

UNIVERZITA KONŠTANTÍNA FILOZOFA V NITRE
PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

APPLICATION OF EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES INTO
TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS

Diplomová práca

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Bc. Lívia PLEVOVÁ

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Abstrakt

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Diplomová práca sa zaoberá aplikovaním efektívnych techník vyučovania produktívnej zručnosti hovorenie. Prácu tvoria dve základné časti - teoretická a praktická. Teoretická časť práce stručne opisuje zručnosť hovorenie, jeho základné znaky, aspekty a vzťahy k ostatným jazykovým zručnostiam a k Spoločnému európskemu referenčnému rámcu. Ďalej informuje o tom, že na rozvoj zručnosti hovorenie existujú rôzne techniky, ktoré by sa mali využívať na hodinách cudzieho jazyka. V práci sú rozdelené do troch podkapitol (Controlled, Guided a Free activities). Výskumná časť práce pozostáva z využitia troch metód. Pozorovaním na hodinách sa zisťovali techniky, ktoré sa najčastejšie využívajú pri rozvoji zručnosti hovorenie. Dotazníkom sa získavali postoje a názory učiteľov. Poslednou metódou – rozhovorom sa bližšie analyzovali postrehy učiteľov na danú tému. Hlavným cieľom tejto práce je bližšie popísať jednotlivé techniky hovorenia, ktoré sa používajú pri výučbe Anglického jazyka a zistiť pomocou spomenutých výskumných metód a ich následnej analýzy, ktorá technika, prípadne techniky majú najväčší potenciál v rozvíjaní žiakových schopností hovoriť. Čiastkovým cieľom je zistiť dôvody nižšieho pokroku v komunikácii počas hodín angličtiny, z dôvodu málo vyhovujúcich rečových zručností žiakov základných škôl z predchádzajúcich výskumov Štátneho Pedagogického Ústavu. Ciele diplomovej práce boli splnené, nakoľko najefektívnejšie techniky boli odporučené, ich výber bol objasnený a možné dôvody nižšieho rozvoja hovorenia boli vysvetlené. Význam práce spočíva najmä v odhalení techník, ktoré by mohli výrazne prispieť k vylepšeniu žiakových schopností hovoriť.

Kľúčové slová:

zručnosť hovorenie, techniky hovorenia, efektivita, výučba anglického jazyka

Abstract in Foreign Language

Bc. PLEVOVÁ, Lívia: Application of effective techniques into teaching speaking skills. [Diploma thesis] – Bc. Lívia Plevová. Nitra: Constantine The Philosopher University in Nitra. Faculty of Education. Department Of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies. 2011. p. 83.

The Diploma work deals with the application of effective techniques of the productive skill speaking. The work is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part of the work briefly describes the speaking skill, its essential characteristics, aspects and relations to other language skills and to the Common European Framework of Reference. Furthermore, the theoretical part indicates that for the development of speaking skills, there are various techniques / activities that should be used during English lessons. They are divided into three subchapters (Controlled, Guided and Free activities). The research part of the Diploma thesis consists of the use of three methods. The Observation method during English lessons tried to explore which techniques / activities are the most commonly used in developing speaking skills. The questionnaire obtained the teachers' attitudes and views. The last method – interview analyzed closer the teachers' opinion on this topic. The main aim of this thesis is to describe closer various speaking techniques / activities which are used during English lessons and suggest by the help of the mentioned research methods, which techniques / activities have the greatest potential to develop students' speaking skills. The partial objective is to find out the reasons for lower progress in communication during English lesson, due to less satisfactory results of students of lower secondary education according to National Institute for Education. The aims of the work were achieved, since the most effective techniques and their choice were revealed and the reasons of the lower progress in communication were suggested. The importance of this work lies in revealing of techniques which may contribute to better speaking skills.

Key words:

speaking skills, techniques / activities for speaking, effectiveness, teaching English

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CEFR	The Common European Framework of Reference
Etc.	Etcetera
NCLRC	The National Capital Language Resource Center, Washington DC
N.d.	No date
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc.
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Introduction

Can anybody of us imagine the world without some kind of communication? People definitely need something what enables them to share their ideas, feelings and needs. One of the possible tools is a language, to which an increasing importance in today's international world is given. Therefore, many people all over the world are learning different kinds of languages. However, there is one which is considered to be not only the language of the European Union and many other organizations, but also the language of the globe. This is the English language.

Actually, many schools are teaching English because they are aware of its importance for the future lives of their students. This implies that learners should be given enough opportunities for speaking which should be at the same time developed by valuable techniques that increase its improvement. Therefore our diploma thesis deals with the application of different speaking techniques which may contribute to this goal.

The importance of this work lies in the depiction of speaking techniques, their advantages and disadvantages, and their relevance. In addition, students have many times problems with speaking in a foreign language. This is why we believe this thesis could contribute or at least show the effectiveness of particular speaking techniques which might lead to better results in speaking.

One of the aims of this work is to find out the reasons for lower development of students' speaking in English lessons. In addition, the results of the research made by the National Institute for Education in 2010 showed that the students' oral skills were less satisfactory (54,9%). Furthermore, our aim is to found out which techniques have the potential to improve the students' speaking skills.

The work consists of two major parts, which are the theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part describes speaking as a skill, its relationship to other language skills, its aspects and features. In addition, it demonstrates different kinds of speaking techniques which are classified into three categories: controlled, guided and free. The practical part of the work deals with the analysis and application of the selected speaking techniques during English classes at the lower secondary education. With this intention, three research methods have been chosen to obtain the required information. These were observation, questionnaire and interview. Each of them has its function in the process of data gathering.

We believe that our diploma work could be an interesting and useful material for those who are interested in teaching speaking and its improvement which is in fact needed by many of today's schools. Furthermore, we can often hear teachers complaining about the students' speaking abilities. On the other hand, there are several students who were studying English for years but they have big problems with communication. Maybe it is caused by the inappropriate choice of techniques, maybe by the students' laziness. Therefore our work serves as a picture of real English lessons and their progress.

The reason why we have chosen to write about this work was that we think that learning a foreign language means to be able to use it, or in other words, to be able to speak this language. We were interested in the real classes and ways how the students' speaking skills can be increased. Therefore we wanted to be a part of their world for a few weeks to see how certain things are working. In addition, we believe that speaking skills create the core of one's language knowledge. This implies that everyone who learns a language should be able to speak it and we believe that with the use of suitable methods learning could be more enjoyable, simple and natural.

1 Skills and their classification

Today we can say that it is a trend to be a professional in some area of life. Furthermore, people's aim is to achieve good results and be skilful in something that provides them with a feeling of inner harmony and success. In general, when we say about somebody that he/she is skilful in doing something, it means that he/she is a kind of "expert" in that activity.

This was just a simple definition from our side but there are more complex and precise definitions of the word "skill". According to Kominarec et al. (1997, p.41) "*skill is an acquired readiness to accurately by the quickest way and with the least effort carry out a certain activity on the basis of obtained knowledge and previous practical activity.*" Bygate (1991) explains the 'skill' in connection to 'knowledge' in language. He says that on one hand they can be equally comprehended and learnt by heart, but on the other hand just skills can be imitated and trained. Furthermore, he adds that language knowledge involves acquaintance of normal grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary use, whereas skill is the capability to employ them.

Everyone is skilful and talented in doing something and therefore there is no definite register of human skills. The reason may be that in every area according to the topic different skill may be considered to be important (UNICEF, N.d). For example, The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) inducts a classification where the skills are divided into more areas, for example:

- ***Social skills:*** are abilities to behave in compliance with certain established sociocultural principles.
- ***Living skills:*** are abilities to perform everyday actions successfully (eating, bathing, etc.) and caring of household tools.
- ***Vocational and professional skills:*** are capabilities to do specific actions (psychological and bodily) which are needed to accomplish certain obligations of employment.
- ***Leisure skills:*** are needed for free time activities, such as arts (painting, playing musical devices), sports (swimming, mountaineering) or hobbies (photography, agriculture).

