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Department of English Language and Literature

**Social Strategies in Foreign Language
Teaching**

Diploma Thesis

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Anotace

Diplomová práce "Sociální strategie ve výuce cizích jazyků" pojednává o důležitosti orální komunikace při výuce cizích jazyků. Popisuje také pozitivní a negativní jevy komunikace jako podstatné součásti sociálních strategií. Dále se práce zabývá rolí učitele, žáka i vyučovacího prostředí. V poslední kapitole jsou prezentovány výsledky výzkumu mínění učitelů a žáků o sociálních strategiích v hodinách cizího jazyka.

Annotation

Diploma thesis "Social Strategies in Foreign Language Teaching" deals with the importance of the oral communication in foreign language learning process. Communication is involved in social strategies and its positive and negative features have been presented. Besides, the roles of the teacher, of foreign language learners and of the classroom setting in a language lesson have been described. Finally, general opinion of some English language teachers and foreign language adult learners on social strategies in foreign language learning process have been investigated in a research and presented in the last chapter.

Klíčová slova

Sociální strategie, učení, jazyk, práce ve dvojicích, práce ve skupinách, komunikace, komunikační aktivity, mluvení, kooperace

Keywords

Social strategies, teaching, language, pair work, group work, communication, communicative activities, speaking, cooperation

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci zpracoval/a samostatně a použil/a jen prameny uvedené v seznamu literatury.

Souhlasím, aby práce byla uložena na Masarykově univerzitě v Brně v knihovně Pedagogické fakulty a zpřístupněna ke studijním účelům

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Introduction

The matter of social strategies has recently become a very frequently discussed topic. Not only does it touch the field of foreign language teaching, but also and mainly our normal daily life. This phenomenon can be easily noticed in the policy and self-development of big prosperous companies. Psychologists, sociologists, personnel officers and, of course, managers are aware of the importance of friendly social background at the working place as it is obvious that better relationships make the work more successful and productive, so they try to make the relations in the company more stable by various group formation activities and courses.

Somehow, school or, to be more specific, language classroom can be seen as a small company: the teacher is the manager, students the workers and the product is their command of the target language. Comfortable atmosphere, good classroom climate and well organized work plan, all together make the learning process more effective. Moreover, social strategies can enable students to speak, which is in the class of fifteen students while teaching by frontal method nearly impossible.

In my diploma thesis, firstly, I would like to point out the importance of social strategies in foreign language teaching as they often do not only teach the target language^{*}, but also prepare the students[†] for their future life on the level of cooperation, empathy, organization of time, responsibility etc. Consequently, would I like to show some possible ways of teaching based on social strategies, because, in my opinion, they can make the teaching process more attractive for the students and their teacher as well, and help the teacher to avoid stereotypical techniques and methods in the lessons.

^{*} Later, when using the term English “target language” is meant.

[†] In my thesis all the language learners will be called the *students*. No consideration on their age, except of the research part, will be taken

Secondly, I would like to refute some negative assertions about pair and group work, which seem to persist in the foreign language teaching in our country from the era before the Velvet Revolution and to stress its positives. Even though it might sound curious, grammar-translation method and the frontal teaching are still very widespread in Czech schools. In fact, there is no need for Czech teachers to get inspiration from the schools abroad, if they take on consideration the teaching methods and strategies they use. On this point, self-evaluation and open discussion among the school staff is highly desirable.

Thirdly, I would like to present the results of my quantitative research. Two types of questionnaires were administered. One type was determined to teachers. Most of the respondents were teachers studying for higher level teaching qualification in the department of English language at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University in Brno and the rest of the respondents were my fellow students at the faculty, who have been already teaching at private language schools in Brno. Second type of questionnaire was dedicated to language learners, who were born in 1980 or earlier. In this case, the questionnaires were given to various people learning a foreign language, mostly English, in a language course.

Finally, all my assertions should lead to the importance of social interaction in the foreign language teaching as it is often the only foreign language environment for the students.

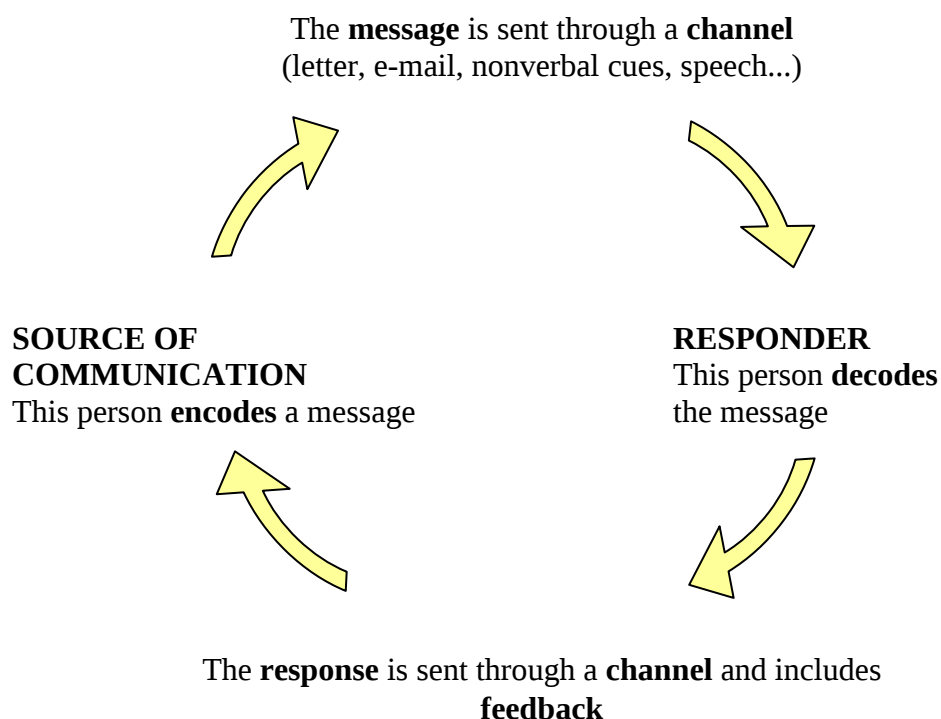
1 Communication

Social strategies in foreign language learning go hand in hand with communication, but the process of communication is not simple. American scholar DeVito distinguishes four main areas of human communication in real life: intrapersonal, interpersonal between two participants, in a small group and public communication (2001:17).

The *intrapersonal* communication takes place inside the consciousness and the person thinks, analyses, solves problems, compensates stress, tries to be aware of his/her weaknesses and to have emotions under control. The main objective is reflection and analysis, whereas the main objectives of the *interpersonal* communication are building relationship, pretending and to be helpful. DeVito describes the main objectives of *a small group* as a share of information, production of ideas, problem solving and to help each other and the small group is more effective in brainstorming and problem solving than individuals or pairs. The aims of *public communication* are to inform, to convince and to amuse the audience.

Many foreign language teachers have the dream to teach their students to live and think in the target language. It is often seen that students reflect in their native language and translate their thoughts into English, which frequently leads to mistakes in syntax or to misleading expressions (i.e. Czenglish, Genglish, Franglais). Concerning the social strategies in foreign language teaching, the most important and valuable, while working in a classroom, are interpersonal (pair work) and small groups types of communication, which certainly develop the communicative skills the most. The last type, public communication, even though it does not develop communicative skills so much, can be trained in project, topic presentation or in final feedback after an activity.

The act of communication is basically the transmission of information of some kind – a ‘message’– from a source to a receiver. In the case of language, both source and receiver are human, and the message is transmitted vocally, through the air, or graphically, on a paper or via the Internet (Crystal, 1985:247). Further important fact is that the process of communication occurs in a circle. According to Gebhard, it begins when a person has both a social need to share information with others, or to influence the attitudes and behaviours of others. Following step of communication is encoding, which is an internal activity and results into a message, which can be verbal, nonverbal or a mixture of both. The message moves between people through a channel (i.e. sounds or visuals). Then the message reaches a responder, who decodes it. In other words, the responder is trying to understand the meaning created by others. As a result of understanding the responder sends a response, what does he/she decides to do about the message, which is feedback. The process of communication can be seen in the following chart (Source: Gebhard: 1999):



2 The Importance of Communication in Foreign Language Teaching

Language is a social phenomenon and can be one form of communication. It can be used to convey information, express feelings, to persuade someone to do something, make contact with someone else, write poetry or talk about language itself (Leech, 1982:150). Students may be strongly motivated to learn foreign languages, because they know it will put them in touch with more people, but at the same time they know that it will take a great deal of effort to master it and may begrudge that effort (Crystal, 2003:3).

Language has many functions, which can be divided into referential, expressive, conative, phatic, poetic or metalinguistic, but more than one function are often combined. Crystal also mentions that language can be occasionally used for purposes other than communication: to let off steam (i.e. when hit our finger with a hammer), to give delight to ourselves purely because of the sonic effect which language has upon the ear (i.e. children's word-play) or as a vehicle for our own thoughts, when no one else is present (1990:251).

The expression *communication* comes from a Latin word *communis*, which means to share, to impart, to partake, to join, to cooperate etc. (Hoad, 1996) Thus, the current sense carries the same significance: communication, as a noun, expresses the activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving people information (Hornby, 2000).

It might be interesting to think a little about the frequency of the communication between two people in real daily life. According to Murphy, approximately 90 per cent of all our oral communicating is done between only two people (1996:1). In addition, the differences between effective and non-effective communications can be seen

everywhere around us. In fact, communication exists in context, which highly determines the meaning of all verbal and nonverbal information (DeVito, 2001:21). It means, the same words or behaviour may have completely different connotation, if they are used in different circumstances. So, the importance of the communication in pairs or small groups during the language lessons is obvious. Moreover, considering the number of students in class, which is constantly increasing, pair work and work in small groups become gradually the only opportunity for the student to speak the studied foreign language in the class.

In fact, the roles of partners in communication are wider than it might seem from the first view. They do not only speak, they listen to each other, adjust their conversation to others, use nonverbal gestures, ask question and react. Thus, natural conversation does not consist of strings of questions and answers, but frequently one speaker makes statements and the other signals interest and encourages the first one to expand his/her idea.

As the basic aim of language learning is to communicate, the teachers should give the students opportunity to speak. In addition, while working in pairs, the students can train some of the abilities mentioned above. According to Hess and Pollard, the more students speak, the better they learn (1995:1). Active involvement of this kind is very close to learning acquisition, which is unconscious and more persisting than passive observation of conversation between the teacher and one student. In general, unconscious is often very desirable thing, especially for language learning, when the teacher encourages the students to use certain strategies (Oxford, 1990:9).

Moreover, self-development in sense of communication needs other people. In other words, by cooperating with others, we can come to understand better our own

experiences and opinions. We can also enrich them with understanding and experiences of others (Edge, 1992:3).

Someone could object that the student might not feel comfortable while working in a pair with a partner they do not like, but in real life we cannot choose who to work with. It means that school should prepare the students for their future and in fact, later at work they will not be asked who they would like to cooperate with. Moreover, students should learn to be able to express their ideas in a comprehensible way, because it is common that most of them will at least once in life head the situation, when appropriate expression of ideas will be essential. So, the more they know about the communication and the more practice they have, the more successful they will be. Moreover, the target language can serve easily as a vehicle for communication, not just an object to study (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:128).

“Most students, even those at a young age, recognize the importance of learning to communicate in English. They want to learn to communicate in English. Although my English isn’t perfect, I think it is my job to teach them to communicate in English.”

(Comment by a Thai EFL teacher, Gebhard, 1999)

“One of the greatest pleasures of life is conversation” (Sydney Smith*)

“The way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives”

“Communication is power. Those who have mastered its effective use can change their own experience of the world and the world’s experience of them.”

(Anthony Robbins[†])

We never know what our students will one day do as their profession.

In fact, most successful leaders or influential personalities in human history, such as Thomas Jefferson, Martin Luther King, Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi or even Adolph Hitler, were great public speakers and masters in communication.

* Sydney Smith – (1771-1845) English philosopher and essayist

[†] Anthony Robbins – American leading peak performance coach, whose clients included Princess Diana, André Agassi or President Clinton.

3 History, contemporary situation of social strategies in language teaching

The idea of social strategies is very old. It already existed in the ancient Greece and Rome, even though this term was not used at that time. In the 4th century BC **Socrates** was aware of the importance of communication and used the method of inquiry, answering a question with a question, which was later described by his student **Plato** as *Socratic dialogue*. Besides, some features of cooperative learning may be seen in **Aristotle's** writings, where he expressed some basic ideas of communitarianism*, comparing the isolated lives of people in big metropolis to close relationships in the smaller city, even though this term had been not used until the 19th century (Etzioni, 2001:355). Consequently, **Quintilian** pointed out the method of one student teaching the other. However, the principle of learning by explaining the problematic to lower level co-student is still being recommended by many respected teachers even nowadays.

Despite the black period of teaching in middle age, which was based on drills of Latin and Greek texts, **Thomas Aquinas**, middle aged theologian and philosopher, mentioned the cooperative teaching in his works (Kasíková, 1997:17).

Well known Czech educator, scientist and writer from the age of renaissance, **John Amos Comenius**, wrote in 1632 in the Bohemian Didactics: “*Who teaches others, teaches himself*”. He also mentioned the role of older students, who helped the teacher and their younger classmates. Similar to Comenius thoughts is the one by **Joseph Joubert**, a French philosopher of 18th century, “*To teach is to learn twice*”.

* **Communitarianism** comes from Latin *commūniter* – together, it is a social theory, which emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relations, friendship, solidarity, common intentions, interests, traditions in opposition to the idea of individualism. (McLean, 2003)

In the 1790s England, **Andrew Bell** and **Richard Lancaster** designed an educational system based on an instructional pyramid, which engaged older, more advanced, students to teach their younger, not as much skilled classmates. Essential part of this method was the communication between one teacher and the advanced students, which allowed the teacher to educate a large number of students (up to 800 in one class!) and to limit the price for schooling to minimum; moreover, it was highly effective. This system became highly used, especially in America, where the immigration and population were rapidly increasing, and by 1830 *Lancasterian schools* had spread from the Northeast to the urban centres of the South and West (Hansen, 2004).

One of the most remarkable representatives of the progressive education based on social principle in the first half of the 20th century was American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer, **John Dewey** (1859 – 1952). Similar to his contemporary Russian developmental psychologist Vygotsky, Dewey believed in the significance of interpersonal communication in education. Typical element of Dewey's theory was learning by experience, not just by mere memorisation of lessons. He also stressed the necessity of problem solving, critical thinking skills in education and communication.

In this time, the Czech educational system was based on Herbart's principle of drilling theory without practical demonstration and authoritative attitude of the teacher towards the students.

As a progressive developer and interpreter of Dewey's ideas is considered **William Heard Kilpatrick** (1871 – 1965), not only did he implemented them in *project method*, but also he brought into American educational system discussion and was able to teach a class of 600 students thanks to usage of group work (Generals, 2000).

Another system of education in the USA inspired by Dewey's work was *Winnetka Plan*, which was developed by **Carleton Washburne** (1889 – 1968) and supported cooperation, group work, discussion and project work.

Winnetka method was later adapted by a French teacher, **Célestine Freinet**, (1896 – 1966) and used in so called *Freinet schools*. As well as Winnetka Plan, this method was based on cooperation and stressed the preparation for student's future life, such as investigation, research, project work or the liberty of expressing student's ideas, and strictly refused memorising of lessons.

