention to become a teacher, since they provided me with both extremes of teaching. I believe if we want to become good teachers, we have to live through some very bad ones and have a possibility to compare with excellent ones. Still, the strongest influence is my father, a teacher of geography and history himself who, as far as I remember, never raised his voice during his lessons – I witnessed a few. His patience towards me was the actual example I inherited towards my students. His belief that he was teaching only the people who were worth, the way he was giving the second, third and other chances. That is where my sense for good examples comes from, and even if I did not teach a single lesson any more in the future, I would feel satisfied with my work, because it has been the way my father always taught me. He never insisted on me being a straight A´s student and actually said that there were more important things in our lives, but that I should try hard and if that does not work out, I would know I did enough. And he also told me that we have to be human beings in the first place, and only then teachers, doctors and the rest. I know that it does not belong to an academic paper, but I have never told him how much I appreciate his influence and how much I value his behaviour towards other people, that I feel doing it now and right here, in this place.

The description of the situation or problem that I want to change or improve may start from my long-term observation of teaching grammar. As I have already mentioned before, I have an experience with written papers, or essays, students create and fill with the same constant types of errors. Monitoring of errors on written material is much easier and transparent than if we monitor errors made during the actual process of speaking. I realized the advantages of recorder errors that supply a firm evidence opposite the errors made during the manifestation of spoken language which are not recorded or easy to monitor. One important perspective is also the fact that if we overdo monitoring of errors made during speaking, we may bring our students to a phase where they cease to talk only because they feel intimidated by our never-ending correction obsession. We become error-hunters instead of language supporters in this case. That is why, I believe, error monitoring for any grammar-related research should be done through written materials and not through the actual spoken material. The written language has served for centuries as a source for standards of linguistic excellence and the rules of grammar were, accordingly, illustrated exclusively from written texts. On the other hand, in the 20th century, an alternative approach became widespread. *This approach pointed out*, Crystal writes, *that speech is many thousands of years older than writing: that it develops naturally in children (whereas writing has to be artificially taught); and that writing systems are derivative – mostly based on the sounds of speech*[79]. The American linguist Leonard Bloomfield insisted that *writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by menas of visible marks*[80]. And the tendencies to favour one or the other continued. From the opinion that writing was more organized, therefore more fit to follow the language tradition, to an extreme which said that writing is only *a mere ´reflection´ of spoken language* and that it should not be included in *the primary subject matter of linguistic science*[81]. Crystal insists that those two disciplines, writing and speech, should never have been allowed to confront each other in this way and that there is no point in stating why one should be better or worse than the other[82]. For the purpose of this thesis, I was interested in facts that would support my choice of written language as the appropriate tool for my action research process. There are some points where writing is undoubtedly more suitable for the type of research I carry out:

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[79] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 147 s.
[80] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 147-8 s.
[81] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 148 s.
[82] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 148 s.

1) Writing is space-bound – there is a limited amount of material that could be used in unlimited form (the combination of 23 letters into larger forms is boundless as we well know)

2) Writing is static and permanent – as such it allows repeated reading and closer analysis.

3) Writing cannot rely on the context – the participants of this interaction cannot usually see each other, that is why the organization of the text must be well-organized.

4) Writing can use some graphic effects such as punctuation, capitalization, colour forms, italics for emphasis,…etc, which make their own styles and cannot be conveyed through spoken language by reading aloud (timetables, graphs, and complex formulae)[83]

5) Writing can use some grammatical forms that spoken language uses very seldom, or never – e.g.inversion in comparison with ´as´ and ´than´. Hewings states that *we prefer to use inversion after* as *and* than *in formal written language*[84].

The research was therefore done on written material. The groups researched were the students of our school, Gymnázium Vrchlabí, ranging from the age of 14 to the age of 19. There were six classes participating in the research and they supplied the essays within the limited time period from October 2009 to February 2010. The criteria were:

- The essays were space-bound (minimum amount of words was 150 and maximum was not selected, but there was only one leaf of A4 format available[85]).
- The time was limited to 45 minutes of a single English lesson.
- The topics of the essays were chosen accordingly to the interests of the students, or at least I chose the topics where I thought my students could have felt comfortable.[86]
- Dictionaries were allowed and supplied by school.

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[83] CRYSTAL, David. How language works. *Penguin Books*. London, 2007, 150 s.
[84] HEWINGS, M. Advanced Grammar in Use. *Cambridge*, 2003, 238 s.
[85] In the future, I would took advantage of using Maria Monreal´s suggestion from Teaching Forum Anthology article called Correcting Written work where she recommends their students to write their works *on every second line so that there is enough space to rewrite the corrected items* (AFA, 1986, 180 s.). I also see the advantage of it in more space for errors indication done by the teacher.
[86] The topics were for example: *When I take a look back, The one I will never forget, I still keep that thing…, Me in an animal body, The worst movie I have ever seen, Suddenly I have a teenage son/daughter, My uniqueness, I attract disasters*, but also topics for less creative students: *My best friend, My school and my classmates.*

After collecting the essays, the process of analysing began. As I assumed, I found out the same errors I had been receiving from my students for the last decade. I also knew about the problem from my colleagues because the grammar was always a thing which was discussed first when it came to language teaching obstacles. The errors were always the same, and it only little mattered on how old the students were, because the errors were of fundamental character and had an effect on meaning no matter how simple or complicated the structures of the language were. The current way of teaching grammar reminds me of the traditional Grammar Translational Method bordering with the approach commented on by Crystal at the end of the chapter overviewing teaching methods (chapter Bb)). The grammar seems to govern the whole realm of teaching English. As if the only way to claim a student is good at English was the way he is able to apprehend grammar rules and apply them on single-acting grammar exercises. It is a very easy way to teach any language. I think it does not require any difficult or time-consuming pre-planning since there is myriad of grammar exercises to be found everywhere – in books, on internet, in files that were covered by dust for a long time. This way grammar is then presented to students, and it seems that the more difficult it is presented, the more respect students have and the more credit the teachers get because it also takes an artist to make a simple language look so uncomprehensible. Generally, if we want our students to obey our commands, let us make our subject look demanding by wrapping a simple rule of grammar into the web of exceptions and irregularities that would make this simple rule absolutely indigestible. That is the way English gets credit of a difficult subject, grammar the label of a mine area threatening to explode as they (the students) trespass it, and the teacher the image of a well-learned individual handling all of this chaos, yet not able to express the grammar for it is *really* difficult and only those who work on it *really* hard can pass the demanding field of English.

I see it differently. But a lot of things would have to be changed to straighten out the distorted spine of English. From the different way of assessing students to a friendlier way to present the language. To change a strict view of so much popular error-hunters into practical helpers or consultants. To encourage teachers´ own initiative to study new approaches and techniques on how to present and assess the language, on how to make it more practical (which involves staying in English-speaking country for at least one year to grasp the multifacial character of the language system and to get enough self-confidence in using it), on how to change from wardens to partners. But wardens are superior, partners are on the same level. We do not discuss things with wardens, we can communicate with our partners. We, as

teachers, should very quickly become partners of our students/clients. Is that really what our school system wants? I think it should. It should tend to make fundamental changes. Anything but what is going on now.

The grammar elements I chose after analysing the essays is being taught during the different times of a school year. It depends on the grade, plan and type of textbook the particular class uses. Apart from this, I teach those grammar rules when there is need for them to be reinforced, or taught for the first time. That is why I found the system of mini-lessons very useful in doing so. Using these mini-lessons, you are able to react on real demands arising from particular circumstances or situations that induce the presentation of the particular grammar rule. You make the learning pro-active and practical. Students who wonder *why* have always been a teacher´s treasure and there is no need to tell them to wait if you can satisfy their urge to *know more* immediately and within the context of the lesson. And there is more – they feel they actively participate in the process of learning and teaching, and their approach to the subject can change rapidly from slow indifference to the ultimate interest. I have seen it happened.

All the planning should be concluded by the third step, the actual explanation which Mertler identifies with developing a research question[87]. Since the main items discussed in this thesis are teaching grammar, contrastive approach and written material and their mutual relation during the process of grammar teaching through contrastive approach applied to written essays on which the effect of teaching grammar is later analysed, the appropriate research question may be stated as follows: *To what extent will teaching grammar through contrastive approach affect students´ writing performance?*

Cb)   Reasons for selection and the actual grammar elements

After analysing the collected essays, I was faced with the types of errors that I had supposed would appear. I do not say that because I think it must be said, for the purpose of this paper, but I anticipated their occurence from my own experience. It may sound daring, but my expectations were based on my oncoming sixteenth-year of teaching experience.

I analysed the errors occuring in the essays submitted by my students very carefully, which means that I had to count every single mistake and filed them into categories. The

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[87] MERTLER, Craig A. Action Research. *Sage Publication*, Inc., 2009, 72-3 s.

categories I chose to monitor were: SVOMPT, Grammar, Articles, Spelling and Other. The reasons I chose to monitor them were following:

SVOMPT belongs to a grammatical category which becomes mutilated in the worst kind of way. The structure of Czech word order has been automatically transformed by Czech students into English and becomes what Don Sparling aptly calls Czenglish[88].

The second item of consistent negligence indeed are articles. These elements of English language to which Czech does not have a satisfactory parallel, has been causing troubles matching the devastation of the language itself. The articles have been creating confusion, terror and abhorrence by hundreds of students that were confided to the care of mine.

The third item, grammar, includes all the abnormalities that English maintains after hundreds of years of becoming analytic language – the absence of 3.p.sg –*s* ending, *There is/ are* phrase, disagreement between the subject and the verb,…etc. I focused mainly on the item mentioned here, yet the field of further research regarding the frequency of other grammar errors, or mistakes, remains open.

The fourth category is spelling. I correct these spelling errors, or typos, because I believe my students should be aware of the fact that these *minor mistakes*, as they call them very often, are of the same importance as they are in Czech, and in most cases these mistakes are nothing but the act of carelessness, I suppose. I must admit that I always check, prior to obtaining a new class, whether there are any children suffering from dislexia or disgraphia and I would certainly assessed their errors in spelling more meekly.
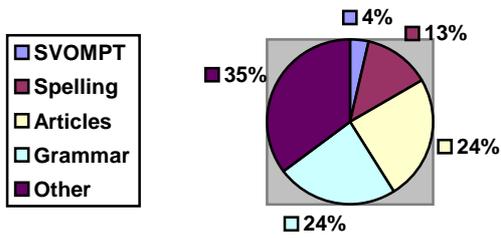
The final category I called Other – which means the errors of other types. Here I included errors emerging from lack of knowledge of phrasal verbs, idioms, wrongly attributed meanings, placing a wrong prepositional phrase,…etc.

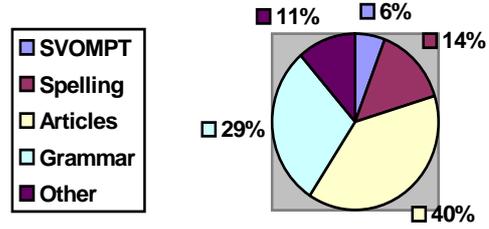The individual classes showed the following rate of errors based on my monitoring model:

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[88] SPARLING, Don. English or Czenglish?Jak se vyhnout čechismům v angličtině. *Praha*, 1989, foreword
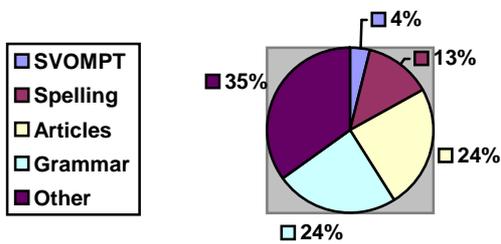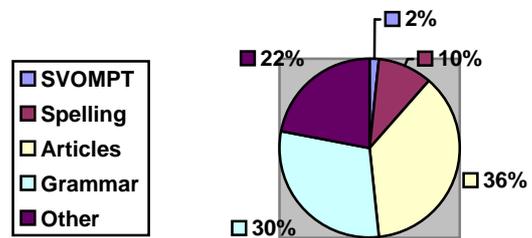
2.B class

4.A class

SVOMPT
Spelling
Articles
Grammar
Other

4% 13% 24% 24% 35%

SVOMPT
Spelling
Articles
Grammar
Other

11% 6% 14% 40% 29%

4.B class

5.A class

SVOMPT
Spelling
Articles
Grammar
Other

4% 13% 24% 24% 35%

SVOMPT
Spelling
Articles
Grammar
Other

2% 10% 36% 30% 22%

6.A class

7.A class

SVOMPT
Spelling
Articles
Grammar
Other

18% 5% 15% 33% 29%

SVOMPT
Spelling
Articles
Grammar
Other

1% 13% 31% 16% 39%
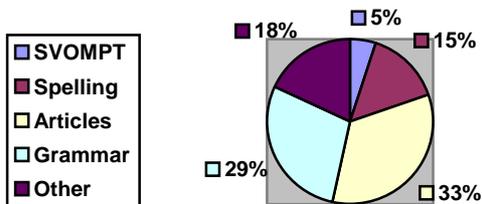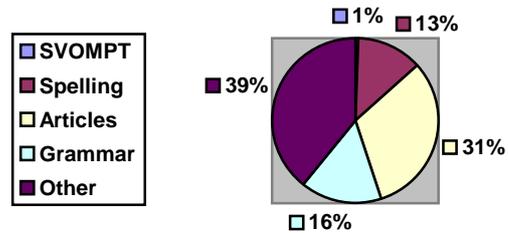
There can be seen differencies among the classes in error-making. Even though the graphic charts are well-descriptive from individual point of view, I believe the simple table will allow better visual comparison among the group of classes.

Table 1.

	4.A	5.A	6.A	7.A	2.B	4.B
SVOMPT	6 %	2 %	5 %	1 %	4 %	4 %
Grammar	29 %	30 %	29 %	16 %	24 %	24 %
Articles	40 %	36 %	33 %	31 %	24 %	24 %
Spelling	14 %	10 %	15 %	13 %	13 %	13 %
Other	11 %	22 %	18 %	39 %	35 %	35 %

As shown in the *Table 1.*, the percentage of errors of the same type is evident. SVOMPT errors are the least represented errors. I suppose it is due to the fact that their number bears a proportion to the age of students and to the time they have been with me. The worst performing group of 4.A class is the youngest class and has been with me since September 2009 only. On the other hand, even B classes (4-year study plan) considered by my colleagues less gifted than A classes (8-year study plan) performed well since they have been with me for two and four years.

