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VÝUKA VÝSLOVNOSTI POMOCÍ JAZZ CHANTS V ANGLIČTINĚ NA ZŠ

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Thesis

TEACHING PRONUNCIATION USING JAZZ CHANTS IN ENGLISH AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

V Plzni dne 26. dubna 2013   …………………....................

Lucie Chocová

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ABSTRACT

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This research paper aims to find out above all if Jazz Chants can help Czech elementary learners of English improve their pronunciation of the phoneme /w/. The additional aim is to find out how they feel about Jazz Chants. The subjects of the research were learners of 4. C class at 14th basic school in Plzeň, ten year old beginner learners of English. In order to gather data, three research tools were used. The first research tool was an experiment by means of which Jazz Chants focusing on the phoneme /w/ were introduced and practised in the class. The main research tool was pedagogical observation consisting of initial and final testings. The purpose of the testings was to find out the level of correct pronunciation of the phoneme /w/. While the initial testing took place before the experiment, the final testing was carried out after it. After the final testing a simple questionnaire was used as a supplementary research tool to discover how the learners felt about Jazz Chants.
Outcomes resulting from the testings and from the questionnaire were then analysed and commented on. Apart from a basis for some other interesting findings they enabled the research questions to be answered.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This piece of work deals with Jazz Chants. It aims to find out if using Jazz Chants in lessons of English can improve the learners´ pronunciation and also how the learners feel about Jazz Chants.

It comprises of six chapters. The first is called **The Introduction** and provides a brief summary of each chapter. The second chapter is **The Theoretical Background** and in it different opinions of methodology authors on the chosen topic as well as theoretical aspects of pronunciation are listed and discussed. The third chapter **The Method** provides information about how I undertook the research. The subject of the research and research tools as well as the way of collecting data are described here.

The next chapter is called **The Results and Commentary**. It is the most important part of the work, where the collected data are clearly presented, explained and commented on. This chapter concludes by answering the research question. The fifth chapter is **The Implications.** Pedagogical implications of my work are suggested, limitations which arose during the research are listed and then further research which could be undertaken on this topic is proposed here. In the last chapter, **The Conclusion**, I remind the reader what I was trying to find out and restate what I discovered.

Chapter 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter deals with theoretical aspects of the research. First, I will explain why I have chosen the topic and how I have arrived at the specific research questions. Then I will introduce theoretical aspects of both pronunciation of English and teaching it. Further, I will deal with theoretical aspects of the phoneme /w/ and I will take a look at various methodology authors´ opinions and suggestions how to deal with possible problems when teaching pronunciation of this phoneme. As the next step, I will present Jazz Chants in general and finally I will briefly describe the Czech basic education system with regards to pronunciation aspects.

2.1 REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE TOPIC

There are two reasons why I have chosen this topic. Firstly, I have been interested in listening and pronunciation issues for quite a long time. Already the topic of my undergraduate thesis was "Listening exercises: What are the features of a good listening exercise?" In my graduate thesis I intend to develop this topic to a greater depth as Jazz Chants are undoubtedly a form of a listening excercise. At the same time I have decided to focus on both pronuncing the phoneme /w/ and using it correctly, because according to my experience this appears to be a common problem of Czech learners of English.

Secondly, I have already gained some experience with various types of chants. When I was teaching at primary school, I occassionally used some chants other than those used in textbooks, usually to consolidate a specific grammar point. To my surprise, even older learners (sixth and seventh graders) obviously enjoyed them. The language structures they were exposed to stuck in their minds and the learners were often able to recall them when it came to the grammar point in some of the next lessons.

Those are the reasons why I have decided to formulate the specific research questions as follows: Can Jazz Chants help elementary learners improve their pronunciation of the phoneme /w/? How do the learners feel about Jazz Chants?

2.2 PRONUNCIATION AS AN AREA OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

How much is pronunciation important? To what extent should it be emphasised? According to Harmer (2007), "while English language teachers usually put enough emphasis on teaching grammar, vocabulary and skills, sometimes they do not pay adequate attention to teaching pronunciation. But in fact pronunciation teaching may (apart from the others) significantly improve students´ speaking, as well as their understanding of spoken English" (p. 248). Scrivener (2005) credits overlooking pronunciation as an area of language teaching partly to the fact, that "teachers themselves may feel more uncertain about it than about grammar or lexis, worried that they don´t have enough technical knowledge to help students appropriately" (p. 284).

2.2.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING PRONUNCIATION

There are various ways how the teacher can help the learners improve their pronunciation. Kenworthy (1987) states that a part of the role of the teacher is to help the learners hear and then produce sounds correctly, especially those which do not occur in their native language. The teacher then should provide feedback as learners often cannot tell if they have pronounced it correctly. He should also provide an assessment of their progress. Another important task for the teacher is to establish priorities, to show the learners the essential features of intelligible speech and help them decide what to concentrate on.

On the other hand it is obvious, that no progress in pronunciation could be made without learner´s effort and willingness to take responsibility for his or her own learning (pp. 1-3). Also Harmer (2007) remarks that "the key to successful pronunciation teaching is not so much getting students to produce correct sounds or intonation tunes, but rather to have them listen and notice how English is spoken ... The more aware they are, the greater chance that their own intelligibility leves will rise" (p. 250).

Certainly it is not realistic to expect that all learners are able to acquire the same level of pronunciation. Kenworthy (1992) lists several factors affecting pronunciation learning. First of all, it is the native language, namely its sound system in comparison with the sound system of English. She remarks that "the more differences there are, the more difficulties the learner will have in pronouncing English" (p. 4). Then it is the age

factor. Although it is commonly believed that the younger a learner is, the more easily he is able to acquire a native-like pronunciation, Kenworthy concludes that we do not yet have evidence for a simple and straightforward link between age and the ability to pronounce a new language and supports her statement by listing results of several researches in this field (pp. 4-5).

The next factor she mentions is the exposure to English, the amount of which is not the only fact that matters. In her opinion, it is also "how the learner responds to the opportunities to listen to and use English" (p. 6). She also mentions the learner´s phonetic ability, which she aptly describes as having "a better ear" for foreign languages than the others, and also motivation and concern for good pronunciation (pp. 4-8).

2.2.2 PRONUNCIATION GOALS

How good should the learner´s pronunciation aim to be? Kenworthy (1987) states that while some time ago it might have been said that the goal should always be native-like pronunciation, most people now think that this is an inappropriate goal for the great majority of learners, who will have a very practical purpose for learning English and will derive no particular benefit from acquiring a native-like pronunciation (p. 3).

In connection with this, many authors mention the notion of intelligibility. Harmer (2007) defines intelligibility as an ability to use pronunciation which is good enough for the speakers to be always understood, otherwise there is a serious danger that they will fail to communicate effectively. However, he suggests that "certain phonological differences (e. g. between /d/ and /ð/) may not be critical to a speaker´s ability to make themselves understood" (p. 249). On the other hand, some sounds have to be right if the speaker is to get their message across (for example /n/ as in /ˈsɪnɪŋ/ versus /ŋ/ as in /ˈsɪŋɪŋ/. Harmer (2007) also points out the importance of both correct stressing of words and phrases, which is vital for correct understanding of words, and intonation, which is a vital carrier of meaning (p. 249).

2.3 THE PHONEME /w/

First of all, let´s define a phoneme in general. A phoneme is "the smallest sound

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that can make a difference in meaning" (Underhill, 1994, p. viii). According to Underhill, the phoneme /w/ is a consonant. He states that consonants, either singly or in clusters, mark the beginnings and ends of syllables. Vowels occur as the centres or focal points of syllables, either between consonants or on their own. In his second definition he states that consonant sounds are made by restricting or blocking the air flow in some physical way, and this restriction, or the release of the restriction, is what gives the consonant its characteristic sound. Further, the phoneme /w/ is voiced, i. e. it requires the vocal cords to vibrate (pp. 29-30). According to the place of articulation, it means where the sound is produced in the vocal tract, it is bilabial. It means that both lips come together to block the air stream (p. 35).

However, according to the manner of articulation, i. e. how the sound is produced in the vocal tract, the phoneme /w/ is often referred to as a semi-vowel. When pronouncing /w/, there is no restriction to the air flow and so no friction or closure characteristic of most consonants. In this way the manner of articulation of /w/ is rather vowel-like (Underhill, 1994, pp. 45-46). Roach (1991) clearly defines this discrepancy saying that "they (/j/ and /w/) are *phonetically* like vowels but *phonologically* like consonants" (p. 61).

The phoneme /w/ is typically pronounced in words such as *what* and *with* but it also appears in words like *one*, *quarter* or *queen*. /w/ occurs initially but not finally (Underhill, 1994, p. 46). There are also other ways of pronouncing the phoneme /w/, such as in words *who* /hu:/, *write* /raɪt / or *slow* /sləʊ /. However, in my thesis I only deal with /w/ being pronounced as /w/.

2.3.1 THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE PHONEME /w/ IN THE CZECH LANGUAGE

Althought there is the grapheme /w/, the phoneme /w/ does not exist in the Czech language. Klimeš (2002) suggests to pronounce some loanwords commonly used in the Czech language in the following way:

Wales /vels, vejls/ in English /vejlz/

waltz /valc/

whisky /viski/ (pp. 851 - 852)

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Pokorná and Vránová (2007) state that (apart from usual usage) the vowel /u/ can appear in words with foreign origin, where they are linked with other vowels, such as U+O (duo /duo/), U+A/Á (manuál /manuál/), U+E (duel /duel/) (p. 786).

To get a clearer idea about this theory, let us compare the pronunciation of these words:

Czech word: duel /duel/

English word: dwell /dwel/

Although *duel* is a two-syllable word and *dwell* is monosyllabic, the pronunciation of both words approximates. It is obvious that a correct pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ does not pose a considerable problem for the Czechs.

On the basis of these facts and my own experience I assume that the Czech learners of English do not have so many problems with pronouncing the phoneme /w/ correctly as using it properly, which means they tend to confuse the use of /w/ and /v/. According to my observations, it is not unusual to hear utterances such as /werɪ vel/ instead of the correct [verɪ wel], sometimes even at more advanced speakers. In any case, the Czech learners of English tend to ignore the /w/ sound in general and replace it by /v/, which especially applies for beginner learners.

2.3.2 HOW TO TEACH TO PRONOUNCE THE PHONEME /w/

Although the correct pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ does not appear to be particularly problematic for the Czech learners of English, still it is interesting to compare several competent approaches to it. Let us take a close look at hints suggested by various authors.

Ann Baker (1981) instructs to pronounce the phoneme /w/ using the following method: "First practise /u:/. Make your lips round and hard for /w/. W is a short sound" (p. 124). Underhill´s (1994) advice is very similar. "… the sound which has the symbol /w/ is in fact /u/, of very short duration, gliding rapidly to the following vowel. Try … putting a very short /u/ in place of /w/ in … /uet/ instead of /wet/" (p. 46). Bowen and Marks (1992) advise the learners to pronounce the phoneme /w/ correctly by a slightly different suggestion. "Many learners find it difficult to pronounce the phoneme /w/, particularly in initial position as in *would* or *woman*. One solution here is

to treat /w/ as a combination of the two vowel sounds /u:/ and /schwa/, and to ask the learners to pronounce each in turn, gradually increasing the speed until they arrive at a sound that is very close to /w/, if not /w/ itself. Focus particularly on the rounded lip position at the beginning of the sound" (p. 76).

Bowen and Marks (1992) further suggest how to prevent pronouncing /w/ in places where /v/ has to be pronounced. "Some learners regularly confuse /w/ and /v/, producing, for example, /wery/ instead of /very/. One solution is to ask them to bite (gently!) their lower lip with the upper teeth before pronouncing the /v/ sound. This should ensure that there is no lip rounding and that /very/ is produced rather than /wery/" (p. 76).