As we could see there are in fact various kinds of skills. However, our work will deal more concretely with the language area, where the skills are separated into productive and receptive ones. From these two categories later we will be interested in one of the productive skills which is called speaking.

1.1 Receptive and Productive Skills

Skills in a language area can be divided further into two subcategories. The first subcategory is composed of the receptive skills. These skills involve listening and reading, where the learners do not have to produce the language necessarily. So it means that it is enough to listen and understand the language. The second category is created by the productive skills which include speaking and writing, where the learners produce some language. (BBC, N.d. a) In brief, the main difference between the receptive and productive skills lies in the production of the necessary language.

The productive and receptive skills are both inevitable for successful communication. The productive skills insure encoding of the message while the receptive ones ensure decoding of information. In general, for every communication at least two people are needed, concretely a sender and a receiver. (Duguet, 1995)

These four skills can be grouped in more ways. According to Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc (SIL, 1999) they can be coherent to each other, from the communicative point of view, in the following two ways which is shown also in the table below:

- *the manner of communication* : oral or written
- *the stream of communication* : reception and production of the message

Tab. 1: Relationships among Language Skills

Source:<http://www.sil.org/lingualinks/languagelearning/otherresources/gudlnsfralnggandcltrlrnngprgrm/FourBasicLanguageSkills.htm>

	ORAL	WRITTEN
RECEPTIVE	Listening	Reading
PRODUCTIVE	Speaking	Writing

So on one hand the receptive and productive skills are in some contrast, but on the other hand they are in a very close relationship. For example, learners cannot speak with someone without listening. In short, language skills can be arranged in various ways, therefore in the next subchapter we will show more deeply their mutual relationships.

1.1.1 Language Skills and their interrelationships

This subchapter will concentrate on the four language skills, listening, speaking, writing and reading. We will analyze them closer and explain the possible relationships between them. Furthermore, language teaching is dependent on these skills, because without them teaching and learning would be impossible. We hope that from the description below it will be easier to see why they are significant, not only in the teaching – learning process, but also in general life.

We would like to start with the skill called Listening. Purdy and Borisoff (1997, p.8) claim that it is “*the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal needs, concerns, and information offered) by other human beings*”. They add that learners should firstly hear and identify a sound or some sentence to be able to produce it. In brief, the relationship between listening and speaking is crucial for effective communication between people.

So, once we have listened to something or someone talking, we should be able to repeat it or react to it. As per SIL (1999 a) speaking includes the following micro-skills like clear pronouncing of the phonemes, the ability to apply the correct forms of words, and the last but not least, is the ability to link words together in accurate word order. Furthermore, it belongs to the category of productive skills like writing, but the difference is that it comes in the oral mode.

While speaking is used in the oral form, writing is employed in the written style. Actually, some people find writing to be the most difficult skill, because it includes not only the descriptive representation of speech, but also introduction of ideas in a structured way (SIL, 1999 b). However, Baker and Westrup (2003) claim that by writing people have more time to consider about denotation of a particular piece of language than in speaking. In addition, they have a chance to redraft it. Because of this quality it is very close to the next language skill.

There are two characteristics which make reading similar to writing. This similarity implies from a fact, that by reading people have also time to contemplate about the text and they can reread it if they need as by writing. In addition, reading comes in the written mode and it involves such micro-skills as establishing a connection between written symbols and phonemes, identifying the vocabulary and different word classes, or getting the most significant information of the text. (SIL, 1999 c)

All the four skills are important and many people could not imagine their lives without them, but is any of them more important than the others? As per Edge (1993) Listening and Speaking are inevitable in face-to-face communication, whereas Reading and Writing are inevitable in written communication. So our question is: Which of them do people use more often, a written or a face-to-face communication? Most of us would vote for the second one. Maybe therefore more emphasis has been put on speaking and listening since the 1990s, because people realized that in real life they speak and listen more often than they read or write. (Scrivener, 1994) At this point another question can be asked: “What do teachers want to teach their learners, or what do the learners want to know from their foreign language classes? Lawtie (2004) states that one of the biggest aims of the learners is to understand the language and to be able to communicate this language in real life. As a result, teachers should give enough emphasis to developing students’ speaking skills.

There are more reasons for the importance of teaching speaking skills. In fact, many learners see language learning as a key to speaking the language. This is why it is important to teach and at the same time to give learners enough occasions to speak during English classes. This is a clue to successful communication classes, otherwise the learners can soon become de-motivated and language learning may turn into uninteresting activity. Another significant clue is the choice of appropriate activities and their teaching in the right way, what can make English classes more dynamic, enjoyable and full of fun. (Ibid, 2004)

This chapter was concerned with a field of skills and their division according to different areas of life. In addition, it can be said that there are as many skills as there are people in the world. Therefore, there is no precise list of these skills. In fact, every area may require another skill. The language area is represented by two categories of skills which are the receptive (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). These are the four basic skills which should occur in every language teaching. But learners are often

motivated to learn a foreign language, because they believe that they will really need and use it once in their future life. Therefore teaching speaking skills should not take the last place among the skills in language learning process.

2 Speaking

Speaking is a natural and inevitable part of everyday discourse between people. Therefore speaking, as a part of teaching any language, should not be underrated because all learners will really need this skill in their future life. Consequently, speaking is not just a natural tool for daily communication, but it is also a notable skill.

2.1 Speaking as a skill

We have already indicated in Chapter one that speaking belongs to the productive skills, but now we would like to explain what speaking embraces and its purposes. As per Lindsay and Knight (2006) speaking as a skill includes for instance, setting some ideas together, their sharing and cooperating with others. In addition, people talk to each other for several reasons. For example, they may need some information, want to react to something or somebody, or convey their emotions and ideas. Generally, it is an everyday component of people's lives.

We have mentioned so far speaking skills for more times. But what speaking skills can be trained exactly by our learners? The table below shows not only some of them, but also demonstrates circumstances in which they can be taught and what they exactly develop. (Dawes, 2008)

Tab. 2: Some Speaking skills that are taught

Source: Dawes, 2008, p.119

Speaking skills:	Situation:	Development:
<i>telling a story</i>	given passage, personal work	involving details, with terms
<i>Performing</i>	others' works, personal work	with denotation and terms
<i>Interviewing</i>	mates, other people	planning questions, reacting to a person being interviewed
<i>Discussing</i>	with a colleague or group, entire class	intensify the use of fixed established rules
<i>Explaining</i>	a route, an image	logical describing, involving details

From the above table we found out that there are such speaking skills as telling a story, performing or interviewing. These skills can be practiced during various situations. For example, learners can interview their mates, friends or some strangers. Furthermore, by interviewing students learn how to plan good questions and develop some steps how to react to their interviewee. But there are many other skills that learners should develop. Lindsay and Knight (2006) list also such skills as creating connected speech, capability to interact, speaking in various situations and the last but not least is equalizing their accuracy and fluency.

Speaking is a necessary and useful skill for communication. In addition, in a foreign language speaking is a component of a learner's output which implies these capabilities (Pokrivčáková, 2010):

- to design information and put together its spoken form
- to utter the foreign language sounds and expressions accurately
- to be able to produce continuous utterances with proper vocabulary in valid word order
- to use relevant grammar structures in sentences
- to employ adequate rhythm, stress and intonation
- to employ accurately linkage techniques and at the same time to be able to simplify the speech (assimilation, omission, reduction of vowels, etc.)

As we could see from the above paragraphs, being able to speak embraces many sub-skills. These are important in order to become an effective communicator. Consequently, there are some others which are covered in all of them, these are fluency and accuracy.