Spelling is another low rated error-occuring grammar element, I suppose because spelling is trained in case of all students in general very frequently, and does not represent any harder work for the teacher.

Grammar with its *There is/are* phrase and some particular elements like the disagreement between the subject and the verb, the absence of final –*s* ending in case of the third person singular and other grammar errors of minor character scored higher on the error scale – the highest rate in 5.A class where I think it was caused by the age of the students and the fact they have been with me also since September 2009 only, like 4.A class which scored the second highest rate. 6.A class, having scored the same rate as 4.A class, has been with me for the third year now, but the error rate here is higher due to an average performance of the whole class in general, I suppose.

Other errors ranging from a misuse of phrasal verbs, idioms, wrongly attributed meanings, or placing a wrong prepositional phrase, scored highest in 7.A class, the group which is creative and tries to use language vividly – thus making a lot of errors caused by the urge of richer language than younger groups of 4.A and 5.A which did not dare to use language so freely as they would have liked because they simply cannot afford it at this level. 4.B and 2.B scored little less rate of errors, yet the reasons I believe are the same as in the

case of 7.A – a vivid way of using the language, trying to be creative at the expense of phrasal, idiomatic or meaning-based accuracy.
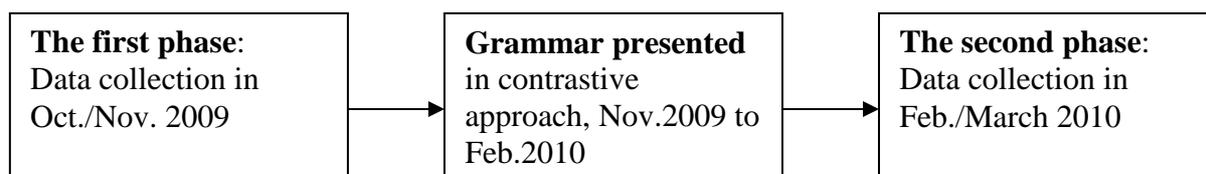
The worst category was the accuracy in the article attribution. 2.B and 4.B classes scored best, even though the rate exceeded 20% percent of overall inaccuracy, which means more than 1/5 of their works in general suffered from this error occurence. The rate of article-based incorrectness in case of the remaining classes exceeded 30%, a third or more of the overall inaccuracy which seems alarming. The articles have always been a stumbling-block of Czech students and the reason is, I suppose, the absence of similar element in the Czech language. We could agree that the articles as grammar category are relativelly simple to be learned or taught, yet the results may not support this opinion. I personally believe the articles of English cause so much ambiguity among Czech students since they are explained in a rather intricate way and which they do not understand well. The way articles are explained is very difficult and the categories of articles are mixed together into one heap of incomprehensible material filled with rules and exceptions altogether presented in singular, plural, zero, countable and uncountable positions that a student cannot possibly conquer the flood of information, yet to put them in a clear order. That is why I chose the category of *articles* as the most important error to treat.

As to the *there is/are* phrase and SVOMPT forms in cases where object is placed in front of the sentence in the same manner as in the Czech phrases where the structure *Někde je/jsou něco…*(*Na zahradě je pár stromů.* or *Ve škole je 300 žáků)* is used, I consider that the second most serious danger of false-remodelling of Czech into English. This positioning of adverbial of place is quite common in Czech phrasing and represents the major cause of troubles for Czech students who transfer it to their mother tongue according to their instinct which makes it possible for them to use adverbial of place at the beginning of a sentence which is completely contradictory to English word order, or SVOMPT. This phenomenon fought against throughout my whole teaching career has always been present in classes and among students. Over and above, it seems that students have never understood the importance of a correct structure of word order and its distinctive aspects in indicative, negative, interrogative and imperative modes. Imperative and negative cause lesser problems because their word order shows only minor differences compare to indicative and interrogative where the ratio of errors is undeniably higher.

Cc)   Collecting Data

Introduction to data collecting

Data collection was a two-phased process. The first phase took place at the break of October and November 2009. I gradually collected data in the form of written essays from six classes attending my lessons at Gymnázium Vrchlabí. The collection was scheduled so that the following analysis was done a week after all the essays were handed in and corrected. The second phase took place at the break of February and March 2010 and the data collected were analysed a week later. The students participation in both of these phases was crucial since they were personally involved in the process – they realised their errors made in the first phase and through grammar lessons they should eventually have improved their grammar knowledge and use it properly during the second stage which, again, consisted of writing essays on a particular topic. The time in between served as operational time for presentation of selected grammar elements with help of contrastive approach. The end of the process would show the differences between the results made during the first and the second writing, and the possible improvement originating from presentation of these rather delicate grammar elements to the students via contrastive approach. In the simple diagram the process could be illustrated as follows:

| **The first phase**: Data collection in Oct./Nov. 2009 | → | **Grammar presented** in contrastive approach, Nov.2009 to Feb.2010 | → | **The second phase**: Data collection in Feb./March 2010 |

The amount of data collected varied from class to class and depended mainly on the actual number of students in the appropriate class. As mentioned, there was a bottom-down limit of 150 words per one essay written in amount of 45 minutes, or a regular secondary school lesson.

The actual words in every essay were counted and the total number of the words served as a basis for performance or efficiency rate for every individual student. In the class of 4.B, I divided the total number of words by three to make the work more demanding, since they are the oldest and thus most experienced group, in classes of 5.A,

6.A, 7.A, and 2.B, I divided the total number of words by two. In 4.A class I counted the total number of words and did not divide it at all as the basis for calculation of their efficiency rate since their age and inexperience in writing essays in such a manner might have been too much a trouble for them to overcome at the first try.

I calculated the words in the following manner:

- every word scored one point
- contracted forms such as *I´m..., I´ve..., it´s..., she´s..., they´re...*, etc. were considered one word also comparing to their full forms[89]
- an article scored one point
- a compound word scored one point
- a number scored one point – if written at lenght, it scored as many points as the actual number had words
- every proper noun scored one point
- punctuation did not score any points

The analysis of the text represented by each individual essay consisted mainly of indicating and grading the errors found. The process of error-rating was also performed according to set rules:

- SVOMPT errors and Grammar errors scored two points each
- Articles, spelling and other errors scored one point each

In case of SVOMPT errors, I counted two points for the whole phrase in the wrong order, even if the phrase consisted of more words than two – for example a wrong SVOMPT construction *in our garden were three cars that night…* I counted two points for the wrong order at the beginning of the sentence.

The calculation process

The combination of the total number of words and the total number of error points resulted in the efficiency rate that was expressed in terms of percentage. To illustrate the

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[89] Through this provision I gently forced my students to use full forms in writing which is advisable in case of written language. Full forms scored two points because they consisted of two words (*I am..., I have…, it is..., she is..., they are...*, etc.)

calculation, I will present one example for a junior student and one example for a senior student with description of the evaluating process:

	Junior students	Senior students	
	4.A	5.A, 2.B, 6.A, 7.A	4.B
Total number of words: (TNW)	220	220	220
Divided by:	-	2	3
The final number of words: (FNW)	220	110	73
Error points: (EP)	18	18	18
The number of words after error points deduction: (WAD)	202	92	55
The efficiency rate: (ER)	202:220 = 0.918	92:110 = 0.836	55:73 = 0.753
Multiplied by 100: (APR)	91.8 %	83.6 %	75.3%

The results show the difference in the APR between the individual classes when all the initial data have the same amount of hypothetical 220 words in total number of words category. That is why I believe the division of TNW is appropriate because it puts higher demands on students according to their age and learning history.

It is necessary to multiply the ER in order to get the actual percentage APR of every individual student´s performance. The formula for calculation can then be recorded as follows:
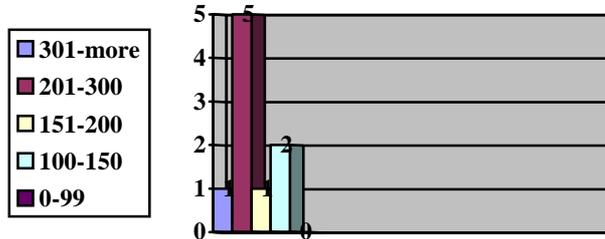
Junior students   TNW – EP = WAD

                  APR = WAD : TNW x 100

Senior students   TNW : 2 or 3 = FNW

$$FNW - EP = WAD$$

$$\textbf{\underline{APR}} = WAD : FNW \times 100$$

Apart from the efficiency rate, the data collected contained the following information:

- The length of essays in total number of words (TNW)

- The efficiency rate in percentage

- Number of errors in individual essays

- The most common errors in essays (see chapter *Cb) Reasons for selection and the actual grammar elements*)

Cd)   <u>Analysing data, the first phase</u>

<u>The length of essays in total number of words</u> (TNW)

<u>TNW</u> : (146-302)   5.A   14 essays

5.A The most common TNW ranged between 151-200 words. Two cases were lower than minimum limit.

<u>TNW</u>: (86-443)   4.A   16 essays

4.A had three cases of falling under the limited amount of TNW. The most common TNW ranged between 201-300 words which was surprising for the age-group, yet it must be said that the vocabulary was limited by age and overall experience in using language, like simple sentences and less courage to experiment with the language.

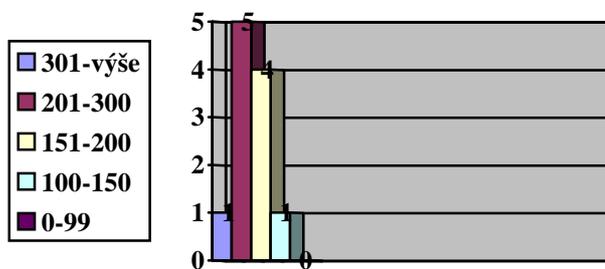TNW: (144-341)   6.A   9 essays

Legend:
- 301-more
- 201-300
- 151-200
- 100-150
- 0-99

6.A is the smallest group – 9 students only. A very good group without any difficulties it reached the most common TNW between 201-300 words. Two cases lower than 150 words in total.

TNW: (149-327)   7.A   11 essays

Legend:
- 301-výše
- 201-300
- 151-200
- 100-150
- 0-99

7.A surprised me since it is my new group, yet they reached very high overall level in scoring well in between 151-300 words in all cases except for two, out of which one was an exceptional essay, and one which was one point less than limited amount.

TNW: (156-292)   2.B   10 essays

Legend:
- 301-more
- 201-300
- 151-200
- 100-150
- 0-99
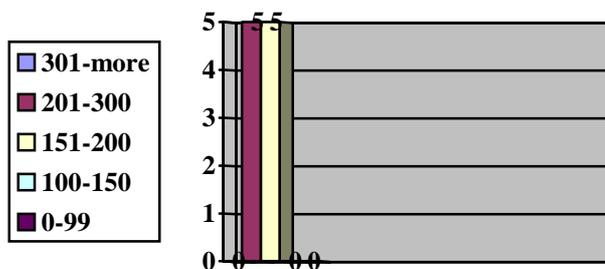
2.B - according to my expectations, raher shy in using creative language for writing in limited time, yet the results did not show any signs of concern for the teacher.

TNW: (156-400)   4.B   17 essays

Legend:
- 301-výše
- 201-300
- 151-200
- 100-150
- 0-99
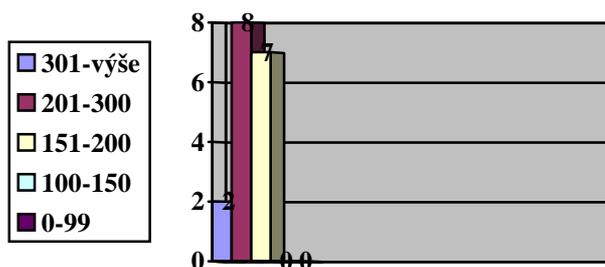
4.B, the most demanding work, also scored very well, realizing the fact their TNW was divided by three. Their overall performance was excellent, ranging in all cases between 151-300 words, and in one exceptional essay having 400 words which was the second longest essay written in this research. None of the student fell under the limit of TNW.