2.3.3 WAYS OF PRACTISING AND IMPROVING PRONUNCIATION OF THE PHONEME /w/

Apart from hints how to pronounce the phoneme /w/, various methodology authors suggest various ways of practising and improving its pronunciation. For example, O´Connor and Fletcher (1990) compiled a language chart, where they suggest useful tasks for speakers of particular languages to practise problematic phonemes. To practise the phoneme /w/, for speakers of Slavonic languages the following tasks are suggested. "Listen and repeat statements such as: ´William heard something wonderful last week.´ Make Wh-questions about these statements. Listen and practise (to distinguish between /b/, /v/ and /w/. ´Bob is very worried about his friends´" (pp. 15, 65-66). Baker (1981) starts the practical part with exercises focused on distinguishing between /v/ and /w/ - *vest* or *west*, *veal* or *wheel*. Then she presents a dialog between Gwen and Wendy about a walk in the woods and lists several exercises based on this text (pp. 125 – 127). Another way of practising pronunciation are chants, for example Jazz Chants.

2.4 JAZZ CHANTS

Professor Carolyn Graham (1979) defines that Jazz Chants are the rhythmic expression of Standard American English. She first developed *Jazz Chant*s as a language teaching technique at the American Language Institute of New York

University in 1970´s, first for adults and young adults and then she developed *Jazz Chants for Children* (p. v).

Just as the selection of a particular tempo and beat in jazz may convey powerful and varied emotions, the rhythm, stress, and intonation patterns of the spoken language are essential elements for the expression of feelings and the intent of the speaker. Linking these two dynamic forms has produced an innovative and exciting new approach to language learning. (p. v)

Graham (1979) points out that the Jazz Chants included in her book *Jazz Chants for Children* were especially designed for children, since they deal with the topics and situations which are important to children and enable them to express in English the many emotions that all children experience. Also the language is the natural language the children use. Many of the chants are humorous and also fun to do. At the end, Graham points out that although Jazz Chanting´s primary purpose is the improvement of speaking and listening comprehension skills, it also works well in reinforcing specific grammar and pronunciation patterns used in situational contexts relevant to the child´s experiences. After *Jazz Chants* and *Jazz Chants for Children* Graham published other book, e. g. *Grammarchants*, *Let´s Chant, Let´s Sing*, *Small Talk* or *Creating Chants and Songs* (p. v).

Various chants are now parts of modern English textbooks for younger learners, for example *Happy House* series, *Chit Chat* series (to name those which I have some experience with).

2.5 TEACHING ENGLISH AT CZECH BASIC SCHOOLS (GRADES 1 - 9)

To gain an overall idea about how English is taught at Czech basic schools and what expected outcomes for pronunciation there are, it is appropriate to briefly describe the system of Czech basic education. It is best depicted in *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro ZŠ (RVP ZŠ)*, in English it is *Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education (FEP BE)*. This is the main curricular document which defines binding educational norms for Czech primary education.

Czech basic education is the only stage of education that is compulsory to all pupils. It is organized in two stages that are mutually linked in terms of content

and organisation, as well as didactically - Stage 1 (grades 1 to 5) and Stage 2 (grades 6 to 9) (FEB BE, 2007, p. 10). The content of basic education within the education framework is divided into nine, roughly defined educational areas. Each educational area contains the characteristics of the educational area, the objectives of the educational area and its educational content. The educational content comprises the expected outcomes and the subject matter. Expected outcomes are activity-driven, practically aimed, usable in everyday life and verifiable. They define the expected competency in applying acquired knowledge in practical situations and in common life. Within Stage 1, the educational content is additionally divided into Period 1 (grades 1 to 3) and Period 2 (grades 4 and 5). This division is meant to help schools distribute the educational content among the grades. (FEB BE, 2007, p. 16)

To specify this definition, learners in Stage 1 are six to eleven years old. Learners in Period 1 are then six to nine years old and learners in Period 2 nine to eleven years old. At the end of Stage 2 learners usually reach the age of fifteen.

"Foreign Language has a weekly time allotment of 3 hours and is compulsory for grades 3 to 9. If there is pupil interest and parental consent, Foreign Language teaching may be started at lower grade levels. Pupils must be offered English before other languages" (FEB BE, 2007, p. 112).

"The requirements for foreign language education set out in the FEB BE are based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*, which describes the various levels of language proficiency" (FEB, 2007, p. 19). "Foreign language education in Stage 1 leads to the acquisition of the A1 level according to CEFR" (Doporučené učební osnovy předmětů ČJL, AJ a M pro základní školu, 2011, p. II. AJ - 1). CEFR does not exactly depict the expected outcome of pronunciation for each level from A1 to C2, however, it defines the phonological control for the A1 level. "Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group" (CEFR, n. d., p. 117). The expected outcome for Period 2 referring to phonetics according to FEB BE is stated. "Pupils will read a simple text aloud containing familiar vocabulary; reading is fluent and phonetically correct" (FEB

BE, 2007, p. 25).

       In this chapter all the relevant background information about the research were presented. The next chapter will deal with the method used to carry out the research.

Chapter 3: METHOD

In this chapter I will depict all the relevant information about the subject and procedure of the research, the research tools and the used materials. I will give a detailed description of how I carried out the research.

In order to find out if Jazz Chants can improve the learners´ pronunciation, I have decided to use two main research tools. First, I carried out a pedagogical observation comprising of initial and final testing of pronunciation and an experiment. The substance of the experiment was working with Jazz Chants. These were the main research tools. After that I used an additional research tool which was a supplementary questionnaire for the learners aiming to find out how the learners feel about Jazz Chants. The subjects of all three research tools were the learners in 4. C class at 14th basic school in Plzeň.

3.1 SUBJECTS, PLACE AND TIME OF THE RESEARCH

The research was carried out at 14th basic school in Plzeň in 4. C class in cooperation with Mgr. Irena Šnebergerová, the teacher of English in this class. There are 10 learners in the tested group, out of which 5 boys and 5 girls, aged 9-10. They have been learning English as the first foreign language since the 3rd grade, it means this is their second year. They have an English lesson three times a week. However, the tested group is a part of 4. C class and the ten learners have been chosen as more gifted in the English language. Once a week (on Mondays) 4. C class is divided into the two groups for an English lesson. The group of the more gifted learners undergoes extended English language teaching while the other group is being taught a regular lesson. During the other two lessons of English both groups are joined and taught together. The textbook used in 4. C class is Happy Street 2.

The research was conducted during four consecutive Monday lessons, when the class was divided into two groups. On the first of these lessons the first part of the observation was carried out. The second and the third lessons were dedicated to the experiment and in the last lesson the second part of the observation as well as the questionnaire were carried out.

3.2 PEDAGOGICAL OBSERVATION

Průcha, Waltrová & Mareš (2001) define the observation as monitoring of sensuously perceivable phenomenons, especially people´s behaviour, process of action etc. (as cited in Chráska, 2007, p. 151). According to the length of duration, there is a short-term observation, which usually does not last longer than one lesson, and a long-term observation, which may last up to one school year. The course of the observation may be direct, when the observer directly meets the subjet of the observation, or indirect, when the observer is not personally present in the classroom (Chráska, 2007, p. 151). According to the way of observing, Gavora (2000) describes an unstructured and structured observation. At a structured observation, the observer knows exactly from the beginning of the observation what and how he will observe. He structures the observed reality into categories defined in advance. He registers his observations into an observation sheet, which may look in various ways (p. 76). According to these criteria, this research can be characterised as short-term, direct and structured.

Chráska (2007) proposes that there are two basic requirements for an observation which are validity and reliability. An observation is reliable if it actually observes what it is supposed to observe. The observer has to have a good overall understanding of the observed item. An observation is valid when it is not influenced by observational mistakes to a greater extent. This is, to a large extent, a question of technique (p. 152).

During the observation, the occurence of tested items is registered. The observer makes a note everytime the observed item is noticed. This procedure is called coding. The first type of coding is called interval coding. In it, a code of an action is registered for every time interval of the lesson which usually varies from three to fifteen seconds. This type of coding may desribe the course of the lesson very exactly. The second type of coding is called natural coding, when the observer notes down the beginning of the observed category. Then the frequency of occurence of each category is evaluated and then interpreted (Gavora, 2000, p. 80). As there was only one observed item in this research, natural coding was used for registration.

3.2.1 PROCEDURE OF THE OBSERVATION – PART ONE

This subchapter in detail depicts a sequence of steps which were taken during the observation. As I have already said, an observation was the first research tool used. In order to prepare materials and procedure, I first contacted Mgr. Šnebergerová and consulted with her the learners´ background information, the choice of materials and the most appropriate strategy of the observation as well as of the subsequent experiment. We agreed on the procedure of both the observation and the experiment. The second step was to create all the materials for the observation - the story, worksheets for the learners, flashcards and an observation sheet. The observation consisted of two parts. Part One was represented by initial testing of the learners´ pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ by means of reading a text focusing on this phoneme (the story). Its objective was to find out and register the level of correct pronunciation of this phoneme. It was conducted in the first of the four consecutive Monday lessons by me.

Story

I created a simple story (see Appendix 1) for the testing purpose. The story included 25 words containing the phoneme /w/, all of which the learners were supposed to be familiar with. This fact was checked with Happy Street 1 and Happy Street 2 textbooks and also with Mgr. Šnebergerová, this means that no new words appeared in the text. Six words of out the 25 were consequently practised in the four Jazz Chants. The plot of the story was meaningful and slightly amusing, so that the learners could enjoy reading it. Besides that, the text was supplemented with pictures at the end of each sentence. Each learner was given a worksheet with the story on it. In Table1 all the tested words and the transcription of their pronunciation are listed.

	word	pronunciation		word	pronunciation
1	queen	kwiːn	14	wood	wʊd
2	one	wʌn	15	always	ˈɔːlweiz
3	white	waɪt	16	wears	weəz
4	window	ˈwɪndəʊ	17	where	weə
5	queen	kwiːn	18	queen	kwiːn
6	always	ˈɔːlweiz	19	what	wɒt, wət

7	swinging	ˈswɪŋɪŋ	20	swinging	ˈswɪŋɪŋ
8	swimming	ˈswɪmɪŋ	21	swimming	ˈswɪmɪŋ
9	walks	wɔːks	22	sandwich	ˈsændwɪtʃ
10	wood	wʊd	23	watching	wɒtʃɪŋ
11	week	wiːk	24	with	wɪθ
12	when	wen	25	Will	wɪl
13	walks	wɔːks			

Table 1: A list of the 25 tested words as they appeared in the story and the transcription of their pronunciation

Flashcards

I created flashcards (see Appendix 2) for the testing purpose. This visual aid was meant as a motivation to draw the learners´ attention to the story and support understanding. The pictures were carefully chosen so that the learners knew how to say the words in English. At the same time they served as a guide through the story. Each flashcard had a picture and an English word for this picture on it.

Intitial testing (1ˢᵗ lesson)

As already said, the first part of the observation was the initial testing. All ten learners were present in class. After a brief introduction the learners were told that they had been recommended by their teacher of English to me as gifted in English and that I was going to test them on reading and pronunciation. I told them that they would work with several chants and asked them briefly if they knew what chants were. I was showing the learners the flashcards while covering words under the picture. The purpose was to find out if they knew how to say these expressions in English. After they said the words in English, I uncovered the words. There was always at least one learner who knew the English word. I asked the learners if they had an idea what the story might be about, once they had seen the pictures. They guessed quite correctly, that the story was going to be about a queen with a crown, living in a tower, swimming in the river and watching TV.