2.1.1 Accuracy and Fluency

Speaking has several aspects but there are two of them which stand in front and they are called accuracy and fluency. BBC (2003) explains accuracy as the ability to speak with no errors in grammar and in the use of expressions. The second one, fluency, BBC (2003) defines as the speaker's ability to express ideas without much pausing and thinking what he/she wants to say.

Accuracy and fluency have a significant role in learning a language. British Council (N.d.) believes that accuracy can help speakers in discourse. In addition, accuracy activities try to

guide learners to speak correctly, to use the right grammar structures and word order in the sentences. They are concerned about mistakes which can be corrected by the teacher, to help learners to become more precise. On the other hand, fluency guides speakers to describe their thoughts and opinions and to speak even though they are producing mistakes. Their aim is to get speakers to communicate as much as it is possible. This is why the teacher does not correct all the mistakes but just those which may lead to misunderstanding.

Effective learning should embrace activities which deal with both accuracy and fluency. However, British Council (N.d) explains that it is important to think about the goal of teaching and which kind of activity would contribute to it more actively. For instance, it advises to use accuracy activities after some new material, whereas fluency activities can be used at the stage when learners become more skilled, or vice versa.

We have mentioned that accuracy and fluency are two considerable aspect of speaking. But there are of course many others, such as vast extent of vocabulary, comprehension of style and formality, clear pronunciation and confidence. However, BBC (N.d, b) says that each teacher may consider other speaking element being fundamental. The figure below shows 2302 teachers' opinions about the most significant speaking element.

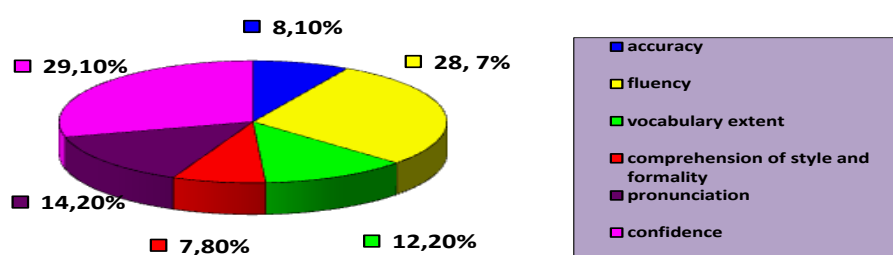


Fig. 1: The most significant element of speaking as per teachers

Source:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/teachingenglish/yourideas/teaching_speaking.shtml

From the above graph we can see that the majority of teachers from the survey think that the most important aspect of speaking is confidence with 29, 10%. However, a large number of them (28, 7%) believe that fluency is the key aspect because there was not a big difference in the percentage numbers of these two characteristics. On the other hand, the two least significant aspects are comprehension of style and formality with 7, 80% and

accuracy with 8, 10%. Later in our research we will compare this graph with our results. All in all, this graph was a good example to show students that their learning has meaning, even though they are making mistakes, because there are more important things than accurate speech.

Generally, several people would say that both, accuracy and fluency are definitely crucial parts of teaching speaking. In addition, many of the following characteristics of speaking are related to these two aspects. Therefore, now we would like to move to characteristic features to have a better overview about speaking.

2.1.2 Characteristics of speaking

Speaking as any other skill has its characteristics. These are connected speech, expressive devices, lexis and grammar and negotiation language. In the following paragraphs we will analyze them a little bit closer.

In order to become fluent like a native speaker, learners should achieve the first characteristics of speaking which is '*connected speech*'. It means that students should not only utter particular English sounds, but also employ smooth connected speech. But what does connected speech exactly mean? As per Harmer (2007) for this speech is typical that some phonemes are modified or weakened and they are sometimes absent or there are some extra phonemes. Thus, sometimes it is not enough just to speak correctly, because learners need to sound naturally too.

The similar argument can be made by the second feature which are the '*expressive devices*'. The reason is that besides being able to apply connected speech, learners should also vary the pitch and stress of certain sentence parts. In addition, they should alter volume and speed of their speech, and explain by physical and non-verbal ways their feelings and emotions. (Ibid, 2007) Consequently, all these mentioned devices help people to communicate particular meanings.

Another important feature of speaking is '*lexis and grammar*'. In fact, the natural speech is full of conventional lexical phrases. Furthermore, it is advisable to provide learners with a range of phrases for various functions. For instance, agreeing and disagreeing, conveying an amaze or support, etc. (Ibid, 2007) In brief, these useful phrases can help learners in different communication situations in life.

'Negotiation language' is also a significant feature of speaking. The reason is that learners employ it because they try to find some clarification and express the composition of their speech. This means that teachers should teach their learners also such phrases as 'Could you repeat your sentence again, please?' or 'What I wanted to say is....' (Ibid, 2007) All in all, this and the above paragraphs showed just some of the characteristics of speaking, but there are many other things that should be mentioned too.

After the characteristics of spoken language, it would be advisable to induct something about the other features that are also covered in speaking. According to Thornbury (2006) the first thing to underline is that the speech production happens in the real world and time and owing to this fact it is linear. It means that words come after words, and every utterance that the speaker makes is dependent on the previous utterance of the other speaker – *interlocutor*. What is more, the mentioned fact explains the spontaneity and continuity of the speaking process.

Actually, there are several factors which influence the process of speaking. They can cause that speaking in a foreign language seems to be difficult for non-native speakers. Consequently, a good speaker has to face many phenomena of speaking in order to be a successful and authentic communicator.

2.2 Speaking in a foreign language

Nowadays many people learn how to communicate in a foreign language. Luoma (2005) says that the potentiality to speak a foreign language is often believed to be a core of the ability to employ the new language. Furthermore, the aim of the most language learners is to be capable to talk with other fellows, co-workers or guests in their native language or in another language that either of them understands. Nevertheless, speaking in another language is an exacting thing and its improvement may last for a long time.

2.2.1 Possible difficulties with speaking in a foreign language

Speeches, discussions, debates, talks definitely belong to everyday lives of people. Thornbury (2006) states that speaking is so much an element of day to day reality that people take it for granted. Consequently, many speakers consider speaking as something natural and they fail to remember how they once sought to reach this ability, until they find themselves in a process of learning a new language.

Speaking a foreign language can be attractive and useful, but at the same time it can be a demanding experience. In addition, many times learning to speak in the foreign language is regarded as one of the most challenging things in language learning not only for learners, but also for teachers. (Brown and Yule, 1999) In our point of view, on the one hand, learners may have a small word-stock or they may be confused by different rules of the foreign language. On the other hand, teachers should know their students well enough and they should establish a good cooperating atmosphere. All in all, the mentioned reasons were just some general ideas why speaking could be difficult.

However, there are many obstacles which students have to overcome during speaking in a foreign language. As per Luoma (2005) at first, learners have to adopt the sounds of the new language, which may be different than the sounds in the speaker's mother tongue. Then the speakers should have an immediate access to adequate vocabulary to express their ideas. Next, they need to be able to match expressions together comprehensibly without too much hesitation in their voice. After that they should understand what the interlocutor wants to say them. Eventually, the speakers should be capable to re-act in a proper way according to the goal of communication. In short, the speakers should be prepared well enough to manage all the mentioned steps while communicating with a native speaker.

Any communication is based at least on one speaker and one hearer. During communication, both sides may meet with some troubles. In addition, the speaker needs to explain his ideas in a clear and understandable way, while the listener should concentrate on his/her speech and react to it. But what if the speaker cannot recall a required word or when the listener does not know some of the words that the speaker has said? Fortunately, there are some useful strategies how to overcome such nuisance. (Anderson et. al, 2004)

- *if the speaker cannot identify or recall a word, he/she can:*
 - ✓ substitute it by a universal one (use “animal” not “shrew”)
 - ✓ explain the features of the thing he/she is talking about

- *if the listener cannot make out the meaning, he/she may:*
 - ✓ outline that he/she has some problem
 - ✓ say again what he/she thinks the speaker wanted to say (Ibid, 2004)

We found out that it needs a lot of time and training to be able to communicate well in a foreign language. In addition, sometimes students have to learn different rules of a new language and acquire them. Nevertheless, we believe that learning a foreign language has meaning and can be managed, if both sides – teachers and students, put all their effort into it.