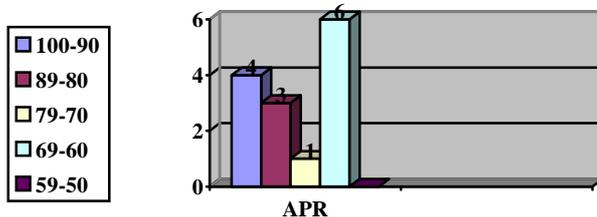The efficiency rate in percentage (APR)

The efficiency rate percentage and the following actual percentage (APR) indicates the efficiency of individual classes, and it offers an easy comparison.
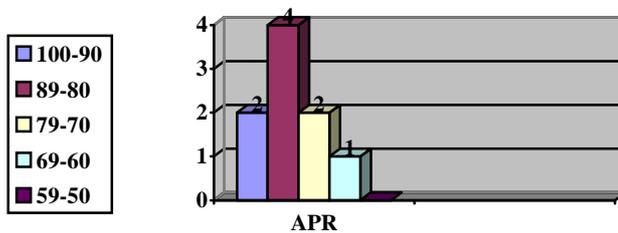
4.A
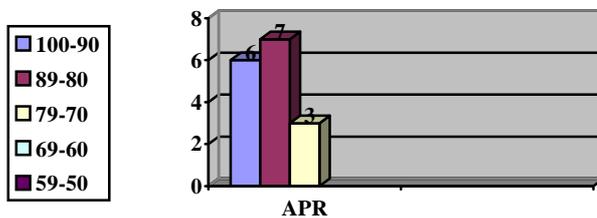
The total amount of errors for the class: **245** (61 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **207**
Average error rate per one essay: **12,9**
Average APR in %: **86,7** = <u>**Very good plus**</u>
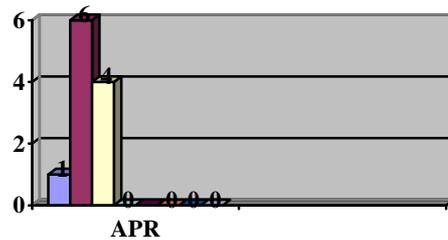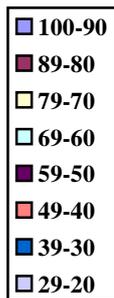
5.A

The total amount of errors for the class: **229** (91 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **210**
Average error rate per one essay: **16,3**
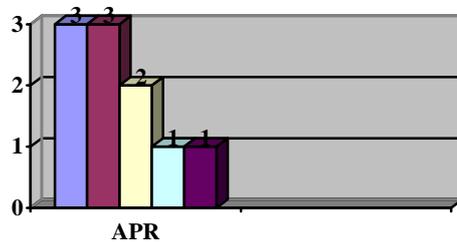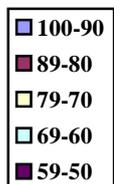Average APR in %: **77,9** = <u>**Good plus**</u>

6.A

The total amount of errors for the class: **122** (41 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **226**
Average error rate per one essay: **13,5**
Average APR in %: **82,4** = <u>**Very good**</u>

7.A

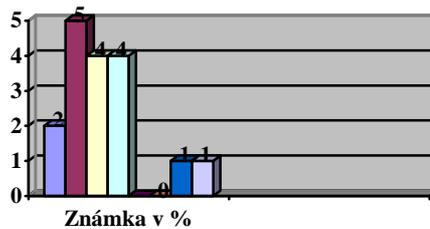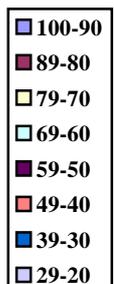| Legend |
|--------|
| 100-90 |
| 89-80 |
| 79-70 |
| 69-60 |
| 59-50 |
| 49-40 |
| 39-30 |
| 29-20 |

The total amount of errors for the class: **156** (26 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **210**
Average error rate per one essay: **10**
Average APR in %: **82,8** = <u>**Very good**</u>

2.B

Legend
100-90
89-80
79-70
69-60
59-50

The total amount of errors for the class: **161** (44 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **208**
Average error rate per one essay: **16,1**
Average APR in %: **80,4** = <u>**Very good**</u>

4.B

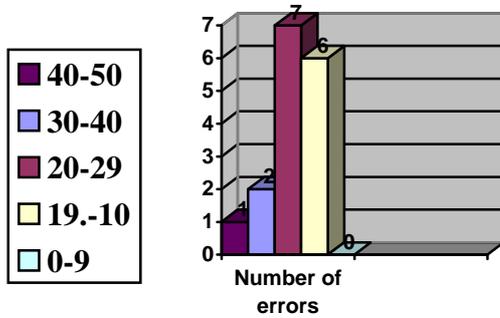| Legend |
|--------|
| 100-90 |
| 89-80 |
| 79-70 |
| 69-60 |
| 59-50 |
| 49-40 |
| 39-30 |
| 29-20 |

The total amount of errors for the class: **266** (77 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **226**
Average error rate per one essay: **15,6**
Average APR in %: **71,1** = <u>**Good plus**</u>

Number of errors in individual essays

4.A

Legend	Chart
■ 40-50 ■ 30-40 ■ 20-29 □ 19.-10 □ 0-9	Bar chart with values 1, 2, 7, 6, 0

The higher number of errors exceeding the border of 30, only one exceeding the border of 40, which I consider very good for this class since it was their first essay written in this way.

5.A

Legend	Chart
■ 40-50 ■ 30-40 ■ 20-29 □ 10.-19 □ 0-9	Bar chart with values 2, 2, 3, 5, 2
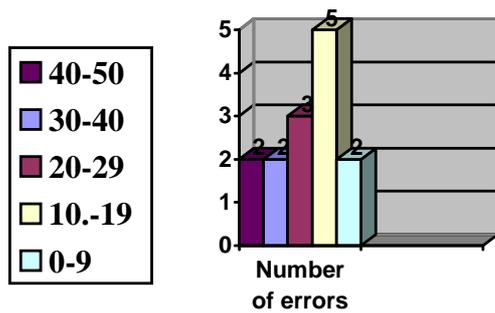
Also very good results considering the fact the class has never done this type of essay-writing. 2 essays exceeded the border of 30 errors, and 2 essays exceeded the border of 40 errors which was little disappointing.

6.A

Legend	Chart
■ 40-50 ■ 30-40 ■ 20-29 □ 10.-19 □ 0-9	Bar chart with values 0, 1, 3, 4, 1
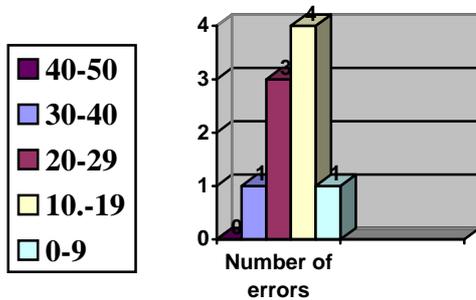
One excellent essay, one that exceeded the border of 30 errors, the rest excellent to very good.

7.A

Legend:
- 0-9
- 10.-19
- 20-29
- (blank)
- (blank)
- (blank)

(Bar chart: Number of errors — bars at 1, 7, 3)
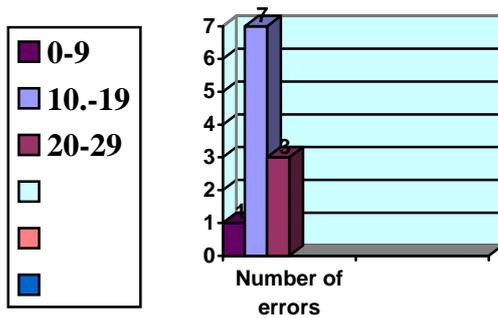
None of the students exceeded the border of 30 errors, I liked the overall performance of this class.
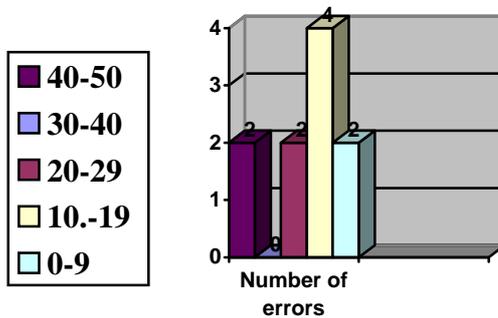
2.B

Legend:
- 40-50
- 30-40
- 20-29
- 10.-19
- 0-9

(Bar chart: Number of errors — bars at 2, 0, 2, 4, 2)

Excellent to very good results in 8 cases, two cases were disappointing, but more or less expected.

4.B

Legend:
- 40-50
- 50-59
- 40-49
- 30-39
- 20-29
- 10.-19
- 0-9

(Bar chart: Number of errors — bars at 0, 0, 1, 4, 3, 5, 4)
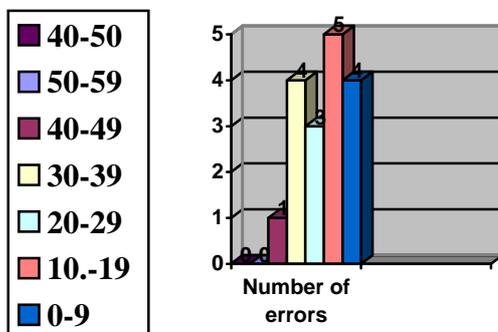
12 cases excellent to very good, 1 essays exceeded border of 40 errors which was expected in this case, 4 essays were average and expected.

The collected data show the incoming level of students´ language proficiency in written form gathered in the first phase. Their results show the real values achieved before the Grammar phase steps in, and give the actual evidence for the need of grammar teaching intended to be done in the grammar phase.

These data will be eventually compared with the collected data from the second phase and will serve as the basis for chapter Ch) *Reflection of the data* and for part D. – *Action research report*.

Ce)   Developing an action plan

After the first phase of data collecting has been a subject to analyses, the action plan to improve the situation must be drawn. This is the logical continuation of the process and it is needed for the formulating a plan of action for the future. Such an action plan *may consist of strategies for the future implementation of the treatments, interventions, revisions and improvements to your instructional methods, and other items that were incorporated into your study and also may consist of designs and proposals for future action research cycles, or perhaps a combination of both.*[90]

Mertler´s views could be recapitulated in the following points:

- we need to determine a strategy on how to implement treatments or improvements that would help to deal with the problem items
- we are expected to prepare a design and/or proposal for future action research cycles

The research cycle mentioned in the definition is, I believe, the critical feature of this process. It not only shows the intent of the teacher to undergo further efforts in the designed matter, but also gives a complex solution to the problem-solving process which will become a unseparable part of the future teaching and learning process. As such, this process will become ordinary, the one that students will get used to and expect, and the one that students will accept as a standard procedure during their learning experience.

My action plan process includes four stages based on Mertler´s original action plan scheme. My plan does not include all the items on Mertler´s list, yet it seems not to be necessary. Zeynep Onel states that *it is unlikely that one will be able to follow the plan step-by-step* and that due to *the light of experience and feedback, some deviations from the plan may be necessary.*[91]

- Planning stage includes Planning for action research and Reasons for selection and the actual grammar elements
- Acting stage includes Collecting data and Analyzing data, the first phase
- Developing stage includes Developing an action plan and Transfer procedures of the grammar elements to be revised and improved

[90] MERTLER, Craig A. Action Research. *Sage Publication*, Inc., 2009, 179 s.
[91] ONEL, Zeynep.Teacher Initiated Research: Action Research. *English Teaching Forum,* January 1997, 58 s.

- There is the second phase of Action stage including Collecting data and Analyzing data for seeing whether my plan or instructional method was found to be effective[92]
- Reflection stage includes Reflection of the data from both action plans and the final outcome of the Action research is provided.

Onel describes a different procedure, her action research consists of five stages: *Initial reflection*, *Planning*, *Action*, *Observation* and *Reflection*. Compare to Mertler, she adds one step to her process of research – Observation. Onel states that *this is where the effects of action are observed and documented in the contexts in which they occur.*[93] I consider that stage very important and found out that this stage is actually included in my thesis as Analysing data, the second phase. The final phase of both Mertler and Onel is the same – Reflection will be the evaluation of observation made by comparing the two acting stages of this research. Since the cyclic nature of the action research in general, these data will be used for further planning and any possible subsequent action. Onel writes that the *result will probably lead to a futher cycle of research*, which is exactly what I believe the purpose of the action research is. *The process of such an action research will most likely lead teachers to further professional development – a lifelong process[94]*, Onel conludes.

It is not possible to say which type of outcome the thesis will fall into. I believe the results will show important data regarding the efficiency of the teaching method used, and that the outcome may help other colleagues if not to adopt my way, then to seriously think about starting to look for their own way which would also make my work great personal satisfaction.

The thesis will be done on a school-level. Even though there are not all students included, there are representatives of selected classes and in the whole, they make a school-group rather then a team. The research has the character of a school-level thesis also from other additional aspects – the group-age varies, they belong under one educational institution

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[92] Mertler (2009, 181 s.) gives five types of possible outcome of an action research. He also states, and quotes Johnson (2008), who states that there are rare cases where teacher-researcher may discover from their results that everything is fine and nothing needs to be changed (Mertler, 181 s.).
The following five outcomes may be expected from action research studies: a) a greater understanding of the situation or child under investigation, or of students in general, is developed, b) a new problem is discovered, c) a plan, a program, or an instructional method is found to be effective, d) a plan, a program, or an instructional method is found to need modification, e) a plan, a program, or an institutional method is found to be ineffective.
[93] ONEL, Zeynep.Teacher Initiated Research: Action Research. *English Teaching Forum,* January 1997, 57-8 s.
[94] ONEL, Zeynep.Teacher Initiated Research: Action Research. *English Teaching Forum,* January 1997, 58 s.

rather than a study group, and their performance will be measured and compared within the group they belong to – the group of their own class which will give us six different data-groups raher than one common data-group.

I think it would be more than appropriate to show the process of developing the action plan in a simple graphic chart:

Planning stage	Planning for action research Reasons for selection and the actual grammar elements
Acting stage 1	Collecting data Analyzing data, the first phase
Developing stage	Developing an action plan Transfer procedures of the grammar elements
Acting stage 2	Collecting data, Analyzing data, the second phase
Reflection	Reflection of the data from both action plans The final outcome of the Action research

The cycle repeats itself

Reflection is mentioned as an important part of the action planning. Mertler sees two most significant roles the planning fulfills:

- Teacher-researcher should reflect on intended, as well as unintended, outcomes of the study for the purpose of planning future professional development.

- He should also reflect on the action research study itself, focusing primarily on the methodology employed.[95]

Cf)   <u>Transfer procedures of the grammar elements</u>

This chapter will focus on transfer procedures outlined in Bc) chapter. The procedures consist of teaching grammar through contrastive approach. The data showed the importance of presenting contoversial grammar elements covered in chapter Cb). The transfer procedures include:

- Teaching the system of articles in English
- Teaching SVOMPT, especially in cases where object is placed in front of the sentence in the same manner as in the Czech phrases where the structure *Někde je/jsou něco*…(*Na zahradě je pár stromů.* or *Ve škole je 300 žáků)* is used
- Teaching Question/interrogative sentences formation in English

The actual teaching was performed in the form of mini-lessons mentioned and described in chapter Ca) of this thesis. It must be said beforehand that I use these minilessons mostly for revision or reinforcement of the grammar element requiring a quick refreshment. Based on my experience, I believe the process of introducing the new grammar element must be prepared in two ways: 1) the initial introduction must be longer than a five-minute mini-lesson, and 2) the revision or refreshment of the element is done through a mini-lesson which can be repeated as many times as it is needed.

<u>Teaching the system of articles in English</u>

The method I used here was partly adopted from an article by Peter Master, and partly developed and adapted to a contrast approach by me. Master published his article *Teaching the English Article System* in the April 1988 issue of the English Teaching Forum. Compare to the systems used by nowadays textbooks I am using, this system provides detailed explanation of logical steps needed to detemine the proper article in various contexts. It also provides useful practical examples that make the process of teaching more transparent. The textbooks I use deal very little or not at all with the nuances the article system utilizes in its

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[95] MERTLER, Craig A. Action Research. *Sage Publication*, Inc., 2009, 190 s.

practicle usage and employ only examples that foreign students (French, German,…etc) find familiar because their own language system contains articles as a feature of grammar. It is clear then that Czech students are very often confused by rather a limited space dedicated to this grammar element.