Then I asked the learners if they noticed which sound appeared very often in the story. They suggested correctly it was /w/ and I told them we would practise its

pronunciation. Do they know how to pronounce the words *queen* and *what* correctly? I wrote the two words on the board. Some of the learners were aware that they should pronounce rather /u/ than /v/. I elicited from them that the same phoneme in both words is /w/ and that it is pronounced the same in both cases, although it is written differently. The learners drilled the pronunciation of the two words, first as a whole class and then individually. I read the story for them, miming and gesturing to support understanding. The learners were listening only. I elicited some more additional information about the plot.

As the next step, I handed out worksheets with the story (see Appendix 1) and let the learners skim through them. Then I read the text again aloud in a slow pace and let them realize its meaning. Pictures after each sentence supported their understanding. I made sure that all learners understood the text. While reading, I placed emphasis on correct pronunciation, particularly of the phoneme /w/, however, I did not explicitly point out to it. After that the actual testing took place. I asked them to read the text one by one and while they were reading, I was noting down into an observation sheet (see Appendix 3) if the pronunciation of the particular tested words was correct or faulty. If the phoneme /w/ was pronounced correctly, a tick ✓ was put in the respective place. If the phoneme /w/ was mispronounced, then a cross ✗ was put. I only registered the pronunciation of this phoneme in the 25 tested words and I did not register on purpose other mispronounced words. I did not call the learners´ attention to the fact that the tested item was the pronunciation of the phoneme /w/. I neither corrected their pronunciation nor commented on their performance in any way, I only encouraged them to read on with words such as "Good." or "O. K.". I also did not record their reading although it would be very convenient for purposes of further research because unfortunately it is not the policy of the school to record this for future reference. After the initial testing was finished, I thanked the learners and left the classroom.

3.3 EXPERIMENT

The experiment was the second part of the research. Its objective was to introduce Jazz Chants to the learners and make them aware of the correct pronunciation

of the phoneme /w/. The learners were supposed to listen to the chants three or four times and then, according to their abilities, gradually start chanting along. Ideally, their pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ should have improved by the end of the experiment.

When discussing the term of experiment, it would be desirable to define some more terms. People who take part in the experiment are called **subjects**. A **variable** is a component of the experiment which can be changed, gain various values or qualities. **Pretest** is the initial test assigned to the subject before the realisation of the experiment. **Posttest** is the final test which is assigned to the subjects after the realisation of the experiment (Gavora, 2000, p. 125).

Gavora (2000) states that in everyday language the word "experiment" corresponds to words "trial" or "testing". However, in the language of science it has a different meaning. He suggests that an experiment is characterised by the presence of at least two closely resembling groups of people. These are called the experimental group and the control group and are exposed to different variables. The variables are controlled by the experimenter and their effect is evaluated in both groups at the end of the experiment (p. 125). However, Filosofický slovník Universum (2009) opposes that while in medical or biological sciences the use of a control group is usually required, in social sciences the experimenter´s possibilities are usually limited, therefore a responsible choice of research sample is required (p. 96). This means that a control group does not have to be used in some cases. According to Gavora (2000), an experiment is a research method, the power of which lies in the possibility to systematically manipulate variables. This enables to reveal deeper causal links than when using descriptive methods, such as questionnaires or tests (p. 125).

In terms of this research, there was only one experimental (tested) group and no control group. The variable that the subjects were exposed to was represented by Jazz Chants. Pretest was the initial testing of pronunciation and posttest was the final testing after the working with Jazz Chants, it means after the realization of the experiment.

The experiment was carried out on the second (Chant 1 and Chant 2) and third (Chant 3 and Chant 4) consecutive Monday lessons. It was conducted by Mgr. Šnebergerová. As already mentioned, the materials and procedure of the experiment had already been agreed on while preparing the observation. I prepared the necessary

materials, which consisted of a CD with the four Jazz Chants, worksheets with the text of the chants and worksheets with lead-in tasks and handed them to Mgr. Šnebergerová. After each lesson she wrote a detailed description of the course of each lesson for me.

Jazz Chants

I chose the four Jazz Chants from *Jazz Chants for Children* (Graham, 1979). I decided on those which included enough words containing the phoneme /w/ so that the learners could have sufficient practice. At the same time, I tried to choose those grammatically simple as the learners were expected to focus on pronunciation and not to struggle with grammar. The chosen chants are also funny and attractive for children from the content point of view.

The four Jazz Chants are as follows. The below tables list the words containing the phoneme /w/ and the number of their occurrences in particular chants. This offers a clear idea how much the words containing the phoneme /w/ were practised.

Jazz Chant 1: I Found a Cow
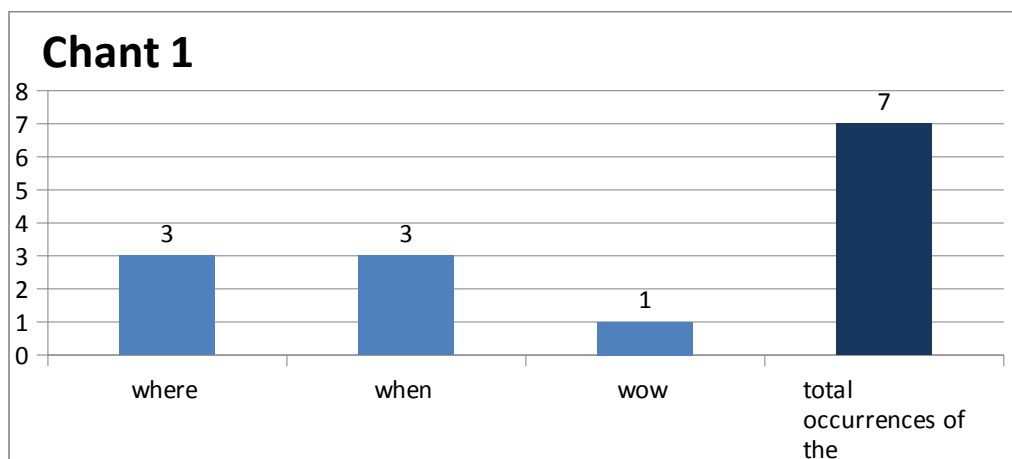This chant is rhythmically accompanied to support its rhythmical pattern.

Table 2: Number of occurrences of words containing the phoneme /w/ in Chant 1

Jazz Chant 2: When I Was One
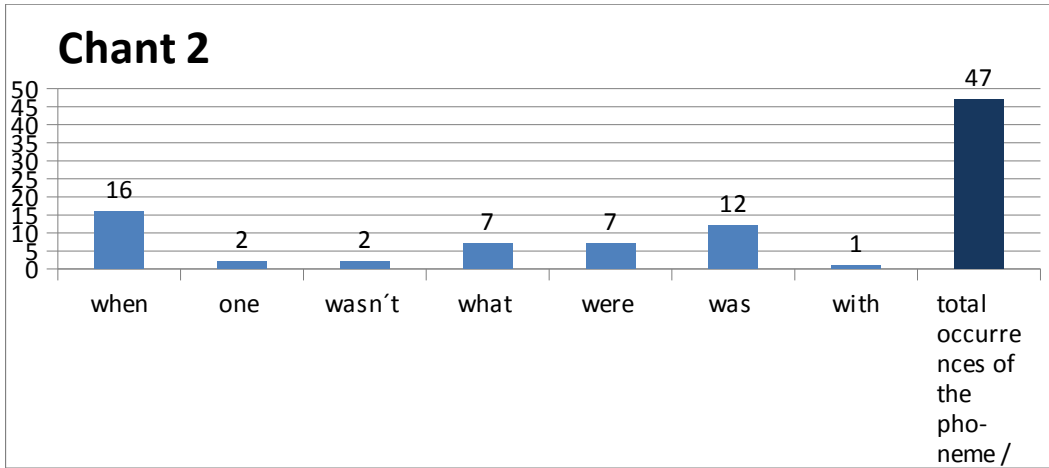This chant is not rhythmically accompanied.

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Table 3: Number of occurrences of words containing the phoneme /w/ in Chant 2

Jazz Chant 3: You Did It Again!
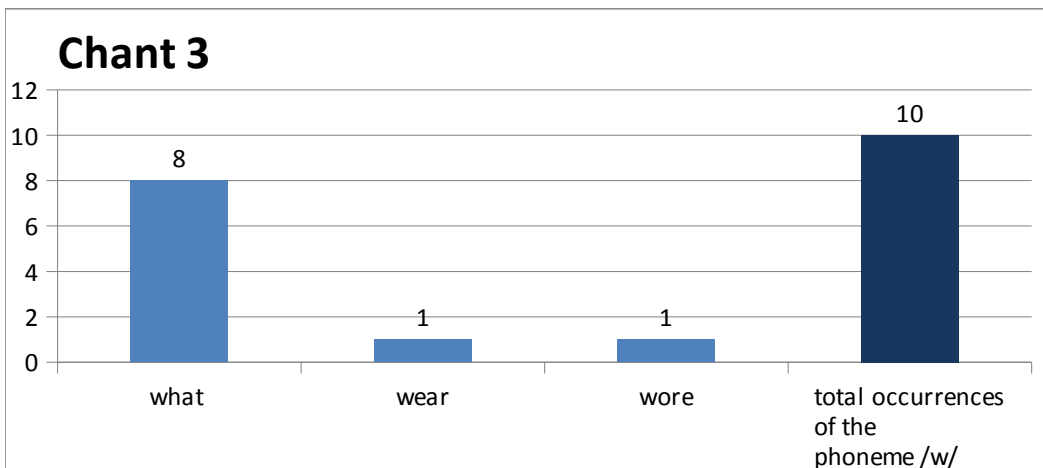
This chant is not rhythmically accompanied.

Table 4: Number of occurrences of words containing the phoneme /w/ in Chant 3

Jazz Chant 4 – Shoes and Socks

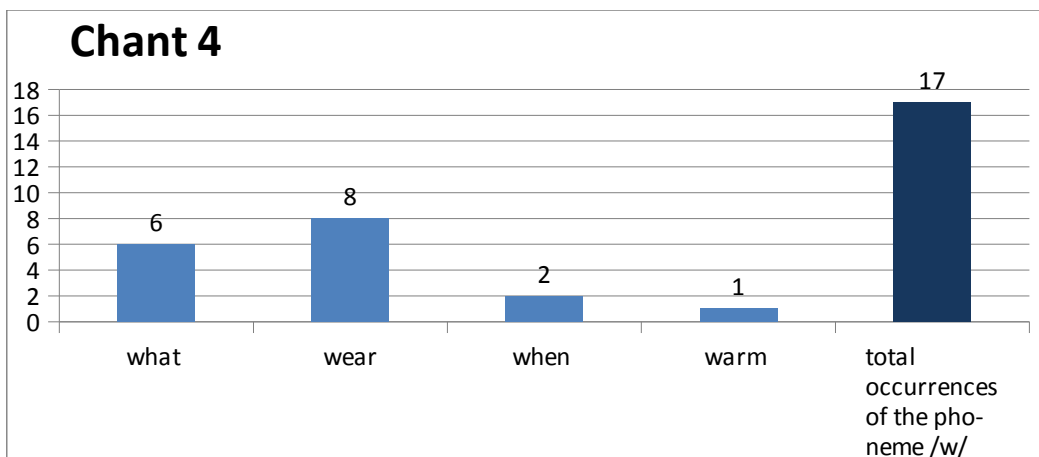This chant has a strong rhythmical accompaniment.

Table 5: Number of occurrences of words containing the phoneme /w/ in Chant 4

It is obvious from the tables that Chant 2 contained far most words containing the phoneme /w/ - 47.

Chant 1 and Chant 2 (2nd lesson)

Several versions of a plan for working with Chant 1 were composed because it was not clear how the learners would react to the chants and how they would work. For example, the teacher was ready to play the chant more times or develop the activities more. However, the learners worked beyond our expectations so there was no need to do so. The teacher also flexibly adapted the plan when the learners wished to lead the chanting (see below).