2.3 CEFR and Speaking

In this subchapter we would like to bring closer one of the significant documents related to speaking, which is the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). It “*provides a common basis for the elaboration of language, syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe.*” (CEFR, p.1) What is more, it defines what learners at different levels should be able to know in all countries and helps the teachers to choose appropriate materials for learners. (Pearson Longman, N.d.) In conclusion, CEFR brought equality to many parts of the language field.

The scales of CEFR help us to distinguish better between particular levels and concerned abilities. Furthermore, it includes also a separate scale for speaking as for the other skills. The levels are divided into 6 groups, from A1 till C2. Each of them exactly says what is required from language learners during speaking.

Tab. 3: Oral production and interaction of learners from level A1 till C2

Source: CEFR, p. 26-27

	Spoken Production:	Spoken Interaction:
A1	He is able to compose elementary phrases and sentences about his home and relatives.	He can interact about easy topics, if the others talk at slow speed and help him express himself.
A2	He is able to produce a set of simple sentences to represent his relatives, life situations, education, etc.	He can hold short talks about usual things and familiar topics, but he cannot understand everything from it.
B1	He can speak about various occasions, expectations and his opinions. He can also tell a content of stories or books.	He is able to talk about everyday or familiar themes with others without any preparation.

B2	He can express himself clearly about many topics in which he is interested in. He can name benefits and drawbacks.	He can speak quite well with native speakers with some level of fluency and naturalness.
C1	He can clearly and in-depth describe complex topics covering sub-topics. He is able to deduce convenient outcomes.	He speaks fluently, confidently and naturally, and employs language for social and specialized intentions.
C2	He can give a clear, fluent account or claim which corresponds to the particular type of context in a logical way which helps the receiver to recall important points.	He speaks or discusses smoothly and easily about any topic. He has a good knowledge of idioms and colloquialisms.

CEFR introduced a new attitude towards language education. Moreover, it does not matter if it is a learner from France or Slovakia, because all learners at the same level should understand each other without bigger troubles during communication. In conclusion, CEFR leads to language equality which is an important part of today's world.

In the second chapter we were dealing with speaking as a skill which is like a key to a door called communication. In addition, we named its significant elements and the basic features. Besides we mentioned that the speaking process is a complicated system in which we produce not only certain sounds, but also one utterance after the other and we respond to our participant. Furthermore, we brought closer the crucial aspects of speaking and their importance in speaking activities and mentioned CEFR's attitude to speaking abilities at particular levels. Actually, speaking can be practice and developed by the use of various techniques which can be divided in more categories and therefore our third chapter will focus on their closer description.

3 Techniques developing speaking skills

In fact, if learners want to become good speakers, they need to train their speaking skills a lot. As per Egan (1999, p.277) “*speaking is at the heart of second language learning*” Therefore, teachers should give chance and use the potential of materials for speaking during lessons. One reason is that if learners are trying to talk, it means that they become aware of the necessity for language. Another reason is that speaking encourages the students’ fluency and assurance. (Gower et al., 1995) In brief, the more practice in speaking leads to better speaking abilities.

Fortunately today there are many different speaking activities which fulfill the learners’ goal to develop their speaking abilities. These activities can be organized in more ways. It means according to Scrivener (1994) that learners can work *individually, in pairs, groups* or as the *whole class* together. As per CEFR, during them learners usually construct a verbal text which is heard by one or more viewers or they may act as a speaker and listener. In addition, speaking activities involve for example, reading a printed content aloud or conversing from notes. Furthermore, there can be involved also imitating of a rehearsed task, unprompted speaking and singing. Thus, teachers can choose from a wide range of speaking activities, however many of them require a careful preparation.

Planning speaking activities should be a crucial part of any lesson oriented on speaking. In addition, if teachers do not pay enough attention to their preparation, they can easily encounter problems. Therefore, the following steps should be taken into consideration (Colorado State University, 2012):

- The activities’ content on one hand should be functional and realistic, but on the other hand it should not contain a lot of new expressions and grammar.
- Give suitable feedback after the activity, but do not disrupt during the activity.
- Try to identify the students’ personalities and support them.
- Foster strategies for conversation, such as requesting for clarification, rephrasing, etc.
- Join the activity if it changes its sense and finish it if it becomes too boring or difficult.

Actually, it can be said that production and interaction are the heart of speaking classes. The students should not only be able to produce language, but also to interact with other

classmates or people. Gower et al. (1995) divide interactive speaking activities into three categories. These are controlled, guided and creative or free activities. Lindsay and Knight (2006) say that those ones which concentrate on the accurate production of language are controlled activities, whereas activities which increase fluency are less controlled. In conclusion, the main difference between the mentioned activities lies in the degree of guidance.

Each of these activities has its importance during the learning process. As per Broughton et al. (2003) at the beginner stages teachers use controlled activities, because students need to learn the basis of language structure and steps how to create accurate language. After that teachers may start to use more guided activities. Eventually they get to the stage where the students are given more and more freedom in producing sentences and language. Consequently, the lower the stage is, the more control and guiding is needed.

Speaking should be definitely practiced in a class for more reasons. In addition, a classroom is a space where students can learn about language rules, train and try out language in an encouraging and helpful environment. Furthermore, the new language is being presented and afterwards practiced. But it is very important to have in mind that the activities should be related to real life situations. Therefore learners should speak about their lives, news, convey their thoughts, debate about different topics. (Baker and Westrup, 2003) Thus, speaking should not be artificial in contrast it should be authentic to prepare the learners for real-life speaking situations.

3.1 Controlled Activities

Controlled activities, as was mentioned before, are devoted to develop accuracy of the students. In addition, Luoma (2005) states that these activities are repetitive exercises of language in such circumstances where the chance of producing mistakes is reduced at the minimum. She also adds that this is usually carried out by drilling. What is more, Gower et al. (1995) claim that by such activities as repetition practice or fixed sentences prompted by pictures, students increase the precise use of expressions, composition and pronunciation and this whole process encourages their self-confidence. Thus, controlled activities are an appropriate practice if the teachers' aim is to develop accurate language use by their students.

In the previous paragraph, we have listed three controlled activities but of course there are many other. Here can be mentioned also such activities as questionnaires, dialogues or guessing activities. (Baker and Westrup, 2003) Other examples of controlled activities according to Thornbury (2006) are for instance, reading aloud, songs and chants. As we can see there are more types of controlled activities, but in the next few paragraphs we will deal with six of them, which are the following: using minimal responses, drills, questionnaires, reading aloud, performing dialogues and using songs and rhymes.

➤ *Using minimal responses*

We will start with minimal responses, which is a technique that is very effective at beginner stages or with shy students. These two types of students usually do not speak, because they are deficient in confidence. But somehow teachers should foster them to speak and participate in activities. One way how teachers can achieve this is by developing a collection of minimal responses which can be used in different situations. (NCLRC, 2004 a) Thus using minimal responses can be a great help for students to reach more self-belief in the beginning.

Now we would like to tell something about how these responses look like and when they can be used. Minimal responses are not only expected and foreseeable, but frequently they are also idiomatic phrases. Participants usually employ them in order to show some understanding, accordance or disbelief to the other speaker. In addition, these responses allow learners to concentrate on the speech of the other participant without having to concurrently intend a response. (Ibid, 2004 a) All in all, minimal responses are in a close proximity to the following technique which is drilling.

