

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

**Fakulta pedagogická
Katedra anglického jazyka**

Diplomová práce

**INFORMAČNÍ A KOMUNIKAČNÍ TECHNOLOGIE
VE VÝUCE ANGLIČTINY SE ZAMĚŘENÍM NA
VÝUKOVÉ PROGRAMY**

Bc. Tomáš Egri

Plzeň 2013

University of West Bohemia

**Faculty of Education
Department of English**

Thesis

**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHING WITH A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE
TEACHING APPLICATIONS**

Bc. Tomáš Egri

Plzeň 2013

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V Plzni dne 21. 6. 2013

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Tomáš Egri

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mgr. Gabriele Klečková, Ph.D., for her guidance, ideas, time and patience. Besides I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my mum and my sister for their unceasing support and encouragement throughout all my university studies.

ABSTRACT

Bc. Tomáš Egri. University of West Bohemia. June, 2013. Information and communication technologies in English language teaching with a focus on language teaching applications. Supervisor: Mgr. Gabriela Klečková, Ph.D.

This thesis deals with the implementation of ICT at Czech elementary schools. Reasons for including ICT in English classes are explained as well as information on types of educational software is given. The greatest importance is put on language learning applications and their use at Czech elementary schools. The presented research consists of two parts. The first part of the research provides an overview of current English language applications and points out the main strengths of such programs. The second part of the research, realized by the means of a questionnaire, explores attitudes, awareness, knowledge and opinions of Czech teachers of English about language teaching applications. Based on the results of both parts of the research, it is concluded that there are language applications for all six language skills and that these programs can have very different pricing and functions. In addition, the results have also shown that not many Czech teachers use language teaching applications in their lessons nowadays even if they think that the use of this kind of software is beneficial for teaching English.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Many language teachers are searching for new and entertaining ways of teaching. Contemporary technical and computer equipment at most of the Czech elementary schools provide them with an opportunities to make their lessons more varied. Computers enable teachers to utilize interesting and modern teaching tools. One of the possible teaching tools is language teaching applications which are also the main topic of this piece of work.

The objective of this thesis is to present information about ICT use in teaching English with focus on language teaching applications which can be used in Czech elementary schools. I have chosen this topic because I am interested in the use of such programs, which can be very helpful and suitable means of teaching. Moreover, there seem to be not so many sources and materials about the use of language teaching applications and this topic is not explored so much, especially in the Czech context.

The first chapter is *Theoretical Background*. It deals with general knowledge of the use of ICT at schools. There are covered several topics such as the use of ICT in teaching, advantages and disadvantages of ICT in language teaching, computer literacy, teachers and ICT, statistics of the use of software at Czech elementary schools and high schools, educational software in general. These pieces of information provide a solid understanding of the basic areas of ICT application.

The second chapter is *Research Methodology* and consists of two parts. The first part examines current software programs for teaching English. There are presented 18 language teaching applications with brief descriptions and fundamental information about each of them. The second part of this chapter is a questionnaire for Czech teachers of English. The questionnaire is composed of 10 questions and its primary goal is to obtain cognizance of the use of language teaching applications in teaching English at Czech elementary schools in terms of frequency of use, time dedication and overall awareness among teachers.

The next chapter is *Results and Commentaries*. In this chapter there is an analysis of outcomes of the research carried out. All the results are supported by graphs and commentaries, which discuss the findings and sum up the advantages and disadvantage of the use of language teaching applications at Czech elementary schools.

The following chapter is *Implications*. There is advice for teachers based on the results of the research. It explains why this research cannot be generalized too much, and discusses problems and weaknesses that were discovered in the process of doing the research. Moreover, there are suggestions on how this same study might productively be

expanded or improved and suggestions on other research studies addressing related research questions. The last chapter, *Conclusion*, summarizes the main ideas of this project.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The objective of the theoretical chapter is to provide necessary information about the topic of use of ICT and learning programs in teaching English. First, the topic of use of ICT in teaching is introduced and defined. There are four parts which present information about advantages and disadvantages of ICT in language teaching, computer literacy and teachers and ICT. In the next section of the theoretical chapter the info about educational software with its the most important versions is presented. Finally, there are two closely connected sections, the first one describes types of English learning software according to their language focus (vocabulary, grammar, speaking, pronunciation, reading, listening). The second one consists of the same subsections, but deals with an overview of the current software programs for teaching English.

Use of ICT in teaching

The exploitation of information and communication technology (ICT) such as internet software, DVD-ROMs, computer attachments and various video technology have created various transformation in the society. These modifications are not simply technical in nature, but more notably, structural in nature. Various major institutions in the society have transformed, and the various lifestyles have been influenced. However, the influence of ICT on education is a new phenomenon that has been felt as teachers incorporate the new technology into their instruction methods. In the early phases of the application of ICT in the learning process, most teachers at the elementary school level provided insights into the new technology. The purpose of studying the effect of ICT is to understand how the application of ICT alters the teachers' work, and what concern or issues that teachers have identified in the introduction of ICT (Elston, 2007).

The application of ICT in the learning process has gained support from different regions in the world. Within academic and economic circles, it is ordinary to hear of meetings, conferences and conversations being conducted in English. In fact, English is so widely spoken and regularly taught that it would be difficult to engage in any substantial activity without understanding the language. English has been transformed into the customary language for businesspeople and academics. Therefore, verbalizing it effortlessly has numerous benefits (Cheong, 2012).

Using technology in school is a very convenient way to strengthen and improve views, and mental attitudes that students have in education. For instance, students will be more inclined to work and enjoy working hard in class when technology is introduced. For example, when learning by use of projectors and visual films students will be interested to listen (Dawson, Heathcote, & Poole 2010).

The advantage of using computers to enhance learning can be seen in schools that have already introduced ICT in teaching. The technology used in teaching aspect shows that the level of concentration from students and the competence from teachers have improved and the societal magnitude can be claimed to go up. There are various functions and advantages that technology has. Unlike the old ways of teaching using books, technology, and by this one might mean usage of equipments such as data projectors, computers, youtube clips, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, has had a significant impact on students (Lytras, 2010).

Advantages and disadvantages of ICT in language teaching

Many non-native speakers around the world struggle to learn a new language. However, in their learning process, they make many oversights that are caused by their mother tongue. These mistakes can be corrected by instructors, but currently computers having appropriate educational software. Modern reviews of the studies that related to the impact of ICT on learners' inspiration levels, carried out by Cox, acknowledged a number of precise inspirational features, for example, enhanced dedication to the learning process, improved satisfaction and concentration, heightened self-esteem and boosts in confidence and independence (Cox, 2007). Some of the investigations focused on the use of portable computers within one academic year by 300 students from different primary and secondary schools. The examiners discovered that the greater part of the instructors reported advanced levels of motivation among the students and an enhanced attitude to work when the students were using computers.

This incentive, leading to improved self-esteem, was particularly visible for the students in schools having children with special needs. Other studies by the UK impact group on the impact of ICT on children's learning process discovered that the pupils' dedication to their work was improved by the use of ICT. More recent studies done by Robertson (2005) on computer-related approaches of teachers and pupils in secondary schools were evaluated by questionnaire articles such as "I prefer working with computers"

and "I would enjoy working with computers" illustrated that instructors and students held a positive attitude towards computers.

The application of ICT in the classroom can have numerous advantages, but conversely, it can have various disadvantages. The introduction of ICT in teaching leads to faster information gathering that can allow scholars to present materials in a more academic fashion with better organization of graphics and literature than using a traditional blackboard (Cox, 2007). ICT can be applied as the major tool in the teaching process, as a teaching aid for evaluating students, as an independent learning instrument and for e-learning purposes for overseas individuals. Using these new advancements in technology, learners are aggressively interested by the teaching process and the result is a more refined learning experience, increased concentration and subsequently lesser delinquency and discipline cases in the classroom (Robertson et al, 2005).

The application of ICT in administering lessons is not limited to the educational programs only, but the internet can also be used. In most instances, the internet serves as a very useful resource, but most of the time, people waste precious time surfing for leisure. However, the internet is a great resource for information only when the instructor is able to regulate the content that students can access in order to find beneficial material for students. Similar consideration must be given when selecting an educational software package that will aid the instructors. When selecting, the issue of suitability and affordability surface as the school has a budget for such expenses and the administration will need to ratify that the software will help their students (Watson, 2003).

Teaching using ICT in itself does not contribute much towards achieving curriculum goals because besides helping in the preparation of classes, an excellent understanding of the internet allows instructors to help the students in their classroom activities that require the internet (Robertson et al, 2005). Apart from that, professional development is beneficial in updating the expertise and improving the possibility of career advancement among teachers. Among other uses, the internet can be used to facilitate a joint discussion group, purchase access to a news group, enroll in classes, and communicate regularly with academic colleagues.

The internet can be used to increase value, administer the activities in the classroom and fine-tune the planning process. Most instructors prefer to switch to ICT when teaching because they prefer the change, improvements and new dimensions that ICT introduces into teaching. When learning, the internet motivates students in diverse ways and by providing internet during the learning process, it acts as a motivational drive especially to

those bored by the conventional methods of delivering information. Therefore, ICT enhances the shift of information from the short-term to the long-term memory (Watson, 2003). The internet also enables us to inspire some of the disoriented learners in class and thereby hastening the process of information assimilation.

Computer literacy

Computer literacy can be defined as the ability to successfully perform numerous tasks using a computer. The ability to be able to use computers effectively has evolved to become a requirement for individuals in all sectors. Within the education sector, teachers and students alike have been forced to embrace ICT in their learning and research process. One problematic aspect of many computer literacy programs is that they depend rather heavily on memorization. Different systems have different and specific methods of performing functions, and when students are introduced to another system, they may become confused. However, long standing companies such as Apple and Microsoft have developed programs that are compatible and easy to use (Watson, 2003).

Learners have the opportunity to grasp imperative technological abilities that are captured in a continuous, efficient application of ICT in the education process. However, even instructors need some support to develop these teaching skills, and here the application of ICT becomes crucial. The instructors are required to prepare the classroom environment and prepare the learning chances for pupils. Contemporary schools need to have skilled teachers who can use technology correctly and understand the role that technology plays in enriching the learning process.

According to the facts mentioned, UNESCO launched standardized guidelines for implementing ICT within the learning process. UNESCO proposed three main approaches that were founded on human capacity development (Cheong, 2012). These approaches include knowledge creation, knowledge deepening and technology literacy. These methods were closely related to the components within the educational system that include curriculum, policy, teacher training, ICT and pedagogy (Cheong, 2012). It is however imperative to realize that ICT greatly motivates teachers by giving them a positive attitude towards their work, by simplifying their tasks and by providing a different perspective toward the whole learning process.

Diagnostic testing is a relatively new field that has been introduced by ICT into the learning sector. More and more children have started depending on private tuition, and this

is administered through ICT. With the increased intake of children across most schools, the conventional instruments for running diagnostic testing on students were rendered useless. In their place, programs such as computer based diagnostic testing were introduced into schools. These tools were necessary in finding out what aspect of a student needed improvement and this was difficult to do manually (Watson, 2003). Conversely, ICT can monitor individual aspects of a student such as cognition and comprehension. ICT has also been used for remedial teaching purposes.