French lecturer of pedagogy at Sorbonne and protagonist of progressive teaching, **Roger Cousinet** (1871 – 1973), became in 1920s well known for his method of free-group work method. He wrote in 1930: "*Child is a scientifically active being*" (Raillon, 1993).

According to Cousinet, children activity is natural and should be encouraged in educational process. Further, does he insist that the effects on socialisation are beneficial, not only intellectually, but also they teach the children to trust their own judgement. Children learn to express themselves clearly, to listen to and understand others. They learn to live socially, in other words, to enhance their own thinking with the thinking of others.

The important fact, which influenced the education of the 20th century in Europe and America, connected with social strategies, was the emergence of new science – sociology, which originally belonged to philosophy and its name was derived by French philosopher Auguste Comte in 1838 from Latin *socius* (companion, associate). The first European department of sociology was founded in France in 1895 by **Émile Durkheim** (1858 – 1917), who believed that education was central to the continuation of a society (Wagenaar: 2006) and described school as "a society in miniature", but

a society of a special sort, which has a similar hierarchy, rules, expectations to the "outside world". According to Durkheim, formal schooling should produce "social beings". He claimed that schools are products of society and they reflect, for better or worse, the live of their communities (Boocock, 1973).

In the Czech Republic at the beginning of the 20th century, the importance of social interaction in learning process was expressed by the representative of educational system reformation, **Václav Příhoda** (1889 – 1979), who said that children should not be taught to become individuals, but to become valuable members of our society.

In that time, Czech educators fascinated by new tendencies in American, French or German education intended to change the old Czech educational system based on Herbart's principle and founded several experimental schools which supported different methods of teaching. Příhoda also was influenced by the *Dalton Plan* created by **Helen Parkhurst** (1881 – 1957) in the USA. This method is highly used even nowadays and enhances the student's social skills and sense of responsibility towards others.

The second half of the 20th century was marked by the development of social psychology and sociology of education. The education in the Czech Republic in 1960s supported collective teaching, but the interaction between students during lessons was restricted (Kasíková, 1997:18).

Nowadays, the communicative competence is involved in *Rámcový vzdělávací program* (Educational Program Framework), a document for designing educational programs at elementary schools, which has been in effective since 1st September 2005.

To sum up, despite the persisting tendency of memorising throughout history, social strategies have been involved in education since the early beginning of society.

They appeared in different forms, either as discussion, expressing of student's ideas or as group work or project work. All these methods lead to education of perspective members of society, who are able to express freely their attitudes and to cooperate with others.

4 Social strategies

4.1 Social strategies definition in general

One of the most recent trends in foreign language teaching is the learner-centeredness. In other words, student becomes the initiator of the teaching process and the teaching approach is directed according to the student's appropriate learning strategies. It has been described by many researchers how to facilitate the student's learning and the use of absorbed information the language learning strategies. In fact, these strategies are used by students consciously or unconsciously, when they are processing new information or accomplishing tasks in the language lesson.

As already mentioned above, several language learning strategies taxonomies have been published and most of them involve either communication or social strategies, or both of them. In general, communication strategies are understood as the focus on the process of participating in a conversation, which involves getting meaning and clarification, whereas social strategies are those that the students engage to face the opportunity to be exposed to the target language and practise his/her already gained knowledge. These strategies often permeate each other in the meaning and scholars put them frequently in connection with other strategies, i.e. affective, or their content is included in other strategies. Oxford sees the aim of language learning strategies in the development of communicative competence and in her taxonomy is communication involved in social strategies. Further, she mentions four-part definition of communicative competence (1990:7):

- 1) Grammatical competence and accuracy
- 2) Sociolinguistic competence
- 3) Discourse competence
- 4) Strategic competence

Despite the importance of communication in foreign language teaching, it is not involved in all teaching methods. The foreign language teaching method, which contains the social strategies, and though the communication, the most, is communicative language teaching (CLT), which is also known as communicative approach. Its main aim is the development of language student's communicative competence and is learner-centred. CLT provides opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition, through the use of interactive pair and group activities (Richard/Rodgers, 2001:193), and requires a considerable amount of exposure to target language. Communication-oriented language instructions are based on student's language learning needs in a supportive, non-judgmental and non-threatening classroom atmosphere (Eveyik, 2003). Students are given real situations, roles and real purposes to communicate, so that they can share knowledge, feelings, experience and their communication partners' reactions. Moreover, it is easier for students to accept correction from their peers as well as teachers who are independent participants oscillating between the roles of facilitator and director transmitter (Eveyik, 2003). Another characteristic of the CLT is the use of authentic materials, which give students the possibility to develop their strategies for understanding language (above all compensation strategies) as it is actually used by native speakers (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:132).

The cooperative language learning (CLL) is very close to the social strategies and CLT. The learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between students in groups (Richard/Rodgers, 2001:192). People often mistakenly equate CLL with a more general idea of group work, but this method goes beyond just putting students in groups and telling them to work together (Kluge, 1996). Each member of the group participates on the group task, as it has clearly defined roles

for the students, and the learning with others increases the student's motivation. This can be helpful to not so gifted students and build positive relationships among students. Team-based organisational structures replace competition and support cooperation, which is also important in the real life and clearly defined goals help students to absorb what they are supposed to learn. Cooperative learning has been statistically shown to enhance learning, to improve comprehension and increase retention. Research investigating on cooperative learning dates back to Morton Deutsch* in the 1940s.

Communication and cooperation is also included in community language learning, which is student-centred and draws on the group's supportive capacities. The students suggest a topic for discussion and the teacher's role is to help to sustain the activities without forcing any student to participate who does not want to (Prodromou, 1995:151). This method attempts to reduce the student's anxiety by encouraging them and activating their emotions.

* Morton Deutsch is a social psychologist and researcher in conflict resolution. In 1986, he founded the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution.

4.2 Social strategies definition in general according to Rebecca Oxford

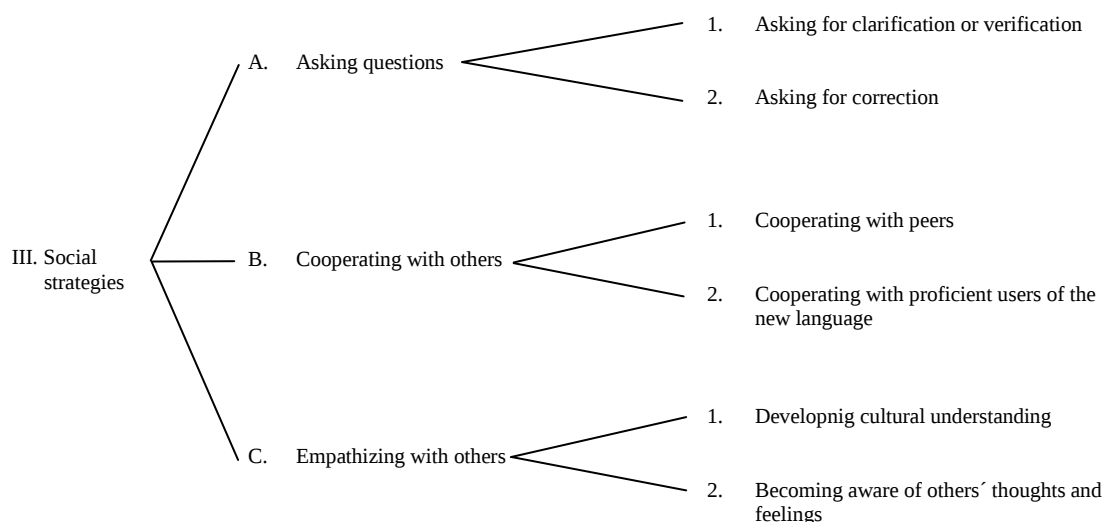
The most well-known division of learning strategies is the one of American teacher and writer, Rebecca Oxford, who separates them into direct and indirect. Those that contribute directly to learning are closely related to the subject matter (memory, cognitive and compensation strategies) and those which are essential to language learning nonetheless, but do not directly involve the subject matter itself (metacognitive, affective and social strategies). She enumerates eleven fundamental features of language learning strategies (1990:9):

1. They contribute to the main goal, communicative competence.
2. Allow students to become more self-directed.
3. Expand the role of teachers.
4. Are problem oriented.
5. They are specific actions taken by the students.
6. Involve many aspects of the student, not just cognitive.
7. Support learning, both directly and indirectly.
8. Are not always conscious.
9. Can be taught.
10. Are flexible.
11. Are influenced by a variety of factors.

In social strategies, students deliberately seek opportunities to practice their knowledge and to be exposed to the target language (i.e. they try to speak with native speakers in order to practise the language, listen to radio, watch films or TV, read books in English, etc.). Social and affective strategies are of paramount importance, as they involve student's whole person and the learning process is very close to acquisition. It could be misleading to think that social strategies are used only for listening and speaking, they are helpful and indeed essential to all four language skills (Oxford, 1990:168).

Oxford explains the importance of social strategies in foreign language teaching by her definition of language as *“a form of social behaviour; it is communication, and communication occurs between and among people. Learning a language thus involves other people, and appropriate social strategies are very important in this process.”*(Oxford, 1990:144)

According to Oxford, three sets of strategies are included in social strategies: asking questions, cooperating with others and empathizing with others. Each set comprises two specific strategies as can be seen from the following diagram:



In fact, we spend our lives asking questions (Hess, 1995:1). To be able to speak about a conversation, there must be at least one question asked by one of the participants, than the talk can be complementary and it is not a monolog.

“Quality questions create a quality life. Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better answers. “(Anthony Robbins)

While workings in pairs or small groups, the students have more opportunity to ask questions, which is sometimes difficult at the elementary and pre-intermediate levels, except of drilled basic questions concerning student’s personal data. The more

students speak the better they learn (Hess, 1995:1). They may try to find out some information about their classmates, which interest them, or discover some interesting facts, they do not know. These situations are very similar to the real life and this should be the aim of language teaching.

Moreover, a dialog, or a conversation, does not only consist of factual questions, but also some listener's feedback should be necessarily involved. The speaker needs to know, whether his words were understood by the communication partner and needs some encouragement in a form of listener's nodding or another nonverbal communicative gestures.

Another important advantage of social strategies concerning asking questions is that while working in pairs or small groups with peers, the students do not feel so anxious to ask or to admit that they do not understand something, as it often happens in frontal teaching. In fact, learning under stress is often ineffective and can even be of negative value, so, pair work and groups work are recommended to reduce the stress (Norman, 1986:12). Briefly, the student's feelings may lower the barriers to language acquisition.

Following important element of the social strategies is cooperation. It comes from the mutual interaction between people and their collective living, when one participant influences the other and the other person's reaction influences the former one again. This social interaction, or information exchange between people, enables people to coordinate their work and to cooperate. In addition, it is important for forming interpersonal relationships (Čáp, 2001:190) and building relationship with and among students is very important (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:96).

"What children can do together today, they can do alone tomorrow." (Vygotsky)

In foreign language teaching the use of social strategies can help the weaker students to catch up some language from their more advanced classmates and to build their relationships in class. It also works vice versa on the level of help and patience. Peer cooperation is especially between school aged children essential, moreover, it implies the absence of competition and the presence of group spirit (Oxford, 1996:145). It is obvious that communicative interaction encourages cooperative relationships among students, as it gives students an opportunity to work on negotiating meaning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:130).

Social strategies allow the students to learn to understand another student's feelings, to tolerate different opinions, thoughts and cultures. According to Oxford, empathy is essential to successful communication in any language (1996:146). People differ in their behaviour, manners and expressing their feelings and attitudes.

"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others." (Anthony Robbins)

Consequently, teaching to communicate throughout the social strategies can show the students, in a friendly way, to try not to solve their arguments by physical force. In consideration with the increasing social differences between the students, this point should not be forgotten by the teachers, as the social strategies may be used as bullying prevention (Říčan, 1995:82). The principle is very simple: pair work and group work support the involvement of the class outsiders and some their qualities can be recognised by the class, as well as the possible aggressors could reach some respect of the class.

5 Roles of students, teacher and classroom setting

In past, when the learning process used to be teacher-centred, the student's role was mainly to drill and memorise the information without ability or practical knowledge to use them in the real life or put them into any context. Nowadays, students are, above all, communicators (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:131). In other words, even though their knowledge of the target language is limited and incomplete, they can be actively involved in communication and try to learn to communicate by communicating, which in fact can also develop their compensation strategies. It means that students learn to be able to figure out the speaker's or writers intentions as a part of being communicatively competent (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:129). In fact, very important role of students in social strategies is to cooperate with others as most people learn a foreign language better with others than on their own (Norman, 1986:11).

"In order to learn, one must have a partner." (Talmud)

Littlewood points out the importance of student's focus on the communication of meaning rather than on the practice of language (1990:50).

Another important feature of student's role today is that they become more responsible managers of their own learning, which leads to student's learning autonomy and supports students' needs, especially while working in pairs or small groups. Moreover, while communicating, the student is not directly forced to use exactly only one possible way of self-expressing, as it is typical for grammar-translation method, but is given a choice not only about what to say, but also how to say it, which is more natural. Also, students can better identify with their roles in the interaction than during controlled language practise. It is highly desirable that the students create the interaction themselves, during role plays, discussions etc., which makes the learning process more effective.

“A turtle trying to fly is more admirable than a bird sitting in a tree.” (Murphy, 1996:124)

The traditional role of the foreign language teacher used to be to correct all errors that occurred in student's formulations; however, nowadays it is not only to teach, to correct or to plan the lessons, as it might seem from frontal teaching, but, in communicative approach using social strategies, it is to monitor and to help the students, which is more complicated process.

According to Byrne, in pair work the teacher works as an organiser, who organises the activities so that the students can practise in pairs or groups, and as a monitor, as he/she has to carry out some checking while they are accomplishing tasks whereas in group activities, the role is of manager and consultant, because the teacher has to set up the activities and to offer advice or provide necessary language items if the students need and ask for them (1990:13). The teacher acts as an advisor during communicative activities (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:130). In other words, the teacher is available as a source of guidance, helps and for some students may even become an important psychological support. Students should have the impression that the teacher is really listening to them and understands what they are saying. By understanding how students feel, the teacher can help students to overcome their negative feelings, which might otherwise block their learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:97). Besides, he/she can monitor students' strengths and weaknesses (Littlewood, 1981:19) and oversees the students' learning, so that they could form a coherent progression, leading towards greater communicative ability. Larsen-Freeman also points as one of the teacher's major responsibilities to establish situations likely to promote communication (1986:129).

Further, teachers are able to make language learning far more effective and enjoyable. According to Oxford, teachers can exert a tremendous influence over the emotional atmosphere of the classroom in three different ways: by changing

the social structure of the classroom to give students more responsibility, by providing increased amounts of naturalistic communication and by teaching learners to use affective strategies (1990:140). In fact, all strategies should be taught, social included.

Byrne admits that to teach the whole class together is easier, in a sense to control everything than pair work or group work (1987:6), but, considering the tendency and merits of student-centred teaching, the teachers position in teaching process becomes less dominant than before, however, not less important. The traditional teacher's dominant role in the teaching process is also significant for its effect on human relationships within the classroom and may be also reduced by introducing more informal seating arrangements. Larsen-Freeman admits that the superior knowledge and power of the teacher can be threatening. If the teacher does not remain in the front of the classroom, the threat is reduced and the students' learning is facilitated (1986:96). When the teacher faces the whole class, interaction from student to teacher, rather than among students is fostered, so the teacher's position reinforces his/her authority as 'knower', but a more informal layout of the classroom can help to support the students' balance as communicators (Littlewood, 1981:47).