Master himself sees the need for transparent article system as follows: *Mastery of the article in English is no easy matter for most EFL students*. He furthermore adds that *one difficulty lies in the fact that the article implies a certain view of the noun to which it applies. To the surprise of speakers of those languages that do not have an article system, the failure to keep this view in mind in English can lead to confusion and sometimes even anger on the part of the listener or speaker*[96], Master concludes. Martin Parrott mentiones a key consideration that must be taken in mind as to *if we decide that an article is necessary, we then have to decide which one. We base these choices on a complex interaction of factors influencing meaning, shared knowledge, context and whether the noun is singular, plural or uncountable*[97].

The method:

In English, there are so-called articles. These are elements that Czech language does not know. Without their presence, on the other hand, it is not possible to make yourselves understood since they hold an important position in the process of speech or writing. Their absence may cause the effect that would seem to shorten phrases, which would phonetically confuse the listener who expects „one more syllable". Or it absence may cause confusion when the speaker omits the definite article and ruins any sign of reference connected with it.

How to use articles correctly then? I will try to proceed step by step in the way that it becomes clear *why* and *what* is being used.

There are <u>three types</u> of articles and their <u>positions</u> in front of nouns:

indefinite	a/an	I heard a story.	Before a noun
definite	the	I heard a nice story.	Before an adjective.
zero	0	*I heard a strangely sounded nice story*. Before an adverb enhancing an adjective.	

[96] MASTER, Peter.Teaching the English Article System. *AFA IV*, 208 s.
[97] PARROTT, Martin.Grammar for English Language Teachers.*Cambridge University Press*, 2009, 45 s.

Compare the following Czech sentences:

*Muž kráčí po **ulici** s **chlapcem***.

Smíchejte **máslo**, **cukr** a **vejce**.

Where Czech nouns do not have articles, which means the position in front of them is empty.

With the English translation:

A man is walking down **a** road with **a** boy.

Combine **0** butter, **0** sugar and **0** eggs.

Where there are articles in front of the nouns.

If we are to assign a proper article to a specific noun, we have to realize the following criteria:

- Is the noun *countable* or *uncountable*?
- Is it *singular* or *plural*?
- Is it unique?
- Is it the 1st reference?
- Is it the 2nd reference?

The following chart shows the relation between the above mentioned criteria.

	1.reference		2.reference	
singular	count.	a/an	count.	the
	uncount.	0	uncount.	the
plural	count.	0	count.	the
	uncount.	0	uncount.	the

The comparison of Czech and English sentences allows us to see why we used the indefinite articles (*a, an*) or zero articles (*0*) in places where they are.

What about the definite article *the*?

In the first place, it is necessary to mention the phenomena of the 1st and 2nd reference. The first time a noun appears in context it is considered indefinite. The second time it appears in the same context, it is considerd definite, a noun that we have already heard about.

Compare now the English sentences with the Czech ones when we enhance the context of our two model sentences:

A man is walking down **a** road with **a** boy.

Combine **0** butter, **0** sugar and **0** eggs.

We add more detailed information:

The man is tired, **the** road is long and **the** boy is thirsty.

Add flour to **the** mixture

The exercise given at this stage:

….simple experiment demonstrates how alkali acts on ….grease or …..oil. Put ….spoonful of …….washing soda with…..water in…..greasy frying pan. Boil …..mixture. In …..short time, …….washing soda and grease become ……particles. …….particles unite to form ……..new substance that we call soap. …….soap can be washed out, leaving …….frying pan clean.

(Results*: a, 0, 0, a, 0, O, a, the, a, the, 0, the, a, the, the*.)

As we can see that in the case of the second reference we have to assign only *the*. We also witness a strange transfer of multiple zero articles into one definite (butter, sugar and eggs = the mixture).

We also place *the* where a noun falls within the category of *Shared knowledge*[98]. Master calls it *perhaps the most difficult aspect of the article system for EFL students to master*[99] and Parrot refers to it when dealing with indicating *common ground*. He states that we use *the* with a noun *to refer backwards or forwards in a text or conversation, and also to refer to our shared experience or general knowledge*[100]. I personally view this category to have been very neglected, if not completely omitted, in the teaching the article system of English, and I believe that it offers a large province to be yet discovered by both students and teachers.

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[98] Both Master and Parrot use this Shared knowledge category to explain the use of the definite article in certain context. I have never seen any mention of this *shared knowledge* consideration in any textbook I have worked with so far at our grammar school. Even my colleagues seem not to know or have heard about the category.
[99] MASTER, Peter.Teaching the English Article System. *AFA IV*, 211 s.
[100] PARROTT, Martin.Grammar for English Language Teachers.*Cambridge University Press*, 2009, 47 s.

The shared knowledge category can be divided into several sub-categories. I found the division into three categories most useful:

- World (the stars, the ocean, the sun, the weather)
- Cultural (the telephone, the capital, the theater, the bus)
- Regional/local (*the city, the university, the door, the station, the pub*)

Every noun around us also takes *the* because we know what we talk about in that specific moment and can point our finger to it which provides enough reference to assign it with *the* article.

As to the second reference without the first reference – there are three categories where such a case can occur:

- Superlatives (*the best, the largest, the most beautiful*)
- Sequence adjectives (*the first, the next, the following, the last*)
- Unique adjectives (*the same, the only, the main, the one, the principal*)

After presenting the comments to the five initial criteria, I set up the graphic chart below summarizing the way to define *why* and *what* of English article system:

Articles in English

Podstatné jméno

↓

Počitatelné ? — ne → 1.zmínka ? — ano → 0

| ano

the ← ano — Jedinečné ?   1.zmínka ? — ne → 2.zmínka ? — → the

| ne

1.zmínka ?

ano ↓   ↘ ne

0 ← ano — Množné ?   2.zmínka ? — ano → the

| ne

an ← ano — Začíná na a, e, o, i ?

↓ ne

a

An easy way to identify a proper article for a proper noun is illustrated here.
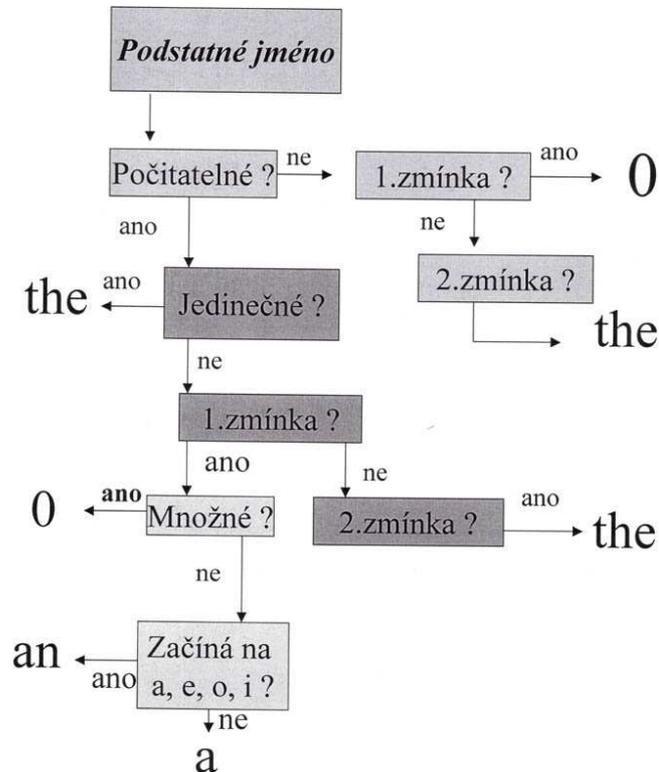
The final amendment to the English article system is what Parrott calls *Rules of Thumb*[101]. He states that these specific rules of thumb may be found rather complicated by students than helpful. I believe the reasonable amount of these exceptions, or sub-rules, may be adopted by students in an easy way. In the end they will find the exceptions working for them rather than against them. For my classroom practice I chose the following list:

The article:	mountain ranges	the Andes, the Giant Mountains
	rivers	the Ganges, the Elbe
	oceans and seas	the Pacific
	islands	the Bahamas
	deserts	the Sahara
	hotels	the Hilton

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[101] PARROTT, Martin.Grammar for English Language Teachers.*Cambridge University Press*, 2009, 48 s.

	polit.parties	the Labour Party
	newspapers	the Guardian
	musical instruments	the piano, the acoustic guitar,
0 article:	institutions	school, church, university
	meals of the day	breakfast, lunch, dinner
	work, home, bed	work, home, bed, - in sentences
	one-word countries	Poland, Germany, Canada
	towns, cities	Knoxville, Vrchlabí
	sports	pétanque, football, tennis
a(n) article:	after *There is/are*	There´s a beer in the fridge.
	With *have (got)*	I have (got) a new bike.

Then the students are given the final test of their knowledge. They are allowed to use the graphic chart I distribute to every person in the classroom.

There are many ……………creation myths in ………………folklore. The formation of ……….sun, ………….moon, ……………stars, …………ocean, and ………..whole realm of ………..nature all have ……………beautiful stories. ……………world does not have such stories about …………….modern inventions such as …………..telephone, radio, and ……………television, perhaps because they are too closely related to ………….science. However, the story of the formation of the Hawaiian Islands is exactly parallel to ………..modern geological account. If you are interested, …………..library or ………..local school or university has more information.

Results: *(0; 0; the; the; the; the; the; 0; 0; the; 0; the; 0; 0; the; the (your,a); the (your,a); 0.*

I also found very useful and I think recreative and enjoyable to use any piece of text in Czech and try to assign articles to the nouns within. It seems as a reverse process, but I believe it reinforces the feeling for the articles, or it may provide a deeper understanding for those who only in a very difficult way abandon their mother tongue. A piece of fairy-tale or simple child´s poem may do. For upper-intermediate students I use bilingual texts in the same manner, where the Czech extract is given to them first and then they compare it with the English original.

Teaching SVOMPT

Apart from Czech, English disposes of a firm word order of how to coordinate individual sentence elements. Parrott states that *the order of words and basic sentence constituents generally creates more problems for learners when they speak and write than in comprehension[102]*. I cannot but agree with this statement since the errors of this kind appear mostly in a written form. In a spoken form we tend to disregard them, or we do not feel the urge to be so strict when we encounter them in speech. While on the paper, they are every teacher´s target. According to what I have experienced at school in the past fifteen years, mistakes of such a type have been a common topic of any grammar discussion among teachers of English, and have always been a popular subject of rightful indignation of many a teacher.

I believe the problem with the order of words, or SVOMPT, as I will refer to the subject further on, is that the Czech language does not possess of a similar construction. In Czech, apart from English, we may place a subject of a sentence in any place and it works without any major discomfort created either in production or comprehension of units of speech or writing. *When we speak and write*, Parrott writes, *we take care to provide a balance between what is new and important*, and adds that we *also depend on the speaker or writer clearly signalling what is and isn´t new and important. The order in which we present information in clauses*, he concludes, *is a crucial factor in how we do this*[103].

The basic explanation starts when my students can differ subject from verb, object from adverbials, etc. Only and after then they are able to understand the complex nature of SVOMPT. I usually teach students on the level that presupposes this basic knowledge, therefore I do not suffer from spending much time on explaining that. Nevertheless, I always start from explaining the importance of SVOMPT on the following graphic chart showing the English language universe.

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[102] PARROTT, Martin. Grammar for English Language Teachers. *Cambridge University Press*, 2009, 268 s.
[103] PARROTT, Martin. Grammar for English Language Teachers. *Cambridge University Press*, 2009, 252 s.

SVOMPT rules must be applied not only to affirmative and interrogative sentences but also to imperative and negative sentences. In all of these forms the word order is different from the Czech language and as such causes troubles to Czech students. As I pointed out before, I will focus on the cases where Czech students tend to make major volume of mistakes sequent upon the wrong word order:

- Teaching SVOMPT, especially in cases where object is placed in front of the sentence in the same manner as in the Czech phrases where the structure *Někde je/jsou něco…*(*Na zahradě je pár stromů.* or *Ve škole je 300 žáků)* is used

Fig. I.
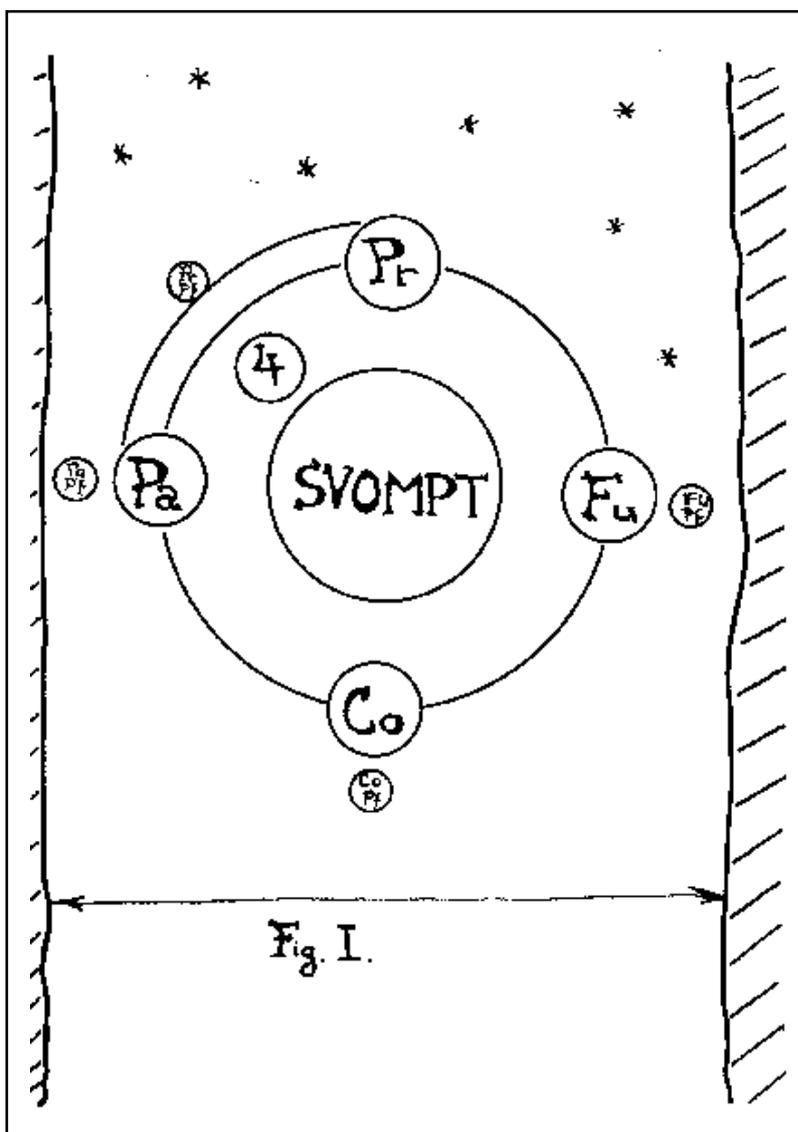
English language Universe:

There are 9 planets and 1 star in the universe. The planets refer to individual tenses ranging from Past, Present, Future and their Perfect forms (small bordering Pf planets), to the planet of Four (4) and the SVOMPT star. The position of SVOMPT in this scheme is evident. It occupies the central place since it is the most important element of English-forming elements. Its faulty construction will result in complete chaos within the whole universe. No matter how perfect you can become at mastering the individual tenses or other elements of the universe, without a correct SVOMPT, or word order, your effort is in vain – the result of such a construction will always be a poor quality sentence, either written or spoken.