The learners received worksheets for Chant 1 (see Appendix 4) and were asked to go through the maze and find a cow. When they finished, the teacher told them: "Wow, you found a cow!" The teacher elicited the meaning of this sentence. Which other animals do they know? She presented the words *a bear* and *a hen* and the learners practised the pronunciation. The learners were then divided into three groups (cows, bears and hens) and listened to Chant 1 for the first time. Whenever they heard "their" animal, they raised their hands. This was quite funny especially in the final part of the chant because the three words changed in a very fast pace, therefore the learners did not manage to raise their hands and put them down again fast enough and it made them laugh. However, the purpose of this activity was to make them listen for the three words

only and also put them in the mood for the work with Jazz Chants.

The teacher wrote on the whiteboard: *How? Where? When?* She elicited the meaning and asked the learners which words these question words rhyme with (*cow, bear, hen*). They practised the pronunciation of the rhyming pairs. Then they listened to Chant 1 for the second time and tried to say the right question word in the right moment along with the singer. Most of the learners were successful in it because the chant was rhythmical and the rhymes were easy to distinguish.

After that, the texts (see Appendix 5) were handed out. The teacher read the chant rhyme after rhyme and the learners repeated them in unison. Then they highlighted the rhyming words in their worksheets. They listened to the chant for the third time. All of them were chanting along the rhyming words and some of them were trying to chant the whole text. Several learners wished to lead the chanting so the teacher let two groups (of three girls and of three boys) chant it for the classmates in front of the desks while the others were chanting the rhyming words only. This was done without playing the recording as the teacher asumed the pace would be too fast for them to follow. Still they managed to keep a very good rhythm by clapping their hands and obviously enjoyed the activity. Finally, they listened to Chant 1 for the fourth time and that time all of them were chanting along most of the chant.

A pre-listening task before Chant 2 for the learners was to listen for any known words. After the first listening they reported that they understood numbers $(1-8)$ and some more words such as *fun*, *ski*, *play* or *great*. The teacher elicited or explained the meaning of the following structures, using lots of gesturing and miming:

When I was ...
I learned to ...
What did you do?
When you were …
It wasnʹt much fun / It was really great / really heaven / a bore

The learners drilled the pronunciation. The teacher read the chant rhyme after rhyme and they repeated them in unison. To practise the language, the teacher mimed three or four activities and the learners guessed: I learned to ski. I learned to swim. I learned to run. After that, they listened to Chant 2 for the second time. The teacher was

signalling the numbers with her fingers so that the learners were able to chant along the phrases: *When I was (one, two, ...)*. They received the texts (see Appendix 6) and were asked to highlight the rhyming words (one-fun, do-two, ski-three, ...).

During the third listening to Chant 2 they were already able to chant the beginning parts with *When I was ...* and *What did you do ...?* Two girls wished to lead the singing then so they chanted the beginning parts *When I was ...* and the rest of the class was responding with *What did you do ...?* Most of them seemed to like it although they quite struggled with pronunciation of the remaining parts (*it wasn´t much fun, it was really bore etc.*). Finally, the learners listened to Chant 2 for the fourth time and were chanting along quite confidently.

Chant 3 and Chant 4 (3rd lesson)

The learners received worksheets (see Appendix 7). The teacher wrote on the whiteboard pairs of words *break-broke*, *eat-ate*, *tear-tore*, *wear-wore*, *lose-lost,* elicited their meanings and explained briefly that the second form was the past tense. The learners were already familiar with the words *eat* and *wear*. They filled in their worksheets and practised pronunciation of the sentences. They listened to Chant 3 for the first time and after that they reported they identified some of the words that they had practised. They received the texts (see Appendix 8) and drilled the pronunciation. The teacher read the chant rhyme after rhyme and they repeated them in unison. While reading, the teacher was emphasising the correct intonation, which is very strong in this chant and of course the correct pronunciation of the words containing the phoneme /w/. The learners then highlighted in their worksheets the pairs of words written at the whiteboard.

Next they listened to the chant for the second time, chanting only the question parts (*What did I do?*). As there was no one wishing to lead the singing as in the previous two chants, the teacher played the recording again, this time turning down the volume when it was the learners´ turn to chant. During the final chanting, the teacher took over the singer´s role and chanted the first parts (*I told you not to do it and you did it again!*), pretending she was the learners´ mother blaming them for something. The learners found this little performance amusing and were chanting their parts very

enthusiastically.

The learners received worksheets and did the crossword. Then the teacher asked them: *"What do you wear on you feet / head / hands?"*, gesturing a lot to support understanding. The learners answered appropriately. Then the teacher asked: "Where do you wear your hat/gloves/socks?" and the learners answered. The teacher then asked questions beginning with *What / Where* in a random order to make sure that children understood them and were able to answer properly. One girl then wished to ask questions herself and so she did – she asked three or four questions and her classmates answered.

The learners listened to Chant 4 for the first time. Then the teacher asked them which words describing body parts or items of clothing they understood in the chant. Most of them understood a lot and so they were keen on answering. When listening for the second time, the learners received the texts (see Appendix 9) and were already able to chant the replies to the questions. As Chant 4 was quite swift, the teacher helped them by pointing at the relevant body parts and parts of clothing. They particularly enjoyed chanting *Socks. Shoes and socks. Shoes and socks.* The teacher did not require the learners to chant the question parts of Chant 4 and neither the learners themselves wanted to try it saying it was too fast and difficult. Instead, the teacher took the singer´s role, chanted the question parts and the learners were answering. They were clapping the beat together. At the end, the learners listened to the recording of Chant 4 again and chanted along.

As the last step, the teacher asked the learners if they could recall the previous three chants. As an answer, the learners started chanting them spontaneously, most of them Chant 1 (I Found a Cow). Before playing each chant, the teacher reminded them the words. The learners obviously enjoyed the chants and were chanting quite confidently.

3.4 OBSERVATION – PART TWO

Part Two of the observation was represented by the final testing of the learners´ pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ by means of reading the same story as in the initial testing. Its objective was to find out and register the level of correct pronunciation of

this phoneme after practising Jazz Chants. The materials used in the second part of the observation were the same as in the first part, consisting of worksheets with the story, flashcards and an observation sheet (see Appendices 1 - 3). It was conducted by me in the fourth lesson of the research, together with the questionaire. Nine learners were present in class (one was absent).

At the beginning of the lesson I reminded the learners all the four chants by playing them. I did not instruct them to chant along but they started chanting spontaneously. After that I asked them if they still remembered the short story and showed them the flashcards. They were spontaneously saying some phrases and sentences from the story when they saw the pictures. Then I read the story again for them, handed out the worksheets and did the final testing. Again, the learners read the texts one by one and I was noting down into the observation sheets the correct or incorrect pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ in the tested words while they were reading.

3.5 QUESTIONNAIRE

Gavora (2000) defines a questionnaire "as a way of written asking question and gaining written answers" (p. 99).

The questionnaire was a supplementary research tool and it was created by me. Its objective was to find out how the learners felt about Jazz Chants. The only material used was the questionnaire form (see Appendix 10).

I handed out the questionnaires after the final testing had been finished and asked the learners to fill them in. I reminded them that the questionnaires were for the research purpose only, anonymous and so they did not have to sign them. I also asked them not to copy but express their own opinion. After the learners completed the questionnaires, I collected them and as a thankyou for their cooperation in the whole research I distributed them some sweets.

This chapter brought some general information about the method used in the research as well as a detailed description of the lessons. In the following chapter the results of the research will be clearly presented, interpreted and commented on.

Chapter 4: RESULTS AND COMMENTARY

In this chapter the results of the observation and the questionnaire will be presented by means of tables and graphs, then interpreted and finally my comments on them will be offered. Apart from them, some other interesting facts which were observed when carrying out the research will be presented and commented on, too. The experiment as one of the research tools did not provide any data for interpretation. Finally, the research questions will be answered on the basis of the results.

4.1 PEDAGOGICAL OBSERVATION

The observation consisted of two parts. Part One was conducted at the beginning of the research and was represented by the initial testing of the learners´ pronunciation. Part Two consisted in final testing of pronunciation and was carried out after Jazz Chants had been practised, it means after the experiment. In Part One 10 learners were present. However, one boy was absent from Part Two, therefore his results from the initial testing were excluded from the statistics. As a consequence, further on I only deal with the results of nine learners. Graph 1 shows the proportion of girls to boys.

Proportion of girls to boys

4
44%

5
56%
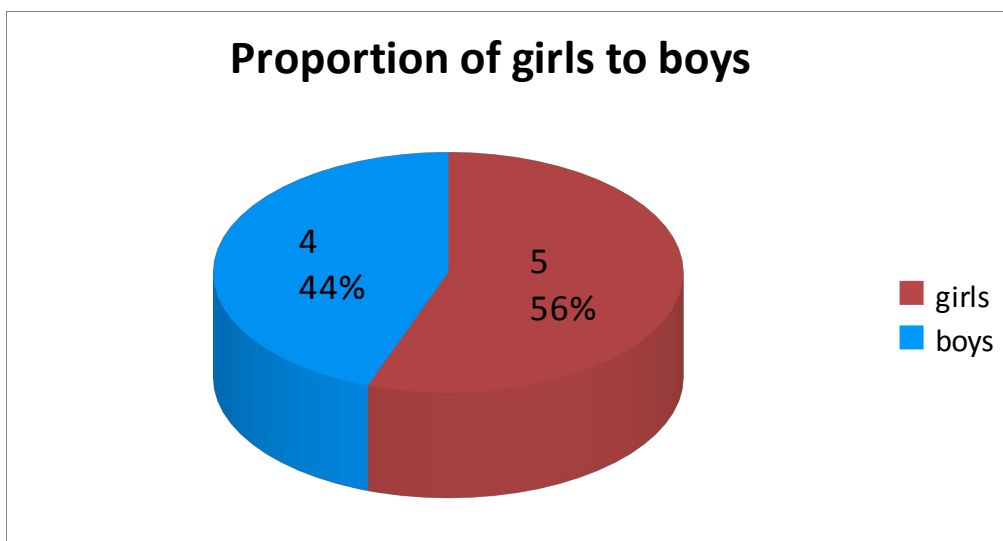
girls

boys

Graph 1: Proportion of girls to boys

Results from the initial and final testings were gathered from nine learners, out of which four were boys and five were girls. It is obvious that the proportion of boys and girls is balanced in the group.

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A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
♀	♀	♀	♂	♂	♂	♀	♂	♀

♀ - a girl   ♂ - a boy

Table 6: Proportion of girls to boys

For distinction, the learners are referred to with letters from A to I throughout the text.

Next, Table 7 and Table 8 are presented. They are actually completed observation sheets for the initial and final testings. They present a general overview of all the tested words and all the learners. If the phoneme /w/ was pronounced correctly, a tick ✓ was put in the respective place. A cross ✗ indicates mispronounced phoneme /w/ in the particular word. As there were 25 tested words and nine learners, it means that there were 225 occurrences of the tested words in total during each testing.

Further, the total percentage and number of correctly pronounced individual words is shown on the right side of the tables and also the percentage and number of the tested words correctly pronounced by individual learners. This can be called a success rate and is shown at the bottom of the tables.

The lowest line is called a final position and it shows how well the learners were doing. The learner who took 1st place pronounced the most tested words correctly.