➤ *Drills*

The next technique we would like to give insight into is a drill. Thornbury (2006) says that drilling involves imitating and repeating expressions, sayings and complete utterances. But how does it work? For instance, after the students have listened to some dialogue and read its text, the teacher separates particular expressions or utterances. Then the learners' task is to say them again. Maybe it can sound boring for somebody, in spite of this fact, it is a helpful technique. The reason is that by drilling, the new piece of language can be shifted from working into a long-term remembrance. Another reason is that learners can improve their fluency by repeating and getting control over their smooth articulation. On the other hand, drilling loses its meaning, if the whole text of a dialogue is learned or memorized.

(Ibid, 2006) Thus, even though memorizing is a part of drilling, students should understand all the words before learning them by heart, to keep the sense of this technique.

By drills, teachers have power over what their students are saying. Lindsay and Knight (2006) explain this by a fact that the responses to the drills are already set. It means that learners have to reply to their teacher or to each other accurately and in accordance with a particular pattern. In brief, using drills definitely help students to remember the correct grammar pattern.

There are more types of drills but this work will mention just two types of them. The first category as per Lindsay and Knight (2006) is substitution drills. From the title of this category it can be deduced that this kind of drill involves substitution of one expression for another. For example the word “apple” can be substituted by the word “banana” in a sentence. In addition this way, students can train specific terms and structures. The second category of drills is called transformation drills. In these drills the students’ task is to make or transform a question from an affirmative sentence in a particular tense.

It has been indicated above that drills are good techniques, but we cannot say that they are trouble-free. Lindsay and Knight (2006) say that the first problem is connected to the fact which we have mentioned before, that learners may repeat sentences which they do not understand. Another problem is that they are restricted in holding the learners’ motivation because of the repetition. On the other hand, there are some suggestions how to make them more attractive. One of them is to employ some simple narrative. This narrative can be made in such a way that learners are fostered to employ specific structures or functions in their answers, for instance, conveying a regret or agreement, etc.

➤ *Questionnaires*

The third technique belonging to controlled activities, which is a little bit similar to the drills, is a questionnaire. The similarity between drills and questionnaires arises from the repetitive language practice which can be found also by questionnaires. Furthermore, Harmer (2007) states that they are pre-planned and therefore they guarantee that questioner and respondent have something to communicate to each other. Byrne (1992) adds that they are techniques which ensure meaningful question and response practice. In addition, they are connected to some kind of topic, such as likes and dislikes about food or sports. The questions are designed in such a way, that the answer is “yes” or “no” or the respondent

can choose from one of these adverbs “never, rarely, sometimes, usually, often or regularly”.

But how can be questionnaires used in the lessons and why are they helpful? Even though, questionnaires can be found in many textbooks, they can be written by learners themselves. Then in the first step teachers should draw out some ideas from the whole class and write them on the board. In the next step, learners create their own questionnaires with some of the ideas from the board. After they finish writing, they can work individually or in pairs, which offers them a supplementary source of conversation. What is more, they can interview not only one or two of their classmates, but the whole class. (Ibid, 1992) We think that the main usefulness of questionnaires is that learners practice how to lead a conversation in the safe environment of the class. So the students may be better prepared for leading real life conversations and they will not be afraid of asking questions to other people.

➤ *Reading aloud*

The fourth technique we would like to demonstrate is reading aloud. Maybe it can sound uninteresting for some people, but it has many benefits. WETA, Washington D.C. (2012) claims that it develops several significant foundational skills, presents new expressions and offers fluent and expressive kind of reading. In addition, Thornbury (2006) says that reading aloud offers students a safe framework inside which they can concentrate on lower-level characteristics of the conversation, such as pronunciation, with no force to design a new sentence.

So far we have revealed the advantages of reading aloud, but it cannot be said that this technique has no drawbacks. Usually the main problem lies in being able to read and comprehend the text at the same time. This implies that students are just pronouncing a chain of expressions without considering their meaning in the text. As a result, it is both not useful for the learner who is reading that way, and boring for the others who are listening to him/her. Nevertheless, there are some solutions. One of them suggests that teachers can read aloud the text and the students track along mutely. The reason is that teachers have a capability to employ inflection and tone, so that students will hear what the text is telling. Eventually they will shift from expression to expression, reading to reading phrases and whole units, just as they do in their mother tongue. (NCLRC, 2004 b) All in all, reading aloud in spite of its drawbacks, is used in lessons because it provides not only

new vocabulary, but also further activities which are connected to the text, such as role plays or performing dialogues.

➤ ***Performing dialogues***

Dialogues seem to be a natural component of teaching learning process. As the reason Thornbury (2006) indicates that language use is dialogic because from any syntax or structure in language a dialogue practice can be made. In addition, doing and presenting dialogues is an effective method which provides training of recently learned features of language.

There are more ways how dialogues can be arranged in the classroom. The first way of performing the dialogue is by a teacher and a particular learner. This one is helpful for the rest of the class to know how to demonstrate the dialogue properly. The second way of performing dialogues is an open pairwork where two students carry out their dialogue, while the other classmates are watching them. The third way is a closed pairwork in which the whole class is divided into pairs which are working on their dialogues at the same time. After they finish, some chosen pairs come in front of the class to perform their dialogues. (Ibid, 2006) All in all, doing and performing dialogues can be a funny thing, but there are also shy students for which presentation of dialogues can mean a big problem.

In the next paragraph we will deal with the possible solutions of the above mentioned dialogue problems. The most important thing to remember is to give students sufficient time for preparing their dialogues. Another significant thing is to choose a task which will be not too easy neither too difficult. Moreover, teachers should not require from the students to remember the whole dialogue perfectly. Fortunately, there are some ways how teachers can ease the dialogue memorizing. For example, they can write for students some useful drilled words or phrases on the board to compose them in the dialogue, or give pairs cards with expressions they should comprise. (Ibid, 2006) In brief, if teachers hold on these suggestions, the fear of dialogue presentation may be decreased.

➤ ***Using songs and rhymes***

In the next paragraph we would like to demonstrate, our last chosen technique from controlled activities, which are songs and rhymes. As per Saricoban and Metin (2000) songs and rhymes are not only culturally rich, but also very charming for students. Moreover, they are valuable sources for increasing students' speaking, listening, writing

and reading abilities. In addition, they are a great source for teaching word order, expressions, pronunciation and rhythm. What is more, they can be used as a good source for several after-speaking activities, such as true or false statements or gap filling. Besides this, they offer students an authentic text and therefore they are quite motivating. In brief, we believe that songs and rhymes bring fun into the classroom and most of the students like to work with them.

In the previous paragraphs we wanted to show some examples of controlled activities, which try to build accurate use of expressions and phrases by the students. Their use is recommended at the beginner stages. Besides controlled activities there are two other kinds of activities which are guided and free activities, which will be the focus of the next two subchapters.

3.2 Guided activities

We would like to start this subchapter with a closer description of guided activities. Savage et al. (2010) indicate that a lesson can progress into a guided practice, after the teachers have introduced intended grammar and make sure that learners understand the new structure, its meaning and application. During guided stage, teachers or course books offer all language models that learners will make. However, guided activities have typically one or a restricted number of correct statements. In addition, guided practice offers a link between the new grammar's presentation and the learners' use of this structure in communicative circumstances.

After a short description above it would be advisable to say something also about the aim and importance of the guided stage. As per Broughton et al. (2003, p.81) "*guided oral practice aims to give the student a limited freedom to use and practise what he has learnt, yet still be subject to some restraints*". Furthermore, the aim of guided practice is developing fluency of the learned structures, or in other words, to be able to use them without uncertainty and with a comprehensible pronunciation. In addition, a large number of learners need several occasions for making exercises of a recent grammar structure before they are able to employ them communicatively (Savage et al., 2010). Therefore we think it is suitable to describe in the next paragraphs some of the guided activities, such as information gap activities, jigsaws, ask and answer, and the last but not least, retelling activities.