Despite the fact that classroom setting, and seating included, can positively influence the student's attitude and habits towards learning, most of the Czech classrooms are still organised as it used to be in the era of the empress Maria Theresa two hundred years ago: the writing desks are set up in rows, which supports mainly the frontal teaching and pair work always with the same partner, the large blackboard is in front of the classroom and not far from it there is a big photo of the president. All the students' concentration heads towards the front of the classroom, where the teacher usually stands and so the students in the back rows might not seem, sometimes intentionally, involved in the learning process. Even if the students would

like to communicate, the traditional classroom setting makes the communication highly uncomfortable or the students have to work always with the same partner. Eveyik admits that the sitting order of students is a factor working against the formation of groups, too, and provides a comment by a EFL teacher:

“I try to integrate group work activities into my classes all the time, but there are 40 – 45 students in my classes and it is really difficult and time-consuming to get them into groups. It takes at least 10 minutes! This is too much time to waste when you have a lot to do. Instead, I prefer having them work in pairs because their sitting order is much more convenient for pair work and I don’t need to spend time on rearranging the desks.” (Comment by a Turkish EFL teacher, Eveyik, 2003)

Some language classrooms in Czech schools are organised in U-shape, rarely in a circle, which facilitates the communication between the teacher and the students and between the students themselves. Moreover, it stimulates the activity and encourages the students, by giving them more space, to move and impression of freedom. This positive feeling enables the development of friendly relationships and supports the language acquisition.

To sum up, teacher, in a broad sense, ‘facilitator’ of learning, may need to perform in a variety of specific roles, separately or simultaneously (Littlewood, 1981: 92), however, together with the untraditional arranging of the furniture in class and student-centred focus on teaching process, can make the communication and cooperation during the language lessons more comfortable and season the lessons with friendly and creative atmosphere.

6 Lessons organization and learning environment

The persisting tendency of frontal teaching during the lessons in the Czech schools does not give to all students the possibility to learn to express them.

Renowned Czech educational psychologist, Jan Čáp, advises teachers to continuously develop the social cohesion of the class by organising out-of-school activities, which provide the opportunity for students and the teachers, too, to recognise each other in different context. Further, he mentions the importance of learning situations, when the students are compelled to cooperate rather than to compete. Also, he recommends the teachers to use sensitively the pair and group work so that the students learn in a convenient way to solve interpersonal conflicts and points out the fact that these strategies of teaching can work as possible prevention against aggression, bullying etc. (Čáp, 2001:578).

Despite the fact that the classroom is often called an artificial environment for learning and using foreign language (Littlewood, 1981:44), it is often the only foreign language environment teachers can their students provide with. Even though it is not natural, it should not be forgotten that the classroom is also a real social context on its own with real relationships between students and teacher, too.

Moreover, the structures and skills that the students acquire during classroom interaction can be later transferred to other kinds of situations. Émile Durkheim already asked himself a question, what kind of place the school is, and claimed that children acquire in school collective believes and behaviours which allow them to take place in the ongoing society without seriously disrupting it (Boocock, 1973). Moreover, a variety of linguistic forms may be throughout teacher's comments and orders presented. In other words, the language teacher aware of the social context should use the target language as frequently as possible, at least for classroom management or basic

tasks explanations appropriate to the students' skills. In reality it means that in general, people hear daily many orders and requests. Even small children, when they start to speak, learn orders rather early. They do not learn them as single grammatical units, but remember them as a one whole word. In addition, these language chunks are quite easy to remember in most European languages. Considering that the foreign language learning is similar to the mother tongue learning, this process seems to be very natural. The students can learn grammar and vocabulary without being aware of the process of learning.

"We have grammar classes, but we don't even call them grammar. We call them 'Skills'. We introduce grammar points by creating a situation through pictures and dialogues. Everything is presented in a context and students find out the correct tense to use. They don't need to know it is called 'past perfect'!" (Comment by a Turkish EFL teacher, Eveyik, 2003)

In fact, the language lesson itself provides a rich source of communicative needs from its beginning until the end. When the lesson starts, the teacher greets the students, then some lesson introduction is necessary and further, organisation of activity, explanation of the task, all these can be done and understood by the student even with limited knowledge of English. Of course, this process should become a regular routine to the class and to the teacher as well, only then the students can profit from the structures the teacher often use and repeat, they can memorise the sentences the teacher frequently use without any impression of drilling. There is no sense, if this process is done randomly and irregularly. Taking on consideration Oxford's chart on page 18, only by listening and reacting to the teacher's instructions, the student is cooperating with a proficiency user of the target language.

It is therefore important to provide students with the language needed for routine classroom affairs, in order to establish the foreign language as the medium for organising learning activities. Not only with the instructions the teacher gives, but

also with the frequent questions and requests the students might feel necessary to ask, such as *What does this word mean in English, please? Could we listen to the tape once more, please? Could you speak slowly, please? Can I open the window?* etc. Nevertheless, the students' private conversations in class, if in English and do not disturb the lesson process, should be supported by the teachers.

It might be objected that the classroom situation can have some limitations. In real life, students need to satisfy a considerably wider variety of communicative needs, which arise from the events of everyday life and certainly cannot come to the topic in common language lessons. In fact, it is better to create partially artificial English environment in the class than none at all.

7 Types of class division and building pair and group tricks

Many variations of class division have been already described. In general, students can work individually, in pairs or in groups.

Individual work is obviously useful, but does not involve social interaction, which is mostly the main reason why people learn foreign languages – to learn to communicate, and student often soon lost the interest and concentration. While using frontal teaching, which in fact goes hand in hand with individual work, if the exercises always done around the class, the communication is, in an average class of 20 students, limited to one sentence to be said by one student (Brewster, 1992:67). Further, individual work does not motivate the student as much as pair or group work and the students might feel stressed and anxious of making mistakes.

Pair work seems to be very useful and suitable for teaching students to communicate, as the teacher is never able to give the students enough oral practice through whole class work, especially in more numerous classes. Moreover, cooperation with other peers highly motivates the students and lowers the stress in the class. According to Byrne, there are two main kinds of pair work: fixed pairs and flexible pairs (1987:34). In fixed pairs students always work with one partner, whereas in flexible pairs (Norman calls the latter ‘rotating pairs’), students keep changing partners. The latter might seem more practical for the students, as they have to understand different accents, but the former can deal with this problem, if every activity is practised with different partner. In general, it is recommended to put in pairs students of similar level of proficiency.

On the other hand, the students in any class are likely to vary in proficiency, and it should be possible to form groups of relatively ‘unequal’ partners (Lynch, 2004:115).

From this point of view, group work could be an obvious choice for mixed ability classes. Not only a maximum of students can be active and occupied, but also even less skilled students may be useful to their group and can bring in interesting and creative ideas, especially during brainstorming, which motivated them and give them impression of being essential for their group. Moreover, they can learn something from their more skilled students, which also works vice versa: more skilled students can slow down and learn to cooperate, to explain, to help etc. It is generally easier for the student to show that he/she does not know or understand something (Norman, 1986:8) and peer's explanation is often more efficient than the explanation from the teacher, because especially younger learners understand the problem in other way than the adults and are able to use limited simple vocabulary, which does not confuse their classmates as if the problem was explained by the teacher. Another important aspect of group work is the speed of working progress, which is individual and in this case, can be adapted to the students' needs. Although group work is flexible enough to allow different students to work on different tasks according to their individual abilities, the danger is that the class will break up 'into different factions', in other words, teacher has to keep control over the task, should always make a whole class feedback, and to limit competitiveness and support cooperation. It should not be forgotten that group work seems to be the best way of working in class, as it develops students' relationships and teaches them to deal with problems and conflicts.

Brumfit divides groups into two types: formal and informal; and advises that the two types should be kept distinct, because they fulfil different functions. The first is more or less permanent with defined roles within school over a long period or temporary, but with the function of performing specific tasks. The latter occurs primarily for social purposes whenever people interact in the class (1992:72). Since

language work is a preparation for informal rather than formal activities, informal groups should be formed in language lessons, even though they will change in normal life and cannot be regarded as permanent. To be more explicit, the social status of students should be put aside while lesson in progress.

According to Brewster, students should start to produce English as soon as possible, meaning in the first session (1992:28). To illustrate the situation, having the first lesson of the foreign language is similar to the first piano lesson: the student comes to learn to play, not to learn to listen to music, so it is necessary to let the student to touch the keyboard, which gives him/her pleasure and is highly motivating for further practicing. Therefore, pair and group work should be taught from the early beginning, as it is the only possibility for the students to use the target language in lessons. Nevertheless, from a psychological point of view, it is a good idea not to force things and to let all students start to contribute when they feel ready. As the students' personality differ, they will not all be ready at the same time.

Considering fluency and accuracy, pair work and group work give the students opportunity to practise both. In controlled pair work, when students are given a gap fill exercise or are to play a dialogue from a textbook, it is easy for the teacher to monitor their activity and check the result. Some activities are designed in a way that students are able to check the results themselves. It is more difficult to monitor accuracy in group work, but on the other hand, group work provides students with more possibilities for practicing their fluency than pair work (Byrne, 1987:10).

There are many techniques how to divide class in pairs or in groups. It is highly demanded the division to be done by the teacher and not by the students themselves. In fact, the students have to learn to work with everyone, not only to cooperate with their friends. If the students can choose who to work with, then it might happen

that some ‘outsiders’ are left, which decreases their motivation and self-confidence, too. Of course, the teacher can divide the class on his/her own by ordering to the students who to work with, but it is less problematic and more amusing for students to be divided by chance.

Maley and Duff propose several possibilities of division in pairs and groups (1982):

‘*Strings*’ – Student chooses a partner by holding a string of the end, while the whole bundle is covered by the teacher’s hand.

‘*Atom 3!*’ – The students move freely about the room to music, then the teacher stops the music unexpectedly and calls ‘Atom 3!’ (or 2 or 7) the number has to always be smaller the number of the students in the class. After it has been repeated several times, the teacher calls out the number needed for the following activity.

‘*Find your group*’ – Every student is given a card containing personal data about an imaginary person and data of their partner to find. This activity can be varied with other facts, i.e. pictures, geographical information, historical dates etc.

‘*Identikit*’ a set of pictures from magazines, corresponding to the intended number of groups, is cut into pieces, corresponding to the number of students in each group, and mixed up. Then everyone randomly picks up one piece and tries to find the other members of ‘their’ picture.

‘*I know what I like*’ – Each student writes on a slip of paper three things he or she likes very much and three things he or she dislikes very much. Then they circulate trying to find a partner who shares as many likes and dislikes as possible. The pairs may continue searching others who may share the same tastes. This activity leads to groups of non-uniform size.

In all activities of this type, it is necessary that the students talk to each other and do not just show each other their pictures or slips of paper.

8 Different types of communicative activities

Various class formations offer more varieties of different activities, but the most important condition of successful working in pairs or groups is the good organization of the activity. In other words, the teacher has to be aware of each step to be done and explain to the students exactly what to do. The simpler the task is, the more chance it has to success (Ur, 1990:14). If the activity is unprepared and the teacher relies on his/her improvisation, the students will be sooner or later confused, will not do the task and will switch into their native language. For this reason, the teacher must prepare these activities in advance and count on with possible questions and problems. While lesson in progress, the pre-activity and perfect explanation of the task, accompanied by suitable examples, are essential.

Littlewood distinguishes two main phases: pre-communicative activities and communicative activities themselves (1990:85). Pre-communicative activities involve isolate specific elements of knowledge or skill, which compose communicative ability, and provide the student with opportunities to practise them separately, such as different types of drill or question-answer practice. Further, these pre-activities can be divided into purely structural activities (i.e. mechanical drills or learning verb paradigms) and 'quasi-communicative' activities, which take account of communicative as well as of structural facts about the language (i.e. when students have to obtain information to complete a questionnaire and some possibilities are given). In communicative activities, the student has to use all knowledge and skills, obtained in pre-communicative activity, and he/she is therefore engaged in practising the total skill of communication. Here again, the communicative activities can be further divided into functional communicative activities, where the student has to perform a task by communicating the best he/she can and accuracy is demanded, and social interaction

activities, where the student fulfil his/her role in specific situations using appropriately to the target language, in this case fluency is required.

Littlewood's division seems close in meaning to Prodromou's, who distinguishes exercises as open or close-ended. Controlled close-ended activities, as already mentioned, support mainly accuracy and even mediocre students are able to check their work without the teacher's help. This of course does not mean that the teacher's monitoring is not valuable and necessary. These activities include drills, role-play, questionnaires, controlled conversation, gap-fill exercise or spotting differences in similar pictures and students are given possibility to choose the right answer.

On the other hand, open-ended activities support students' creativity. To this type belong conversation, personalised dialogues, discussion, problem-solving, narration, simulation of various life situations (original role-play), games, project work and drama activities. According to Prodromou, open-ended activities allow all types of learners to work on the same task, in their own way and at their own speed within the framework of the same lesson (1995:73). In fact, considering the reality that there are mixed ability students in every class, open-ended exercises appear to be the ideal way of teaching process. Moreover, especially young learners have great imagination and can find these activities very interesting, which leads again to language acquisition.

Closed-ended exercises may be done in fixed pairs or in flexible pairs, in which the whole class can be involved. Drills and questionnaires of the type '*Find someone who...*', '*Have you ever ...*' or '*Do you like...*' are in general very liked among students, as they can be active in their approach and use the language in real communication, moreover, on personalised level. It should be mentioned that usually language students are not aware of doing drills and, when the task well explained beforehand, have

impression to be successful in communication, which obviously motivates them and their self-confidence consequently grows. A lot of foreign language textbooks offer short dialogues and further propose their role-reading or, if learned by heart, role-play. Lynch describes whole class role-reading, when a script from the class's textbook was interpreted by nearly 45 students (1996:115). However, closed-ended exercises demand first of all accuracy in grammar and because of this fact, students often make mistakes.

Contrary to close-ended exercises, open-ended exercises stress fluency in communication and allow the student to be at least partly right. In fact, good feeling improve the ability of acquisition. All students, adults including, enjoy game-like activities. While enjoying a game, students can practise some grammatical features, vocabulary chunks, quarrel over a problem or just only speak during the game and with minimum of tension they can learn from each other (Ur, 1990:8). According to Kasíková, games can involve three basic functions: instrumental function (developing cognitive abilities and practising already learned skills), diagnostic function (serves to investigate student's problem or to make its diagnose) and existential (developing perceptive abilities, creativity, releases tension from classroom atmosphere and is often used as a way of solving relationship problems among students). Nowadays, the stress, while using a game, is put on production, aim and organisation of the students and the activity (Kasíková, 1997:62). It would be ideal to include in one language game all these function. There are numerous possibilities how to involve communicative games in language lessons and most students seem to like them.

Another frequently used activity is problem-solving, which not only develops students' accuracy in expression, but also gives practice in thinking in the foreign language (sifting through information, following instructions, reducing many words,

etc.) (Maley/Duff, 1991:3). Students can form images of themselves as fluent speakers and therefore, are encouraged to think in the target language. When this is achieved, much learning goes on automatically (Murphy, 1991:83).

The use of role-play has added a tremendous number of possibilities for communication practice (Ur, 1990:9). Students are no longer limited to the kind of language they use as ‘students’ in the classroom. They can become shopkeepers, doctors or spies. They can play different moods or social status, imagine they are in a different place, according to the communicative functions or purposes that are required. At one stroke, they do not have time to concentrate on language learning, but all the other aspects engage them so much that the learning process turns into subconscious, so role-play can have excellent results.