When common mistakes are discovered by the teacher, a Remedial-teaching program can be implemented by the teacher that can be online or offline. ICT is also crucial in the evaluation process through digital collection of information (Cheong, 2012). Computer literacy is a crucial syllabus in schools, from primary to high school. As the role of technology continues to permeate all features of life, students require computer knowledge that is essential in plotting a course in the scientific world with expertise and accountability. Computer literacy in schools holds the possibility of leveling out the playing field and offer students from different backgrounds the chance to learn more about ICT.

The application of technology in education is without doubt a proper advancement in the teaching profession. The role played by the teacher in the modern ICT system has also changed. The new educational environment is plagued by an insatiable volume of information that is presented to the students, and this has increased the pace of learning every day (Elston, 2007). However, it is definite that the role played by instructors will still be significant and irreplaceable aspect of the educational process in spite of the tremendous application of ICT in teaching.

On a fundamental level, computer literacy instructs students on the proper way to use computers and maximize on the potential of computer software. Nevertheless, the main academic role of computer literacy transcends basic computer expertise. Computer literacy also covers areas that have a broad range of goals such as learning how to use equipment such as mice and keyboard, as well as investigating information on how to use the internet (Cheong, 2012). Technology within the classroom or the computer lab engages the students actively in the learning process.

Teachers and ICT

There has been a drastic difference in the way how teachers look at ICT and on one hand where the surveys suggest that a decade ago not many teachers were in the favour of ICT. A research shows that there has been a change in acceptance of ICT in the last few years. Nowadays most of the teachers strongly support the use of ICT in education. However, there is still a large number of people involved in the education industry who feel that there is a lot of scope for improvement in ICT (Lytras, 2010).

Currently, the teaching profession is one of the most challenging careers where the knowledge bank grows rapidly. Current technologies demand that teachers acquire the necessary skills to apply these technologies properly in their teaching. ICT makes the delivery of lessons easier and aid the learning process. These contemporary technologies offer teachers the chance to transform the learning experience of a language and make it simpler and more useful to students rather than just providing the skills (Watson, 2003). The introduction of ICT can change the way teachers lecture in schools. Many states in the world have acknowledged the significance of ICT in learning and teaching, and have provided teachers with training programs that teach them to use technology as an instrument to improve the teaching process.

With the current infrastructure, class size, accessibility of instructors, teacher skills, training of instructors and other factors, it is next to impossible to attain all the goals. Furthermore, most of the instructors apply the lecture method that does not have the possibility of achieving the greater part of aforementioned goals (Elston, 2007). These objectives are multi-faceted in nature and therefore, multiple methods of achievement should be applied in an incorporated manner. Presently, ICT provides the best opportunity for these objectives to be realized. It is a recognized fact that not a single instructor is talented enough to provide updated and inclusive information in his or her own field.

Using ICT in the classroom can cover this gap because it can offer access to diverse sources of information. It will supply accurate information in a comprehensive manner and in different layouts with different cases. ICT also offers an online interactive option where students and instructors can switch their thoughts and opinions, and get explanations on any subjects from different professionals. ICT assists learners to widen their information base. ICT also provides diversity in the production of content that aids learners in attentiveness, better perception, and longer holding of information that is not possible through any other way (Elston, 2007). The students can get the chance to work on any live

tasks with pupils and professionals from other states. Some of the challenges that face ICT education in most developed and developing countries include infrastructure problems. Most regions lack access to power supply and other sources of energy and equipment necessary for running a computer lab. The number of qualified teachers that can guide students in computer studies is also wanting for most schools (Elston, 2007).

Statistics of use of software at Czech elementary schools and high schools

In the following section there are shown results of an ICT research in Czech schools that was conducted by the Czech School Inspection (Česká školní inspekce) in the school year 2011/2012. For the purposes of this diploma thesis I have chosen just results of the use of software that concern foreign languages. Official results contain percentages of many school subjects. However, for purposes of this thesis I have picked just results of foreign languages that are taught at Czech elementary schools and high schools.

Elementary schools (základní školy - ZŠ)

Use of software at Czech elementary schools. Most schools have the basic software for the use of interactive whiteboards. This software is usually Microsoft Office (an office suite of desktop applications). Teaching of ICT in schools is mostly focused on its components as a basis for further education, which is unfortunately not commonly developed as it is supposed to be. Moreover, the representation of educational software as well as multimedia textbooks and other multimedia data content that support teaching by using ICT is, with its 30,1 % in overall score, very low. The following Table 1 presents results of use of different kinds of software at Czech elementary schools.

Monitored indicator	ZŠ overall	small ZŠ	big ZŠ
MS Office	96,2 %	93,6 %	98,3 %
graphical editors	64,6 %	47,2 %	79,5 %
Integrated Development Environment	8,5 %	4,5 %	11,9 %
specialized software	30,1 %	22,7 %	36,5 %
SW for interactive whiteboards	90 %	81,8 %	97 %
e-learning	18,7 %	12,9 %	23,6 %

Table 1: Use of software at Czech elementary schools

Use of ICT at Czech primary schools. As visible from Table 2 bellow, ICT was used relatively seldom in teaching at primary schools, 66,6% of observations confirmed that ICT was not used in the lessons. When ICT was used, it was used in the form of *simple presentation of the curriculum by using ICT*. Foreign languages got 13,8% of observations with lesson ICT use in this area.

Primary schools - observations - subjects	The English language	Another foreign language (5x German, 3x Polish)	Foreign languages in total
Monitored indicators of the lesson course			
Number of observations	441	8	449
ICT was not used	66,4 %	75,0 %	66,6 %
simple presentation of the curriculum by using ICT	13,6 %	25,0 %	13,8 %
use of special software applications - without the direct use of pupils	6,1 %	0,0 %	6,0 %
use of special software applications - direct work of some pupils	7,7 %	0,0 %	7,6 %
use of special software applications - direct work of all of the pupils	6,1 %	0,0 %	6,0 %

Table 2: Use of ICT at Czech primary schools

Use of ICT at Czech lower-secondary schools. As Table 3 shows, at lower-secondary schools likewise at primary schools, ICT was mainly used in *simple presentation of the curriculum by using ICT*. In this section, languages were, with the result of 16,1%, slightly under the average score of all subjects (that is not stated in the table), which was 20,4% of observations with lesson ICT use.

Lower-secondary schools - observations - Subjects	The English language	The German language	Another foreign language (25x Russian, 7x French, 3x different one)	Foreign languages in total
Monitored indicators of the lesson course				
Number of observations	366	101	35	502
ICT was not used	65,8 %	79,2 %	62,9 %	68,3 %
simple presentation of the curriculum by using ICT	17,8 %	11,9 %	11,4 %	16,1 %
use of special software applications - without the direct use of pupils	6,6 %	5,0 %	8,6 %	6,4 %
use of special software applications - direct work of some pupils	5,7 %	1,0 %	11,4 %	5,2 %
use of special software applications - direct work of all of the pupils	4,1 %	3,0 %	5,7 %	4,0 %

Table 3: Use of ICT at Czech lower-secondary schools

High schools

The research was conducted in 836 high schools. It gathered results from 322 529 students who used 55 671 computers.

Use of software at Czech high schools. The findings in the area of software are shown in Table 4 on the next page. Almost all of the high schools have access to MS Office and the teaching of ICT is mostly focused on its applications. In addition, high schools continue in an extensive use of graphical editors and SW for interactive whiteboards.

Monitored indicator	High schools overall
MS Office	97,6 %
graphical editors	85,8 %
Integrated Development Environment	39,7 %
specialized software	66,1 %
SW for interactive whiteboards	80,2 %
e-learning	49,2 %

Table 4: Use of software at Czech high schools

Use of ICT at grammar schools. As we can see from Table 5, ICT was mostly used in the form of *simple presentation of the curriculum by using ICT* in grammar schools. Languages were, with the total score of 15,8 % of observations with lesson ICT use, under the grammar schools average that was 27,9 % for all subjects (it is not stated in the table).

Grammar schools observations - Subjects	The English language	The German language	Another foreign language (7x Russian, 8x French, 4x Spanish, 2x Latin, 1x Polish)	Foreign languages in total
Monitored indicators of the lesson course				
Number of observations	78	20	22	120
ICT was not used	73,1 %	85,0 %	86,4 %	77,5 %
simple presentation of the curriculum by using ICT	17,9 %	15,0 %	9,1 %	15,8 %
use of special software applications - without the direct use of pupils	6,4 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	4,2 %
use of special software applications - direct work of some pupils	1,3 %	0,0 %	4,5 %	1,7 %
use of special software applications - direct work of all of the pupils	1,3 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	0,8 %

Table 5: Use of ICT at Czech grammar schools

Use of ICT at Czech graduation vocational schools (s maturitou). Table 6 shows that in teaching in graduation vocational schools (s maturitou), ICT was used very similarly to grammar schools. *Simple presentation of the curriculum by using ICT* was mostly used in aesthetics, vocational practice, natural scientific and social science subjects, each of these got more than 30% (it is not in the table). The total average of this section was 25,1 % (also not mentioned in the table). Languages got 16,7 % of observations with lesson ICT use.

Vocational education with graduation observations - Subjects	The English language	The German language	Another foreign language (10x Russian, 6x French, 1x Spanish)	Foreign languages in total
Monitored indicators of the lesson course				
Number of observations	245	109	17	371
ICT was not used	75,9 %	85,3 %	88,2 %	79,2 %
simple presentation of the curriculum by using ICT	19,6 %	11,9 %	5,9 %	16,7 %
use of special software applications - without the direct use of pupils	2,4 %	1,8 %	5,9 %	2,4 %
use of special software applications - direct work of some pupils	2,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %	1,3 %
use of special software applications - direct work of all of the pupils	0,0 %	0,9 %	0,0 %	0,3 %

Table 6: Use of ICT at Czech graduation vocational schools (s maturitou)

Use of ICT at Czech vocational schools without graduation (bez maturity). As Table 7 indicates, in teaching in vocational schools without graduation (bez maturity), ICT was predominantly used in *simple presentation of the curriculum by using ICT* in natural scientific, social science, aesthetic and health education subjects (it is not stated in the

table). The percentage of ICT use of these subjects were from 25,9 % to 43,5 % and the total average of this section was 21,7 % (also not mentioned in the table). Languages obtained 13,8 % of observations with lesson ICT use.

Vocational education without graduation observations - Subjects	The English language	The German language	Foreign languages in total
Monitored indicators of the lesson course			
Number of observations	38	29	67
ICT was not used	88,9 %	79,3 %	84,6 %
simple presentation of the curriculum by using ICT	11,1 %	17,2 %	13,8 %
use of special software applications - without the direct use of pupils	0,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %
use of special software applications - direct work of some pupils	0,0 %	3,4 %	1,5 %
use of special software applications - direct work of all of the pupils	0,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %

Table 7: Use of ICT at Czech vocational schools without graduation (bez maturity)

Educational software in general

Every communication tool, as long as it is used properly, can be used for learning. Nowadays, multimedia tools are able to use several media and each of them can make a different contribution to the development of many aspects of students' intellect. In addition, they are also able to provide students with an approach to the same matters from various perspectives. Computers give us these merits, and thus it should be possible to take advantage of them in teaching.