➤ ***Information gap activities***

These activities focus on interaction between people. In addition, Lindsay and Knight (2006) say that many times teachers practice with their students such activities, in which one student is familiar with something or could observe something while the other one does not, what can give them a motive for speaking. These types of activities are named information gap activities.

There are more kinds of information gap activities. The first one is *describe and draw*, where one student has some picture which he/she is explaining to a partner who is drawing it. The second kind is called *describe and arrange*, where one student is talking about some place or map and the partner's task is to arrange items according to the heard commands. The last but not least kind is "*find the differences*". Here students from each pair get a picture with some distinctions. Their task is to depict their pictures to each other in order to discover these distinctions. (Ibid, 2006) Consequently, we think these activities can be interesting for students more than for example drilling because by them students forget that they are still learning and language learning may become more funny and attractive.

➤ ***Jigsaw activities***

Jigsaw activities are in a very close relationship to the information gap activities. Richards (N.d) says that the reason is that they are built on the similar theory. He adds that in jigsaws the class is divided into groups and each of them has a piece of information which is necessary for successful completion of the task. Therefore, the groups need to communicate with each other and match these pieces together in order to finish the whole task. In short, jigsaws support speaking process in the class since students need to talk and acquire crucial information from the others.

➤ ***Ask and answer***

This technique may be used after some reading. Nation and Newton (2009) say that firstly, the teacher prepares some questions from the text and the students work in pairs. One of them is asking questions from the teacher's list while the other is answering them. The answers usually depict the main ideas or abstract of the story. The pairs repeat the questions and answers more times until they come in front of the class to present them. The main aim of this technique is to develop students' fluency while speaking.

➤ ***Retelling***

From the title we can deduce that this technique involves some degree of repetition. Truly before this technique students should read some text, which usually has an extent from 100 to 200 words, and after that they should repeat it by their own words. In addition, the text supplies students with new expressions and the context makes it easier for students to comprehend them. What is more, retelling offers learners an opportunity to recover expressions. Besides, the students can be given guided questions which they should ask to their partners. Furthermore, these questions ensure that the main points of the text will be repeated. Eventually, students can be asked to present their questions and answers in front of the class. (Joe et al., N.d.)

From the above paragraphs we found out that guided practice is used after the learners are acquainted with all the rules of some grammar structure and its proper use. Its main role lies in developing students' fluency. All in all, the guided practice is a build-up stage where students practice language within limited chances, after which they can move to free activities where they have much more communication practice.

3.3 Free activities

In this subchapter we will analyze free activities, where the students can train a foreign language more freely. This implies that they can communicate more often with their classmates in a foreign language. Some of these activities can be quite interesting and attractive for students. We have decided to demonstrate these four: role plays, simulations, discussions and games. But before we move to their description we would like to expound their importance.

The use of these activities in the classroom is meaningful for more reasons. The first reason according to Gower et al. (1995) is that they offer learners chances to experiment with language and see how good communicators they are. The second reason is that they can increase students' fluency in speaking. The last but not least reason is that they connect a gap between the artificial language of classroom and real language outside it. Thus, by free activities students can develop the use of real language which will be a great help for them in the future.

➤ ***Role plays***

The first free activity we would like to analyze closer is role plays. As per Lavery (2001, p. 44) in role plays students should “*take a role (imagine that they are someone else), imagine a situation (pretend they are in another time and place) and improvise in their choice of language.*” Gower et al. (1995) add that by pretending to be such a person, they imitate a particular conversation which should be unscripted. However, students should have some general outline about what they should say.

Actually, role plays have more significant functions and therefore their use in classroom is very practical. First of all, they remind learners of some circumstances they could once possibly occur. Next, the learners can not only practice lately presented language, but they can also revise it in a more controlled mode and improve their fluency. What is more, they reveal the learners’ strength and weaknesses in using English. (Ibid, 1995) All in all, role plays enable students to try out different roles in different situations and help them realize some responsibilities and duties in those situations.

➤ ***Simulations***

Simulations are very similar to the previous technique of role plays but there is a slight difference between them. The distinction as per Thornbury (2006) lies in the degree of adoption of a particular role. While in role plays students are playing another person, in simulations they are playing themselves. Thus, they should do things, solve problems, and make decisions or requests as they would do in their real life.

It can be said that simulations are focused on learners and their opinions and attitudes. In addition, Jones (1995) says that simulations are about learners, not about teachers. He adds that it is a tentative learning and therefore students need to learn from the mistakes they have made. As a result, simulations are not taught processes in contrast, they should be authentic and subjective. In brief, if learners want to do simulations properly, they should put a part of their personality in them.

➤ ***Discussions***

It can be said that discussions and simulations have a common feature, because in both of them students should express their opinions. However, Gower et al. (1995) claim that discussions require more preparation in a case that teachers will not be in control. They offer some suggestions how to lead successful discussions. For example, the topic should

be interesting enough for students to speak. Furthermore, learners should know the necessary language for discussing the topic. Besides this, students should be given enough time to arrange their opinions. Eventually, the most important thing is that discussions should not be directed by one or two learners. Consequently, discussions work if all the students in the class have same chances for speaking.

A good discussion is such one where everyone wants to share his/her ideas freely. Thornbury (2006) believes that the majority of teachers would concur that the best discussions are those which take place unexpectedly. He adds that such discussions occur in the class because students have something to say to the topic or they are interested in it. But does it always work that way? If not, teachers can help themselves. For instance, they can give each group cards with statements related to a certain topic. After the groups discussed them, they present their main ideas to the other groups, which can open a whole class discussion.

We think discussions are not only developing learners speaking skills, but they teach them many other skills. For example, learners are taught how to express themselves in an appropriate way, how to listen and react to others. Generally, all these skills are necessary in real world for effective communication.

➤ *Games*

Games are very attractive and popular techniques by almost every generation. The reason as per Lindsay and Knight (2006) could be that students feel relaxed and amused by them. Furthermore, games have a power to bring laughter and fun into ordinary everyday classes. In addition, they are frequently effective techniques how to cheer up bored and tired students. Therefore, we have chosen two types of them which we would describe closer.

The first type of game according to Harmer (2007) is called ‘Twenty questions’. During that game students can be divided into pairs or groups. One student has to think of some object, animal or person and the other/others are guessing what he/she thinks of by asking yes / no questions. They are asking questions like for what that thing can be used, where they can see that person, etc. The game does not get its name randomly. It is called ‘Twenty questions’ because this is the limit in which students should find out the correct answer. If they do, they will get a point. Consequently, getting points can be a good motivation for students to work and speak.

The second game 'Fishbowl' is a little bit different from the previous one. Two students have to speak on some topic in front of the class. However, they should have some set sign beforehand, at which one of them pull out of the fishbowl pieces of paper with some phrases or sentences written by their classmates. In addition, they should not only speak fluently, but also integrate these pieces of papers into their talk. (Ibid, 2007) In our point of view this game can turn into great fun due to witty statements of classmates which can be sometimes hardly included into the original topic. But it does not matter, because the game's main aim is to have cheerful moments. All in all, learning should be amusing and motivating, not only with the use of games, but also with all the other techniques.

This chapter revealed some of the techniques which can be used to develop students' speaking skills. We have chosen the fourteen mentioned techniques because they appeared in the most of literature we have studied. We classified them under three categories, which were controlled, guided and free activities. However, we found out from more sources that some of these activities can be found in all categories. These are for example such activities as information gap activities, dialogues or games. But it is the teachers' task to decide which technique should be used in which stage (controlled, guided or free) to achieve the expected results. We think that the most important thing about teaching speaking in classes should be to enable our students to speak as much as they can in the foreign language to become better speakers.