Most of already mentioned open-ended exercises can be recognised as drama techniques, which are nowadays continuously penetrating into all curricula subjects. According to Prodromou (1995:103) drama techniques fulfil the following conditions:

- They involve the students’ personalities and ideas.
- They are open ended.
- They encourage students to take risks, while recognising that shy students have the right to remain silent or withdrawn.
- They recognise the importance of self-esteem in all learners.
- They recognise that students have bodies as well as brains and that sitting still for long periods is bad for one’s mental and physical well-being.
- They assert that failure has no place in the mixed ability class.
- They try to make students both self-aware and aware of others.
- The teacher’s role is crucial, and though it carries widely, it is generally not at the centre of the classroom stage.

To sum up, considering that phases in language learning are:
input → practice → follow up (Norman, 1986:1), the teacher’s explanation and division into pairs or groups at the beginning of the lesson may be understood as the input, pre-communicative activity limited to closed-ended exercises (i.e. drills or role-reading)

as the practice and as the follow up, open-ended exercises supporting students' creativity and giving them impression to be at least partly successful in communication.

9 Peer and Teacher Correction, Assessment

It is very disputable what sort of mistakes should be in communicative activities corrected, nevertheless, it should be kept on mind that mistakes are natural and frequent. Some mistakes may be already eliminated during the pre-communicative activities. The explanation beforehand that people learn by mistakes and that everyone in the class is apt to make mistakes would be valuable, because the shy students may become more willing to join conversation. As the emphasis in communicative activities themselves is on practising the process of speaking, unnoticed errors are an inevitable price to pay for the more intensive and individualised practice that become possible when students perform in pairs or groups (Littlewood, 1981:54). Therefore, it is essential to create an atmosphere, in which errors can be accepted as a necessary step in the learning process (Prodromou, 1995:21). According to Lynch, cooperative atmosphere may lower the stress on making mistakes (1996:113). Errors are tolerated and seen as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:129).

In fact, it is impossible for the teacher to correct all mistakes, even if the teacher is a native speaker. Teachers are not able while students working in pairs or groups to check everyone (Byrne, 1987:33). Many teachers seem obsessed with eliminating mistakes and correct their students constantly (Prodromou, 1995:21). In addition, overcorrection may lead to overwhelming of the students with information. Murphy describes his own experience: "I had wanted to help him so much that I was correcting every little thing he did and giving him so much information that his brain was on overload" (1996:45). If mistakes are corrected too often, it might also lower students' interest in the language; they may become inhibited and unable to continue activity. Moreover, the shy students may become afraid of speaking. Prodromou calls this anxiety of producing mistakes and looking foolish in the eyes of the classmates

‘errorphobia’ (1995:21). Moreover, too frequent interruption disturbs communication and any activity lost its original sense.

“We don’t correct every mistake in order not to interrupt the flow of communication and not to discourage our students. They are already very shy and not eager to speak English in the class. We have this concept of ‘good mistake’. I tell them mistakes are natural outcomes of learning and sometimes help us learn better.”(Comment by a Turkish EFL teacher, Eveyik, 2003)

However, there are ways of correcting which can be encouraging and not so stressful for the students. Oxford admit that self-monitoring is important for speaking, too, but students should not become obsessed with correcting every speech difficulty, because this would kill communication (1990:161). Students may correct each other and teach each other some non-linguistic material as well (Ur, 1990:8).

“We encourage peer correction. That makes them to listen to their friends better and learn better.” (Comment by a Turkish EFL teacher, Eveyik, 2003)

Lynch also points out as the most effective and preferable self-correction and peer-correction (1996:4). Further, he enumerates the reasons for getting learner to take on the role of corrector and adviser (1996:118):

- It increases students’ speaking opportunities.
- It develops a conscious focus on language form.
- It encourages students to express their own judgements on language points.
- It is an acknowledgement that different individuals know more about specific areas than others.
- It provides an opportunity for real communication.

Considering the fact that peer-correction increases students’ speaking opportunities and may lead to real communication, their success is determined as much by their fluency as it is by their accuracy (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:129), similar to the real life. Moreover, Lynch mentions that simple peer correction in pair or groups work and negotiating

meaning involve asking for clarification (1996:5), which has been already mentioned as one of six specific strategies involved in social strategies in Oxford's taxonomy.

On the other hand, if the teacher decides not to correct all errors that he/she observes, to many teachers, it might appear to conflict with their pedagogical role, which has traditionally required them to evaluate all student's performance according to clearly defined criteria.

In general, it is preferable that the teacher waits until the students finish a conversational exchange. Dobson admits that the teacher should not interrupt the flow of conversation with constant minor correction, but should take notes during the performance and go over these afterwards, pointing out the correct forms that should have been used (1992:12).

Lynch points out that correction does not have to be the only form of negative feedback and proposes different types of feedback as shown in the following chart (1996:115):

	<i>Implicit</i>	<i>Explicit</i>
<i>Positive</i>	Clues showing the listener understands	Confirmation (approval)
<i>Negative</i>	Signals that repair is necessary	Correction (disapproval)

Further, Lynch claims that implicit feedback is more effective than explicit. In fact, implicit feedback does not only seem to happen in more friendly way to the students, but also gives them opportunity for further communication and discussion, as it is not so direct. Unfortunately, it has to be mentioned that in monolingual classes, students always prefer to switch into their native language.

While speaking about correction, the question of assessment may arise. It is obvious that social strategies do not only involve language learning, but also communication and cooperation, which are very important for our whole life, as already

mentioned several times. Therefore, as well as the language, other social abilities should be evaluated. However, it is obvious that only children should be evaluated, not adults.

Kasíková proposes various types of cooperation in group and pair work assessment (2005):

- The whole group/pair unit cooperation may be assessed.
- Individual roles of members, their performance and support to the group/pair.
- Continuous and summative assessment of the group/pair work and progress.

Further, she admits that self-assessment may improve efficiency of groups/pairs, if the students have possibility to think about the work process of their group, efficiency of each group member, self-evaluation of themselves as individual units of the group or to be evaluated by another group. Prodromou points out that some students might be particularly interested to compare student and teacher assessments, if the task is evaluated both by students and the teacher as well (1995:15) and proposes following points for discussion after pair and group work to elicit the students' opinion of the rationale behind class activities and their effectiveness, in order to encourage cooperation and understanding amongst them:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- 1) The task was useful.
- 2) The questions were easy.
- 3) The instructions were clear.
- 4) We made a lot of mistakes.
- 5) The activity was a waste of time.
- 6) It gave us the chance to use English.
- 7) The teacher did not have to do anything during the activity.

In general, most researchers agree that a good learner is an independent learner and the communicative activity mentioned above leads to students' independence as they have possibility to evaluate the task significance and how much did they participate on the task.

Finally, even though that the students' ability to cooperate and to be able to lead conversation is also evaluated in English Cambridge examinations, while learning a foreign language they should be aware of the reason why they learn it. It is communication and it goes hand in hand with cooperation.

10 Negative features of pair work and group work

Teachers often complain about numerous negative features of communicative activities in pair or group work and say that these reasons prevent them from using communicative activities in pairs or groups. In fact, the number of negative features is remarkably smaller than its positives.

Byrne provides a list of the problems that teacher usually voice concerning pair and group work. The following is a summary of these complains (1987:33 and 77):

- The students make too much noise.
- Students make mistakes and I will not be able to correct them.
- Students do not work properly.
- Students expect the teacher to teach them.
- There are too many students in the class.
- I cannot move the desks in the classroom.
- It takes up a lot of time.
- The students will not talk in English.
- The best students will do all the work.
- How do I know if the students are learning anything?

Every communication involves some kind of noise. Even though it is not possible to remove it totally, it may be at least reduced, if the communication participants are aware of its origin. According to DeVito, there are three types of noise and he divides them into the following categories: physical (when disturbed by people speaking around us), psychological (prejudice, difficulty to concentrate) and semantic (not able to understand the meaning) (2001:27). Therefore, noise during a communicative activity may also have positive influence on the learning, because the students have opportunity to learn to cope with it. Norman admits that the noise level or hum of activity may be disturbing at first, but one soon grows accustomed to it and it also reflects 'real life' in, for example a restaurant or shop, in a street or at a party (1986:13).

“Its management in such crowded classes is not easy at all! When everyone starts talking at the same time, we (English teachers) start getting complains from other teachers in nearby classrooms. Especially, teachers of mathematics, history, I mean, those who teach other courses. They use more traditional methods of teaching and cannot understand how English classes can be that noisy!”
(Comment by a Turkish EFL teacher, Eveyik, 2003)

When the noise level oversteps the limit, Byrne advises to stop the activity and ask the students to start again, but more quietly (1987:3). Nevertheless, it is obvious that language students should get used to noise, as it forms common background of the daily communication, and learn to be able to find the way to deal with it. Further, Byrne mentions that the noise certainly does not bother the students themselves if they are busy practicing and in any case they can hear on another quite easily.

Another rather frequent feature of communication in pairs and groups is the usage by the mother tongue in monolingual classes. Nolasco admits that in some cases the problem of mother tongue is so bad that teachers abandon pair and group work altogether, however, it is not inevitable and monolingual classes may work in English only, when a reasonable contract has been done (1988:54). According to David Kluge, an English language teacher, students fall into the native language, because they do not have the language to do the task in the target language, so it is important to give them the language they need to do that task as well as the team-building social skills (Kluge:1997). Dobson points out that any use of mother tongue during a communicative activity is a waste of the valuable time students need for practice in English and they must be speedily returned to English (1992:14). The first step to get students to accept only English use is to accept the fact that it is valuable to work in English. However, once verbal agreement has been obtained, it is possible to make a ‘contract’ so that the students take on the responsibility for maintaining an ‘English only’ rule in the classroom (Dobson, 1992:54).

Nevertheless, even the teacher may head the difficulty to use the mother tongue of the students, because of lack of patience or for another reason. As already mentioned, when the teacher uses the target language for routine instructions, the student may learn a lot from it. On the other hand, the instructions are often more difficult than the task itself and in this case even the teacher can use mother tongue. Particularly at lower levels, mother tongue may be very useful for the context explanation. Therefore occasional use of the student's native language for explanation of new grammar and vocabulary can be beneficial (Dobson, 1992:4). To sum up, any strategy that enables the whole class to work together is useful and the use of mother tongue may be an advantage, not a distraction, if it involves all students in the lesson, avoids frustrating misunderstandings, and encourages collaboration.

The problem of mistakes has been already treated in chapter 10. The teachers should always keep in mind that mistakes are natural and that they are not able to correct all their students' mistakes. In fact, a considerably large amount of mistakes may be prevented when excellent preparation and pre-activity is done. Byrne recommends to write relevant material on the board and to practise the model several times. On the other hand, some teachers feel safer while they keep constant correcting, because it is an area in which they have authority and the students are vulnerable. This is probably particularly true about the large mixed ability classes, where teachers often feel insecure about discipline and control (Prodromou, 1995:21).

Discipline inside the classroom is another often mentioned problem.

"...teachers see the problems caused by group activities as a threat to their authority. They feel like they are loosing control of the class and instantly switch back to more traditional activities. I believe this has to do with their personality, their educational attitudes or even maybe with their past experience as a learner." (Comment by a Turkish EFL teacher on his/her colleagues, Eveyik, 2003)

Kluge quotes the following misconception (1997): “Gifted students end up doing all the work while lazy students get a free ride. The slower students will hold them back.” This situation may be prevented either if the class is divided into balanced proficiency pairs or groups, or if roles to students are defined (i.e. the stronger students are given the responsibility to teach or explain the task to their weaker classmates. Moreover, this role division leads to cooperation. DeVito points out that if some students try to be leaders of their group or pair, do not support the communication inside the unit, they are never able to listen to others and become, in fact, ‘killers’ of communication (2001:158). In large classes some students often finish earlier than the others, for this case Nolasco advises the teachers to keep always something up in the sleeve and he adds the Turkish proverb ‘*Idle men tempt the devil.*’ (1988:112)

Teachers also often complain about sitting order, but it is not necessary anymore for teachers to stand in front of the class. They can move freely around the class and monitor students communication, which is often more difficult and tiring, but more effective for students, than the frontal method of teaching.

“Considering the sitting orders of our students, I can say that pair work activities are much easier, but still it is very difficult to monitor each pair.”

(Comment by a Turkish EFL teacher, Eveyik, 2003)

Moreover, the organization and the preparation of the speaking activity are often very complicated and time consuming.

“Communicative language teaching demands a lot from teachers. Teachers should be very creative, spend extra time to prepare supplementary teaching materials, and sometimes should pay for the photocopies themselves, because there is no copy machine in most schools. Besides, most of the teachers in public schools are suffering from economic problems and being a communicative teacher is the last thing in their mind!” (Comment by a Turkish EFL teacher, Eveyik, 2003)

Considering the last quotation, it has to be admitted that in most Czech schools the situation is not so poor and the success of the pair and group work during speaking activities depends highly on the teacher's personality and students' will to cooperate.

11 Positive features of pair work and group work

To end up the theoretical part of this thesis, the advantages of social strategies used in foreign language lessons, even though sometimes obvious, should be enumerated.

First of all, during communication in pairs or small groups all students may be active (Kasíková, 1997:19; Byrne, 1987:31; Norman, 1986:8), despite the large number of students in a class. It is speaker driven (Edge, 1992:6), so all students have possibility to speak which is considerably more effective and frequent than while frontal teaching is employed. There is more opportunity for the students to help each other instead of sitting alone struggling to understand (Norman, 1986:8) and it is generally easier to show that you do not know or do not understand something in a smaller group than in a large one.

Also, students are encouraged to use and practise functions and forms. They can pay attention to particular lexical items, language structures and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks (Richards/Rodgers, 2001:193). It means that these activities always have the aim to practise a particular language problem either a grammatical, lexical, and phonetic or their combinations. In addition, any strategies, social the most, may be involved.

Further, there is maximum cooperation and communication between students (Norman, 1986:9) and students learn actively to communicate (Kasíková, 1997:19). Communicative activities foster cooperation rather than competition, develop critical thinking skills and communicative competence through socially structured interactions activities, these can be regarded as the overall objectives (Richards/Rodgers, 2001:195). Students learn through expression (Edge, 1992:8), which drives them more active. Moreover, the conversation among students is more natural and relaxed

than in the frontal teaching (Kasíková, 1997:19). They can face and talk directly to one another, so it is much closer to the way we use language outside the classroom (Byrne, 1987:31) Also, communication teach them to listen carefully to others (Edge, 1992:1).

Communicative activities enhance students' motivation and reduce their stress, also, create a positive affective classroom climate (Richards/Rodgers, 2001:193). In other words, communicative activities in pairs or small groups give the students freedom from anxiety and tension, which leads to a relaxed atmosphere (Norman, 1986:9) They become more motivated and interested in the task and further, more self-confident and successful (Kasíková,1997:19). They become aware of their own strengths and skills and they learn to appreciate the strengths and skills of others (Edge, 1992:1). Students learn to be responsible for their work, to plan it and to be more independent. They are not so stressed by the fast progress of their classmates and can work according to their own needs and speed (Kasíková, 1997:19). When the pair gets a chance to work independently: this is good for motivation and good for preparation for group work, when the students will have to take a lot of responsibility (Byrne, 1987:31) Also, while social strategies engaged, they can compare their ways of work and their task results in the group (Kasíková, 1997:19).