After the importance of SVOMPT has been emphasized, the further step follows – the simple example of several sentences:

10 o´clock/ to school/ went/ she/   *told/ husband/ the truth/ her/ she/*

uneasy/ felt/ children/ the/   *needful/ is/ language/English/ a/*

As this exercise seems very easy, almost trivial to students, I continue with more complex exercise where there is a need to decide whether to correct or pass the sentences as they are:

> *I went out to buy a book which had written a friend of mine.*
> *The head-master gave to the boy some good advice.*
> *On my way to the office happened something very funny.*
> *He last month drove into a tree his car.*
> *The teacher forgot our compositions to correct.*

Students identify the individual constituents of the sentences, reorganize the sentences according to their best knowledge and are evaluated. The above mentioned examples do not seem so easy to them anymore and the doubtable nature of SVOMPT starts attracting their attention.

Then I disclose a fact to them which basically declares that the Czech language does not have any parallel SVOMPT rules and that it basically does not matter where we put a subject – whether in front of or behind a verb. English, on the other hand, must strictly adhere to these rules and cannot do without them. In addition to its general importance in English, this construction is one of the most used and neglected, wherever it appears in the Czech language context. Its usage and logic work directly against the Czech logic, and in English it seems to be somehow excessive. However, it is a building stone of sentences which form a large part of Czech common language manifestation. Every sentence of *Někde je něco* type, e.g. *Na stole je kniha. V našem městě jsou tři hotely. V této knize je o tom zmínka. Na střeše je holub s holubicí. V tašce je peněženka. Na recepci je nějaký člověk.*, and likewise, has to be realized through this construction. We now know that SVOMPT dictates a firm position of a verb behind a subject which, in case of these sentences, is vice-versa – *is/are* stay in front of the sentence subject here. In order that this status does not destroy the regularity of the system, it is necessary to place *there* word in front of *to be* verb. That is how the disorder is balanced again and the whole construction is as it is supposed to be. Let´s take the first three sentences of our model phrases: this is where I write the following Czech sentence on the board, using the contrastive approach in teaching this grammar element:

a)   Czech original: *Na stole je kniha.*
       A false translation (Czech-directed SVOMPT):   *On the table **is a book***.
       Notice the subject is behind the verb which does not work in English.
       A correct translation (SVOMT adhered to) :   ***There is** a book on the table*.

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b) Czech original: *V našem městě jsou tři hotely.*
    A false translation: *In our town **are three hotels**.*
    A correct translation: ***There are** three hotels in our town.*

c) Czech original: *V této knize je o tom zmínka.*
    A false translation: *In this book **is a mention** of it.*
    A correct translation: ***There is** a mention of it in this book.*

There in the beginning then regulates a false word order into a correct word order in cases of sentences of *Někde je něco* type. In a simple graphic form the whole process can be depicted as follows:

Někde	*je/jsou*	*něco*

There   is/are

něco		*někde*
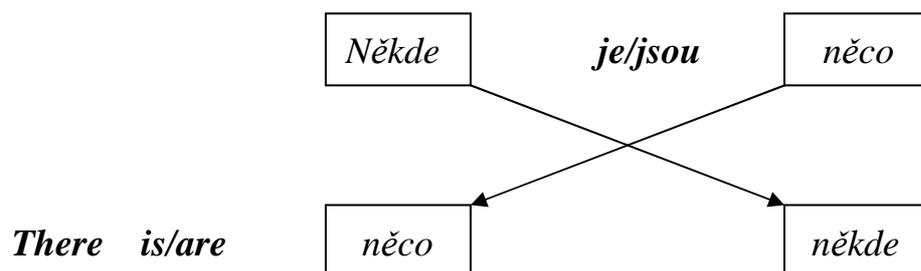
The final step in comparison of those two different sentence models can be realized through model sentences of different levels and characters. We may, for example, take an extract from English newspapers article, or a book, and let students looks for and find examples of SVOMPT in there. They may translate some phrases and possibly do the same vice-versa – to translate some short Czech news or extracts to English while adhering to SVOMPT principles.

<u>Teaching question formation</u>

In many languages the distinction between question and statement is made only through intonation in speaking and punctuation in writing. However, in English, we use grammar to make this distinction,[104] Martin Parrot states, and he considers asking *questions without making the necessary changes (or additions) to word order* a common ground for making mistakes[105].

The issue of making questions in English is a broad topic which I decided to introduce through a set of basic rules, focusing on creating basic questions in present, past and future tense.

The first thing when teaching Czech students how to make questions, which is – as indicated above – only a variation of SVOMPT rules, is that I randomly choose a verb, or students can choose it. Let´s suppose the verb is *to play*. I use only the bare infinitive (without *to*).

PLAY

We know that V cannot exist without S, so we may add any subject we want. It must not be one of the verbs of four (*can, may, must, to be*) and we should try both variations – with *I*, *you*, *we* or *they* subjects, and with *she*, *he* or *it* subjects.

You play football.   *Hrajete fotbal.*   **He play<u>s</u> football**.   *Hraje fotbal.*

Compare to Czech language where questions are only formed with changed intonation and by adding a question mark, English needs more work. But the process is very simple. Add operator DO and the question is formed.

Do you play football?   *Hrajete fotbal?*

In case of of *he, she* ot *it* we must not forget the extra *–s* ending which moves with the operator – and forms an operator hybrid **DO+ES = does**. Because it moved from the affirmative sentence, we cannot have it in the verb form:

Do<u>es</u> he play**0** football?   *Hraje fotbal?*

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[104] PARROTT, Martin.Grammar for English Language Teachers.*Cambridge University Press*, 2009, 273 s.
[105] PARROTT, Martin.Grammar for English Language Teachers.*Cambridge University Press*, 2009, 282 s.

Please, compare now the two question forms. It is necessary to *move –s* from affirmative sentence to a question operator in the sentence in 3.p.sg.

The above mentioned examples work for present simple tense, the basic tense for Czech students of English, the first question formation they learn. But it is in this formation where the simplicity and genius of English is manifested: if we want to change tenses in English question, we only change one word, the operator. Take Czech, for example:

Hrajete fotbal?

Hráli jste fotbal?

Budete hrát fotbal?

As you can see, the form of every tense and verb changed abruptly. Compare now with the English way of handling the change from the present to the past and over to the future:

Present:	**Do**	
	(Does)	he........................?
Past:	**Did**	you play football?
Future:	**Will**	

In case of English, the only change was exchanging an operator, only one word shifted the present into the past, and to the future. The simplicity of the process is startling.

The question *Hrajete fotbal?* is general. In many cases, I would say in most of the cases, the situation urges us to ask some additional information such as *Kde hrajete fotbal?* Or *Proč hrajete fotbal?* Then we have to use Question words, or interrogative pronouns. There are seven basic types and we place them in front of the operator :

Please note that they all (except for *how*) begin by *wh-*. Compare the following scheme with the Czech equivalents

Co			
Kde			**hrajete fotbal?**
Kdo	**0**		**potřebujete peníze v 5?**
Proč			**máte rádi květiny?**
Jak			

with The following scheme of English system that makes a perfect sense:

What			
Where			
Who			**you play football?**
Why	**do**		**you need money at 5?**
How			**you like flowers?**
When			
Which …			

And the line of questions we can create with help of *why, how, where, when*,..etc. seems to be endless. In these sentences I use *you* person because it is most practical. We usually ask questions to persons standing in front of us, thus using the second person singular or plural which realize themselves in English through the pronoun *YOU*.

<u>The time reference and marked meanings</u>.

This DO operator does not have any marking of meaning, it forms a basic, common question that a user can use many times a day. As mentioned previously, if you want to make a question more specific or marked, aimed into the future or past, there is nothing less difficult than to change the operator. That is where the magic of words begin! **It does not mean anything else that with a change of one word only we get a completely new sentence!** Please, look at the scheme when we add up these words and monitor the changes. At the same time, keep realizing the fact that **you only change one word, nothing else!**

will   -   future reference
did   -   past reference
can   -   *to be able to* marked question
must   -   *to have to* marked question
may   -   *to be allowed to* marked question

and see what changes in meanings took place when compared with the initial basic question of *Do you play football?   -   Hrajete fotbal?*
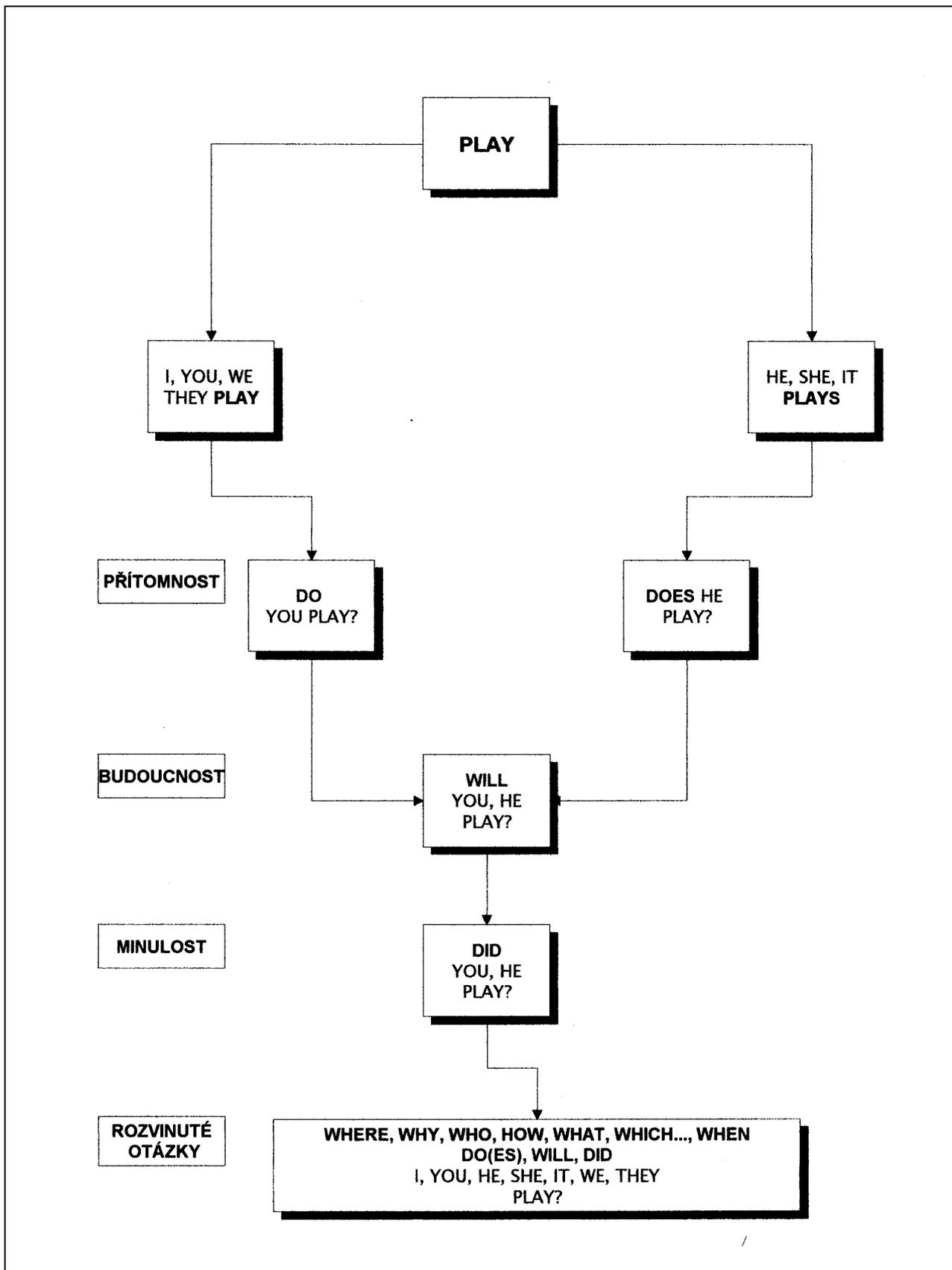
What		
Where	**may**	
Who	**will**	you play football?
Why	**do**	you need money at 5?
How	**did**	you like it?
When	**can**	
Which …	**must**	

And the question *Why will you like it?* changes swiftly into the future reference *Proč se ti to bude líbit?,* or *How can you like it?* means *Jak se ti to může líbit?.*

The simple procedure can be then summarized in three steps:

1. Create a SVOMPT sentence where the main verb is not any verb of four.
2. To make a question place an operator DO, WILL, DID, CAN, MUST, MAY in front of such a created sentence, according to your needs and feelings. podle toho, jak chcete větu zabarvit.
3. If you want to ask why, how, where...etc., place one of the appropriate interrogative pronouns in front of the created structure.
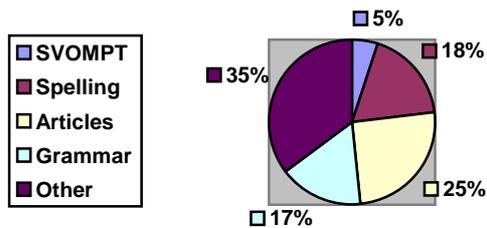
To make the process even more transparent, I made the following table to cover the basic steps in question forming.