According to these assets, it is possible to create software packages which, as stated Pontecorvo et al. (1989): "Are adapted to the various levels and knowledge and ability of students, enable students to consider and test different possible solutions to a given question, enable users to play an active role in the learning process, allow a greater personalization of the teaching or learning process than traditional media" (as cited in Caselli, Vallin, & Wunsch, 2005, p. 842).

To get the full benefit of definite resources of a medium, it needs to be used correctly. Computers themselves do not present any drawbacks, but their potential can be significantly limited if their use is not adapted to their objectives. A lot of it depends on the software. There have been made huge efforts to produce quality teaching programs that would be able to promote and guide self-teaching and to facilitate and create the accumulation of users' personal knowledge.

In my opinion, computer programs can be the best tools for students' learning, regardless of the subject they want to study for. Nowadays, there are a lot of educational software packages that can help the learners to improve their knowledge. Educational applications have a rather long history; they have been used at schools for many years. Vyas and Patel (2009) describe it by the following:

Several current CALL applications have a venerable history extending back decades. For instance, language learning software was first created in 1960 (when computers still took up whole rooms), concordancing starting in 1969, and the first artificial intelligence program specifically designed for language learning appeared in 1976. Computer games for language learning emerged in 1983, e-mail projects were used by 1988, and tasks using the internet as a knowledge resource were first reported in 1994 (very soon the internet became publicly available in 1992). (p. 89-90)

A lot of teachers and students use computer-based packages as classroom resources, and computer software is used in many types of learning activities. The methods, in which these educational packages are used differ with the context of their use, with different age levels, subject areas or classroom settings. Much of the software which is used at schools has been designed specifically for teaching purposes, but some of it is not intended for schools. However, it is used at schools because it suits the aims of teachers and students.

Versions of software

Educational software can be bought on a CD/DVD or can be downloaded from the internet. If you buy the software, you usually receive an installation CD or DVD with instructions on how to install the program. The second option is to download it from the internet, which means that we have all the data for installation and work with the program in an electronic form. The process of installation is very simple then, we just download the file on our hard drive and install the program.

If we are interested in buying some educational software, we need to consider how long we are going to use it for what purposes. The best explanation is a practical example. In the school educational plan we are supposed to teach graphics programs for two months. Zoner company provides a free trial version software for 60 days (the number of days is relative, companies can freely adjust their software license) without any functional limitations. It is clear that there is no need to order software for tens of thousands of crowns, but it is sufficient to install the trial version on the school computers and use it just for a few weeks until we finish our teaching topic, for which we need the software. In the following section, there are listed and described different versions of software packages, which are usually used at schools, according to their price and limitations.

Full version. This type of program is "the best" because it is not limited in time or in functions. The full version contains all the functionality of the software. The downside is that you have to buy the software and as it will be presented in the following chapters, software prices are not low.

Shareware. In comparison to the previous version, this solution is more sophisticated. It is a freely distributable software that gives each user the possibility to test whether it suits him/her or not. The trial time is usually a few days up to several months. If the user wants to continue working with the program, he/she is obligated to extend the license (or just register), which he/she must pay for.

Freeware. This kind of software is a bit similar to shareware, it is also free software, but the author of the program owns the copyright. It means that the user does not have full control of the program. The limitation of this kind of software is, for example, that the user cannot run updates, which is a quite necessary function in some sort of programs. In addition, freeware does not have all the functions of full version programs available as well as it cannot be used for commercial purposes. Therefore, freeware software is just a certain alternative to expensive paid licenses.

Trial version. Some manufacturers spread limited trial version (time or functionally limited). The time limit is either absolute (it means that there is a definite number of days that we can use the software, usually for 30 days) or relative, which means that the program expires after specific number of activation, in other words, you can run the software just a few times before it will be blocked.

Functional limitation means that users have access just to some choices in the menu. A good example of this is the demo version of a sports computer game. In the full version the player has a choice of 20 racing cars, but in a demo (trial) version there are only 2 cars that can be chosen. To sum up, the advantage of trial software, just as the shareware software, is that user can first test the application and then decide whether to buy the full version or not.

Open source software. With open source license, unlike proprietary software license, the user does not pay for using the program. On the contrary, a licensee guarantees all rights, which were given to the owner of the copyright law, to users. According to the open source license, the user can choose whether he or she wants to accept it. The user can use the software without accepting the license. However, if the user wants to use any of the other rights permitted by the software license (such as the right to spread the software), then the user must accept the license.

Free software. A recommended Czech translation of free software is "svobodný software", so it is not the second meaning - "software zdarma", which is usually referred to as freeware. Free software is a matter of liberty, not price. Free software gives its users the right to such programs freely dispose. There are four fundamental freedoms that every free software should meet, they are: a freedom to run, copy and distribute, study, change and improve the software.

Version of software	Advantages	Disadvantages	Paid / free of charge
<i>Full version</i>	no limitations	paid	paid
<i>Shareware</i>	trial time	limited in time, the user must pay for additional service	free of charge
<i>Freeware</i>	free of charge	limited, e.g. in updates	free of charge

<i>Trial version</i>	trial time	limited, e.g. in time or functionally, the user must pay for additional service	free of charge
<i>Open source software</i>	no limitations / free of charge	the user must accept the license	free of charge
<i>Free software</i>	no limitations	the user must pay for additional service	free of charge / paid

Table 8: Overview of versions of software

Types of English learning software according to its language focus

Technological firms have realized the issue of studying and teaching the English language in most educational institutions and have effectively come up with different products to counter this problem. By far, the biggest issue in learning English is the large numbers of students that makes it difficult to offer individual attention. The introduction of ICT into the learning system sought to bridge this gap by eliminating the issue of numbers, affordability and technicality of learning using new technology. ICT has also enriched the learning experience by making it more entertaining and informative.

In the selection of suitable English learning software, various aspects should be considered. The application should present numerous realistic teaching features like pictures, entertainment, recording options, playback and a dictionary. The software should also be able to teach all the basics of English as mentioned above. Even though there are numerous advantages toward working with ICT to enhance the learning process, there are drawbacks such as infrastructure, inefficient software and computer-related complications that make the software an inferior technique (Akinbode, 2008).

These ICT companies focused on easing the study and teaching of the English language produce specialized, interactive and accessible multimedia software that are administered through the internet. The focus of such products is to allow English students having fundamental computer expertise to utilize and successfully benefit from English learning software. In all the aspects of learning English, it is evident that the issue of having large numbers of students in a classroom greatly increases the burden for the instructor to teach English. It also means that the efficiency of teaching the language will be low as no one student can get individual attention. The introduction of ICT into the

education system has created more learning opportunities for learners who could not access school facilities or were not able to afford them.

Vocabulary

Generally, reading exposes people to a completely new world beyond themselves as it allows individuals to increase increases their vocabulary knowledge. Reading introduces students to new words, and in many cases, it allows the reader to infer their significance from the context in which they were written. Presumably, readers bear in mind most of the new meaning connections, particularly if they maintain reading and encounter the vocabulary words in a different context (Roberto, 2012). It is very reasonable to presuppose that learning new vocabulary through reading benefits readers whose first language is not English. Therefore, vocabulary is a fundamental feature in language, since it emerges in every skill of language from reading, listening, writing and speaking (Rank et al, 2011). Many individuals become conscious of the fact that they have limited vocabulary and that they cannot effectively express their ideas.

English learning software has allocations for teaching vocabulary. These techniques are designed for different age groups from kindergarten to middle school. Popular applications such as *Ultimate Vocabulary* are interactive and flexible. They offer a broad series of easy-to-do examinations and exercises monitored by a special examination system that displays the student's progress in a graphic representation (Rank et al, 2011). The software also provided all the correct spelling, the appropriate place to use each word and how the word would be used. These software systems, therefore, give users a better understanding of English words. Lastly, English vocabulary software has endless resources in the form of a thesaurus and dictionary that further elaborates on any word. The advantage of teaching using this method of vocabulary is that it overcomes any language barriers that the teacher may have. It also eliminates misunderstanding, senseless clarifications and exhaustion among the tutors (Roberto, 2012).

Grammar

Grammar software concentrates on comprehending grammar regulations and utilizing those rules in writing. These applications are developed for learners from primary school through university that have difficulty in grammar (Akinbode, 2008). The software was

also developed with English teachers in mind who did not necessarily major in that subject as well as teachers who needed a substitute technique of teaching grammar. Software packages such as *Grammar Key* have about three levels of study for beginners, intermediate learner, and advanced students. These syllabi were integrated with the school textbooks from kindergarten to university.

Grammar is systematic in nature and, therefore, it can be taught on a computer mainly because a computer cannot get weary while a tutor will need breaks to rest. The grammar software can say again any word or grammatical guide when instructed to do so. This repetition is important in that the grammar being taught will be internalized in the scholar's mind. Having many students in one class at a go, a teacher may find it difficult to repeat the grammatical aspects to every child to a level that the child is satisfied. The installation of this software for each child eliminates these oversights and increases the efficiency of the teaching period. The grammar applications such as *Grammar Key* also show the relationship between clauses, punctuation and verbs thereby teaching the children other parts of English simultaneously (Adams & Brindley, 2007).

Other software learning systems such as *Grammar Fitness* have added features such as dynamic grammar exercises that seek to test whether the learner grasped the correct grammar. Like vocabulary software, grammar software also has a tracking system that can be customized to monitor the progress of each student separately. The results of each child's performance are then presented in an easy-to-understand manner. A teacher may not have the time and organization levels to monitor the skill of each student. In such cases, instructors may employ the use of such applications to help them easily find out the weak students.

Speaking

In the present world, the significance of English cannot be refuted or ignored as English is spoken in almost all of the countries in the world. The advent of improved technology, English plays a key function in many sectors for example engineering, medicine and education. Of the three, education is the most important sector that requires proper English speakers. For students having career dreams, English appears as the first criteria whether they apply for a post when they seek admission in a reputed institution. Companies embrace candidates that can speak fluent English apart from having the relevant qualifications.

There are various applications and programs established that teach people how to speak proper English. Within the school environment, applications such as *Eye Speak* have been introduced to help students who have difficulties in speaking proper English. These applications provide audiences where users can get professionals to have conversations in proper English. While this is also possible with the help of a tutor, the issue of numbers makes it difficult for one instructor to teach each child individually. The applications use either pre-recorded English audio sets or a real-time English speaker to translate and pronounce words for the learners. The advantage of the applications is that they can be accessed by students all over the world through the internet. This helps in maintaining a high level of spoken English. Common features of English speaking software are the basic English pronunciation exercises and exceptional speech recognition feature that together work to improve the level of a students' skill until they can satisfactorily and smoothly speak English (Adams & Brindley, 2007).

Pronunciation

Pronouncing English words in a wrong way may puzzle people even if the user had spoken advanced English words. A person can speak basic words and uncomplicated grammar structures that can be understood easily by many people but there is nothing like simple pronunciation (Roberto, 2012). For example, you will switch the channel when a reporter covering the news lacks a good pronunciation of English words because it feels confused. Pronunciation software aim to bridge this gap and eliminate the challenges of saying one thing and meaning another by applying different methods.