To sum up the advantages of communication in pairs or groups for the students, this kind of activities provide opportunities for them to develop successful learning and communication strategies (Richards/Rodgers, 2001:193).

On the other hand, communicative activities help the teacher to avoid stereotypical techniques and methods in the lessons (Kasíková, 1997:19). It means, pair work and group work provide some variety during the lesson. According to Byrne, two or three short activities are a good way of breaking up the lesson (1987:31). Also,

teachers have possibility to work with weaker students or with students with special needs (Kasíková, 1997:19).

All in all, the communicative activities in pairs or small groups make the foreign language lessons more fresh either for the students or for the teachers and create opportunities to participate on the process actively, which brings merits to everyone.

12 Practical part

12.1 Research method and research sample

The main aim of this research was to propose a complex view on the social strategies in foreign language teaching in the Czech Republic, more precisely, to find out the main reasons why these students learn foreign languages and their attitudes towards social strategies, to compare the differences in social strategies before and after the Velvet Revolution and to compare the students' and teachers' points of view on 'negative features' of social strategies.

Before the research was carried out, a pre-research was done. Some sample questionnaires were distributed to the students in one language course, which lead to more precise formulations of questions in the final version. Concerning the questionnaire for teachers, the pre-research was qualitative in the form of interview. As it was done only among my fellow students, its results were very surprising and motivated me to make the questions in the final version open-ended. In fact, in this pre-research phase I found out that some of my fellows often do not know the various forms of pair work or they do not use it because of its negatives, mostly frequent mistakes which the students, according to these teachers, get used to produce.

The final research was held in December 2006. 151 questionnaires were handed in to two groups of responders. Both versions of the questionnaires were in Czech and are attached in the annexes at the end of this thesis.

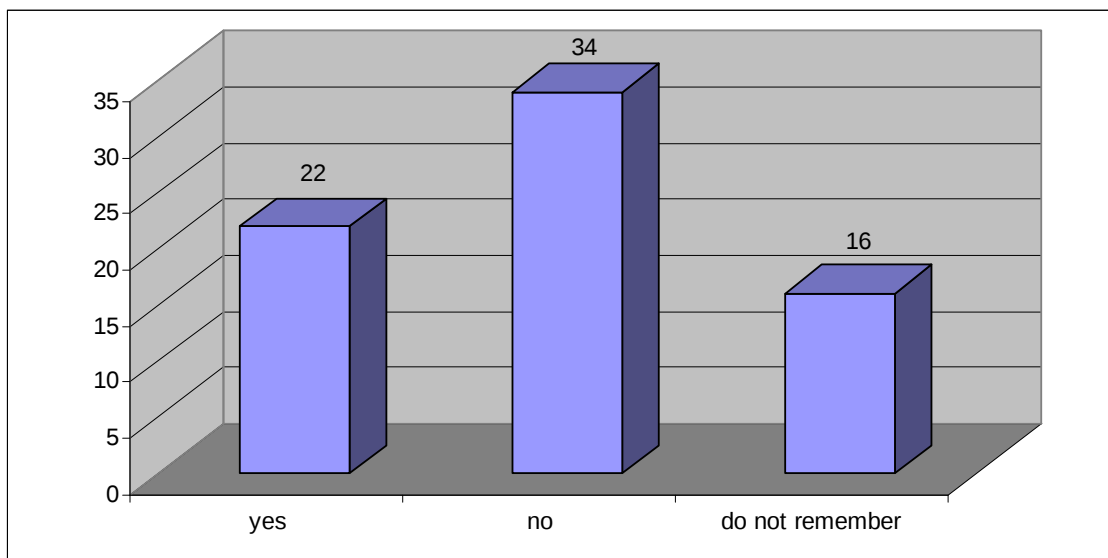
First group of responders consisted of foreign language students, who were frequenting a course at a language school of a foreign language. Most of them learned English; however, there were at least three students of French and two of German. Also, these students were born in 1980 or earlier, so that some changes in social strategies usage before and after the Velvet Revolution could be proved. In fact, it turned to be

very difficult to find language students of this particular age group, as the most of students at language schools were born between 1981 and 1985. The final number of responders – students, born in 1980 or earlier was 72, even though most of them were very young, in other words, born between 1977 and 1980. There were 12 closed questions in this questionnaire.

Second group was formed by English language teachers studying at our faculty to increase their qualification from basic school to secondary school teachers. So, it should be kept in mind that these teachers were aware of all didactical principles, which can be use in English language teaching. The number of these responders was 79. However, five of them had to be taken out, three because of illogical answers and two because of unsuitable age of their students. These 74 questionnaires were further divided into four categories according to the age of the students the teacher were teaching. In the first category there were only 5 teachers and they were teaching the foreign language at primary school. Second group was teaching at basic school or lower level of secondary school, third group at upper-secondary level and the fourth group at language schools, mainly the adult students. There were 14 mostly open-ended questions in this questionnaire, so that some fresh ideas and inspiration could be obtained.

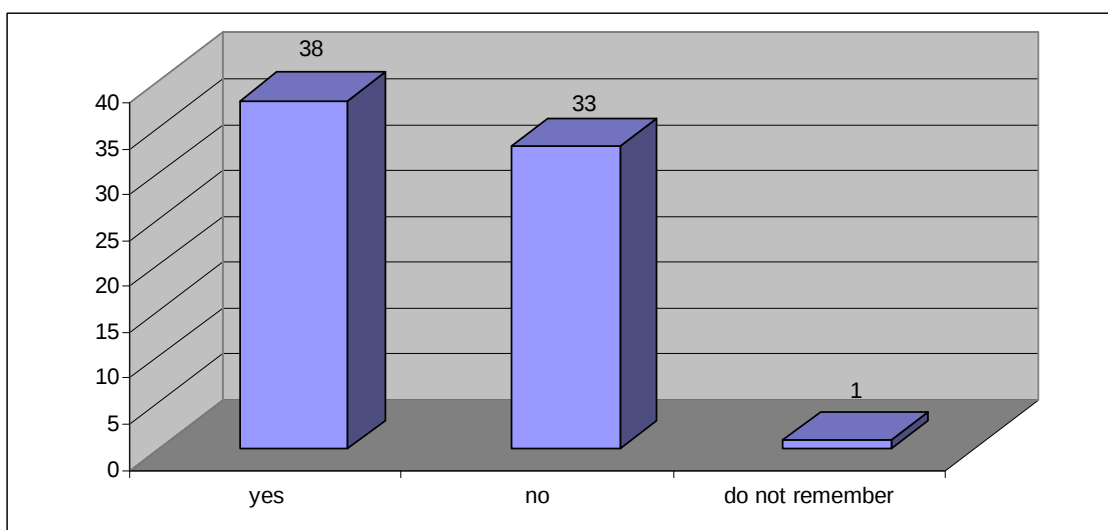
12.2 Analysis of the result

All students were asked if they worked in pairs or groups at basic school.



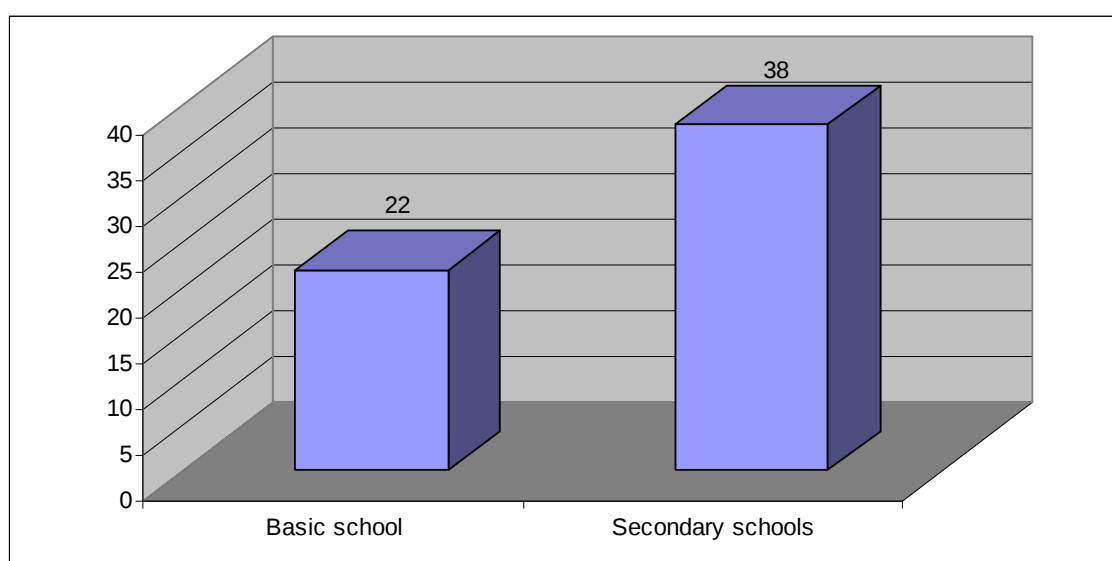
34 out of 72 students answered 'no'. In fact, as all were born in 1980 or earlier, it means that they studied at basic school before the Velvet Revolution and it could be presumed that before the Revolution the social strategies in foreign language lessons were not frequent.

Then they were asked the same question, but this time about the secondary school.



This time the students, who claimed that they remember pair or group work in foreign language lesson, were more numerous. As most of the responders were born between 1977 and 1980, and the Revolution was in 1989, it is obvious that they were studying at secondary already after the Revolution, when the boom of English and more progressive methods was marked.

In the following chart the positive answers from the two questions are put together, so that the increase is more evident.



Further the teachers were asked how often they use different social strategies. They were given five possibilities of frequency: very often – often – sometimes – from time to time – rarely or never. It should be also mentioned that ‘often was not defined, but considering the line of possibilities, the responders could write down the frequency. In the brackets on top of each of the four groups’ column, there is the age of the students.

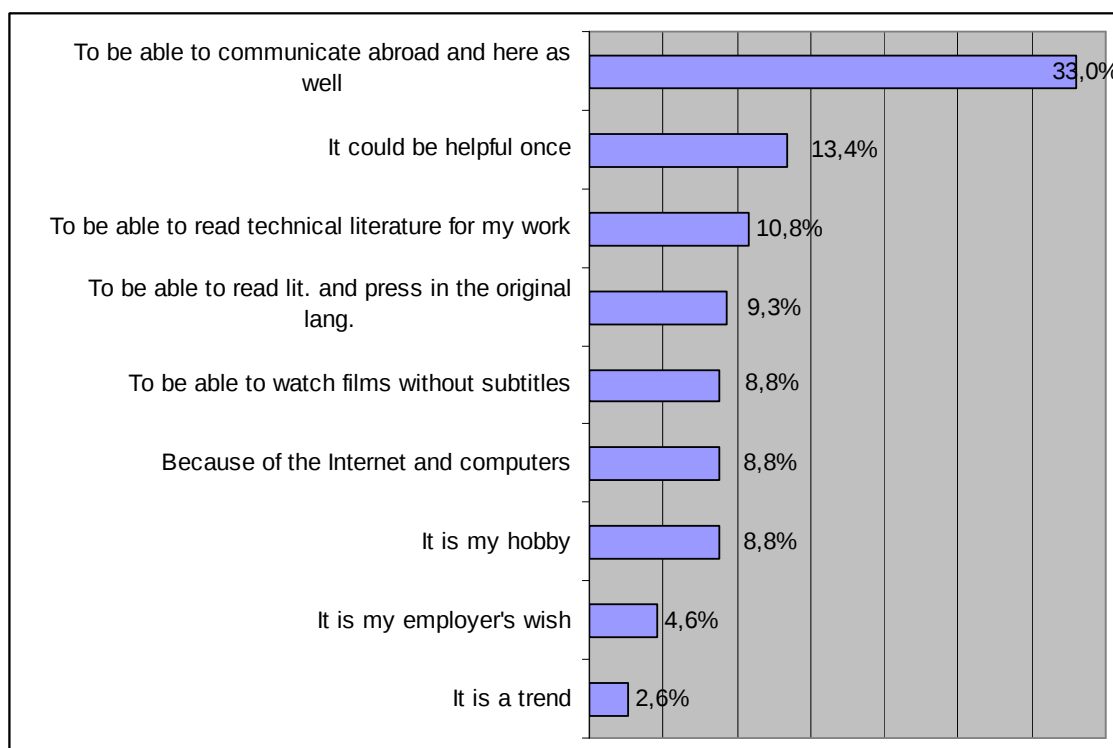
Frontal teaching	1. (6-15)	2.(11-15)	3.(16-19)	4.(20-100)	all	
very often	0	8	8	3	19	25,7%
often	2	11	8	7	28	37,8%
sometimes	1	4	5	4	14	18,9%
from time to time	1	1	4	3	9	12,2%
rarely or never	1	0	1	2	4	5,4%
all	5	24	26	19	74	100,0%
Individual work						
very often	0	2	1	3	6	8,1%
often	2	15	14	7	38	51,4%
sometimes	1	7	7	7	22	29,7%
from time to time	2	0	3	2	7	9,5%
rarely or never	0	0	1	0	1	1,4%
all	5	24	26	19	74	100,0%

Pair work	1. (6-15)	2.(11-15)	3.(16-19)	4.(20-100)	all	
very often	1	5	12	8	26	35,1%
often	1	16	8	6	31	41,9%
sometimes	3	2	5	5	15	20,3%
from time to time	0	1	0	0	1	1,4%
rarely or never	0	0	1	0	1	1,4%
all	5	24	26	19	74	100,0%
Small groups						
very often	2	4	10	3	19	25,7%
often	0	9	5	7	21	28,4%
sometimes	1	6	5	5	17	23,0%
from time to time	2	5	5	2	14	18,9%
rarely or never	0	0	1	2	3	4,1%
all	5	24	26	19	74	100,0%
Big groups						
very often	0	1	1	0	2	2,7%
often	1	1	1	0	3	4,1%
sometimes	0	3	2	3	8	10,8%
from time to time	1	5	8	3	17	23,0%
rarely or never	3	14	14	13	44	59,5%
all	5	24	26	19	74	100,0%

Individual work is rather frequent and frontal teaching is in general used very often, in other words, more than half responders answered that they use frontal teaching often or very often, whereas more than half answered that they use individual work often or sometimes. In this table, the division into four groups is done only for illustration, but as the number of responders teaching at primary school is very low no generalisation may be done. It may be assumed that pair work and work in small groups is frequent and

though favourite among the teachers. On the other hand, 60% do not use work in big groups at all.