Table 7 and Table 8 are the basic outcomes of the research and all further commentaries result from them.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	correctly prounounced words %	no.
queen	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	67%	6
one	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	78%	7
white	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	78%	7
window	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	67%	6
queen	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	56%	5
always	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	11%	1
swinging	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	44%	4
swimming	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	33%	3
walks	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	22%	2
wood	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	22%	2
week	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	11%	1
when	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	44%	4
walks	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
wood	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
always	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
wears	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	22%	2
where	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
queen	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	44%	4
what	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	44%	4
swinging	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	22%	2
swimming	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	33%	3
sandwich	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	56%	5
watching	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
with	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
Will	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	22%	2
correctly prounounced words %	40%	24%	36%	64%	80%	72%	20%	8%	8%		
correctly prounounced words no.	10	6	9	16	20	18	5	2	2		
final position	4th	6th	5th	3rd	1st	2nd	7th	8th - 9th	8th - 9th		

Table 7: Results of the initial testing

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	correctly prounounced words %	no.
queen	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	56%	5
one	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	9
white	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	9
window	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	9
queen	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	22%	2
always	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	11%	1
swinging	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	22%	2
swimming	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
walks	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
wood	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
week	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	33%	3
when	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	67%	6
walks	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	44%	4
wood	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	22%	2
always	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	22%	2
wears	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
where	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	78%	7
queen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	67%	6
what	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	89%	8
swinging	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	44%	4
swimming	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	33%	3
sandwich	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	33%	3
watching	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	67%	6
with	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	89%	8
Will	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	33%	3
correctly prounounced words %	28%	60%	52%	68%	88%	60%	36%	24%	40%		
correctly prounounced words no.	7	15	13	17	22	15	9	6	10		
final position	8th	3rd - 4th	5th	2nd	1st	3rd - 4th	7th	9th	6th		

Table 8: Results of the final testing

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As one of the aims of the research was to find out if Jazz Chants can help learners improve their pronunciation, it appears to be appropriate to compare results of both initial and final testings from various points of view. They are closely related and in my opinion, they should be analysed together. A comparison of both tables undoubtedly provides several interesting possibilities of interpretation which I will now present, interpret and comment on.

For example, the results can be analysed from the point of view of particular learners. Graph 2 shows if the individual learners´ pronunciation improved or worsened.
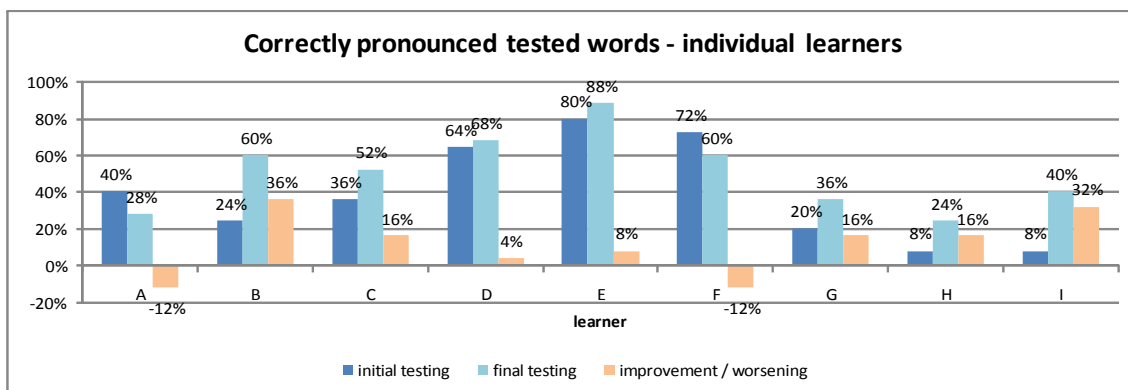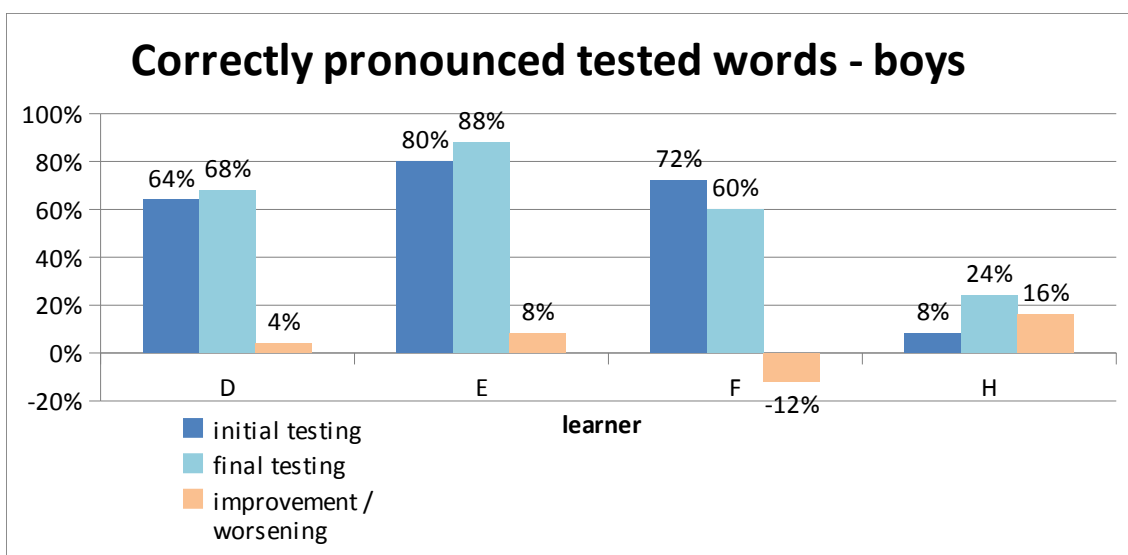

Graph 2: Correctly pronounced tested words - individual learners

Table 7 shows that seven learners´ pronunciation of the tested words improved, in two cases very significantly (increase by 36% and 32% of correctly pronounced tested words). On the other hand, in two cases the pronunciation worsened by 12%.

Comments:

We can observe an overall slight or fairly significant improvement and only a not very significant worsening by 12%, which is represented by three words. The worsening meant for Boy F a drop from the 2nd final position to the 3rd – 4th. However, Girl A dropped by four grades – from the 4th to the 8th position (for final positions see Table 7 and Table 8).

Now a logical question may arise: who was better at pronunciation – boys or girls? In the following part the boys´ and girls´ results are presented in separate graphs.

Graph 3: Correctly pronounced tested words - boys
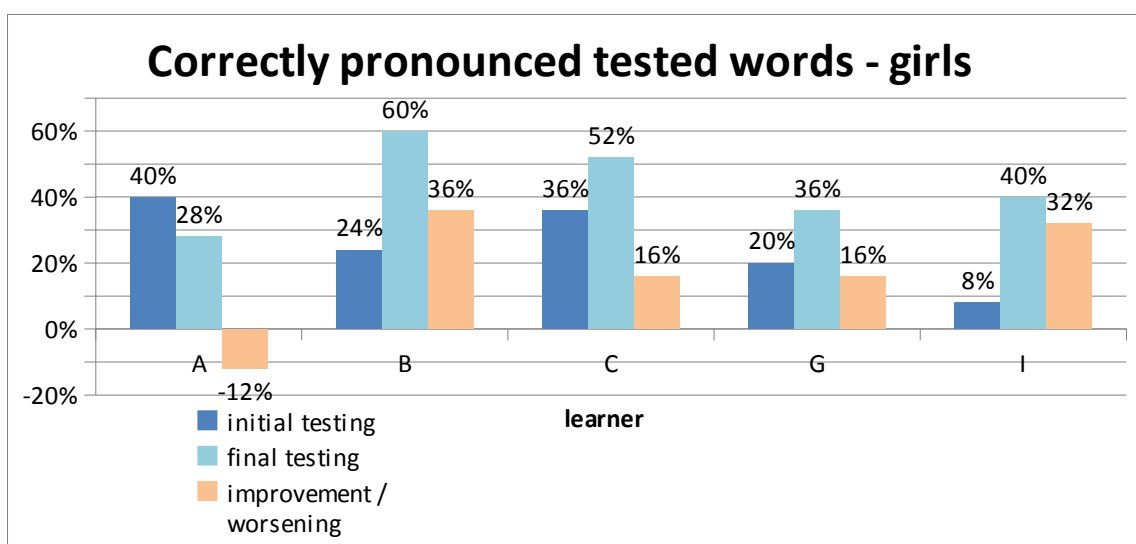
Graph 4: Correctly pronounced tested words - girls

Graph 3 and Graph 4 show that the four boys´ pronunciation differed a lot when comparing their performances mutually (the boys D, E and F being the "top three" and the boy H being the last). On the other hand, it practically remained the same with respects to their final positions after both initial and final testings. The girls´ performance does not show as big difference the boys´ perfomance.
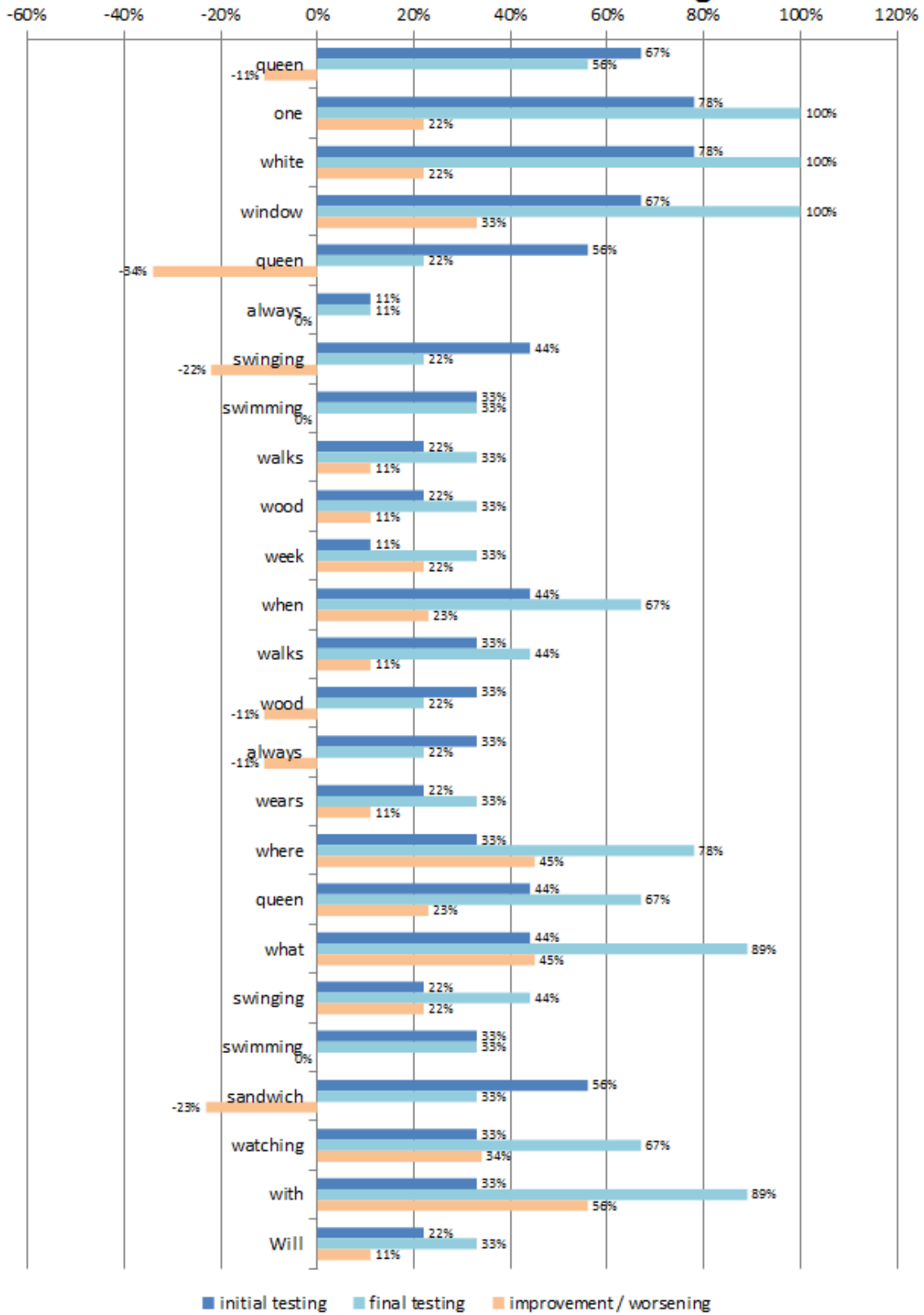
Comments:

Mgr. Šnebergerová confirmed that the performance of the boy H in English is fairly poor in general, which might explain his results. However, his pronunciation still

slightly improved (8% and 24% of correctly pronounced words in the initial and final testing). From the tested group´s point of view we can call the girls´ pronunciation average, it was somewhere between the best and the worst boys´ performance and except the girl A their final positions did not change much. Regarding all these results we could say that boys pronounce better than girls do but I think that the representative sample of nine learners does not give sufficient information to make definite conclusions. It only applies for this group in this particular research. Nevertheless, a comparison of girls´ and boys´ performance might be a suitable topic for further research.