4 The Goal and Methodology of the Thesis

The practical part of the diploma thesis is closely related to the theoretical part which was concerned with speaking and speaking techniques. The reason is that while the theoretical part was dealing with the notional facts about speaking techniques, in the practical part the main focus will be given to a closer investigation of these techniques in real English classes.

But before we move to the specific parts of the research, we would like to analyze the goals of the work closer. One of the goals of the practical part is to find out the reasons for lower development of students' speaking in English lessons. We chose this goal due to the less satisfactory level of students' oral skills (54,9%) in 2010 at the lower secondary education in Slovakia according to the National Institute for Education (2010). Another goal is to find out which techniques / activities are prevailing during teaching speaking and which of them have the potential to develop students' speaking skills most effectively.

4.1 Characteristics of the research sample

Each research work has its research sample which is like a heart of the investigation. In our research we focused on the mentioned speaking techniques / activities. Furthermore, we tried to explore closer the real English lessons, their learners and teachers. Therefore, we have chosen three kinds of methods which were observation, interview and questionnaire, but we will deal with them later in this work.

The research sample which we observed, were teenagers who were 13 to 14 years old. These students attended the seventh and the eighth grades at the lower secondary education. We have chosen this grade of education because we think that the students at this stage get the real basis of their speaking abilities on which they build on in the following years. Even though they had learned English sooner, those years were mostly devoted to learning grammar. Therefore, we believe that in these two grades, the seventh and the eighth, students should be given much more space for speaking.

Furthermore, we observed not only the mentioned teenagers but also their facilitators – teachers. We would like to find out if the teachers devote enough time to improving

students' speaking skills, if there are some techniques they prefer more than the others or some techniques they ignore.

After we have defined the research sample, we would like to describe the location of our research. General, in the education system more kinds of school can be found, but we were interested in the lower secondary education. Actually, we have carried out our observation and interviews at three lower secondary schools in the south of Slovakia, in the town Šahy. Besides these two methods we have also applied questionnaires. However, they were distributed to a larger number of people in the near area and in the area of Šaľa, to provide a higher reliability of this method.

In brief, we believe that what the students acquire at the mentioned stage at the lower secondary education is the core of their further English development. Therefore, we wanted to reveal if speaking is practiced enough in English lessons, if students are provided with enough opportunities to improve their speaking abilities and which technique / activity or activities are the most suitable for this aim.

4.2 Research methods and their descriptions

The acquirement of the required facts was provided by the choice of three important qualitative and quantitative methods. By the first method, which was the observation, we gained an overview about the techniques / activities that are used during English lessons and their frequencies. The second method – the interview, offered the possibility to detect more deeply the thoughts and attitudes of teachers where we had done the observation beforehand. By the help of the last method, which was the questionnaire, we could obtain not only more information about the actual situation of speaking during English lessons, but also about the attitudes and opinions of a larger number of teachers in the near and more distant area.

4.2.1 Characteristics of the research method - Observation

Observation is one of the broadly used methods of gathering facts. An investigator can collect 'live' information of spontaneously happening social situations. What is more, he / she can observe these things immediately as they are happening, so he / she does not have to rely on second-hand descriptions. (Cohen et al., 2005)

From the literature we found out that there are more types of observation, such as structured, semi-structured and unstructured observation. We decided to make use of the first type, where the researcher has a plan what he/she will observe. Therefore, a schedule with observation categories needs to be worked out beforehand. (Ibid, 2005) However, there are more ways of entering information into the schedule. We chose event sampling, in which we entered a particular sign if a certain speaking technique / activity appeared.

Our observation focused on the speaking techniques / activities during English lessons. Furthermore, we tried to explore which techniques are used, how the students were working during them and how they reacted to them. Therefore, we decided for a direct observation in which we could observe the situation personally.

The observation took place at two elementary schools and one Gymnasium. We were interested in the seventh and eighth classes. At the first elementary school there were two seventh grade class and one eighth grade class. At the other elementary school there was one seventh and one eight grade class. In the Gymnasium there was just one eighth grade class. The students in these classes were 13 to 14 years old and the average number of them was approximately 18.

Our observation lasted for three weeks. In this time we took part in 42 English lessons from which 18 lessons were in the seventh grade classes, that was 42, 91%. The remaining 24 lessons were observed in the eighth grade classes which composed 57, 14%.

We created the structured observation schedule where we noted how many times the particular speaking techniques appeared and the organization of students' work. For each of these categories we had a special sign. Actually, we distinguished in the observation schedule between the following signs:

a forward slash (/) for the type of the used technique

a tick (✓) for the organization of students' work

We divided the lesson into nine parts per five minutes. It means that we made a note each five minutes. When we were deciding about the appropriate time limit, we have taken into consideration the students' abilities and the change of techniques in the lessons. For example, five minutes is a good time limit for having a small talk or for asking and

answering questions about some topic. Furthermore, the techniques should be changing during lessons several times because the learners at this stage would not be able to sit and do the same type of activity for a long time. The schedule of the structured observation can be found also in the appendices.

4.2.1.1 Analysis of the results of the research method of observation

The first part of the observation analysis depicts the particular speaking techniques and their occurrence during lessons. The observation schedule consisted of the following speaking techniques: using minimal responses, drills, questionnaires, reading aloud, performing dialogues, using songs and rhymes, information gap activities, jigsaw activities, ask and answer technique, retellings, role plays, discussions and games.

We can conclude that the most frequently occurred technique was ask and answer with 18, 51%. Besides these techniques, students very often read aloud (14, 81%). They usually read some articles in their course books or some articles brought by teachers, which were related to the topic they were dealing with. Furthermore, when they had read something, many times teacher started to ask questions from the text or she wanted from the learners to retell it in their own words, which formed 10,85%. Besides this, they used to read their homework or something they should write in the lessons. Drills which are in general not very popular techniques represented 12, 70%.

The remaining techniques did not exceed the threshold of 10%. For instance, performing dialogues were represented just by 9,00%. Information gap activities achieved 7,67%. Even though, games are generally regarded as appropriate activities at the lower secondary education, they formed just 5, 30%.

The following techniques represented less than 5%. For instance, role plays were used just a few times (3, 97%). The discussions were in the similar situation, because their percentage was 3, 44%. Somewhat less percents were given to using minimal responses (3, 17%). But a worse fact was that we noticed that the use of songs and rhymes, jigsaw activities and questionnaires did not occur at all.

Besides the speaking techniques we were observing the organization of students' work. The analysis brought the following results. The most popular organization in which the students worked was a whole class work (52, 66%). The results showed that the second

place belonged to individual work (18, 51%). Pairwork was used less than the previous ones, because it was represented by 11, 37%. The least used technique was group work with 6, 88%.

However, we observed many other facts related to speaking and its techniques. For instance, students who were working in group work switched many times to their mother tongue. Furthermore, they did not like individual work. In addition, they felt more confident if they could work in a pair. What is more, they were working harder on their performance in pairs than in groups.

The results were worked out from the observation of all the six classes. We did not want to divide the analysis according to particular classes, because our aim was to give a general overview of certain techniques at the lower secondary education. The method of structured observation in which we worked out our categories, helped us to have a better overview of which techniques / activities could be the most effective. The final outcomes will be presented in the “*evaluation and discussion*” part of the work.

4.2.2 Characteristics of the research method - Questionnaire

The second research method we used was a questionnaire. It was distributed not only to those teachers where we had done our observation, but also to other teachers in the near Districts of Šahy and in the District of Šaľa. We can name such cities as Levice, Banská Bystrica, Krupina, Dunajská Streda, etc. The majority of them were delivered personally and a small portion was delivered electronically.

Our respondents were assured that this questionnaire is anonymous and its completion lasts maximum 15 minutes. They were acquainted that we need their help and opinions for the purpose of our research in the diploma thesis.