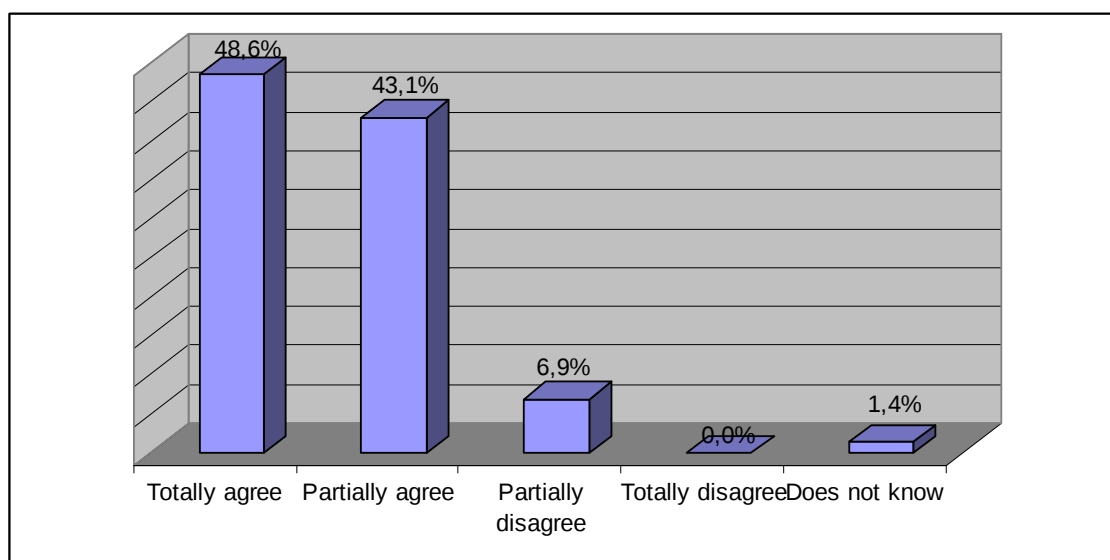
It is essential for the teacher to know the reason why are his/her students, especially the adults, learning foreign languages, so that the teacher could make the lessons appropriate to their expectations, if possible. In fact, according to Crystal, English has become the chief lingua franca of the Internet (2003:117), which could propose the presumption that it is the main reason of English language learning tendencies. So, the students were asked for their reasons. “*Why do you learn a foreign language?*” They could tick four answers maximum and write down and other reasons that were not mentioned. Some of the interesting different reasons were: *because of my children; I don’t want to forget what I have already learned; a good way of relaxation; my employer doesn’t want it yet, but will; it’s important to keep my brain fit.* However, communication appeared the most important to all of them:



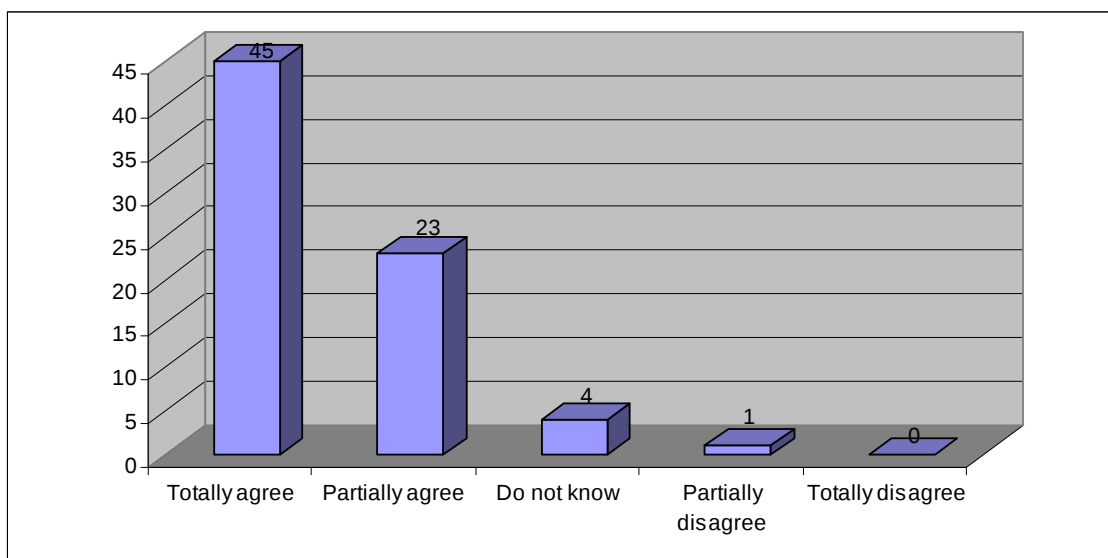
If the communication is so important to the students, it means that it should be involved in the lessons, and from the theoretical part of this thesis, it is obvious that

the best way is to use pair or group work. In other words, social strategies should be trained in the lesson and the student should not wait until there is occasion to speak to a native.

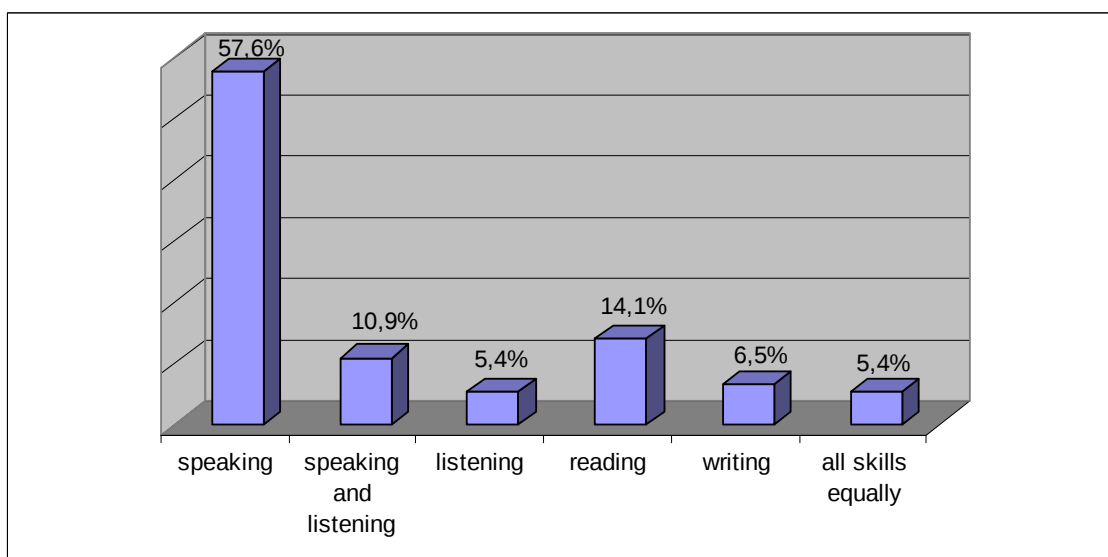
The students were asked the following question: *“Do you think that conversation in pairs could improve your ability to communicate in the target language?”* As showed in the following chart 92% think that it could.



The pair and group may have influence not only on the language development itself, but also on the whole student's personality. Even 68 teachers agreed, either totally or partially, that the communication between students may have positive influence outside the classroom:



Following question was pointed to the teachers, but its results are disputable. They were asked: *“Which skills do you practise in your lessons the most?”* Most of them answered more than one possibility, but ‘speaking’ seems absolutely the most common.

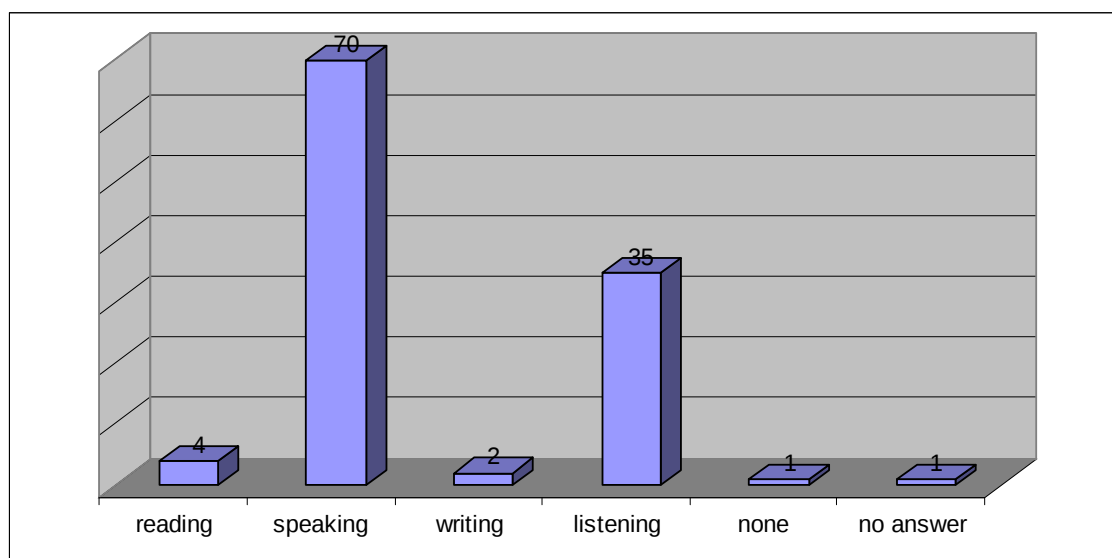


The following table shows the results on the different school levels.

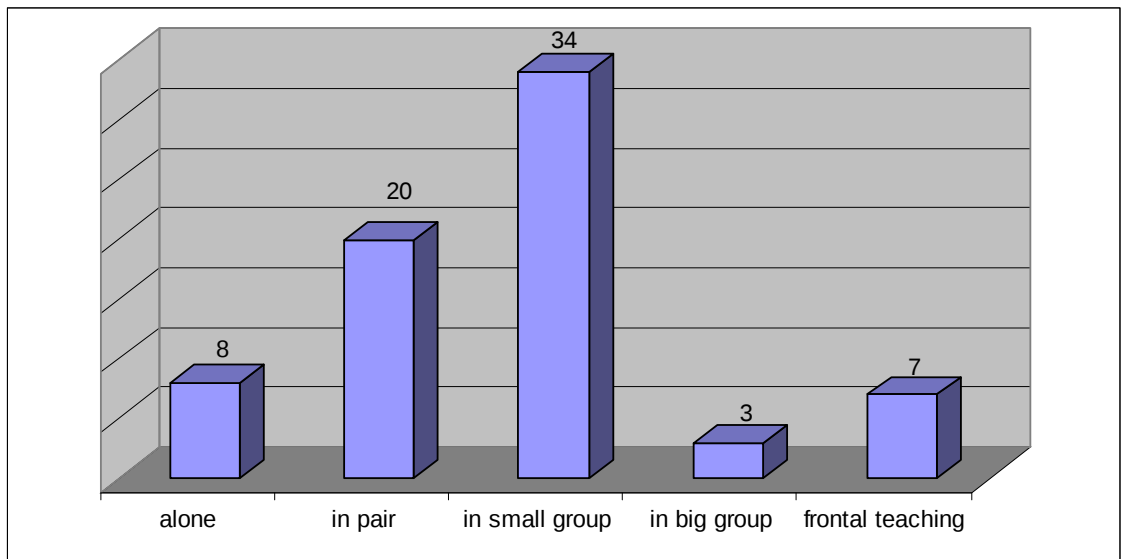
	1.(6-15)	2.(11-15)	3.(16-19)	4.(20-100)	all	
speaking	2	20	15	16	53	57,6%
speaking and listening	2	3	4	1	10	10,9%
listening	0	1	4	0	5	5,4%
reading	0	7	4	2	13	14,1%
writing	0	5	1	0	6	6,5%
all skills equally	1	0	2	2	5	5,4%
all	5	36	30	21	92	100,0%

Considering the frequency of the frontal teaching and individual work, it seems highly improbable that practising the speaking could be practised so often. Moreover, speaking goes hand in hand with listening, which some responders completely forgot. In fact, it was also my fault, because the question should not have been asked, as the teachers in general are advised to practise all skills equally.

The same may be said about the question: *“Which of the language skills do you think you train the most while working in pairs?”*, which was given to the students.

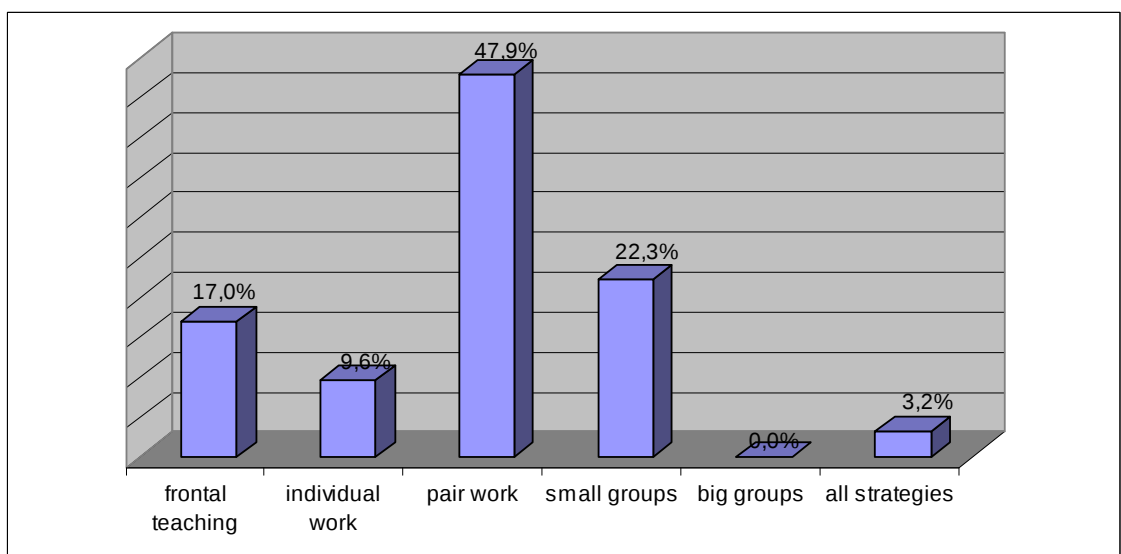


Considering that communication is in general the main reason why people learn foreign languages, it was very interesting to ask them which of the following class formation they prefer in language lessons.



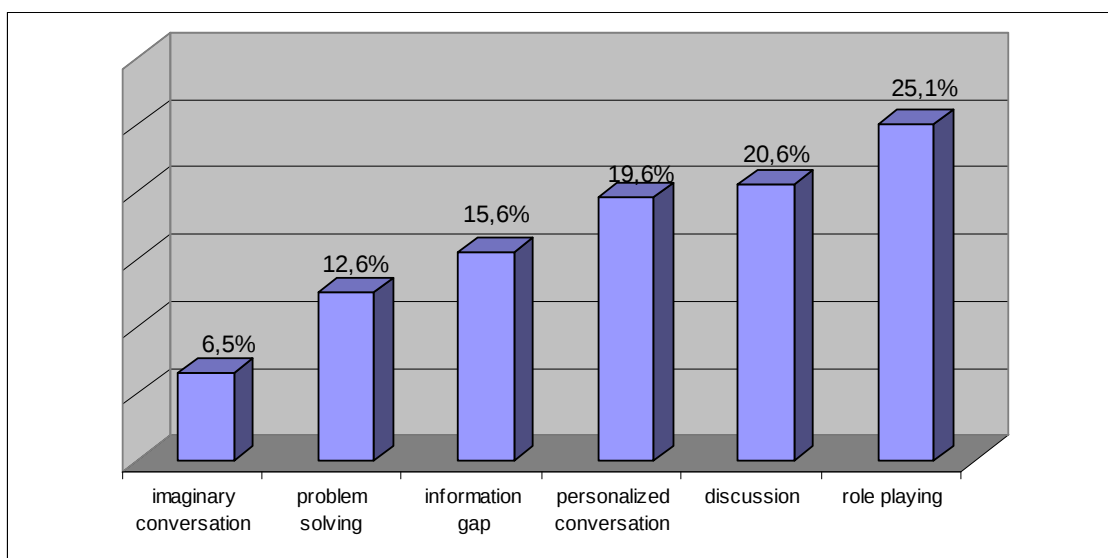
8 people answered they prefer working alone and a few of them admitted afterwards in personal contact with me that the reason are their partners, who often do not understand them and have considerably lower level of language than they have. Frontal teaching is preferred by 7 students, which might mean, as Byrne mentioned, that they expect the teacher to teach them. Still 54 students are favourable to pair and small group work.