PLAY

I, YOU, WE THEY PLAY

HE, SHE, IT PLAYS

PŘÍTOMNOST

DO YOU PLAY?

DOES HE PLAY?

BUDOUCNOST

WILL YOU, HE PLAY?

MINULOST

DID YOU, HE PLAY?

ROZVINUTÉ OTÁZKY

WHERE, WHY, WHO, HOW, WHAT, WHICH..., WHEN DO(ES), WILL, DID I, YOU, HE, SHE, IT, WE, THEY PLAY?
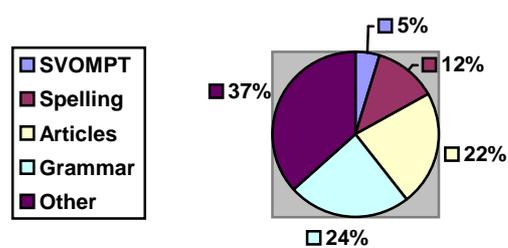
Cg) <u>Analysing data, the second phase</u>

The individual classes showed the following rate of errors based on my monitoring model during the second phase of the research.
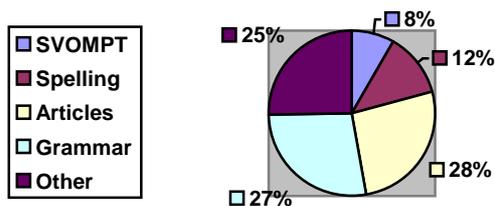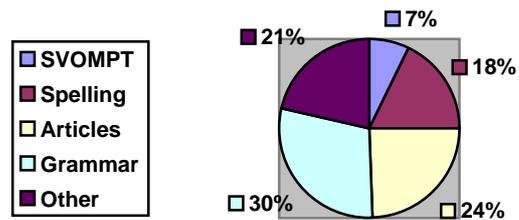
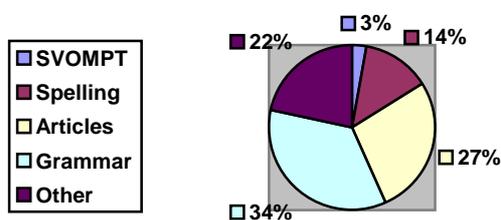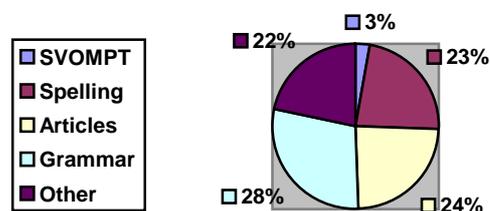2.B class   4.A class

SVOMPT	5%
Spelling	18%
Articles	25%
Grammar	17%
Other	35%

SVOMPT	5%
Spelling	12%
Articles	22%
Grammar	24%
Other	37%

4.B class   5.A class

SVOMPT	8%
Spelling	12%
Articles	28%
Grammar	27%
Other	25%

SVOMPT	7%
Spelling	18%
Articles	24%
Grammar	30%
Other	21%

6.A class   7.A class

SVOMPT	3%
Spelling	14%
Articles	27%
Grammar	34%
Other	22%

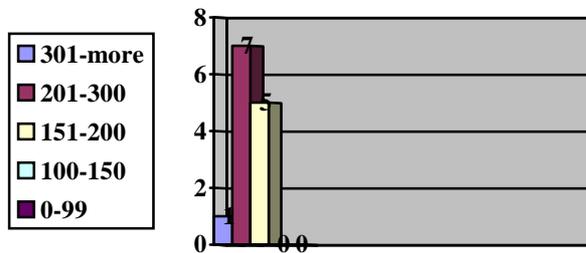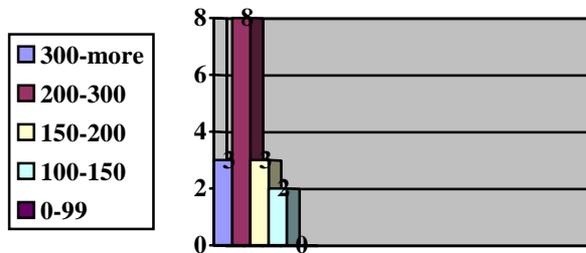| SVOMPT | 3% |
Spelling	23%
Articles	24%
Grammar	28%
Other	22%

The graphic charts show differencies among individual classes very well, yet I believe the simple table of results as in the first phase will be a help to get a transparent comparison. I will include the comparative tables in the chapter Db) *Charts and figures*.

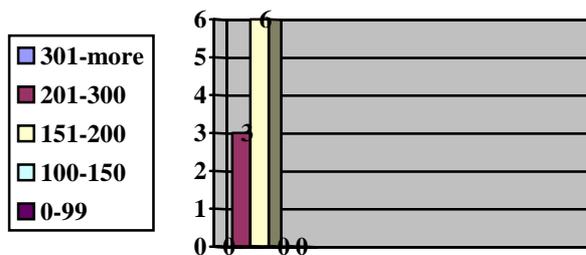The length of essays in total number of words (TNW)
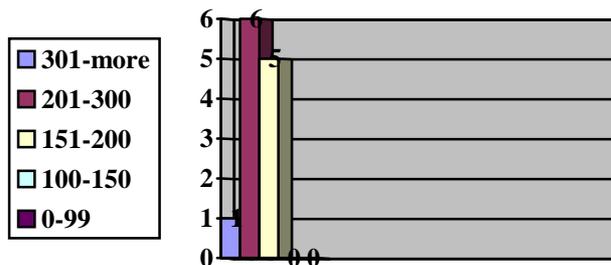
TNW : (170-508)   5.A   13 essays

Legend	
■ 301-more	
■ 201-300	
□ 151-200	
□ 100-150	
■ 0-99	

TNW: (131-340)   4.A   16 essays

Legend	
■ 300-more	
■ 200-300	
□ 150-200	
□ 100-150	
■ 0-99	

TNW: (156-292)   6.A   9 essays

Legend	
■ 301-more	
■ 201-300	
□ 151-200	
□ 100-150	
■ 0-99	

TNW: (150-305)   7.A   12 essays

| Legend	
■ 301-more	
■ 201-300	
□ 151-200	
□ 100-150	
■ 0-99	

5.A There were no works under the minimum limit. Also the TNW increased, the majority of students reached between 201-300 words which is one level up compare to the first phase. One exceptional essay had 508 TNW which is a total record of all essays in both phases.

4.A had two cases when the TNW dropped under the minimum words allowed. Nevertheless, the majority of students scored well above 200 words. The two cases were expected to fall below the required number since they performed in a similar way in the phase one. Their overall performance in the class is poor compare to the rest of the class.

6.A None of the students went below the required number of the TNW which, compared to the first phase, is their personal success. They also scored better and they appreciated the difference.

7.A performed well again, all of the students were above the minimum limit of words. The fact the majority of them went above 200 words is the mark of their enhanced effort and their drive to perform better.

TNW: (151-343)   2.B   10 essays

■ 301-more	
■ 201-300	
□ 151-200	
□ 100-150	
■ 0-99	
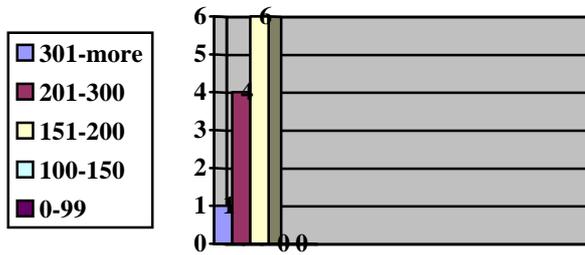
2.B – one student went over 300 TNW and the rest of the students performed over the required TNW. The effort to perform well in grammar was marked by lower number of essays exceeding the 300 number border.

TNW: (151-412)   4.B   17 essays

|	
■ 301-more	
■ 201-300	
□ 151-200	
□ 100-150	
■ 0-99	
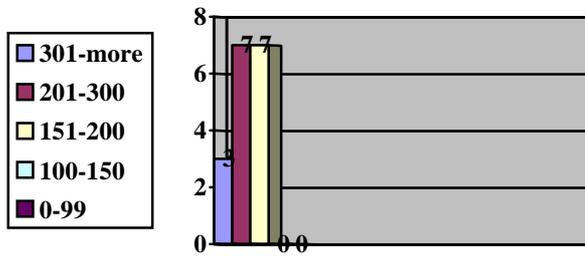
4.B - TNW divided by three made the essays of this group the most demanding of all works performed. One essay went over 400 TNW and was added by two excellent essays performing well in TNW and ER. None of the students fell under the 150 words limit, the experience in writing and time management is much more apparent in case of these four-graders.

The efficiency rate in percentage (APR)

The efficiency rate percentage and the following actual percentage (APR) indicates the efficiency of individual classes, and, again, it is accompanied by a summarizing review.

4.A

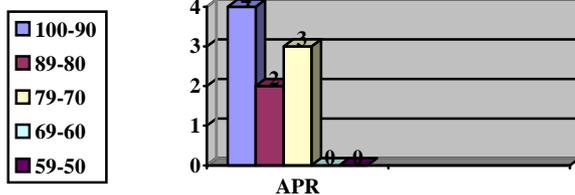|	
■ 100-90	
■ 89-80	
□ 79-70	
□ 69-60	
■ 59-50	
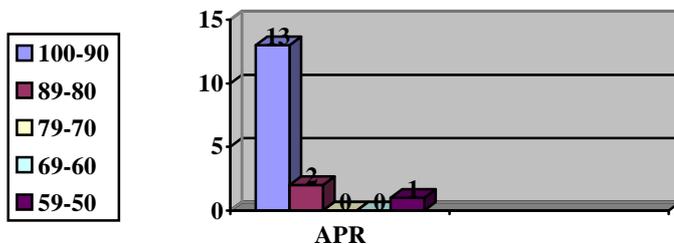
The total amount of errors for the class: **218** (62 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **232**
Average error rate per one essay: **13,6**
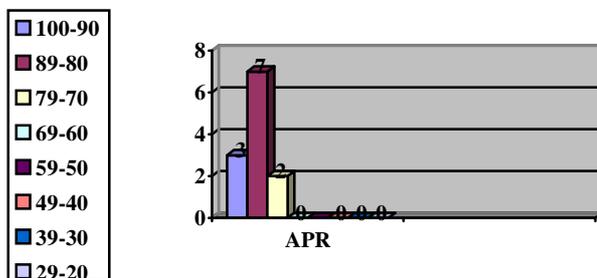Average APR in %: **90,1** = **Excellent minus**

5.A
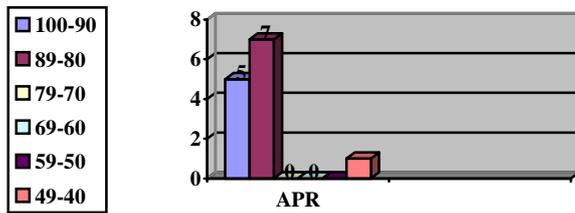
The total amount of errors for the class: **168** (61 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **241**
Average error rate per one essay: **12,9**
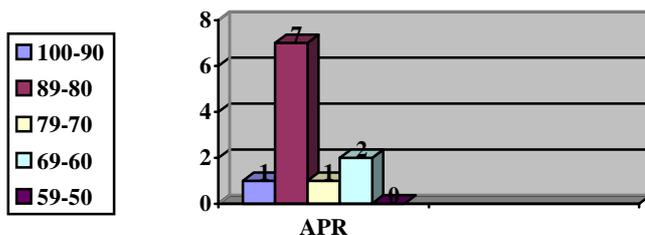Average APR in %: **85,5** = **Very good plus**

6.A

The total amount of errors for the class: **111** (41 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **197**
Average error rate per one essay: **12,3**
Average APR in %: **83,6** = **Very good**

7.A

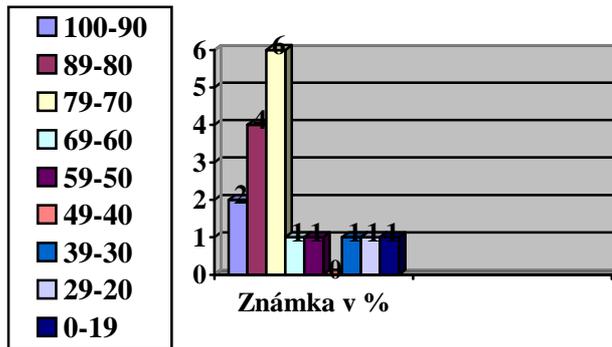
The total amount of errors for the class: **176** (56 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **220**
Average error rate per one essay: **14,6**
Average APR in %: **84,5** = **Very good plus**

2.B

The total amount of errors for the class: **139** (30 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **201**
Average error rate per one essay: **12,6**
Average APR in %: **81,4** = **Very good**

4.B

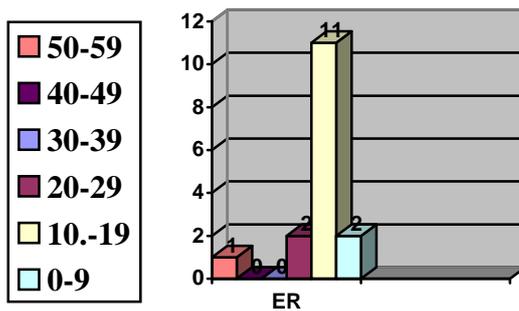| Legend	
■ 100-90	
■ 89-80	
□ 79-70	
□ 69-60	
■ 59-50	
■ 49-40	
■ 39-30	
□ 29-20	
■ 0-19	

Známka v %

The total amount of errors for the class: **226** (81 of 2 point-errors)
Average number of words: **231**
Average error rate per one essay: **13,2**
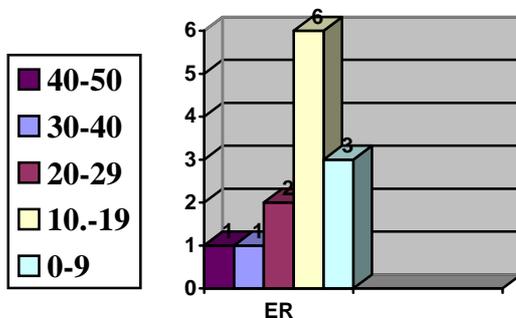Average APR in %: **74,4** = **Good plus**

Number of errors in individual essays (ER)

4.A   (8-62)

Legend	
■ 50-59	
■ 40-49	
■ 30-39	
■ 20-29	
□ 10.-19	
□ 0-9	

ER

One student went over 50 errors, it is understandable considering the student´s overall performance in the class. I liked the fact the majority of the class scored between 10-19 errors only.