After the results from the learners´ point of view have been examined, let us take a close look at particular tested words. We can analyse them and try to deduce some conclusions. For example, we can decide, which one was the "most successful", it means which appeared to be least problematic for the learners and was pronounced correctly most often. Table 9 shows a comparison of correct pronunciation of particular tested words in the initial and final testings.

Results of the initial and final testing


	initial testing	final testing	improvement / worsening
queen	67%	56%	-11%
one	78%	100%	22%
white	78%	100%	22%
window	67%	100%	33%
queen	56%	22%	-34%
always	11%	11%	0%
swinging	44%	22%	-22%
swimming	33%	33%	0%
walks	22%	33%	11%
wood	22%	33%	11%
week	11%	33%	22%
when	44%	67%	23%
walks	33%	44%	11%
wood	33%	22%	-11%
always	33%	22%	-11%
wears	22%	33%	11%
where	33%	78%	45%
queen	44%	67%	23%
what	44%	89%	45%
swinging	22%	44%	22%
swimming	33%	33%	0%
sandwich	56%	33%	-23%
watching	33%	67%	34%
with	33%	89%	56%
Will	22%	33%	11%

Graph 5: Results of the initial and final testing

The well arranged graph clearly depicts that the words correctly pronounced most often were *one, white, window, what, with* and *where* (100% - 78%), namely in the final testing. Pronunciation of all the words except *queen, swinging, wood, always* and *sandwich* improved.

Comments:

It is evident that the best pronounced words are those most frequently used in everyday life. From the learning point of view, they are basic words from vocabulary areas that the learners come across in the initial parts of their learning (colours, numbers, question words, prepositions). We can suppose that they are familiar with them.

In my opinion, the main and the most important result is the number of the tested words correctly pronounced by all learners during both initial and final testings. Their comparison indicates if the research was successful or not and, in fact, it answers the research question *Can Jazz Chants help primary learners improve their pronunciation of the phoneme /w/?*

Correctly pronounced tested words all learners - initial testing

137
61%

88
39%
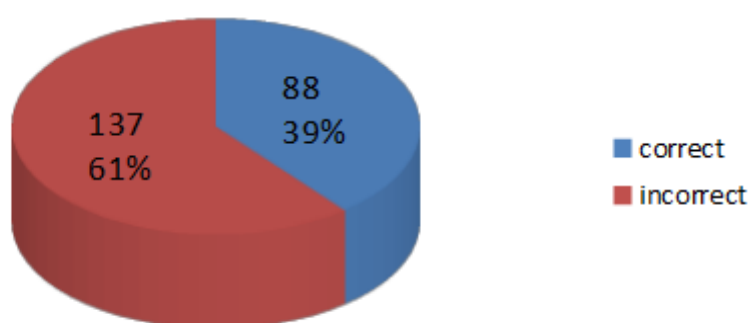
■ correct
■ incorrect

Graph 6: Correctly pronounced tested words of all learners – initial testing

Correctly pronounced tested words
## all learners - final testing
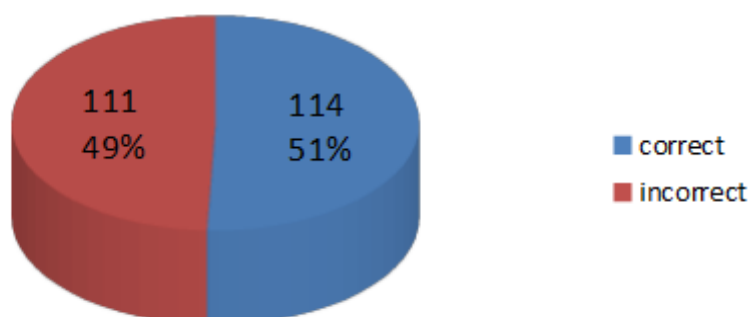
Graph 7: Correctly pronounced tested words of all learners – final testing

It is obvious at first sight that the number of 88 correctly pronounced tested words in the initial testing increased by 26 and in the final testing reached the number of 114. The number of 26 represents 12% from the total of 225 tested words.

<u>Comments:</u>

These results indicate that the pronunciation of all the tested words improved in average. In my opinion, it entlitles us to claim that the credit for this improvement can be attributed to Jazz Chants. On the base of this result it can be concluded that working with Jazz Chants actually did help the learners improve their pronunciation of the phoneme /w/.

Finally, I will analyze if there is a direct connection between practising the words containing the phoneme /w/ in Jazz Chants and potential improvement of their pronunciation. Let us take a close look at the words which appeared in the story and at the same time they were practised in Jazz Chants. How much has the learners´ pronunciation of these words improved?
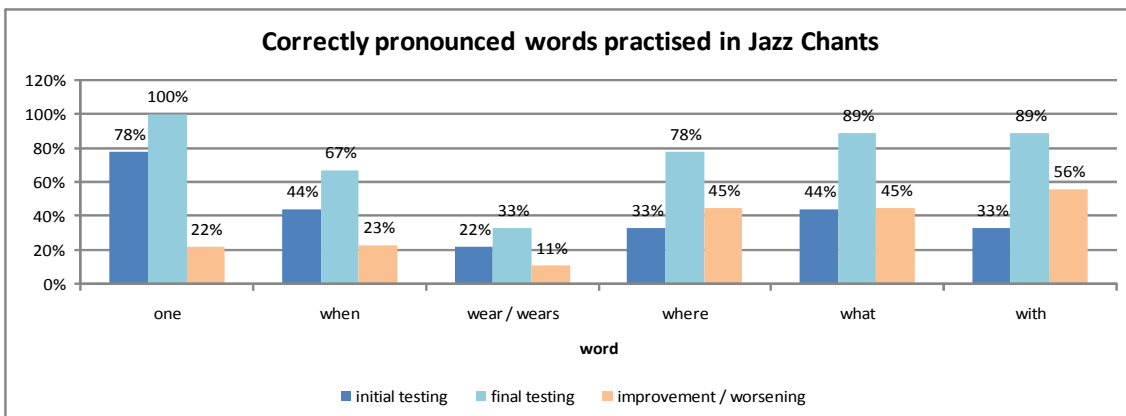
Graph 8: Correctly pronounced tested words practised in Jazz Chants

Note: Some of the words appeared in the chants many times, some of them only once or twice. The tested words occurring in the chants and the number of their occurrence are listed in the subchapter 3.3 EXPERIMENT.

The results show that the pronunciation of words actively practised in Jazz Chants increased in all cases. The increase varies from 11% (*wear / wears*) to 56% (*with*). The pronunciation of the word *one* only increased by 22%, on the other hand its success rate in final testing was 100%.

Comments:

Not surprisingly, it turned out that the learners´ pronunciation of all the words which had been practised in Jazz Chants improved, sometimes very significantly. While the success rate of pronunciation of all the tested words increased by 12%, the success rate of pronunciation of the particular tested words practised in Jazz Chants increased by 34% in average. This is quite an imposing number, but not unexpected, if we consider, how many times the learners heard and pronounced the words during working with Jazz Chants. I think it is a fair evidence that the more practice the learners have, the better their results are, which of course does not apply for this research only but in general. Besides that, all of these words (maybe except of *wear*) are very frequent and the learners are likely to pronounce them hundreds of times in the future. If Jazz Chants learnt during this research helped the learners improve it, I think it can be considered an additional merit.

4.1.1 OTHER FINDINGS

The purpose of the research was to test the learners´ pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ in the tested words. However, I spotted some other interesting facts whilst they were reading, that are worth describing and commenting on.

The girl C was reading quite fast and confidently during both initial and final testing. However, her pronunciation was very "Czech-like". As I noticed, in general, she failed to pronounce most typical English phonemes which do not appear in the Czech language, such as /ð/, /θ/ or /æ/ and also /w/. As a result, her score was quite low.

On the other hand, the boy E was reading very slowly, I would say with deliberation. He often paused when reading and corrected himself. Yet his pronunciation sounded much more natural and "English-like" and he was also the most successful in pronouncing the phoneme /w/ correctly in both initial and final testings.

Comments:

The results show that reading fast and confidently does not automatically mean that the learners will read well. I think that despite the low speed of reading, the boy E showed he had "a better ear" for foreign languages (Kenworthy, p. 4-8). The girl C´s pronuncion was perfectly intelligible for the "Czech ear", however, I believe she might have considerable problems to be understood by native English speakers. In comparison with her pronunciation, the boy E would probably be more intelligible for a native speaker.

Learners were above average successful in pronouncing correctly a phrase *one white window* (78%, 78% and 67% in initial testing, 100%, 100% and 100% in final testing).

Comments:

It seems that a close location of the tested items, moreover with the phoneme /w/ at the beginning, helped the learners to pronounce them correctly. In other words, a positive transfer came in useful.

Many of the learners failed to pronounce correctly the words *very* and *every* in

the phrases *always very happy* and *in the wood every week*. They pronounced /'werɪ /
and /'ewrɪ /.

Comment:

The reason for this phenomenon is the same as in the previous case. The
phoneme /w/ in words preceding the words *very* and *every* negatively influenced the
learners´ pronunciation of these words. This phenomenon is called interference.
However, it was not a subject of investigation, therefore I did not register it.

The learners often confused the words *swing* and *swim* so that they read *She
likes swimming in the garden and swimming in the river.*

Comments:

This mistake is quite understandable as both words look similar and the phrase
swim in the garden might seem meaningful to the learners. Anyway, this fact was not
important for me as the subject of my testing was the phoneme /w/ and I did not correct
their pronunciation.

The learners often incorrectly pronounced the word *with* as if it was *witch*. At
this point Mgr. Šnebergerová corrected them several times.

Comments:

Mgr. Šnebergerová confirmed after the lesson that this was a very common
mistake the learners made. She also stated that another pair of words easily confused
was *kitchen* and *chicken*. I agree with her, those words might seem very similar to the
learners. Besides that, based on my own experience, *with* and *witch* sometimes causes
troubles even to adult learners.

4.2 QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was a supplementary research tool and the learners filled it in
after the final testing. They were told they did not have to sign their names. When
answering Question 2, they could tick or write more answers. They were also asked to
be honest and write their own opinions (for the original version as well as the English
translation see Appendix 10). All nine learners present in class filled them in.
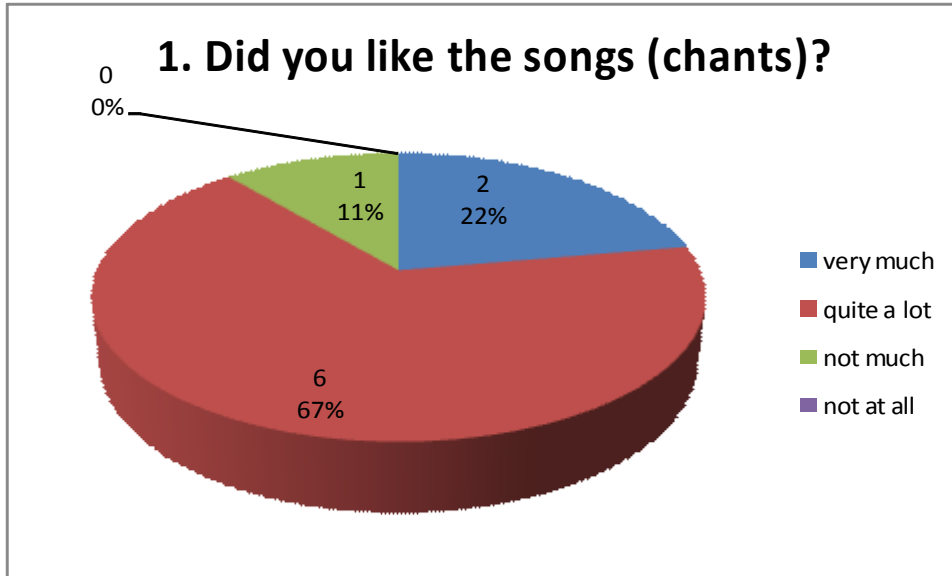
Graph 9: Questionnaire - results of Question 1

The majority of 67% of learners liked the chants quite a lot. 11% did not like them very much and one did not like them much. Nobody disliked them.