Pronunciation software contains the correct words and their proper pronunciation. Apart from this, they also have different dialects and the common errors that each dialect is most likely to face in pronouncing the word. In short, students from different language backgrounds can select their dialect, find out their flaws, and fix them. Pronunciation software also makes use of the fact that children learn better by speaking rather than studying a language. Therefore, they usually have simple songs such as rhymes and lullabies that can be sung by children during breaks on a regular basis.

The Sky Software House is a company that is highly reputed for producing quality language software such as *Sky Pronunciation* (Roberto, 2012). This application has customized learning capabilities that enable a learner to get a course that is tailor-made for their needs. A tutor can use the Sky Pronunciation software to create an exercise for

children at the elementary level. The application has pre-defined templates and individual aspects that are both useful to instructors. News houses such as *BBC –UK* have also taken up the initiative to teach people on the importance of pronunciation when speaking English.

Reading

Students in whatever level of education should be very concerned with reading because according to Akinbode (2008), educational researchers have discovered that there exists a solid relationship between academic success and reading. Consequently, good readers in school are more likely to perform well in their examinations and do well than students who rarely read any book. Avid readers can comprehend the single sentences and the organizational structure of a work of literature. They can understand thoughts and arguments, and notice the consequences of different actions. They are acquainted with most of the words in the books and they can discern the denotation of many strange words from the context in which they were used. If this fails, they even resort to a dictionary.

Reading software for English learners is also categorized according to the level of education. Companies such as Merit Software offer inclusive packages for readers that include products such as *Reading Comprehension Booster* and *Reading Skill Builder*. Other independent applications include *PIE Transformer* that includes diacritics to English sentences to simplify their pronunciations. These applications are useful in the case where the teacher cannot cater to many children simultaneously or physical conditions cannot allow children to attend school. Most of the learners that benefit from reading software are enrolled in home schooling programs. Either way, reading software use interactive texts and comprehension strategies to teach children how to recognize words and how to read them.

Listening

When studying English, most instructors tend to neglect teaching the learners the skill of listening is. However, listening is the most vital part of learning the English language. Speaking may be the overall goal but it is a byproduct of listening and reading. The usage of technological methods to teach children how to listen to English words and sentences mainly depends on audio channels (Akinbode, 2008). Again, teachers may

require such software because of certain language barriers that may surface when the English teacher has a foreign accent.

Normally, children are intrigued by audio methods of learning and therefore, this approach is quite effective when used occasionally in the classroom setting. The teacher can present the particular listening exercise using a stereo system for all the students to hear specific words and their sound. If stressed repeatedly, learners notice how the sound is supposed to be pronounced. Listening software is best effective when accompanied with flash cards or poster showing the word being spoken. Repetition is vital in these exercises to allow the children mull over the words. There are also listening websites such as *Podcasts in English* and *Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab* that offer different categories of pre-recorded audio clips for learners to listen and understand (Adams & Brindley, 2007).

This chapter describes topics of ICT use in teaching such as advantages and disadvantages of ICT in language teaching, computer literacy, teachers and ICT. In addition, it points out a few more crucial pieces of information about the ICT situation at Czech schools and general information about types of software for language learning. The fields of focus are: the use of software in Czech elementary schools and high schools, educational software in general, types of English learning software according to its language focus. In the following chapter, the research methodology to investigate what software is available and how it is used in the Czech context is presented.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research chapter consists of two parts of the research. The aim of the first part of the research is to compile a structured overview of selected current English teaching applications, which can be used as language teaching tools for teachers of English at Czech elementary schools. The objective of the second part of the research is to gather important data about awareness, knowledge and usage of these English teaching applications from Czech teachers of English. A questionnaire was chosen as a method for this research.

Part I.: Overview of current software programs for teaching English

This research gives a detailed analysis of the existing English language programs and software for learners who study English as a second or third language. The research came up with six main categories that are the main components of studying English as a language. These are: grammar, speaking, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading and listening. It is from these six categories that the research used to classify the various programs obtained during the research. From the main classification, the programs were then sorted according to their price of purchase and their release dates. In case of more than one program in a particular group, the research settled on the most recent release. It is evident from the existing programs that their prices varied based on the number of users, the time period allocated, and the type of license. The research settled for the cheapest pricing of the single user license programs at any category.

The research settled on the six categories for the main classification of the programs. The classification included grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, reading and listening. This main classification was then sub divided into three sub-divisions on the grounds of the purchase price of the programs. These three sub-divisions are between 0-500 Czech crowns, 501-1500 Czech crowns, and more than 1500 Czech crowns. Most of the prices of the programs were in dollars, hence prompting the conversion to Czech crowns, whose exchange rate was 1 dollar for 19, 7640 Czech crowns. Moreover, the prices of the programs were rounded to the nearest tenth.

The programs were selected according to their price and their date of release on the internet. If there were more programs for a single price category, the one with newer date of release was chosen. In case that there were no existing programs for a requested

price limitation, an additional program description was added under one of the other price categories.

All the programs listed in each subdivision contained a detailed but summarized description of the features contained in various packages, the purchase price, the year of release, and the online link and website from where the program can be accessed. It was noted that the content features of the programs dictated the pricing. For instance, the programs between 0-500 Czech crowns comprised of limited features i.e. covering only a particular learning experience such as limited vocabulary and spelling examples. They also have limited online help from their sources. Those of the middle-class pricing had fairly advanced learning features with a reliable online help from their sources. Those programs with the highest pricing had advanced, all-inclusive and detailed packages with comprehensive study schedules customized to maximize learning English as a second or third language. The program's website links details provide the reader an easy opportunity to access and purchase the various software found useful in the learning process. The year also gives an indication of the most recent applications bound to be more effective in comparison to earlier releases.

In summary, the research has six main divisions, and three subdivisions for each, thus leading to a total of eighteen program examples each containing a brief description of its features. Some of the programs listed include: Smart Tests, Grammar Key, and Grammar Fitness under Grammar, Vocabulary Builder Simple, Ultimate Vocabulary, and Vocabulary Stretch all under Vocabulary classification, Eye Speak Standard Edition and Eye Speak Premium Edition all under Speaking, Perfect Pronunciation, sky pronunciation, and Pronunciation Coach all in Pronunciation, Phonics Alive, and Reading Comprehension Booster in Reading, and Instant Immersion English, 101 Languages of the World, and Tell Me More English programs in Listening.

Part II.: Questionnaire for Czech teachers of English

The research made use of a questionnaire to gather information from the teachers of learners of English as the second or third language at Czech elementary schools. The teachers were chosen randomly from different elementary schools all over the Czech Republic, the crucial piece of information for selecting the teachers was their specialization, which must have been English. The specializations were as follows: English – History, English, English – PE, English – Czech, English – Russian, English – German,

English – Biology – Chemistry, English – Czech – Music, English – Mathematics, English – Physics. As visible from the list, none of the teachers were specialized in ICT. The concrete number of teachers of each specialization is displayed in *Results and Commentaries* chapter.

The questionnaire was created online and sent to 79 Czech elementary school teachers of English via email, 22 of them were willing to help with the research and provided the required data. There were ten questions in the questionnaire, the types of questions used were both open-ended and close-ended with varied options for the teachers to choose from. For the close-ended questions, multiple choices were provided giving the respondents an opportunity to choose the most fit. The choices given catered for all possible answers and outcomes, thus eliminating possibilities of a respondent being unable to answer a given question. The questions were also well-structured and tailored to obtain appropriate information that is useful to the overall research topic which is the current software applications for teaching English as second and third language. Some of the areas covered and possible information obtained from the questionnaires after evaluation and analysis include: the most effective application in use by the teachers for the specified learners, different applications that suit different levels of learners, the applications that are most preferred by most teachers, existing and exciting language program in schools, available prices for various applications, online links where learners can obtain exciting language teaching applications, and also available features most preferred by the teachers.

The questionnaire was targeted to give data and feedback on various issues such as the teacher's teaching experience, teaching specialization, knowledge and use of interesting language teaching applications, time period allocated for each English lesson, use of different applications for different grades of teaching, the benefits observed in the use of applications in teaching the English learners, most common programs in use on the basis of their purchasing price, and the number of times the programs are purchased.

In summary, the questionnaire contained a total of ten questions that are properly structured and focused to maximize on the respondents and the topic of research. The choices provided for some of the questions cover extensively all possibilities, thus valuable data is to be obtained with the use of the questionnaire. All gathered information was subsequently processed in graphs, which can be found in the following chapter.

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

This chapter presents results of two parts of the research. The first one describes current software programs for teaching English and provides basic information about 18 language applications. The second part shows results of the questionnaire for Czech teachers of English, and is focused on teachers' knowledge, awareness of and relation to modern language teaching programs.

Results - Part I.: Overview of current software programs for teaching English

In the following section I describe some of the current language learning programs. The programs are divided into six categories - vocabulary, grammar, speaking, pronunciation, reading and listening. All the programs are CD versions with no limitations unless stated otherwise next to the price information.

Vocabulary

1. 0-500 Kč

Vocabulary Builder Simple. Ultimate Vocabulary is a very simple application. It isn't a touchstone of modern design, but it has many suitable functions. For example, students can edit words and categorize them to make them easier to memorize. Moreover, the software tracks their progress and eventually gives them a grade. It also has its own dictionary with a 4,800-word database. Ultimate Vocabulary is a good and cheap way of learning and practising new words. The program is intended for advanced students, but it can be also used as an teaching aid in higher grades of elementary schools.

Basic information about Vocabulary Builder Simple	
1. Where we can get the application	http://vocabbuilder.sourceforge.net
2. The price of the application	Free (<i>download version</i>)
3. The year of publication	2009

2. 501-1500 Kč

Ultimate Vocabulary. Ultimate Vocabulary is an application that focuses on many learning areas. It can work very well for students studying for tests, for adults who want to improve their comprehension and, of course, for all those who would like to learn the English language. This application allows you to choose the area of vocabulary you want to learn. In addition, you can set the studying pace which is convenient for you. Ultimate Vocabulary is a greatly flexible and thorough program that can considerably ease students' learning of new words.

Basic information about Ultimate Vocabulary	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.ultimatevocabulary.com/order/
2. The price of the application	1320,- Kč
3. The year of publication	2012

3. more than 1500 Kč

Vocabulary Stretch. Vocabulary Stretch is an application, which helps students recognize words in different contexts and understand where many English words come from. The program has many activities that enrich vocabulary, for example, matching words to ideas or completing crossword puzzles. Another advantage of this software is that students are able to track their progress and print results. Moreover, their scores are kept in a management system, which allows teachers to view and print reports. Vocabulary Stretch works well for those who need to learn basic vocabulary words such as children or people learning the English language.

Basic information about Vocabulary Stretch	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.meritsoftware.com
2. The price of the application	3120,- Kč (<i>sets 1 & 2- home version</i>)
3. The year of publication	2004

Grammar

1. 0-500 Kč

Smart Tests. This software is focused on testing grammar and vocabulary and is primarily intended for English language learners. The tests are educational, which means that they do not only test the students, but also teach them. There are more than 4,500 test questions and each contains an explanation of good and bad answers. It means that the students will learn not only where they made the mistake, but also why it is not correct and why it should be otherwise.