5.A   (4 – 48)

Legend	
■ 40-50	
■ 30-40	
■ 20-29	
□ 10.-19	
□ 0-9	

ER

One student scored 48 but the rest of the class performed very well, scoring between 4 – 21 errors. A very good result, the class improved significantly from the first phase.

70

6.A   (5-23)
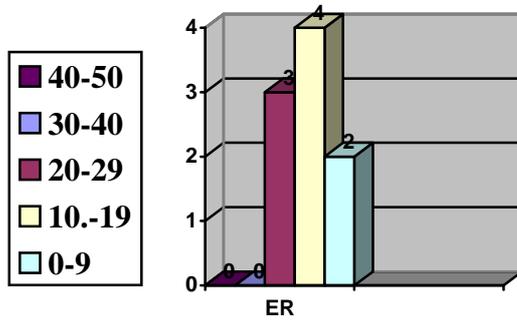
None of the students went over the barrier of 30 errors which is a standard result considering their performance in the first phase. The results did not show any significant abnormalities, neither positive, nor negative.
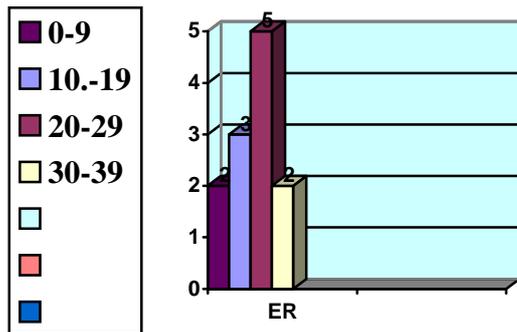
7.A   (5-30)

ER did not exceed 30 errors. It is also a standard performance, yet the first phase showed „only" 23 errors maximum. The overall performance better, the individual performance in individual cases rather worse.

2.B   (3-43)
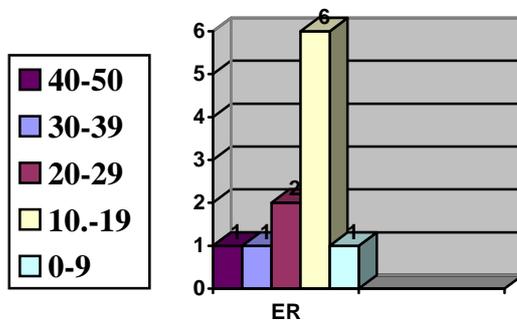
Less overall number of errors than in the first phase. Slightly better overall performance. One student went over 40 errors and one went slightly below 30 errors (28). I expected more students to move from 20-29 ER down to 10-19 zone. The one excellent result is identical with the one from the first phase.

4.B   (4-46)
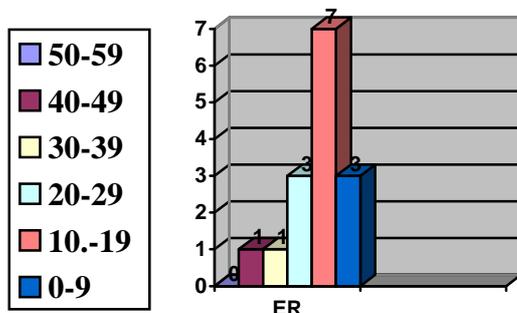
The worst result repeated itself, this time it went even higher – 46 ER. It was expected, but not in such a downfall as he presented. 13 students performed between 4 to 28 errors. With the division of TNW by three, the ER between 20-30 end in Good/Satisfactory only mark.

The collected data show the level of students´ language proficiency in written form gathered in the second phase. Their results show the real values achieved after the Grammar phase was inroduced, and give the actual evidence for the results of grammar teaching done in the grammar phase.

These data will be eventually compared with the collected data from the first phase in chapter Ch) *Sharing and reflecting the data* and will serve as the basis for part D. – *Action research report*.

Ch)   Sharing and reflecting the data

I believe the reflection of the data is a logical and unseparable part of any action research made on any level. The need to record, publish and otherwise share the results is more than obvious. Without reflecting and sharing the results achieved, the effort of the teacher would vanish in the air. *It is imperative for teacher-researcher*, Mertler writes, *to share their research, ranging from local presentations to professional conferences and academic journals*[106]. Onel declares that the effects recorded during the research *are*

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[106] MERTLER, Craig A. Action Research. *Sage Publication*, Inc., 2009, 191 s.

evaluated to be used later for further planning, subsequent action and so on. She concludes that *the results will most probably lead to a further cycle of research*[107].

I suppose the data collected in my action research, and especially the transfers I use for better understanding of mechanisms of their error making connected with their effort to apply rules and forms of their mother tongue into English, might be used by other teachers or students themselves. It is necessary, again, to understand and emphasize the fact that students, according to Warhall (quoting Croft, 1980, p. 105), make errors, not mistakes. Errors, Croft states, *are systematic, consistent deviances characteristic of the learner´s linguistic system at a given stage of learning*, which I believe has been the exact environment of my field of research, and mistakes are *performance factors as memory limitations, spelling pronunciations, fatigue, emotional strain, etc*[108]. That is why the thorough recording of errors and their nature, with the special attention paid to the elements selected according to my experience, supported with the results of the first phase of data collection, is a liability of mine that I would like to discharge in a responsible way.

To share the results, I decided to use visual aids in the form of graphic charts included in my thesis, accompanied with overall performance rate given in percentage, the particulars of their writing performances such as the total amount of errors for the class, the average number of words, the average error rate per one essay, and the average APR in percentage. I believe that in case of any presentation the visual aids will help me to keep the listeners (any target group they may be) attention because I myself do not like to be only talked to. The individual graphic charts might be posted on a large board, or presented individually – class by class – on the screen of an overhead projector.

It might also help to hand out one or two pages including the overall results compared, in this case the results of the first and the second phase of data collection. The handout wil be a part of D.- *Action research report*, in written and via graphic charts and tables.

I suppose that I would divide my presentation, or sharing of the results, into individual parts or points reflecting the purpose of the study, its actual course and timetable, the methodology employed including the transfer mechanisms used, the actual results with possible action plan cycle-operation that would ensure that my effort intends to continue in the future in the form of further cycles of my action plan research. In this part, I would specify the possible oportunities for ESL teachers to take part on the project and encourage them to

[107] ONEL, Zeynep.Teacher Initiated Research: Action Research. *English Teaching Forum,* January 1997, 58 s.
[108] WARHALL Jr., Lawrence F. A Survey of Contrastive Analysis, error analysis, and, interlanguage; and their relation to language teaching. *[online]* 2003, quoting Croft, K. (1980). *Readings on English as a second language:For teachers and teacher trainees*, Cambridge: Winthrop, 105 s.

record, create and share more of these contrastive approach transfers they may make up or design.

I believe the effort is worth since the conditions for the spread of similar approaches are more than favourable in our current environment of language teaching. I especially mean the textbooks based only on English, originally written for groups of students coming from different countries and completely ignoring the fact that we have to teach groups of students united under one language system and thus resistent to certain mechanisms of English only textbooks grammar rules explanation. I also believe that this trend is to be continued until an appropriate teaching tool (a textbook) is introduced to our market, a tool respecting our Czech mental background that we necessarily ´drag along´ on our way to master a foreign language.

I also see a great advantage of similar action research data sharing in the fact that it can be presented to local or district school-boards as an inducement for future planning or decision making on how to conduct language teaching in a better way. And in case of a bad presentation or a not quality research study that was presented and taken in consideration as a possible help, it can well serve as feedback for the teacher that had made it to try a different approach or method or any other attitude towards the topic that would result in a worth-sharing research. As such, the reflection of the data collected during any action research provides one more, very important I believe, dimension that could be critically observed.

My intention to share my data, in the way of scope of its spread, does not exceed the theoretical borders of my students, colleagues, local language education oriented institutions on district level at its top. I have never considered the data to be fit for any professional conferences or academic journals, since the topic is very large and its individual pieces treated in my research are only small pieces of a mosaic that may be completed in the future, but not without a systematic help of English teaching community, such as teachers, lecturers and other people interested in language teaching.

The electronic sharing has been ensured by placing the thesis on *upce.cz* site and the publishing activity was performed by placing one original into the local University library. It is possible to use the electronic version as a means of futher spread of my research, I do not disapprove of this, and also by putting the results of my research into the internal electronic system in Gymnázium Vrchlabí, where it is already located for individual classes information.

D. Action research report

Da)   A written report

The action research had the following criteria:

The action research question: *To what extent will teaching grammar through contrastive approach affect students´ writing performance?*

The type of research: *Two-phased action research, the school level.*

The time schedule: *time period from October 2009 to February 2010.*

The research done on: *written material.*

The participants: *6 groups of students.*

Place of research: *Gymnázium Vrchlabí.*

The age group: *14 to the age of 19.*

The criteria for written material (essays) were:

- The essays were space-bound (minimum amount of words was 150 and maximum was not selected, but there was only one leaf of A4 format available).
- The time was limited to 45 minutes of a single English lesson.
- The topics of the essays were chosen accordingly to the interests of the students, or at least I chose the topics where I thought my students could have felt comfortable.
- Dictionaries were allowed and supplied by school.

During the actual action report, two research phases were conducted, with a instructional phase consisiting of the presentation of selected grammar issues, the transfer methods used in order to make them more user-friendly to the students.

The answer to the action research question *To what extent will teaching grammar through contrastive approach affect students´ writing performance?* is yes. To what extent?

When comparing the results of the first phase with the results of the second phase of the action research, the following outputs were acquired:

In case of all classes, the advance moving towards the improvement of written skills, or efficiency, of my students were apparent. In case of 4.A class the efficiency (rated in %) improved from 86,7 to 90,1(+ 3,4 %); in case of 5.A class it improved from 77,9 to 85,5 (+

7,6 %) – the most significant improvement of all classes; in case of 6.A class it improved from 82,4 to 83,6 (+ 1,2 %); in case of 7.A class it improved from 82,8 to 84,5 (+ 1,7 %); in case of 2.B it improved from 80,4 to 81,4 (+ 1 %); in case of 4.B it improved from 71,1 to 72,8 (+ 1,7 %).

Teaching grammar through contrastive approach had a positive effect on students´ performance throughout this research. The results reached show the improvement in overall efficiency, yet the individual elements of grammar show in some cases the impairment of percentage rates – see the charts of 1st and 2nd Phase results. It is crucial to state, nevertheless, that it is important to realize the *total number of errors* (EP) made in each particular phase and class to understand the proportion values of the individual elements´ percentage rates.

I believe the action research, even though at its beginning, will have a cycling character with the tendency of more grammar elements (selected on the basis of the problem character they create to Czech students) to be added. My idea is to cover the problem elements thoroughly, and to fully record the methods of their transfers.

Db) <u>Charts and figures</u>

The overall efficiency of the action research on the students´ performance after the both phases of the research were concluded:

Efficiency (APR)	First phase	Second phase
4.A	86,7	90,1
5.A	77,9	85,5
6.A	82,4	83,6
7.A	82,8	84,5
2.B	80,4	81,4
4.B	71,1	72,8

The individual grammar elements and their percentage rate of errors made during each phase of the research:

1st Phase Results

	4.A	5.A	6.A	7.A	2.B	4.B
SVOMPT	6 %	2 %	5 %	1 %	4 %	4 %
Grammar	29 %	30 %	29 %	16 %	24 %	24 %
Articles	40 %	36 %	33 %	31 %	24 %	24 %
Spelling	14 %	10 %	15 %	13 %	13 %	13 %
Other	11 %	22 %	18 %	39 %	35 %	35 %

2nd Phase Results

	4.A	5.A	6.A	7.A	2.B	4.B
SVOMPT	5 %	7 %	3 %	3 %	5 %	8 %
Grammar	24 %	30 %	34 %	28 %	17 %	27%
Articles	22 %	24 %	27 %	24 %	25 %	28 %
Spelling	12 %	18 %	14 %	23 %	18 %	12 %
Other	37 %	21 %	22 %	22 %	33 %	25 %

The total number of errors (EP) made during the each phase by individual classes:

EP	4.A	5.A	6.A	7.A	2.B	4.B
1st Phase	245	229	122	156	161	266
2nd Phase	218 (-27)	168 (- 61)	111 (- 11)	176 (+ 20)	139 (- 22)	226 (- 40)

	4.A	5.A	6.A	7.A	2.B	4.B
Efficiency 1 (APR) %	86,7	77,9	82,4	82,8	80,4	71,1
Efficiency 2 (APR) %	90,1	85,5	83,6	84,5	81,4	74,4
Average TNW 1	207	210	226	210	208	226
Average TNW 2	232	241	197	220	201	231
Number of Essays 1	16	14	9	11	10	17
Number of Essays 2	16	13	9	12	10	17
Error points (EP) 1	245	229	122	156	161	266
Error points (EP) 2	218	168	111	176	139	226
SVOMPT 1 %	6	2	5	1	4	4
SVOMPT 2 %	5	7	3	3	5	8
Grammar 1 %	29	30	29	16	24	24
Grammar 2 %	24	30	34	28	17	27
Articles 1 %	40	36	33	31	24	24
Articles 2 %	22	24	27	24	25	28
Spelling 1 %	14	10	15	13	13	13
Spelling 2 %	12	18	14	23	18	12
Other 1 %	11	22	18	39	35	35
Other 2 %	37	21	22	22	33	25

The Complete Data Chart of the Action Research Results:

Legend:

1 – 1st Phase
2 – 2nd Phase
APR – Average percentage rate
TNW – Average total number of words
EP – Total number of error points for the whole class

<u>E. Conclusion</u>

In my diploma thesis I focused on the way of teaching grammar through contrastive approach. I believe the effort is worth since the conditions for the spread of similar approaches are more than favourable in our current environment of language teaching.