Comments:

Most learners stated that they liked the chants quite a lot. This is good because it would be difficult to expect them all to like it. Still certain space remains to make chants more attractive for the learners so that they perceive them even more positively.
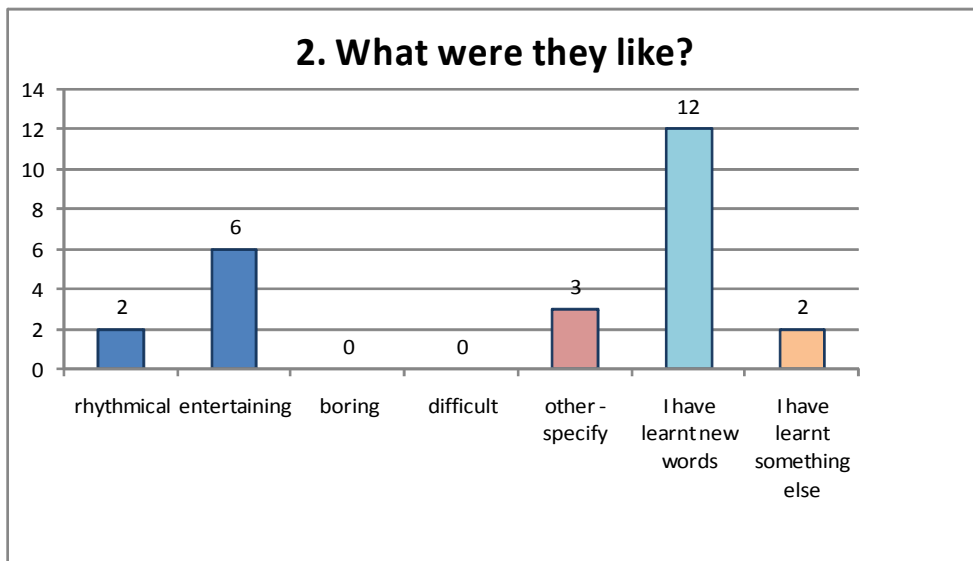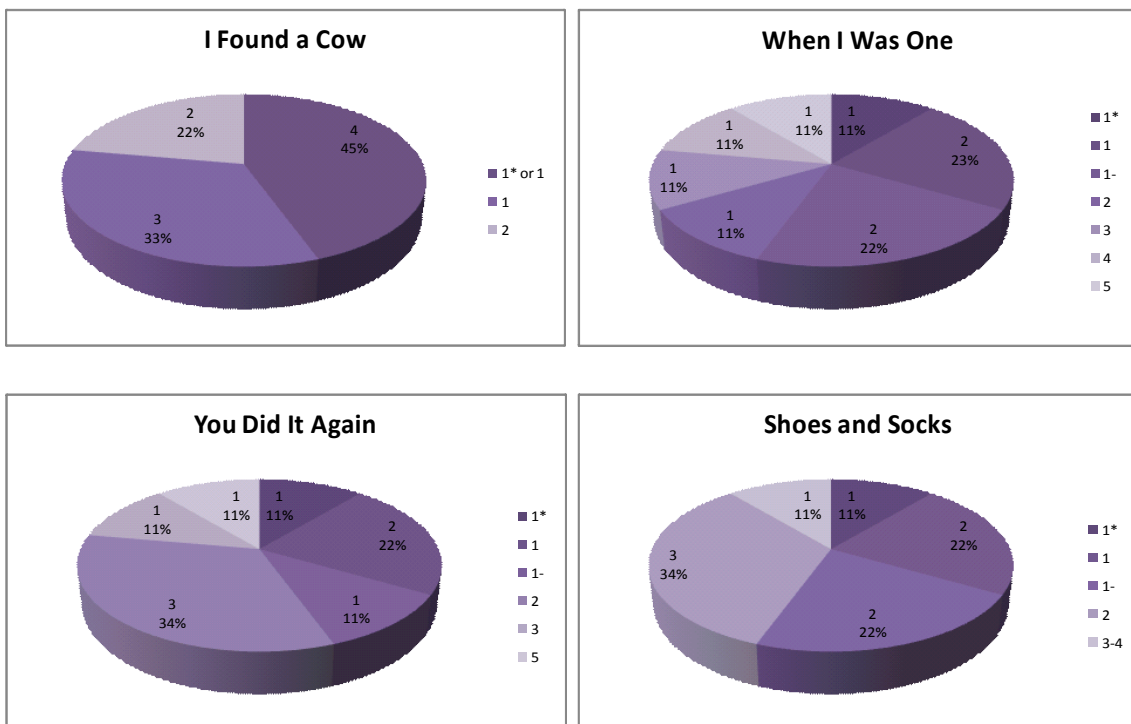

Graph 10: Questionnaire - results of Question 2

Altogether they stated that they had learnt 12 new words, such as *swing* (3 times), *gloves* (twice), *hen* (once), *garden* (3 times), *crown* (twice) and *queen* (once). They also stated they had learnt to sing English songs or recite English poems.

Comments:

Most learners thought that the chants were entertaining. This is good because they are in general intended as a natural didactic tool. The learners are supposed to learn various aspects of language without thinking about them too much. When Mgr. Šnebergerová checked the completed questionnaires, she was a bit angry with the learners saying that they should definitely be familiar with words such as *glove*, *garden* or *crown*. Some learners said that these were newly learnt words. It is possible that they have already forgotten them and were reminded of them again when working with Jazz Chants.

3. Mark the chants according to your preference (1 – 5, as if at school :)

Graph 11: Questionnaire - results of Question 3

Notes: *1* or 1 is a mark of a particularly high performance*

1- is a mark of a slightly worse performance than that marked with 1

3-4 marks a limit performance between 3 and 4

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The four graphs present the learners´ preference for particular chants. Only two marks of 5, one mark of 4, one mark of 3-4 and two marks of 3 were given. The rest of the chants were assessed marks 1 or 2.

When analysing the results of Question 3, I decided to take account of "partial" marks which the learners had awarded the chants. The mark of 1- was given weight of 1.25 points and the mark of 3-4 was given weight of 3.5 points. After taking this into account the results showed the following.

chant	average mark
Jazz Chant 1: I Found a Cow	1.2
Jazz Chant 2: When I Was One	2.1
Jazz Chant 3: You Did It Again!	2.0
Jazz Chant 4: Shoes and Socks	1.7

Table 10: Average mark - all chants

Comments:

The results show that the learners perceived the chants quite positively and apart from a very few exceptions they assessed the chants with good marks. Still it is obvious that they preferred some chants to others. Chant 1 and Chant 4 were assessed slightly better. I assume it is due to the rhythmical accompaniment which was fairly strong and Mgr. Šnebergerová confirmed that the learners appeared to be chanting these two chants more enthusiastically. No two questionnaires were the same, it proves that the learners were not copying and expressed their own opinions.

I instructed the learners that they did not have to sign the questionnaires as I supposed that the feeling of anonymity would enable them to express their opinions more openly. Accordingly, they did not sign them, except two girls. Now a question arises, what would happen if they were asked to sign them. Maybe some more interesting findings would arise when analysing the learners subjective feelings about the chants with regard to their objective performance in initial and final testings. On the basis of results in Table 10 we can also answer the second research question: *How do the learners feel about Jazz Chants?* As I think that if the worst average mark

assessed by the learners was 2.1, it can be concluded that the learners feel Jazz Chants positively, as a useful and entertaining part of an English lesson.

Chapter 5: IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter I will state what I consider to be the pedagogical implications of my work. Then I will analyse limitations of the research and finally I will outline some possibilities for further research on this topic.

5.1 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this research confirmed that Jazz Chants may present a valuable tool to enhance learners´ pronunciation. As they are a form of listening exercise, their pedagogical implications are much the same as those of listening exercises. Also similar rules should be followed when conducting a Jazz Chant activity. This means that learners should listen to chants more times, at least three or four times, but ideally as many times as necessary. They should have no texts available during the first listening otherwise it would turn into more reading than a listening activity. Successful conducting of Jazz Chants also requires some kind of a lead-in activity to pre-teach vocabulary and set the context.

Jazz Chants can be, by their very nature, attractive for the learners. They represent a complex activity. Lexical, grammatical and phonological aspets are well-balanced and presented in a natural context, and can therefore enhance the learners´ awareness of the language as a whole. Apart from that, they are invaluable in terms of teaching various aspects of pronunciation, such as connected speach, vowel reduction, word stress or intonation. The learners seemed to preferr the chants which were rhythmically accompanied.

It was useful to take advantage of children´s natural curiosity and enthusiasm and let them actively participate in the lesson. This became apparent during the situation when some learners wanted to lead the chanting for their classmates or ask them questions during practising Chant 4 (Shoes and Socks). Such an approach stimulates learners´ activity and increases effectiveness of teaching.

5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Although the research was planned with as much care as possible, certain limitations showed up during it. The most limiting factor of the research was a relatively

low number of learners in the tested group and this is the main reason why the conclusions cannot be generalised too much. A bigger representative sample would have certainly provided a more reliable basis for conclusions. Furthermore, the period of four lessons (actually only parts of them) was rather limiting, too. Ideally the time for working with the chants should have been extended. Unfortunately it was not possible for this research.

Obviously, it would be more appropriate if the learners could have been recorded. Although simultaneous registration of the results was carried out reliably, it might be interesting to keep the recording for future reference – either for the purpose of future research or for the learners themselves to listen to their own reading after some time (e. g. one year).

Next, it should be pointed out that Jazz Chants originally express Standard American English. We should realize the many ways in which American English differs from British English, especially in pronunciation but also in grammar or vocabulary. This fact has to be taken into consideration when choosing the aspect of language we want to focus on. However, in terms of this research this difference did not represent any limitation because the phoneme /w/ is pronounced the same in both British and American English.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Apart from limitations, also several ideas for further research arose during working with Jazz Chants, which are worth mentioning here.

It might be interesting to carry out the additional testing after practising some more Jazz Chants. A comparison of three outcomes would probably give very interesting and more reliable conclusions.

As it was said in The Method chapter, the learners in the tested group were more gifted in English. The observation using the very same materials and method could also be carried out in other classes, e. g. a normal or even mixed-ability class.

Another suggestion is to engage a native speaker in the research, especially in assessment of the learners´ performance. The native speaker´s ear might be able to precisely distinguish and evaluate more subtle nuances in pronunciation of phonemes

such as /ð/, /θ/, /əʊ/ or /æ/, which may also be potentially problematic for Czech learners of English.

More experienced users of chants may find it challenging to create their own chants or songs. Graham (2006) offers detailed instructions in her book *Creating Chants and Songs.*

This chapter outlined pedagogical implications of the research as well as its limitations and briefly described some suggestions for further research. The last chapter will summarise the main results.