Basic information about Smart Tests	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.vitware.cz/smart-tests
2. The price of the application	390,- Kč
3. The year of publication	2010

2. 501-1500 Kč

Grammar Key. This application focuses on understanding the rules of grammar and applying those rules to writing. The advantage of Grammar Key is simplicity, consistency and efficiency. This grammar program shows the relationship between clauses, punctuation and verbs thereby teaching the children other parts of English simultaneously. However, it is not intended to include all areas of grammar (e.g., no verb tenses or subject-verb agreement lessons), which means that students still need to cover some usage and mechanics as well as writing instruction elsewhere.

Basic information about Grammar Key	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.grammarkey.com
2. The price of the application	790,- Kč (<i>online licence for 180 days</i>)
3. The year of publication	2009

3. more than 1500 Kč

Grammar Fitness. Grammar Fitness is a program that helps students improve their grammar skills and provides teachers with measurable results, moreover, it is very easy to use. The program use strategies that help students deal with many problematic points of

grammar, for example, usage, diction, idioms, grammatical relationships, and punctuation. In addition, Grammar Fitness has features such as dynamic grammar exercises that seek to test whether the learner grasped the correct grammar. Grammar Fitness is designed for students in U.S. grades 4 through 8 (ages 9 and up), but it can also be used by English language learners and adult students.

Basic information about Grammar Fitness	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.meritsoftware.com
2. The price of the application	2730,- Kč (<i>sets 1 & 2 - home version</i>)
3. The year of publication	2004

Speaking

1. 500-1500 Kč

Voice and Accent. This is an audio-video program that is primarily intended to improve students' speaking and English accent. It helps foreign language learners to enhance some of the most problematic speaking features such as troublesome vowel sounds or difference in stressed and un-stressed syllables and words. This software is mainly meant for self learning, but it can be also used in school lessons. There are no age or skill limitations, however, given the necessary basic knowledge of English, it is probably more appropriate for higher grades of elementary schools.

Basic information about Voice and Accent	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.letstalkpodcast.com
2. The price of the application	790,- Kč (<i>download version</i>)
3. The year of publication	2012

2. 501-1500 Kč

Eye Speak Standard Edition. The content of this program is designed to teach English carefully through building sentences using common everyday topics that people can encounter with in English speaking countries. The themes are formed to cover the necessary skills of English. EyeSpeak provides special visual feedback which allows students to clearly see what they are saying. They do not need to guess what they have

said. There are means of listening, speaking and learning supported by visual feedback which helps students learn English quickly. In addition, the program creates the language skills needed for common communication.

Basic information about Eye Speak Standard Edition	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.eyespeakenglish.com
2. The price of the application	990,- Kč (5-year free download guarantee)
3. The year of publication	2007

3. more than 1500 Kč

Eye Speak Premium Edition. It is an extended version of Eye Speak Standard Edition. The Premium Edition has a few more functions in comparison with the standard version, for example, 10,000 word phonetic spoken dictionary, 6,000+ exercises of words, sentences, role plays and sound lessons (Standard Edition has only 2,000+) or automated suggested lessons. Both versions of this program are focused on helping students who have difficulties in speaking proper English, which means that these applications are intended for all age groups of language learners.

Basic information about Eye Speak Premium Edition	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.eyespeakenglish.com
2. The price of the application	2960,-Kč (5-year free download guarantee)
3. The year of publication	2007

Pronunciation

1. 501-1500 Kč

PerfectPronunciation. This software contains 500 exercises which teach students to pronounce the 500 most frequently used English words. Moreover, there are 564 audio recordings with American English pronunciation, phonetic transcriptions of all words and information about word stress. The program can help students learn phonetic transcription, speak English with more confidence and be better understood by others. PerfectPronunciation is a very simple and easy-to-control application, which is appropriate for almost all age groups and levels of English.

Basic information about PerfectPronunciation	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.antimoon.com/
2. The price of the application	590,- Kč (<i>download version</i>)
3. The year of publication	2010

2. 501-1500 Kč

Sky Pronunciation. Sky Pronunciation is a multimedia interactive pronunciation software, which is designed to improve students' pronunciation skills in English. It is reached by awareness-building, recognition and production of words. This application has customized learning capabilities that enable a learner to get a course that is tailor-made for their needs. A teacher can use the Sky Pronunciation software to create an exercise for children at the elementary level. The application has pre-defined templates and individual aspects that are both useful to instructors.

Basic information about Sky Pronunciation	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.skysoftwarehouse.com
2. The price of the application	1210,- Kč (<i>disks 1 & 2 - home version</i>)
3. The year of publication	2011

3. more than 1500 Kč

Pronunciation Coach. This application shows how to pronounce words or phrases. This means that students type in any word, even names, addresses or number sequences, and the program creates a model of the pronunciation. Each model has an audio record for listening to the pronunciation and a video record for viewing the pronunciation process (i.e. the tongue movement, waveforms for viewing timing, pitch, and speech intensity). Pronunciation Coach is a very useful program that can be used for any age groups or skill levels as an aid to learning the English language.

Basic information about Pronunciation Coach	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.rose-medical.com
2. The price of the application	1960,- Kč
3. The year of publication	2011

Reading

1. 0-500 Kč

Reading Acceleration Machine. Reading Acceleration Machine is a simple program focused on presenting different word-groups for students to read. It is primarily intended to help foreign-language learners practice their reading skills. The software improves rhythmic reading, rehearsal of text-comprehension, and acceleration in reading speed. According to its simple functions many teachers of English can find a useful teaching aid in it. This program is intended for all age groups and levels of English.

Basic information about Reading Acceleration Machine	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.slu.edu
2. The price of the application	Free (<i>download version</i>)
3. The year of publication	2007

2. 501-1500 Kč

Phonics Alive! 2. This program improves students' phonological knowledge of blending sounds and essential reading skills. It allows students to practise and learn through an interactive and funny way where they can even set their own pace of work. The software has twelve self paced, interactive modules and each of them contains lessons to teach students, followed by interactive exercises and rhyming, blending & keyboard activities, which are intended for age groups from 6 to 11 years old. Phonics Alive! does not require prior reading skills, so it is most suitable for second or third language learners.

Basic information about Phonics Alive! 2	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.englishsoftware.com.au
2. The price of the application	990,- Kč (<i>home version</i>)
3. The year of publication	2011

3. more than 1500 Kč

Reading Comprehension Booster. Reading Comprehension Booster helps students improve reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. The program targets the comprehension process for readers, but also offers personalized help and feedback when

students encounter problematic areas. In addition, teachers and students can track progress and assess improvement via a reporting system. The software provides texts and questions appropriate for students of elementary schools, it includes more than 120 passages and 1,320 testing questions. Reading Comprehension Booster is primarily designed for students in U.S. grades 3 through 5 (ages 8 and up), but it can be also used by English language learners and older students.

Basic information about Reading Comprehension Booster	
1. Where we can get the application	http://www.meritsoftware.com
2. The price of the application	1560,- Kč (<i>home version</i>)
3. The year of publication	2009

Listening

1. 0-500 Kč

Instant Immersion English. The learning program uses image techniques to enhance the learning experience of English as a second or third language. It provides learning experience that suits either work or school environment. It has effective exercises, challenging and interactive activities as well as quizzes that assure the learner of achieving fluency in English within a short span of time. Instant Immersion™ includes an interactive DVD and audio files that can be played via an iPod or an mp3 player.

Basic information about Instant Immersion English	
1. Where we can get the application	http://store.hermanstreet.com
2. The price of the application	890,- Kč
3. The year of publication	2013

2. 501-1500 Kč

101 Languages of the World. This is a language program tailored to enable learners earn valuable knowledge on many languages, with English being one of them. It contains over a hundred thousand words and about twenty five thousand phrases for each language. It also has a fully integrated speaker sound for each word and sentence, with advanced

analysis on the speech. It has a record, playback and compares capabilities with many listening and speaking activities. It has a slow-sound geared to develop a learner's listening skills.

Basic information about 101 Languages of the World	
1. Where we can get the application	http://shop.transparent.com
2. The price of the application	1380,- Kč
3. The year of publication	2009

3. more than 1500 Kč

Tell Me More English. The software's features include customized learning that gives a learner an opportunity to choose the best level that suits him or her. It boasts of over two thousand exercises covering all the skills required to learn English, one of which is speaking and listening. It provides an interactive approach with dialogues, speech recognition and other advanced features that give a learner an effective way of assessing one's pronunciations. It also has cultural videos and enables a learner to play the part of a character in the Role Play activity. It has a real time English news broadcast that enhances one's listening skills. It has a learning platform for those who are always on the move, with use of MPEG videos, audio files, cultural texts, and a printable vocabulary examples and grammatical descriptions.

Basic information about Tell Me More English	
1. Where we can get the application	http://store.hermanstreet.com
2. The price of the application	4130,- Kč
3. The year of publication	2013

This research shows that English teachers have various language learning programs that they can use to improve their students' performance in the English language. The programs include vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, speaking, reading and listening focus/practice. These programs are mostly affordable and thus available for many schools. Moreover, they can be used individually by all students who want to improve their performance in English. Students can benefit from these programs since they have the

opportunity to, for example, learn new vocabulary, understand grammar rules, learn the correct use of punctuation marks or the correct pronunciation. In addition, they can considerably ease their learning process, e.g. the grammar programs can help them to learn and correct their mistakes by following the given process, which should improve their work and their grammar skills.

The significance of these software programs for teaching English is that they can be used by all students in English lessons if the students are appropriately guided by their teachers. Students have many programs to use in their education, so they can cover many English topics and take a lot of practice tests. One of the many programs that allow these kind of tests is Grammar Fitness. It offers a dynamic grammar test which tells students whether their grammar is correct and provides them with an explanation of their mistakes, which can prepare them for upcoming tests. These modern learning programs can help students enhance all language skills that they need to practise and can also be regarded as a huge advantage in their learning process. Moreover, the applications provide some useful functions, for instance, in some vocabulary and reading programs students can set their learning pace and they can monitor their progress and get the results of their learning activities. Students who have some difficulties in learning can benefit from these programs since they can find out where their weaknesses are.

The research showed that there are many software teaching programs for English and teachers have a lot of possibilities to choose one or more that they like or find helpful and use them as teaching tools in their lessons.

Results - Part II.: Questionnaire for Czech teachers of English

In this section, the results of the questionnaire for Czech teachers of English are presented. The questionnaire was focused on gathering data on use of language teaching applications in teaching English at Czech elementary schools. There were ten questions in total; seven of them were close-ended, multiple choices questions, which are supported by graphs.