Nevertheless, the same question was given to the teachers. Even though it might seem similar to question no.2, but this time the objective was the preference, not the frequency.



As the question was partly open-ended, the teachers could write down why they like the particular ways of class work. Concerning pair and group work, the teachers appreciated all advantages mentioned in chapter 12. The teachers, who chose frontal teaching, defended it as a good and fast method, which is absolutely suitable for grammar explanations.

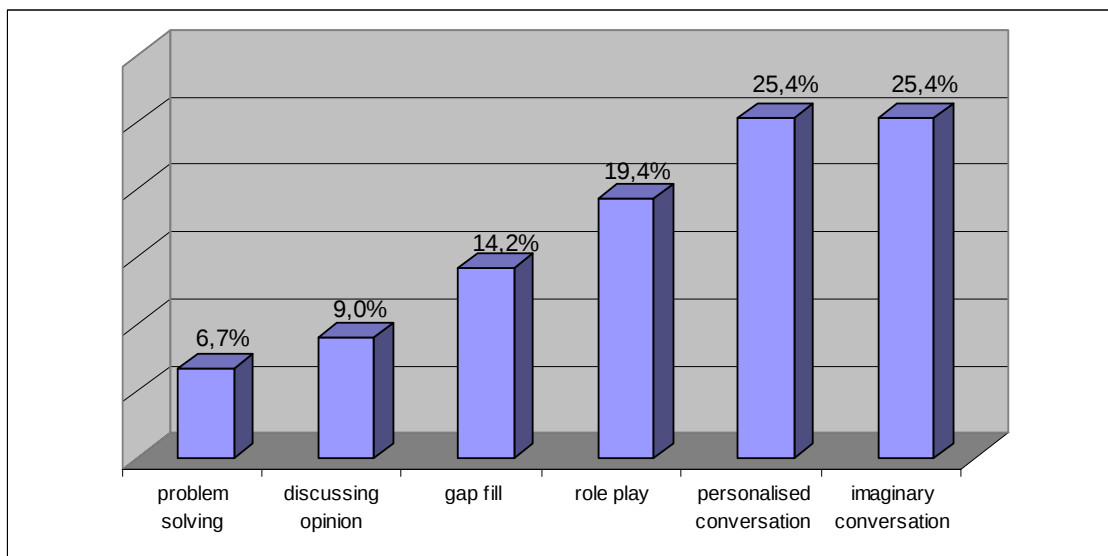
The possibilities of communicative activities are numerous. However, most foreign language books propose rather limited and constantly repeating exercises such as role-play, discussion or gap-fill. The teachers were given six possibilities and had to choose one to three they preferred, also one line was left for their suggestions.



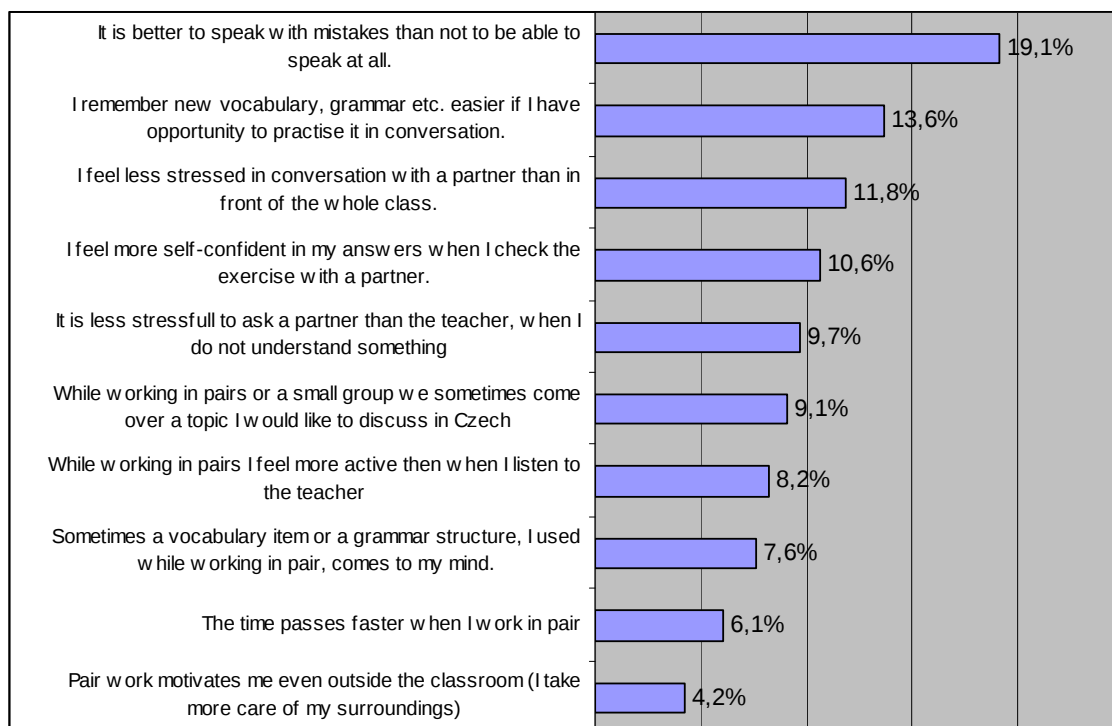
Especially on the primary level they mentioned project, but they complained about the lack of time for more speaking activities. At upper secondary level, the teachers also practise speaking parts of PET and KET tests. Surprisingly, at language schools the teachers, who teach adults, mentioned drama activities.

The students were asked the same question and could choose only two activities. Nevertheless, the results considerably differed from the teachers' preferences. The least favourite activity for teachers was the imaginary conversation, whereas it became the favourite for the students. Imaginary conversation is a normal conversation, but does

not push the student to tell partner the truth. This fact is quite important, because they may not feel comfortable to speak about the reality i.e. when the student is about to get divorced or does not want to speak about his/her health problems. As well-liked students' activity as the imaginary conversation was personalised conversation, but only 20% of the teachers like it.



In the following question, the students could tick unlimited number of answers, 64 out of 72 think that it is better to communicate with mistakes than not to be able to speak at all. The statements prove some of the positive aspects already mentioned in chapter 11.



Concerning the negative features, as might have been supposed, most teachers mentioned those written in chapter 11. So, more precise questions were incorporated in the questionnaire. It was very pleasant when a few teachers wrote down that pair and group work have no negatives.

The first possible answer was put in, because in the pre-research interview three of my fellow students mentioned it as the reason why they do not use pair and group work. However, it obtained zero result, even though 74 teachers responded.

What do you think about the mistakes your students make while working in pairs?	
They make mistakes too often and so I do not let them to work in pairs	0,0%
Everyone makes mistakes, it's normal. I try not to interrupt them	42,2%
I note my students's mistakes and later explain to whole class	57,8%

In general, only few teachers mind the noise:

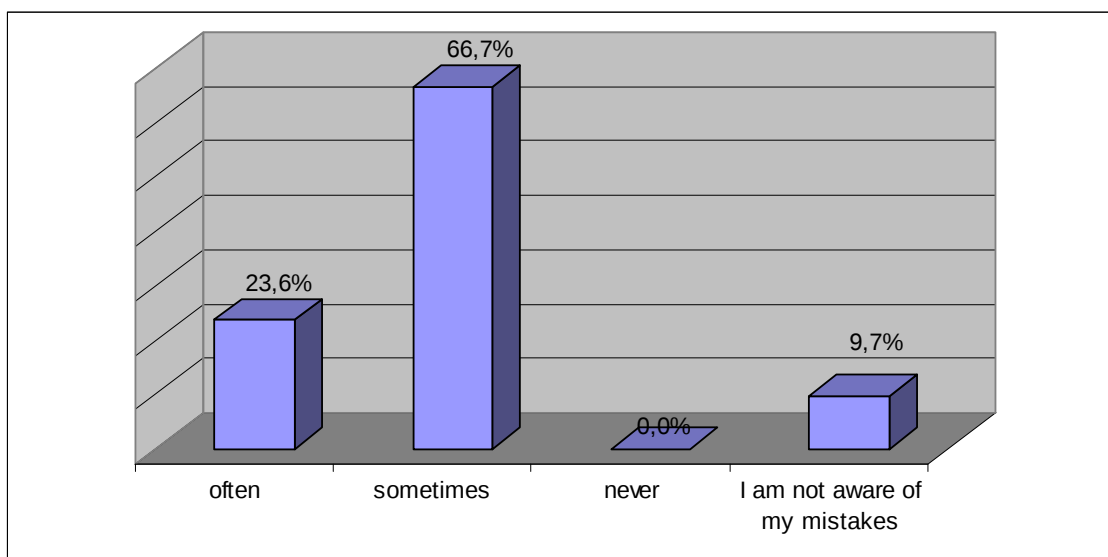
Do you consider noise in the classroom while the students are working in groups or pairs being negative?	
yes	6,8%
no	83,8%
sometimes	2,7%
do not know	6,8%

Do you mind if your students slip sometimes into their native language?	
yes	45,8%
sometimes	5,6%
no	45,8%
I do not care	2,8%

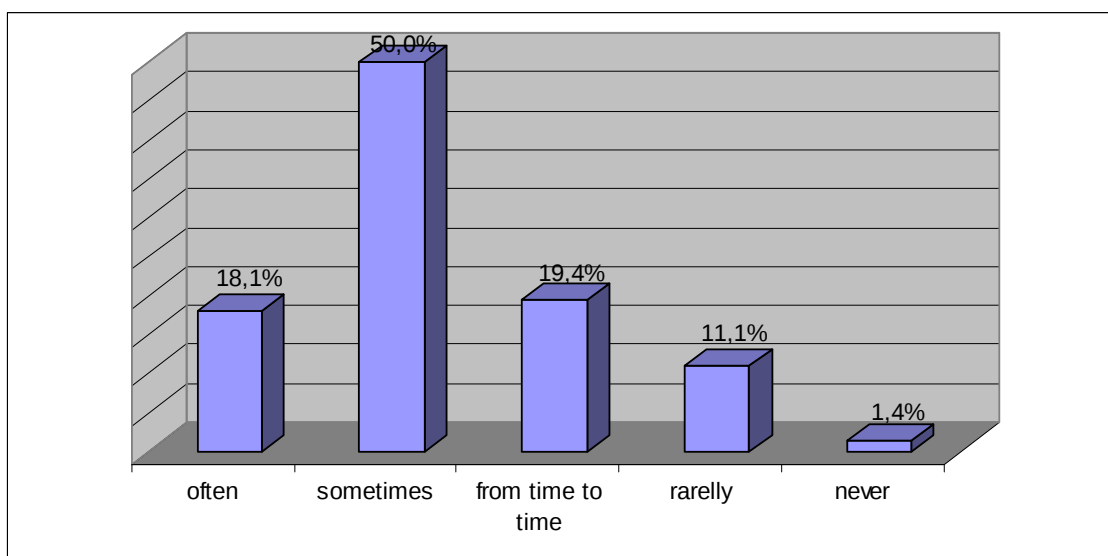
Some teachers note down to these question that if the native language is used only sometimes, they do not mind. Perhaps, 'sometimes' should have been defined.

The students' comments on the negative features may be seen in the following charts:

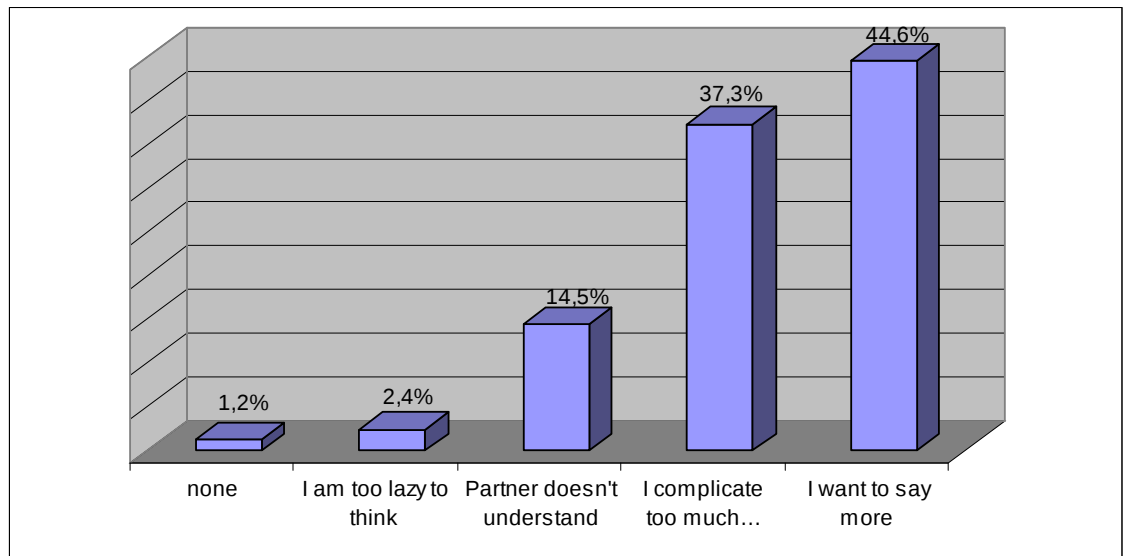
“When working in a pair I correct myself:”



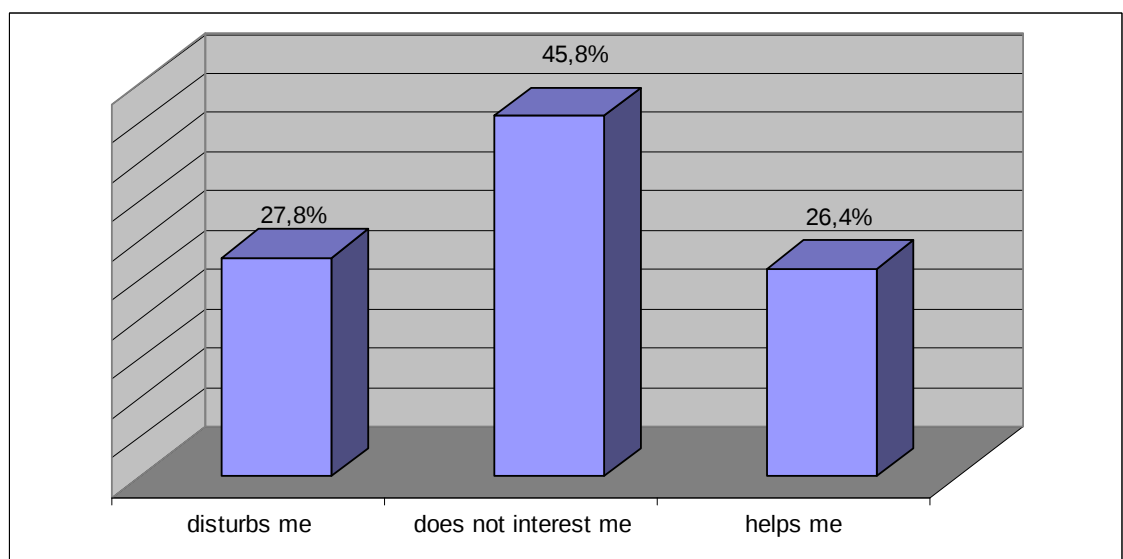
“While working in a pair I slip into my language:”



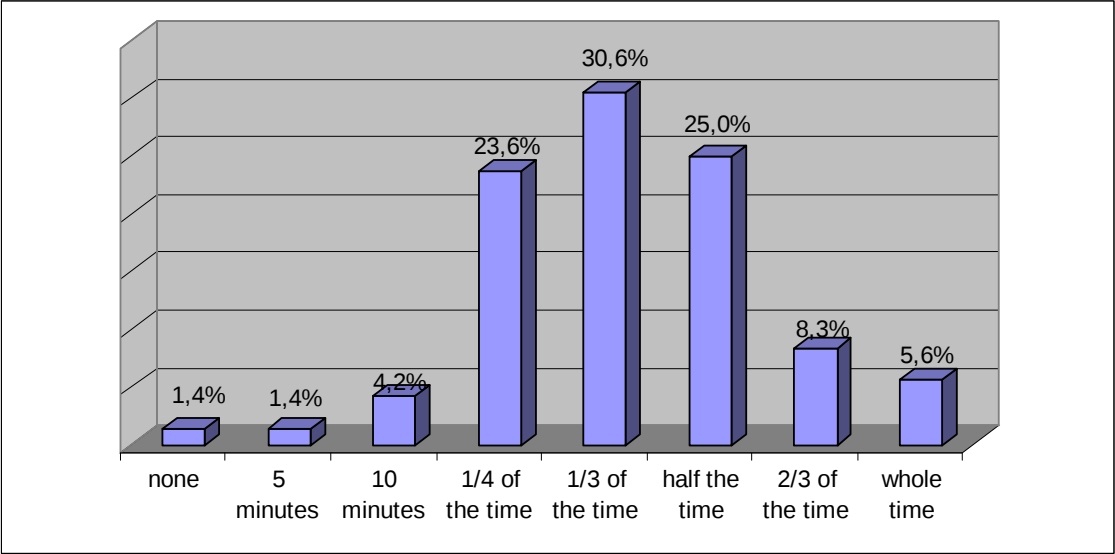
“The reason why I slip into my native language is:”



“While working in a pair the noise in the classroom:”



Finally the students were asked how much time of their foreign language lessons weekly they would devoted to pair work, if they had a partner of their choice they like cooperate with. They turned out to be very reasonable in their decisions.