Chapter 6: CONCLUSION

The topic of this thesis were Jazz Chants and their use in teaching pronunciation to Czech primary learners of English. The research focused on correct pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ at fourth graders. Pedagogical observation was carried out to test the learners´ initial level of pronunciation of the phoneme /w/. Then an experiment was conducted. Its content was to teach four Jazz Chants focusing on words containing the phoneme /w/ to the learners in order to improve their pronunciation of this phoneme. Then the second part of observation was undertaken. It aimed to find out by means of final testing if the learner´s pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ improved. As the last step, the learners completed a small questionnaire which aimed to find out their feeling about Jazz Chants. The questionnaire was the third research tool.

The learners showed a high level of interest in Jazz Chants, they actively participated in the lesson and in the supplementary questionnaires they evaluated Jazz Chants on the whole positively. Findings from the objective analysis of the observation results show that the success rate of pronunciation of all the tested words increased by 12%. However, the success rate of pronunciation of the particular tested words practised in Jazz Chants increased by 34% in average. In my opinion, this result proves usefulness and effectiveness of Jazz Chants as a part of language teaching in terms of enhancing the learners´ pronunciation. Nevertheless, some interesting issues arose during conducting the research which may present suggestions for further work with Jazz Chants and for further research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Story

The queen lives in a big tower.

The tower has got one white window.

The queen is always very happy.

She likes swinging in the garden and swimming in the river.

She walks in the wood every week, too.

When she walks in the wood, she always wears her beautiful crown.

Where is the queen now?

What is she doing?

She isn´t swinging in the garden.

She isn´t swimming in the river.

She is in her room eating a sandwich and watching TV with her dog Will.
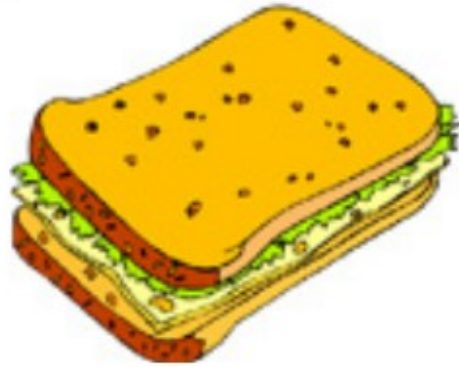
Appendix 2 – Flashcards (part 1)

queen

tower

crown

swing

river

happy

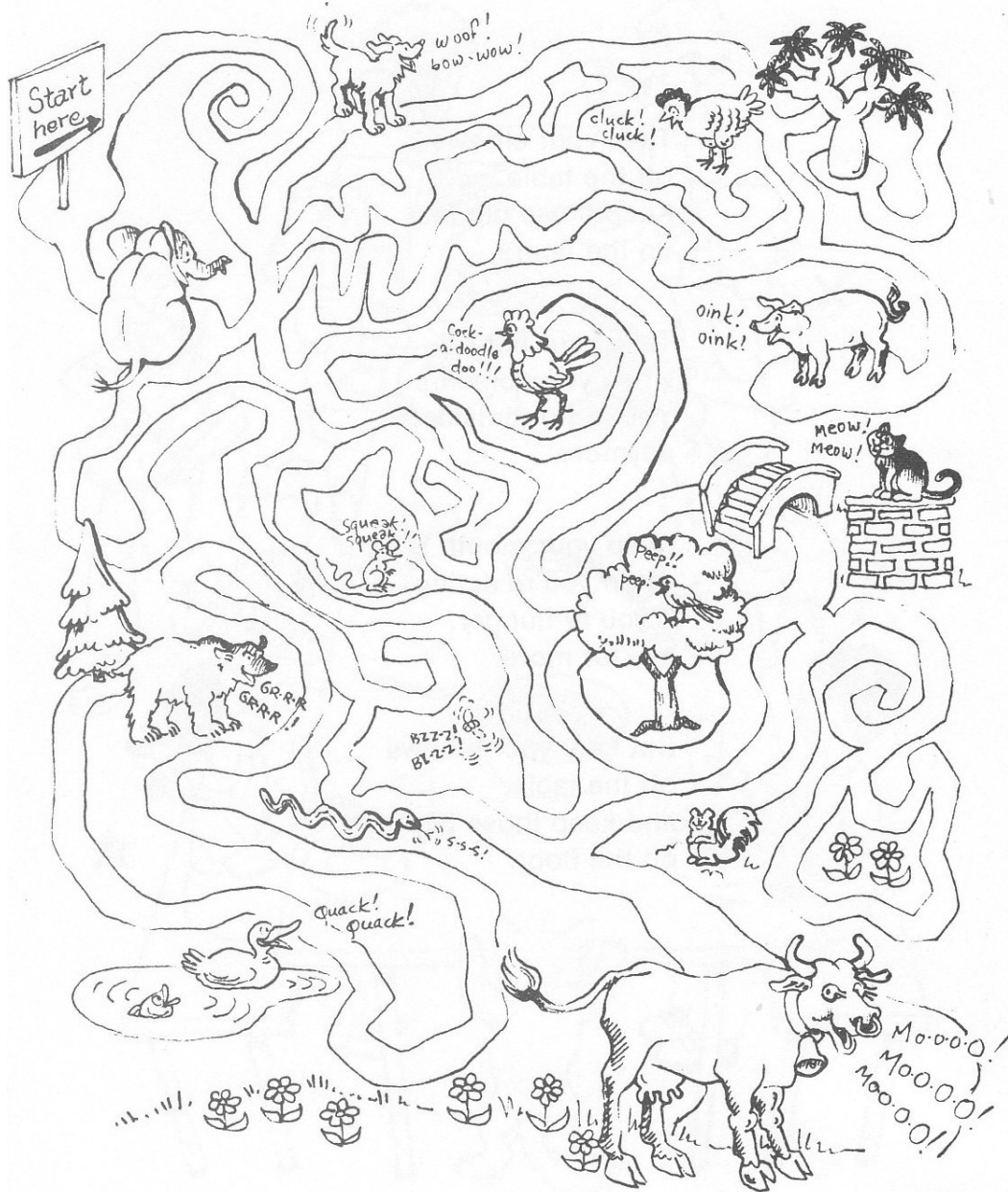Appendix 2 – Flashcards (part 2)

room

sandwich

TV

dog Will

wood

window

Appendix 3 – Observation sheet

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
queen										
one										
white										
window										
queen										
always										
swinging										
swimming										
walks										
wood										
week										
when										
walks										
wood										
always										
wears										
where										
queen										
what										
swinging										
swimming										
sandwich										
watching										
with										
Will										

I Found a Cow

Find the cow.

Appendix 5 – Chant 1 – text

I Found a Cow

I found a cow!
How?
I found a cow!
How?
I found a bear!
Where?
I found a bear!
Where?
I found a hen!
When?
I found a hen!
When?
I found a cow.
I found a bear.
I found a hen.
When?
I found a hen.
I found a cow.
I found a bear.
Where?
I found a bear.
I found a hen.
I found a cow.
How?
I found a bear.
I found a hen.
I found a cow.
Wow!

Appendix 6 – Chant 2 – text

When I Was One

When I was one
it wasn't much fun.
                    What did you do
                    when you were two?

When I was two
I learned to ski.
                    What did you do
                    when you were three?

When I was three
it was a bore.
                    What did you do
                    when you were four?

When I was four
I learned to drive.
                    What did you do
                    when you were five?

When I was five
I played with sticks.
                    What did you do
                    when you were six?

When I was six
it was really heaven.
                    What did you do
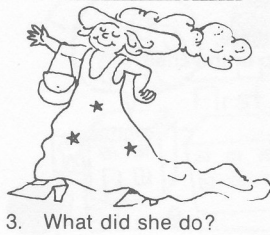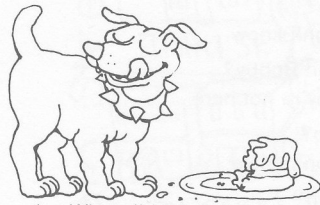   when you were seven?

When I was seven
I learned to skate.
                    What did you do
                    when you were eight?

When I was eight
it was really great,
but when I was one
it wasn't much fun.

Appendix 7 - Chant 3 – worksheet

You Did It Again!

What did she do? She broke it.

1. What did he do?

2. What did they do?

3. What did she do?

4. What did he do?

Appendix 8 – Chant 3 - text

You Did It Again!

You did it again!

What did I do?

You did it again!

What did I do?

I told you not to do it,
and you did it again!

I'm sorry.
I'm sorry.

You broke it!

What did I break?

You took it!

What did I take?

You lost it!

What did I lose?

You chose it!

What did I choose?

I told you not to do it,
and you did it again!

I'm sorry.
I'm sorry.

You wore it!

What did I wear?

You tore it!

What did I tear?

I told you not to do it,
and you did it again!

I'm sorry.
I'm sorry.

Appendix 9 – Chant 4 – text

Shoes and Socks

What do you wear on your head?
        A hat.
What do you wear on your hands?
        Gloves.

What do you wear on your feet?
        Socks.
        Shoes and socks.
        Shoes and socks.

What do you wear when it's cold?
        Socks.
        Shoes and socks.
        Shoes and socks.

What do you wear when it's warm?
        Socks.
        Shoes and socks.
        Shoes and socks.

Where do you wear your hat?
        On my head.
Where do you wear your gloves?
        On my hands.
What do you wear on your feet?
        Socks.
        Shoes and socks.
        Shoes and socks.

Appendix 10 – Questionnaire

1. Líbily se ti popěvky (chanty)? Zakroužkuj:
hodně moc – docela ano – moc ne - vůbec ne

2. Jaké byly?
      rytmické
      zábavné
      nudné
      obtížné
      (jiné – napiš jaké) …………………………………………………………………
      naučil/a jsem se nová slovíčka, například:……………………………………………
      naučil/a jsem se něco jiného: …..……………………………………………………

3. Oznámkuj chanty podle toho, jak se ti líbily (1 – 5, jako ve škole) 😊
I Found a Cow známka:
When I Was One   známka:
You Did It Again   známka:
Shoes and Socks   známka:

Questionnaire – English translation

1. Did you like the songs (chants)? Circle:
very much – quite a lot – not much – not at all

2. What were they like?

rhythmical

entertaining

boring

difficult

(other – specify) …..……………………………………………………

I have learnt new words, for example: …..………………………………………………….

I have learnt something else: …..…………………………………………………

3. Mark the chants according to your preference (1 – 5, as if at school :)

I Found a Cow mark:

When I Was One   mark:

You Did It Again   mark:

Shoes and Socks   mark:

SHRNUTÍ

Úkolem této práce je v prvé řadě zjistit, zda Jazz Chants mohou pomoci českým studentům angličtiny na prvním stupni ZŠ zlepšit výslovnost hlásky /w/. Dalším cílem je pak zjištění, co si žáci o Jazz Chantech myslí. Předmětem výzkumu byli žáci třídy 4.C na 14. ZŠ v Plzni, desetiletí začátečníci. Ke shromáždění dat byly použity tři výzkumné nástroje. Prvním byl experiment, jehož pomocí se ve třídě uvedly a procvičily Jazz Chanty zaměřené na hlásku /w/. Hlavním nástrojem pak bylo pedagogické pozorování sestávající z úvodního a závěrečného testování. Účelem obou testování bylo zjištění úrovně správné výslovnosti hlásky /w/. Zatímco úvodní testování proběhlo před experimentem, závěrečné se uskutečnilo po něm. Po závěrečném testování žáci vyplnili jednoduchý dotazník, který zjišťoval, co si žáci o Jazz Chantech myslí. Výsledky vyplývající z obou testování a dotazníku byly zanalyzovány a okomentovány. Kromě toho, že posloužily jako východisko pro učinění některých dalších zajímavých zjištění, umožnily zodpovědět výzkumné otázky.