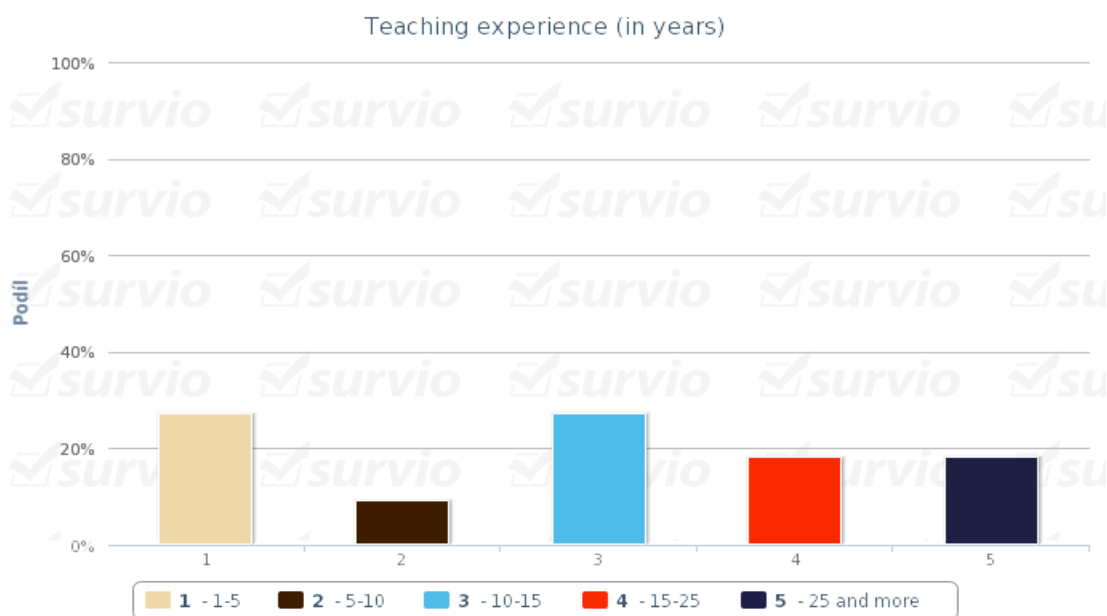
1. Teaching specializations (aprobace)

The fundamental information for this research is the teaching specialization, which must have been English. The following is a list of specializations of the teachers who filled out the questionnaire. The number indicates how many teachers have the same specialization.

Specialization	Number of teachers	Specialization	Number of teachers
English – History	2	English – German	3
English	6	English – Biology – Chemistry	1
English – PE	1	English – Czech – Music	1
English – Czech	4	English – Mathematics	1
English – Russian	2	English - Physics	1

Table 9: Teaching specializations

2. Teaching experience (in years)

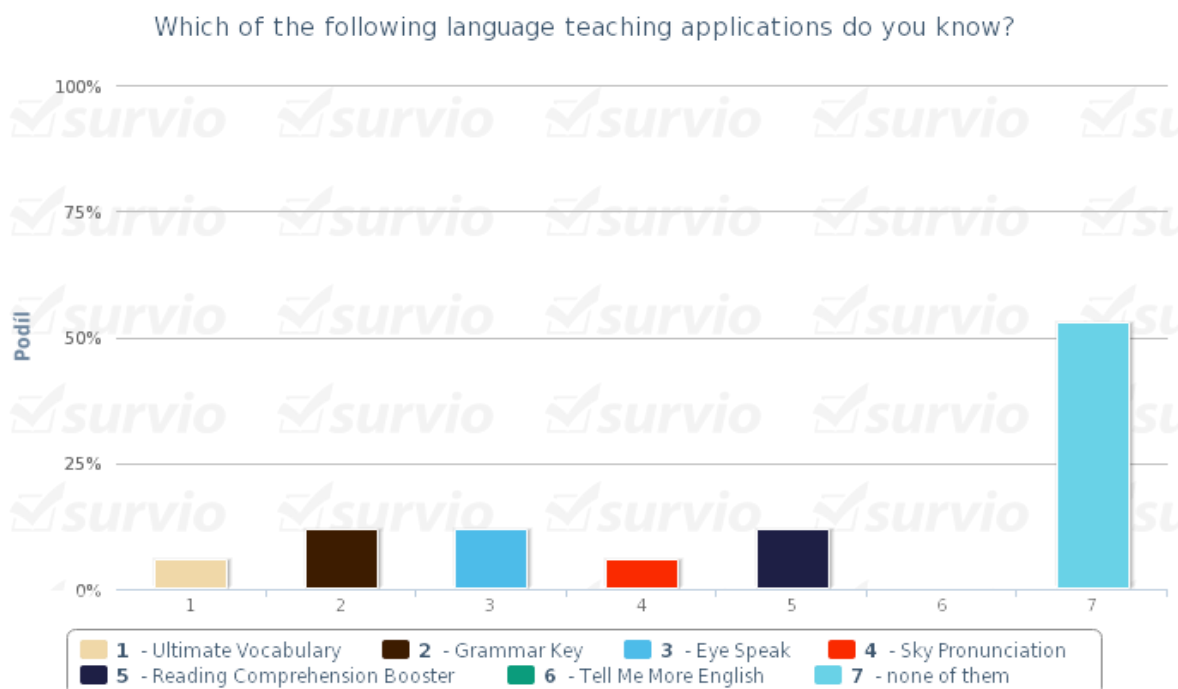


Graph 1: Teaching experience

Teaching experience. Graph 1 shows the experience of the teachers, which is expressed in number of years. The most teachers who were interested in this research and

helped to provide necessary answers can be marked as beginning or younger teachers because the majority of them has been teaching from 1 year to 15 years. The results were as follows: 1-5 years (6 teachers), 5-10 years (2 teachers), 10-15 years (6 teachers), 15-25 years (4 teachers), 25 and more years (4 teachers).

3. Which of the following language teaching applications do you know?

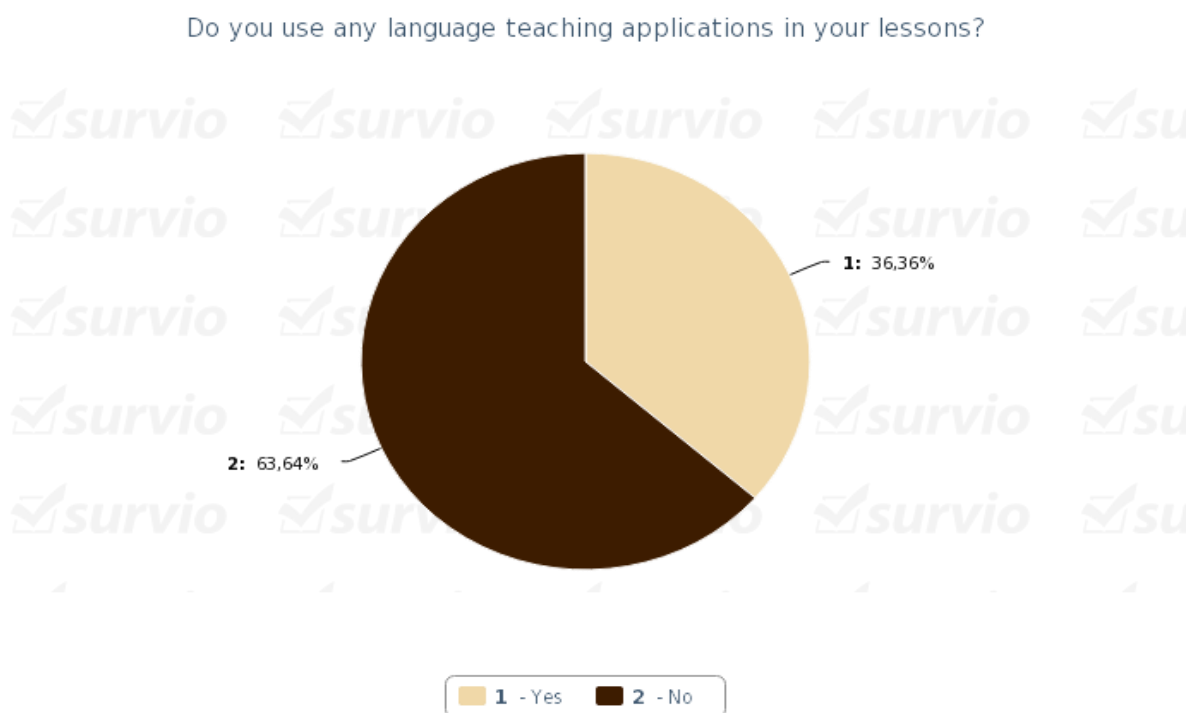


Graph 2: Awareness of language teaching applications

Awareness of language teaching applications. I picked six current teaching programs from six main categories that are the main skills of studying any language - vocabulary, grammar, speaking, pronunciation, reading and listening. In this question, the teachers could choose more than just one option, so the results show only votes, not the number of teachers who know the program. From all the programs, the less popular was a program for listening "Tell Me More English", which got 0 votes. As we can see from Graph 2 above, most of the teachers do not know any of the provided programs, this choice obtained 18 votes. The other results are: Ultimate Vocabulary (2 votes), Grammar Key (4 votes), Eye Speak (4 votes), Sky Pronunciation (2 votes), Reading Comprehension Booster (4 votes). According to the results only 4 teachers know the first five programs. These results show that many of Czech teachers do not know even the most current language

teaching applications. Nevertheless, there can be more than just one reason for it, for example, a shortage of money at schools, the teachers are badly informed in this area, they prefer to use other teaching tools, they lack computer knowledge, etc.

4. Do you use any language teaching applications in your lessons?



Graph 3: Lesson use of language teaching applications

Lesson use of language teaching applications. Graph number 3 shows the number of teachers who use language teaching applications in their lessons. This question was important for a few following ones. In case of a positive answer in this one, the teachers also filled out the next three questions. As visible from Graph 3, a negative choice was picked by most of the teachers, exactly by 14 of them, only 8 teachers chose "yes" as an answer. This data just confirm results of Graph 2.

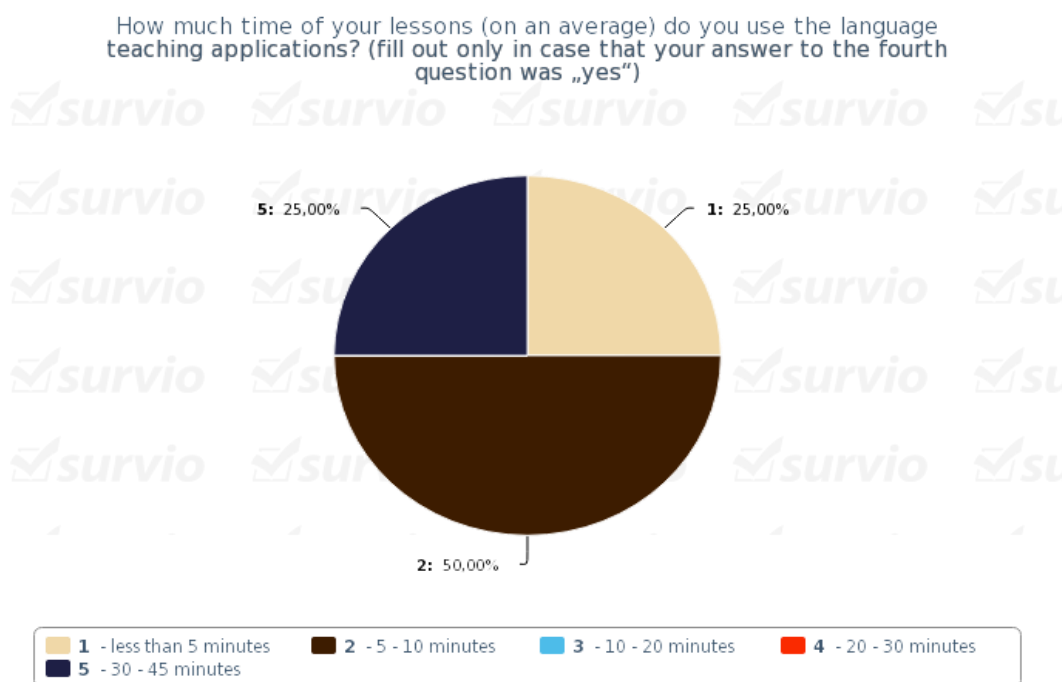
5. What kind of language teaching applications do you use in your lessons? (fill out only in case that your answer to the previous question was „yes“)

Kinds of language teaching applications. Only 8 teachers, who participated in this research, use some teaching programs in their lessons. The name of the programs and number of teachers who use it are both shown in the table bellow. The most popular program was Terasoft applications, which was picked by 4 teachers. This company provides affordable programs for many school subjects, but mostly languages.