12.3 Interpretation of the results

The research proved that the social strategies before the Velvet Revolution were not so frequent as nowadays. However, the situation in this field has considerably improved since then. In fact, after they filled the questionnaires in, some of the students admitted that they studied at secondary school after the Revolution and the methods of teaching foreign languages differed from those at basic school, as it was not grammar-translation but communicative oriented and both the students and the teachers were more motivated.

Most students think that it is better to speak with mistakes and admit that they try hard not to switch into their mother tongue. Most of them, however, make their statements too complicated, so they are pushed to use their native language. On the other hand, some students are paralysed by their lower level of proficiency partners, which also causes that some people do prefer frontal or individual work.

Concerning the noise, teachers in general do not mind it. Some students claimed that the noise helps them, because they do not feel being so controlled, but nearly the same number feel disturbed by the noise. In fact, most seem not to be interested in the noise at all.

Students try to correct their mistakes they make while working in pairs or groups, if they are aware of them. And the teachers appear to correct them in absolutely perfect way, as they try not to interrupt the students. Nevertheless, it seems disputable how sincere and realistic the teacher's answers were, if we take on consideration all the difficulties the teacher faces in a common class such as the teachers authority, discipline in the class, students behaviour, relationships, etc. . If the teachers answered honestly, it would be reasonable to assume that they are perfect.

Also, the research has showed that students learn foreign languages mainly, because they want to learn to communicate in the target language and they are very motivated to use it. They also like pair work and group work and believe that communication in classroom will help them even in real life. Moreover, they claimed that if they have opportunity to practise some grammar features or vocabulary in conversation, they do not feel so stressed and remember the feature better and easier. This preference of communication in foreign language lessons has been proved at the teachers as well. However, its frequency seems rather disputable, as the teachers claimed that they use it often or very often, which must be complicated in some groups of teenagers.

Further the research has shown that the two groups prefer different types of communicative activities. In fact, all activities should be practised equally with consideration on the students' proficiency and needs.

Finally, even though communicative and cooperative learning is nowadays trendy, the students were very reasonable in their answers concerning the frequency of communicative exercises in the language lessons in case that they would have a suitable partner for communication, as 30% would devoted to it 1/3 of the lesson time. In fact, personally, I had supposed that they would devote more time to conversation practise.

Conclusion

Social strategies have become a standard part of foreign language lesson, because they involve communication and, as the research has shown, people learn foreign languages to be able to communicate. Concerning the frequency of dialogues in our daily life and the effort to prepare the language students to use the target language in common daily situations, it has to be admitted that pair work or work in small groups of students are inevitable.

However, according to Byrne and Nolasco, but also from my pre-research interviews or personal experience, some teachers still keep complaining that the conditions for the language teaching process are not always ideal. They claim that there are too many students in the classroom and it is difficult to maintain discipline in the class, particularly with teenage children.

Even though the teachers-responders from my research were rather optimistic about social strategies in their lessons, a few of them admitted that they rarely use them. Their excuse often was not the noise or mistakes as may come to mind, but the lack of time. This reason is obviously unacceptable, because relatively a big amount of grammar exercise or reading can be done in pairs or small groups.

Moreover, while using social strategies in lessons, the students are more active in the activity, practise communication, build relationships, etc. Also, students with special needs can be involved in these activities or can work with the teacher on another task, so social strategies can be very useful in mixed abilities classes.

Social strategies propose wide range of possibilities in foreign language learning and make all students active. In general, most students like being active. If they feel comfortable and not stressed, they learn easier. In other words, good friendly atmosphere in the classroom supports language acquisition.

Nevertheless, the success of social strategies in foreign language learning is conditioned by appropriate preparation. It means, the teacher has to plan the activity in advance and the activity itself must be well organised. If the preparation is not satisfactory, it might end up in disaster. The students will be confused what to do and sooner or later will switch into their native language. In this case the students should be able to ask the teacher in the target language for help and explication.

It should be mentioned that the teacher's personality is also important, as it is sometimes difficult to keep the discipline and the low level of noise, but it has not so enormous influence on the process as the preparation. Also, the teacher should be able to organise suitable pairs and groups to support good classroom climate.

To sum up, social strategies have considerably more positives than negatives and should be regularly and frequently involved in foreign language lessons, because they make the students active and the classroom is often the only foreign language environment teachers can provide the students with.

Resumé

Diplomová práce “Sociální strategie ve výuce cizích jazyků” pojednává o důležitosti orální komunikace při výuce cizích jazyků. Práce uvádí stručnou historii sociálních strategií. Popisuje také pozitivní a negativní jevy komunikace jako podstatné součásti sociálních strategií. Dále se práce zabývá rolí učitele, žáka i vyučovacího prostředí. Jsou v ní taktéž uvedeny různé možnosti práce ve dvojicích a ve skupinách a jejich výhody v porovnání s frontálním vyučováním cizích jazyků. V poslední kapitole jsou prezentovány výsledky výzkumu mínění učitelů a žáků o sociálních strategiích v hodinách cizího jazyka.

Summary

Diploma thesis “Social Strategies in Foreign Language Teaching” deals with the importance of the oral communication in foreign language learning process. A brief history of social strategies has been mentioned, too. Communication is involved in social strategies, which has been also treated, and some positive and negative features of social strategies have been presented. Besides, the roles of the teacher, of foreign language learners and of the classroom setting in a language lesson have been described. Further, various possibilities of pair work and group work have been enumerated and their advantages over the frontal teaching method have been pointed out. Finally, all these features and general opinion of some English language teachers and foreign language adult learners on social strategies in foreign language learning process have been investigated in a research and presented in the last chapter.

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Annexes

Annexe 1

Dotazník – student narozený 1980 a dříve

- 1) V hodinách (cizího jazyka) pracuji nejraději:
 - a) sám/sama
 - b) ve dvojici (se sousedem, kamarádem a pod.)
 - c) v malé skupince (3-5 lidí)
 - d) ve velké skupině (6-10 lidí)
 - e) frontální vyučování (učitel pracuje s celou třídou)

- 2) Cizí jazyk se učím hlavně: *(zde zatrhněte 1, maximálně 4 odpovědi)*
 - abych se domluvil v zahraničí i u nás
 - abych mohl(a) číst odborné texty pro mou práci
 - abych mohl(a) číst cizí literaturu a tisk v originále
 - abych mohl(a) sledovat filmy v původním znění bez titulků
 - kvůli počítačům a internetu
 - protože je to trend
 - protože to po mě chce zaměstnavatel
 - protože člověk nikdy neví, může se to hodit
 - protože je to můj koníček
 - jiné: _____

- 3) Myslíte si, že rozhovory ve dvojicích zlepšují vaši schopnost dorozumět se cizím jazykem?
rozhodně ano - spíše ano - spíše ne - rozhodně ne - nevím

- 4) Které dovednosti v cizím jazyce podle Vás práce ve dvojicích nejvíce rozvíjí:
(1-3 odpovědi)

- čtení	- mluvení
- psaní	- poslech
- žádnou	

- 5) Setkali jste se s rozhovory ve dvojicích či malých skupinkách při výuce cizích jazyků na základní škole?
ano ne nevzpomínám si

- 6) Setkali jste se s rozhovory ve dvojicích či malých skupinkách při výuce cizích jazyků na střední škole?
ano ne nevzpomínám si

- 7) Z následujících možností vyberte 2 aktivity, které se Vám zdají nejzajímavější:

- 1) rozhovor se sousedem na probírané téma začínající „*What do you think ?*“
- 2) zjišťování informací, které chybí v mém zadání, ale soused je zná
- 3) rozhovor, který se týká mého každodenního života, mé rodiny, minulosti a mých plánů do budoucna
- 4) rozhovor, kdy hraji někoho jiného (např. prodavače, lékaře, pacienta, policistu apod.)
- 5) nezávazný rozhovor, kdy se můžu ptát na co chci a mé odpovědi nemusejí být pravdivé
- 6) řešení problému
- 7) jiné: _____

8) Zatrhněte s čím **souhlasíte** (*neomezený počet odpovědí*)

- 1) Když si cvičení zkontroluji se sousedem, cítím se v odpovědích před celou třídou jistější.
- 2) Když mluvím se sousedem, nemám takovou trému, jako když musím mluvit před celou třídou.
- 3) Když pracuji ve dvojici, mám ze sebe lepší pocit, než když jen pasivně poslouchám učitele.
- 4) Myslím, že je lepší dorozumět se s chybami než vůbec.
- 5) Práce ve dvojicích mě motivuje ke spolupráci i mimo vyučování (více si všímám svého okolí).
- 6) Při práci ve dvojicích mi čas rychle ubíhá.
- 7) Když něčemu nerozumím, je pro mě snadnější se zeptat souseda než se ptát učitele před celou třídou.
- 8) Někdy si zpětně vybavím gramatický jev nebo slovíčko, které se objevilo, když jsem se sousedem pracoval ve dvojici.
- 9) Učivo, které jsem měl(a) možnost si vyzkoušet v rozhovoru, se mi pamatuje lépe.
- 10) Při práci ve dvojicích nebo malé skupince někdy narazím na téma, o kterém bych si rád(a) bavil(a) i česky.

9) Kdybyste si mohl(a) vybrat souseda, se kterým by se Vám dobře spolupracovalo, kolik času z vyučování týdně byste práci ve dvojicích věnoval(a)?

- celou dobu (např. 90 min.týdně)
- 2/3 (např.60 min.týdně)
- půlku času (např.45 min.týdně)
- 1/3
- 1/4
- 10 minut
- 5 minut
- vůbec

10) Když mluvím se sousedem, sám/sama své chyby opravuji:

Často - někdy - vůbec - nevím o nich, tak se neopravuji

11) Při práci ve dvojicích sklouznu do češtiny:

Často - někdy - párkrát - výjimečně - nikdy

důvodem je: chci říct víc než dokážu

příliš komplikuji to, co chci říct

soused mi nerozumí

nechce se mi přemýšlet

žádný

jiný: _____

12) Při práci ve dvojicích bývá často ve třídě hluk, který mě:

- ruší
- nezajímá (vůbec si ho nevšímám)
- pomáhá (mám pocit, že mě nikdo nekontroluje)

Děkuji ☺

Annexe 2

Dotazník – učitelé

- 1) Jak jsou přibližně staří Vaši žáci? (*většina*)
6-10 let 11-15 let 16-19 let 20-30 let 30 a více let
- 2) Oznámkuje prosím následující způsoby práce ve výuce cizího jazyka podle toho, jak často je používáte.
(1= *velmi často*, 2= *často*, 3= *někdy*, 4= *čas od času*, 5= *velmi málo nebo vůbec*)
_ frontální vyučování
_ samostatná (individuální) práce
_ práce ve dvojicích (pair work)
_ malé skupinky (3-5 žáků)
_ velké skupiny (6-15 žáků)
- 3) Který z předchozích způsobů Vám při vyučování vyhovuje nejvíce a proč:

- 4) Kterou ze čtyř základních dovedností (čtení, psaní, mluvení, poslech) Vaším „oblíbeným“ způsobem nejčastěji procvičujete?

- 5) Jak často používáte práci ve dvojicích?

často někdy málokdy nikdy
- 6) Jaké jsou podle Vás hlavní výhody práce ve dvojicích?

- 7) Jaké jsou podle Vás hlavní nevýhody práce ve dvojicích?

- 8) Z následujících aktivit zatrhněte prosím jednu až tři, které **pro práci ve dvojicích** nejčastěji používáte:

- discussion (rozhovor na probírané téma, často začíná např. *What do you think* a pod.)
- information gap (oba žáci mají stejné zadání, ale v každém chybí jiné údaje nebo se údaje liší, hledání rozdílů na obrázcích a pod.)
- personalized conversation (žáci mluví o sobě, své rodině, minulosti a plánech do budoucna atd.)
- role playing (rozhovory v různých životních situacích: např. prodavač a kupující, lékař a pacient, vedoucí a podřízený a pod.)
- imaginary conversation (žáci se mohou ptát na co chtějí a jejich odpovědi nemusejí být pravdivé)
- problem solving (řešení problémů, dávání rad a pod.)
- jiné: _____

9) Je podle Vás výhodnější nechat žáky pracovat dvojicích nebo malé skupince 3-5 žáků? Proč ano? Proč ne? _____

10) Myslíte si, že komunikace a spolupráce ve vyučování může mít kladný vliv na žáky i v jejich osobním životě?

rozhodně ano - spíše ano - nevím - spíše ne - rozhodně ne

11) Co si myslíte o chybách žáků, které dělají při práci ve dvojicích?

- Dělají je příliš často, tím si je fixují a proto pair work nepoužívám.
- Každý dělá chyby, to je normální. Když to nebrání komunikaci, radši žáky nepřerušuji.
- Chyby žáků si zaznamenávám a po dokončení aktivity společně proberu s celou třídou, aby měli žáci možnost poučit se z chyb ostatních a podobných chyb se snažili vyvarovat.
- jiné: _____

12) Připadá Vám hluk který vzniká při práci ve dvojicích jako negativní jev?

ano ne nevím

13) Vadí Vám, když si žáci při práci ve dvojicích či malé skupince občas pomáhají češtinou

(mateřským jazykem)?

ano - ne - je mi to jedno - ještě jsem se s tím nesetkal(a)

14) Máte nějaký zajímavý poznatek nebo názor, týkající se sociálních strategií (pair work, group work) při výuce cizího jazyka, který byste mi chtěl(a) napsat?

Děkuji ☺

Hana Burešová