In the first part I focused on theoretical aspects of teaching grammar from historical perspective to action research in theory. In the second part of my thesis, the practical part, I conducted an action research in order to improve my students´ written performance via helping them to eliminate the most common and notorious errors made. The research had three parts, two data collecting parts and one part related to the actual transfers of the selected grammar elements.

The thesis could be also used by teaching community on all levels, from beginning teachers to more experienced teachers who want to get inspiration or a different point of view. I tried to make the research clear and understandable to anyone who would be interested in any further continuation or addition to the existing state of the treatise. My future interest would be to cover the problem grammar elements thoroughly, and to fully record the methods of their transfer mechanisms. Since the task is so extensive, the efforts to add to the existing state of the treatise could be adopted by other teachers, lecturers or educational experts. The shared activity in this field might lead to a highly beneficial work that could help not only students, but also teachers themselves.

For me, personally, this research has been an ideal way to introspectively examine my practice of teaching. It provided me with the urge to go on, to try to find better and more useful ways to present English to my students. This task of presenting students with better-quality knowledge is a never-ending activity, with every new thought and idea you get about teaching exciting you into more work and more effort you put into it. This research made me also aware of the important fact that it is necessary to take teaching seriously enough to base your processes and teaching methodology on a solid platform consisiting of the data that are as precise as they could be, as in any other occupation, and finally, made me feel proud of the work that I am trying to perform, of being a teacher that is able to face and withstand the act of self-evaluation, no matter how unflattering the results may appear in the end, and to resurrect the drive to be able, willing and tolerant.

F. Resumé

Tato diplomová práce nazvaná *Teaching Grammar* se zabývá problematikou výuky gramatiky anglického jazyka využitím kontrastivního přístupu. Skládá se ze dvou hlavních částí – části teoretické a části praktické.

Teoretická část je rozdělena na čtyři oddíly, z nichž každý představuje konkrétní aspekt vztahující se k teoretické podstatě této práce. První oddíl se zabývá výukou gramatiky z hlediska historické perspektivy. V této části je vysvětlen pojem gramatika z hlediska etymologického a zmíněn náhled na pojetí gramatiky v tradičních gramatických školách. Dále jsou zde krátce zmíněny nejvýznamější tendence výuky gramatiky dle jednotlivých gramatických škol – od klasického řeckého pojetí, přes středověké trivium, gramatické metody devatenáctého století, až po zmínky o trendech a tendencích století dvacátého.

Druhý oddíl teoretické části se zabývá přehledem učebních metod od nejrannější metody Grammar Translatin Method až po metody moderní – Total Physical Response, Communicative Language Teaching a Content based, Task based a Participatory Approaches. V tomto oddíle se práce rovněž zabývá určitou převahou komunikačních procesů nad jazykovým obsahem, tedy komunikace nad gramatikou, těchto třech posledně zmíněných přístupů. Je zde ovšem následně vysvětlen záměr, proč se obsah této práce bude týkat hlavně výuky gramatiky písemného projevu.

Třetí oddíl teoretické části představuje problematiku kontrastivní analýzy. Je zde uvedena definice a obecné pohledy na vývoj kontrastivní analýzy, její vztah k dalším disciplínám – *error analysis* a *interlanguage*. V tomto oddíle je vysvětleno i základní pojetí jazykového transferu z jazyka výchozího (mateřského) do jazyka cílového, a pojem *Interlingua*, zabývající se jednotlivými stádii vývoje tzv.přenosových dialektů (transitional dialects). V závěru tohoto oddílu jsou popsány tři teoretické rozměry kontrastivní analýzy.

Čtvrtý oddíl teoretické části se soustřeďuje na techniku a druh výzkumu, který byl pro tuto práci využit– akční výzkum. V první části tohoto oddílu jsou uvedeny hlavní teoretické rysy akčního výzkumu dle C.Mertlera, a vysvětleny jeho čtyři hlavní části. Tyto čtyři části jsou dále podrobněji rozvedeny do specifických kroků, které jsou pro teoretický akční výzkum charakteristické. Celkem tedy tyto čtyři hlavní kroky akčního výzkumu obsahují devět podrobnějších kroků, v tomto oddíle uvedených. Je zde rovněž vysvětleno, jakým způsobem tyto kroky spolu vzájemně souvisejí, a jak důležitý je fakt definice společného tématu, na které by se měla výzkumná osoba soustředit. Druhá část čtvrtého oddílu se zabývá

stanovením společného tématu akčního výzkumu této práce – stanovení potřeb studentů z hlediska analýzy chyb jejich písemných projevů, stanovení klíčových gramatických elementů, kterých se akční výzkum bude týkat, a hledání nápravy těchto vybraných gramatických jevů pomocí kontrastivního přístupu využitím příslušných jazykových transferů. Dále se zde vysvětluje průběh sběru dat pro analýzu a význam akčního výzkumu pro praktickou činnost ve školské praxi.

Druhá část této diplomové práce, část praktická, se týká praktických činností souvisejících s vlastní přípravou akčního plánu, důvody výběru příslušných gramatických jevů, sběru dat, jejich analýze, tvorbě akčního plánu, postupům jednotlivých transferů použitých při výuce gramatiky a sdílení a reflexi sebraných a vyhodnocených dat. Je rozdělena do osmi jednotlivých oddílů.

První oddíl praktické části je věnován plánování akčního výzkumu, kde se uvádějí témata vhodná k podobnému typu výzkumu. Je zde uvedeno několik otázek, na které je nutné před započetím výzkumu odpovědět. Týkají se hlavně výukových teorií v praktické zkušenosti výzkumné osoby, hodnot, které zastává ve vztahu ke vzdělávání a k historickému kontextu vztahujícímu se k přejímání určitých názorů, které výzkumná osoba o procesu učení a učení se má. Dále jsou zde představeny dva pohledy na pojetí chyby; transmission model (TM) a contrastivist model (CM) a jejich různé způsoby prezentace gramatických jevů studentům. Významná část tohoto oddílu je věnována mini-lekcím, jednotkám výuky gramatiky, které mají své specifické rysy, a které jsou využívány výzkumnou osobou pro prezentaci gramatických jevů v určitých případech a za určitých okolností. Tento oddíl se dále zabývá aspekty plánování výběru gramatických jevů na základě dlouholetých zkušeností s výukou anglického jazyka, při které se určité gramatické chyby opakují s neotřesitelnou pravidelností. Jsou zde rozebírány i možné důvody, proč k tomuto stavu dochází. V poslední části prvního oddílu jsou zmíněny přednosti výběru písemného projevu ve vztahu k této práci a k tomuto výzkumu, a podrobněji popsány podmínky, za kterých k provádění výzkumu docházelo. Jsou zde udána pravidla, která byla během akčního výzkumu určena a dodržována. Jedná se hlavně o pravidla vztahující se k tvorbě a vzniku písemných projevů, na jejichž základě byla shromažďována data k následné analýze a hodnocení. Aby byla zajištěna co největší objektivita těchto dat, byla tato pravidla striktně dodržena všemi účastníky výzkumu. V závěru této části je vytyčena výzkumná otázka této práce - *Do jaké míry ovlivní učení gramatiky skrze kontrastivní přístup písemné výkony studentů?*

Druhý oddíl praktické části se zabývá důvody, které vedly k určení vybraných gramatických jevů. Tyto gramatické elementy byly určeny na základě četnosti opakujících se chyb v shromážděných písemných pracích studentů. Je zde uveden výčet těchto pěti hlavních gramatických jevů – pořádek slov (SVOMPT), gramatika (absence *–s* ve 3.os.j.č., vazba *there is/are*, nesoulad mezi podmětem a přísudkem), členy, hláskování (spelling) a jiné (nesprávné významy, čechismy, špatné předložkové vazby). Následují grafy a souhrnná tabulka opravňující výběr jednotlivých gramatických elementů dle procentuálního zastoupení chyb.

Třetí oddíl praktické části je věnován vlastnímu sběru dat. Je zde popsán dvoufázový model sběru dat, který probíhal od října 2009 do března 2010, a způsob, jakým byla data následně zpracovávána. Důležitou součástí hodnocení dat byla pravidla kalkulace slov písemného projevu tak, aby byl každý žák hodnocen stejným způsobem již od prvopočátku výzkumu. Na tuto fázi navazovalo i vlastní bodování chyb (jeden nebo dva body dle typu chyb) a proces kalkulace kde se poměrově vyjadřuje úspěšnost studenta na základě počtu dosažených slov v poměru k procentu chyb, kterých se při psaní dopustil. Výsledné procento úspěšnosti je propočítáno dle matematického vzorce – pro mladší studenty (4.A) s nižším a pro starší studenty (5.A-4.B) s vyšším koeficientem poměru. Na závěr tohoto oddílu jsou uvedeny zkratky týkající se jednotlivých vzorců výpočtu, jejich vysvětlení a druhy informací, které jsou v analýze dat v následujícím oddíle představeny.

Čtvrtý oddíl praktické části této práce je věnován analýze sebraných dat první fáze. Sebraná data této fáze udávají vstupní hodnoty akčního výzkumu před započetím jakékoliv následné výuky pomocí kontrastivního přístupu. Rovněž poukazují na nutnost výuky zvolených gramatických jevů, která bude následovat v oddíle Cf.

Oddíl následující, pátý, se zabývá vývojem akčního plánu a popisem jeho jednotlivých částí. Tyto části vytváří tzv.výzkumný cyklus, který je pro akční výzkum klíčovým elementem. Jeho podstatnými charakteristikami je jeho opakování a možnost reflexe umožňující sledování jak zamýšlených jevů, tak jevů, které se během akčního výzkumu objeví neočekávaně. Výzkumná osoba by v praktické školní praxi měla věnovat pozornost oběma těmto rysům výzkumu.

Následující oddíl popisuje jednotlivé postupy transferů použitých při výuce zvolených gramatických jevů skrze kontrastivní přístup. Z hlediska rozsahu práce byly pro tento oddíl zvoleny popisy transferů ve výuce systému anglických členů, výuce pořádku slov v anglické větě – včetně problémové fráze *There is/are*, a výuce systému otázek v anglickém jazyce. Každý z těchto výukových transferů je podrobněji popsán a doprovázen buď tabulkou, anebo názorným schématem.

Druhá fáze analýzy dat proběhla bezprostředně po sběru dat druhé fáze. Na počátku sedmého oddílu praktické části je uvedena souhrnná tabulka grafů znázorňující rozdíly mezi jednotlivými zkoumanými skupinami – třídami. Následuje stejný popis hodnotících kategorií jako v případě hodnocení první fáze. Každá ze skupin je zde hodnocena na základě celkového počtu slov, poměru výkonu v procentech a počtu chyb v jednotlivých písemných pracích. Následuje poslední oddíl praktické části, kde se zdůvodňuje nutnost a prospěšnost sdílení sebraných dat v této práci pro případné budoucí využití nejen ze strany výzkumné ososby, ale i dalších pedagogů. Jsou zde zmíněny i způsoby, jakými lze tento proces sdílení realizovat – grafy a tabulky prezentované buď na magnetických tabulích, anebo skrze závěsný projektor. V tomto oddíle se rovněž objevuje odkaz na tabulku celkových výsledků, která je uvedena v části Db – Tabulky a hodnoty.

Část D se věnuje zprávě akčního výzkumu. Ta se skládá z oddílu písemné zprávy a oddílu zprávy ve formě tabulek a hodnot. Písemná zpráva rekapituluje hlavní kritéria akčního výzkumu a zodpovídá na otázku položenou v oddílu plánování akčního výzkumu (Ca), která zněla: *Do jaké míry ovlivní učení gramatiky skrze kontrastivní přístup písemné výkony studentů?* Zpráva uvádí, že ano, a podrobněji popisuje, jak byly dosažené výkony po výuce kontrastivním přístupem pro všechny jednotlivé skupiny (třídy) ovlivněny. Uvádí, že výkony jednotlivých tříd se po prezentování vybraných gramatických jevů zlepšily, a dokládá to uvedenými hodnotami vyjádřenými v procentech úspěšnosti. Pro názornost jsou tyto výsledné hodnoty zpracovány do formy tabulky na str.76-78. Obsahují hodnoty naměřené v celkovém poměru úspěšnosti mezi první a druhou fází výzkumu a rekapitulují výsledné hodnoty jednotlivých gramatických jevů v první i druhé fázi výzkumu samostatně. Je zde rovněž uvedena tabulka celkového počtu chyb zaznamenaných v první a druhé fázi, s udáním rozdílu chyb mezi jednotlivými fázemi. Tabulky uzavírá Celková tabulka dat akčního výzkumu, ve které jsou dosažené hodnoty uvedeny v přehledném souhrnu a opatřeny legendou.

Závěr této práce, část E, rekapituluje záměr výzkumné osoby a shrnutí formální stránky práce. Jsou zde uvedeny důvody, proč by tato práce mohla být využita širší učitelskou komunitou, a zabývá se i otázkou možnosti následného výzkumu založeného na této práci. Zdůrazňuje se zde, že rozsah tématu zpracovaného v této práci je natolik široký, že následná spolupráce nejen mezi učiteli, ale i mezi výzkumnými ústavy a učiteli, by na tomto poli mohla být prospěšná, a mohli by z ní těžit nejen učitelé, ale hlavně jejich žáci. Závěr obsahuje i

osobní hledisko výzkumné osoby, kde je vyzdvihnuta nezbytnost sebereflexe práce učitele a její pozitivní dopad na učitelskou profesi obecně.

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