Name of the program	Number of teachers
Terasoft	4
Fraus - in Notebook application	2
Dobrodružná angličtina – didakta	2
Primary i-dictionary	1
DVD for English Grammar in Use	1

Table 10: Kinds of language teaching applications

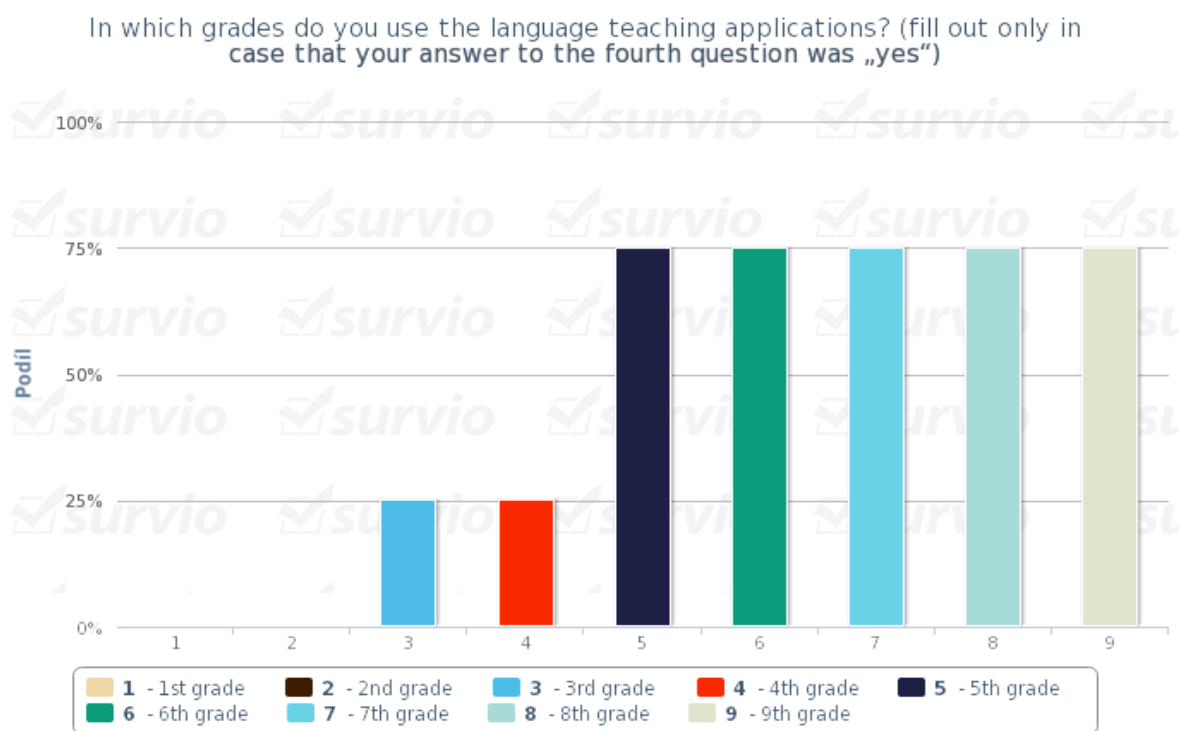
6 How much time of your lessons (on an average) do you use the language teaching applications? (fill out only in case that your answer to the fourth question was „yes“)



Graph 4: Time dedicated to use of language teaching applications in a lesson

Time dedicated to the use of language teaching applications in a lesson. As we can see from Graph 4, only 2 teachers out of 8 when they use language teaching applications in their lesson, they use them for more than 10 minutes, precisely 30-45 minutes. The same number of teachers use language teaching applications for less than 5 minutes. The last part of the graph displays use of language teaching applications for 5-10 minutes, which was selected by 4 teachers. These results indicate that teachers most of the time of their lessons devote to some other means of teaching; the programs are mainly used just as supplementary teaching tools.

7. In which grades do you use the language teaching applications? (fill out only in case that your answer to the fourth question was „yes“)



Graph 5: Most common grades for using language teaching applications

Most common grades for using language teaching applications. Responses in this question was also conditioned by a positive answer in question number 4, so as the previous two ones, this question was answered by only 8 teachers. However, the teachers could choose more than just one option, so the results show only votes, not actual number of teachers. As visible from the Graph 5, grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 gained most votes, exactly

6. Grades 3 and 4, were picked just twice. These results inform us that teachers prefer higher grades for use of language teaching applications in their lessons.

8. Do you think that use of language software or language applications is beneficial for teaching English in elementary schools? Why?

Opinions on use of language applications. All 22 teachers answered this question, but not all responses were as detailed as others, however, they were all positive. I have chosen the most extensive and comprehensive answers, which are quoted below. The results indicate that the teachers think that the use of language teaching applications can be motivating, entertaining, interesting and attractive for children. Some teachers also consider them to be a timesaver for language skills practice.

Quote 1: "There are many ways and strategies which help pupils to learn the language; using lang. application is one of them. It is beneficial to change the strategies in a lesson. Lang. applications can make the learning more interesting and attractive for children."

Quote 2: "Maybe, but since there is shortage of money on primary schools, we do not have and won't have any. As far as the question below concerns, we do not use any kind of such application."

Quote 3: "It's beneficial, because it's another way how to practice the language (vocabulary, grammar, reading, listening). For some students it's quite motivating. Most students are more successful doing exercises on our language software."

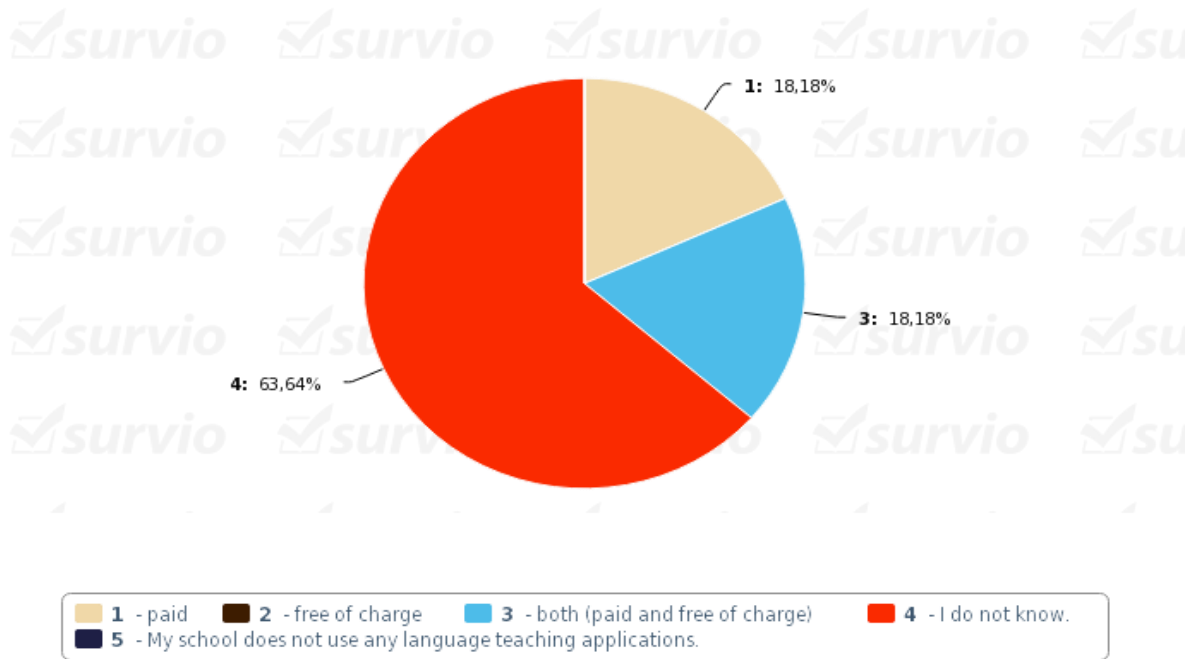
Quote 4: "Use of language software or language applications is beneficial for teaching English in elementary schools because it can help children to repeat vocabulary and grammar quickly and in an entertaining way."

Quote 5: "I have no problems with using software, I guess it is very familiar to children, easy to manage it and the most important - pupils can evaluate themselves very often."

Quote 6: "Yes, effectivity, self-studying, individual approach, different learning strategies, pupils enjoy it, it is more patient than teachers."

9. Does your school use paid or free of charge language teaching applications?

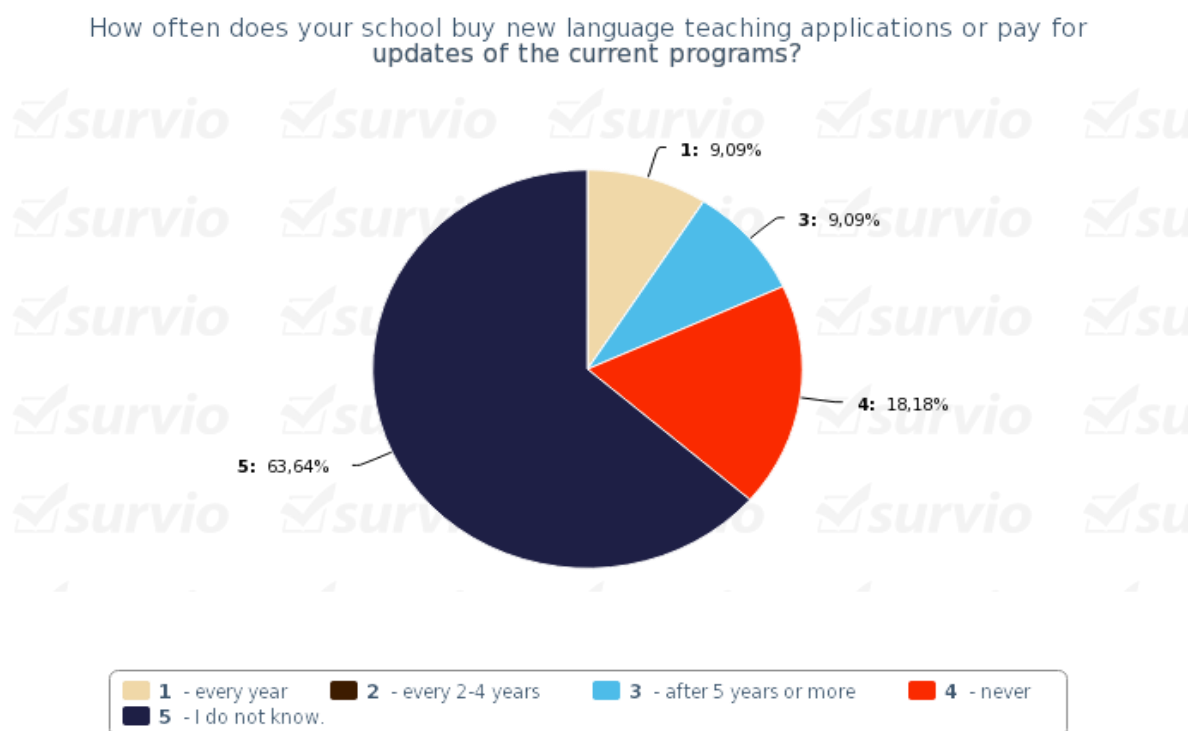
Does your school use paid or free of charge language teaching applications?



Graph 6: The use of paid and free applications at schools

The use of paid and free applications at schools. As Graph 6 shows, 14 teachers out of 22 have no idea whether the school they teach at uses paid or free of charge language teaching applications. This is not a surprising result considering the fact that the exact same number of teachers does not use any applications in their lessons as visible from Graph 3. There are two more answers in Graph 6, both got an identical number of responses. Only paid applications use 4 schools, paid and free of charge applications use 4 schools as well. The information we obtained through this question just confirms previous results, especially from Graph 3.

10. How often does your school buy new language teaching applications or pay for updates of the current programs?



Graph 7: School updates of language teaching applications

School updates of language teaching applications. This question reflects data gathered through Questions 4 and 9. As Graph 7 indicates, most of the teachers do not know how often their school buys new language teaching applications or pays for updates of the current programs. Overall 14 teachers marked this option as their answer. Other results are as follows: 4 schools never buy or update their applications, 2 schools buy or update their applications after 5 years or more and only 2 schools buy or update their applications every year. This result, that partly shows the situation at Czech schools, is most probably caused by shortage of money that can be spent on computers, multimedia classrooms and, of course, language teaching applications. Another explanation for it can be a large number of detached teachers who do not find this mean of teaching interesting enough.

Commentary

The first part of the research clearly showed that there are many software programs for teaching English that can be beneficial to all students. These programs can better students' performance and comprehension skills. However, these applications require students to be computer literate and know how to use the programs in their school work. At the same time, teachers need to motivate their students to get acquainted with modern programs that can enable them to improve their educational progress. Teachers should embrace the modern software since it could give their students a broad understanding of the English language. In addition, teachers should introduce these programs in their lessons and help their students to comprehend how to apply the use of the programs in their individual studies. As stated in the *Theoretical Background, Teachers and ICT* part:

"Current technologies demand that teachers acquire the necessary skills to apply these technologies properly in their teaching. ICT makes the delivery of lessons easier and aid the learning process. These contemporary technologies offer teachers the chance to transform the learning experience of a language and make it simpler and more useful to students rather than just providing the skills" (Watson, 2003, p. 37).

The survey among Czech English teachers indicated that the number of teachers using the modern teaching programs is small; majority of these teachers is young and have just a few years of experience. Experienced teachers have not yet embraced the modern teaching programs. In addition, the questionnaire has clearly showed that most teachers are not well informed about the learning programs that they can use in their teaching. They prefer to use other teaching tools, and only a small number of them use the modern learning software in their lessons. To sum it up, Czech schools should put more money into buying new educational programs for languages or at least update the current ones and also educate their teachers in this area because the use of these programs can be a motivating and entertaining way for students to learn English and possibly other languages or subjects.

V. IMPLICATIONS

As we can see from the results - Part I., there are many language teaching programs for all six categories of studying English as a foreign language (grammar, speaking, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading and listening.). However, as indicated in the results - Part II., not many of these programs are used at Czech elementary schools. In this chapter, I describe implications and limitations of these two parts of the research with possible suggestions for further research.

Implications for Teaching

The first part of the research provides a comprehensive overview of current applications for teaching English. This research can be very helpful for teachers or learners who would like to apply such programs in their teaching/learning. They can base their selection on specific language skills, prices of the programs and also the year of publication. There are 18 programs in total, so Czech teachers or learners of English who are interested in modern teaching tools have many possibilities to choose from. Of course, there are many more that can be identified beyond the ones presented in this thesis.

The second part of the research presents results of the questionnaire for Czech teachers of English. There are data and feedback on various issues such as the teacher's teaching experience, teaching specialization, knowledge and use of interesting language teaching applications, time period allocated for each English lesson, use of different applications for different grades of teaching, the benefits observed in the use of applications in teaching the English learners, most common programs in use on the basis of their purchasing price, and the number of times the programs are purchased. The results of this part are important because they reflect the present situation at Czech elementary schools regarding the use of language teaching programs by Czech teachers of English.

The results of both parts of the research suggest that teachers should examine their approach to modern teaching technologies and increase their awareness of language teaching applications. In addition, the research provides a list of possible programs to use, which can supply accurate information in a comprehensive manner and assist learners to widen their knowledge of the English language.

Limitation of the Research

None of the two parts of the research can be generalized because there are several elements that influence the value of them. As for the first part, there are 18 programs that were sorted according to their price of purchase, their release dates and specializations. However, this information does not include the exact number of programs of each category, so we do not know how big the market is and what skills are more supported by software companies. Moreover, the high price of some programs does not guarantee high quality of them, so it is possible that there are some programs that are, for example, simpler to use, cheaper, have more functions, etc. Regarding the second part of the research there are several factors that have a certain impact on the results. First of all, there were only 22 teachers who took part in the research, so the results can differ very significantly with a higher number of participants. Second, none of the teachers was specialized in ICT, so the results would have probably been quite different if a majority of them had had a provably positive approach to such technologies.

Suggestions for Further Research

As mentioned above there are several areas that were not explored so much and also several aspects that distort the received data a bit. The further research should concentrate on such deficiencies. It should explore deeply the market with language teaching programs and provide information about preferred skills of software companies in relation to their language applications. In addition, it should compare each language application for teaching English and give a comprehensive overview of all available programs. The further research should also deeply examine the use of language teaching application at Czech elementary schools and secondary schools. It should gather information from more teachers, and opinions of school directors on how they feel about using ICT in teaching and if it is possible to implement such technologies into all school subjects according to the financial situation of current Czech state schools. These are the main areas that could be expanded or improved. However, there can be other studies related to similar research questions or topics. ICT is a very broad field of study and its use can have many forms. It concerns such topics as e-learning, interactive blackboards, barriers to students' use of computers in their learning, history of ICT use at schools, teaching methods with ICT use, ICT and changing mindsets in education, ICT and students with special educational needs, etc.

This chapter evaluates the two parts of the research, it underlines its implications for teaching, specifies the limitation of the research and also gives suggestions for further research, which deals with expanding or improving the current survey and also provides ideas for other research studies addressing related research questions. The next chapter, which is the last one, summarizes the main ideas of this project and the crucial information of this thesis.

VI. CONCLUSION

This work deals with language teaching applications and their use at Czech elementary schools. Integrating these programs into English lessons is very closely connected to the recent boom of information technologies which can have certain advantages and disadvantages in language teaching.

Regarding the benefits of ICT, there are various ways of technology integration, for example, usage of many equipments such as data projectors, computers, youtube clips, and social networking sites that have a significant impact on students and their language education. Moreover, the internet enables teachers to inspire some of the disoriented learners in class and thereby hastening the process of information assimilation. In addition, the internet also serves as a very useful resource, but sometimes it gives unmonitored students an opportunity to waste precious time of a lesson surfing for leisure, which is considered to be one of the disadvantages of the ICT use. Another disadvantage is the price of language software that can be relatively high and does not always have to correspond with its knowledge contribution to students. If teachers want to choose a language program and use it as a teaching tool in their lessons, they need to consider all aspects of its use. They can, for example, pick language applications for any of the language skills, which are: grammar, speaking, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading and listening. The teachers who participated in the research think that the use of language software or language applications is beneficial for teaching English in elementary schools, which is surely a positive approach to modern teaching technologies. However, not many of them use language applications in their lessons, especially the ones with more years of experience, which is something that need to be improved in the future.

The application of technology in education is without doubt a proper advancement in the teaching profession. ICT can be applied as the major tool in the teaching process, as a teaching aid for evaluating students, as an independent learning instrument and for e-learning purposes for distance learning. Using these new advancements in technology, learners are aggressively interested by the teaching process and the result is a more refined learning experience and increased concentration and motivation of most of the students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Czech teachers of English

LEGEND:

- Teachers could choose only one option.
- Teachers could choose more than just one option.

1. Teaching specialization (apropace)

2. Teaching experience (in years)

- 1-5
- 5-10
- 10-15
- 15-25
- 25 and more

3. Which of the following language teaching applications do you know?

- Ultimate Vocabulary
- Grammar Key
- Eye Speak
- Sky Pronunciation
- Reading Comprehension Booster
- Tell Me More English
- none of them

4. Do you use any language teaching applications in your lessons?

- Yes
- No

5. What kind of language teaching applications do you use in your lessons? (fill out only in case that your answer to the previous question was "yes")

6. How much time of your lessons (on an average) do you use the language teaching applications? (fill out only in case that your answer to the fourth question was "yes")

- less than 5 minutes
- 5 – 10 minutes
- 10 – 20 minutes
- 20 – 30 minutes
- 30 – 45 minutes

7. In which grades do you use the language teaching applications? (fill out only in case that your answer to the fourth question was "yes")

- 1st grade
- 2nd grade
- 3rd grade
- 4th grade
- 5th grade
- 6th grade
- 7th grade
- 8th grade
- 9th grade

8. Do you think that use of language software or language applications is beneficial for teaching English in elementary schools? Why?

9. Does your school use paid or free of charge language teaching applications?

- paid
- free of charge
- both (paid and free of charge)
- I do not know.
- My school does not use any language teaching applications.

10. How often does your school buy new language teaching applications or pay for updates of the current programs?

- every year
- every 2-4 years
- after 5 years or more
- never
- I do not know.

SHRNUTÍ

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá zaváděním informačních technologií na základní školy v ČR. V práci jsou objasněny důvody pro využívání informačních technologií ve výuce AJ. Jsou zde také uvedeny druhy vzdělávacího softwaru, přičemž největší důraz je kladen na využití programů pro výuku AJ na českých základních školách. Praktická část zahrnuje dva výzkumy. První výzkum poskytuje přehled současných programů pro výuku AJ. Výsledky tohoto výzkumu jsou doplněny o krátké popisy programů, které zdůrazňují jejich přednosti. Druhý výzkum, který byl realizován pomocí dotazníku, se zabývá názory, znalostmi a celkovým přístupem a přehledem českých učitelů AJ o jazykových výukových programech. Na základě výsledků obou výzkumů je v závěru práce shrnuto, že existují programy pro všech šest jazykových dovedností a že tyto programy mohou mít velice rozdílné ceny a funkce. Kromě toho bylo zjištěno, že v současnosti využívá jazykové programy při výuce velice malé množství českých učitelů, a to i přesto, že všichni dotázaní učitelé věří, že jsou tyto programy přínosné ve výuce AJ.