The questionnaire was distributed to 54 respondents. The delivery process started on 16 of March and lasted till 22 of March. After their collection, we have assessed the results statistically.

The questionnaire consisted of 11 questions, where 5 questions were closed, 1 was opened, 3 had rating scales character and the remaining 2 were multiple choice questions. Each of these questions was chosen for some reason. The closed questions and multiple choices

were used to speed up the evaluation process of the questionnaire. In these questions concrete categories were set, from which the respondents should pick up the appropriate one. In the opened question we offered teachers a space to express their opinions. Through the questions which used rating scales, we wanted to find out the teachers' preference of certain issues.

Our questionnaire was divided into more parts and each of them focused on different kind of information. Its first part consisted of rating scales, where the respondents were offered certain options. Their task was to arrange these options according to their relevance. These questions were concentrated on language skills, the organization of students' work during lessons and speaking techniques/activities. The next few questions were concerned with speaking skills, aspects of speaking and correction of mistakes.

4.2.2.1 Analysis of the results of the research method of Questionnaire

This subchapter deals with the analysis of our questionnaire, in which 54 respondents took part. The results are processed statistically. Furthermore, each question is accompanied by graphs or tables to depict the detected outcomes. The whole questionnaire is attached to appendices at the end of the diploma thesis.

The first item in the questionnaire dealt with the four *language skills and their relevance in teaching English language*. The respondents could choose from these options: speaking, listening, reading and writing. In addition, their task was to put them in order according to their opinion.

This implies that there may arise more combinations of answers. The reason is that one teacher may consider, for instance writing, while the other speaking as the most relevant skill in teaching English. By this question we would like to find out how many teachers regard speaking as the most important skill in learning a foreign language.

We found out, that there arose 9 combinations. The table below shows the possible combinations (1-9) according to teachers' opinions. There are four columns with numbers from 1- 4, where each number expresses the degree of relevance:

1 – the most relevant

4– the least relevant

Tab. 4: Ordering of importance of language skills

No.	Combinations of answers:				The number of replies	Evaluation in %
	1	2	3	4		
1	speaking	listening	reading	writing	28	51,86%
2	listening	speaking	writing	reading	6	11,12%
3	listening	speaking	reading	writing	5	9,26%
4	speaking	reading	writing	listening	5	9,26%
5	reading	speaking	listening	writing	4	7,40%
6	speaking	reading	listening	writing	2	3,70%
7	speaking	writing	listening	reading	2	3,70%
8	reading	writing	speaking	listening	1	1,85%
9	writing	reading	listening	speaking	1	1,85%
together:					54	100%

We can conclude that the most frequent combination with 51,86 % from all the other, was speaking – listening – reading – writing, which was selected by 28 teachers. This combination was clearly prevailing above the rest. On the other hand just one respondent voted for such a combination where speaking is on the penultimate or last position.

Analyzing this table closer, it may be seen that speaking is on the first place four times. Then listening and reading follow, where each of them is on the first position twice, whereas writing is just once on the first position. In brief, we can assume that teachers are becoming aware of the importance of teaching speaking during lessons because more than a half of all of them think that it is the most important language skill.

The second question which used rating scales was about the organization of students' work. Our query was: "Which of the following organizations of students' work do you consider being the most appropriate to improve speaking?" We offered four possibilities of organization: whole class – group work – pair work – individually. The options they could assign were: 1- most appropriate, 4- least appropriate.

Before we move to each category, we would like to describe how many people selected particular kinds of work as the most appropriate. The results are depicted in the table below:

Tab.5: The most appropriate type of work

Respondents' responds	The number of replies	Evaluation in %
pair work	22	40,74%
individual work	19	35,19%
group work	11	20,37%
whole class	2	3,70%
together:	54	100%

The table suggests that almost half of the respondents (40, 74%) thought that pair work is the most appropriate type of work. Somewhat less, 19 respondents, which formed 35, 19%, believed that it should be the individual work. Approximately a quarter of all respondents (20,37%) considered group work as the most appropriate, whereas just two people (3,70%) answered that it should be a whole class work. We may suppose from these results that teachers are trying to make use of such forms of work in which pupils can cooperate with each other. This would be a good step to improve communicative abilities of students.

In the further few paragraphs we will deal with appropriateness within each of the mentioned organizations of the learners' work in order to see the teachers' opinions more deeply.

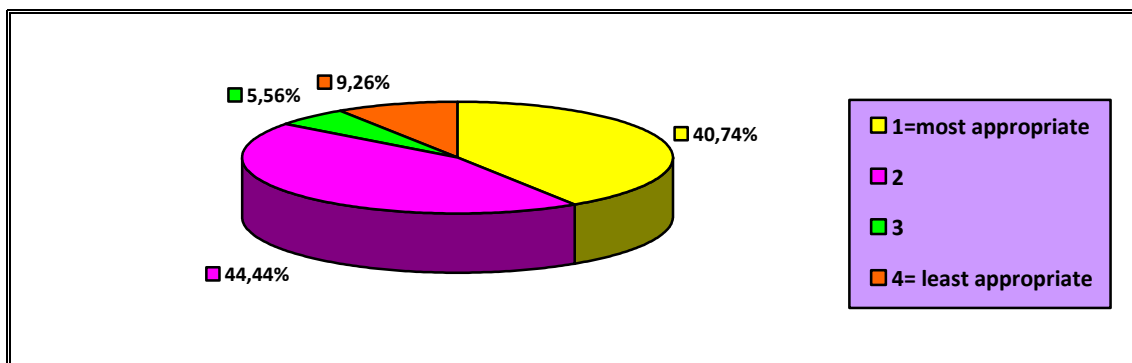


Fig. 2: Pair work

Even though 22 respondents regarded the pair work as the most suitable work from all the others, within this category it is not the winning kind of work. The results from this chart showed that more people, concretely 24, which were 44, 44%, believed that it should be on the second place and not on the first one. Just 3 people (5, 56%) voted for the third place and 5 people (9, 26%) regard it as the least appropriate.

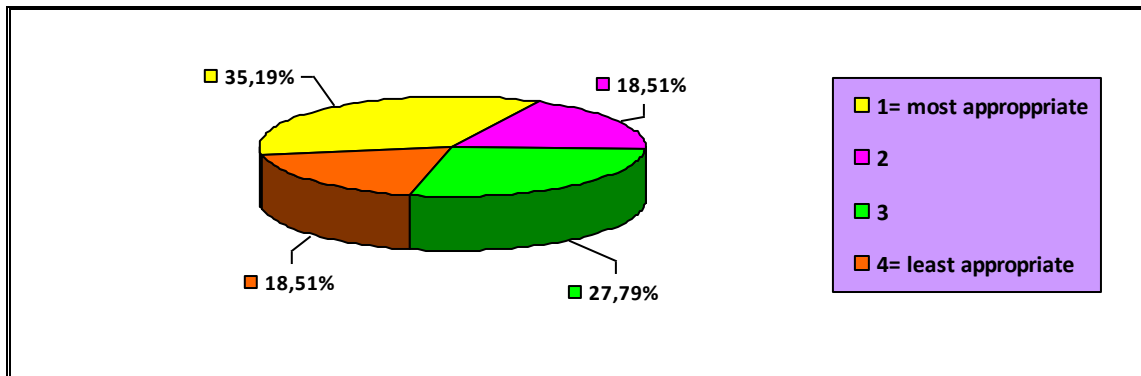


Fig. 3: Individual work

Within the category of individual work, 19 respondents (35, 19%) believed that pupils should work mainly on their own. One third of all teachers (27, 79%) indicated that individual work should be on the third place. But 18, 51% of respondents answered that it is the second most appropriate and at the same time the last appropriate kind of learners' organization.

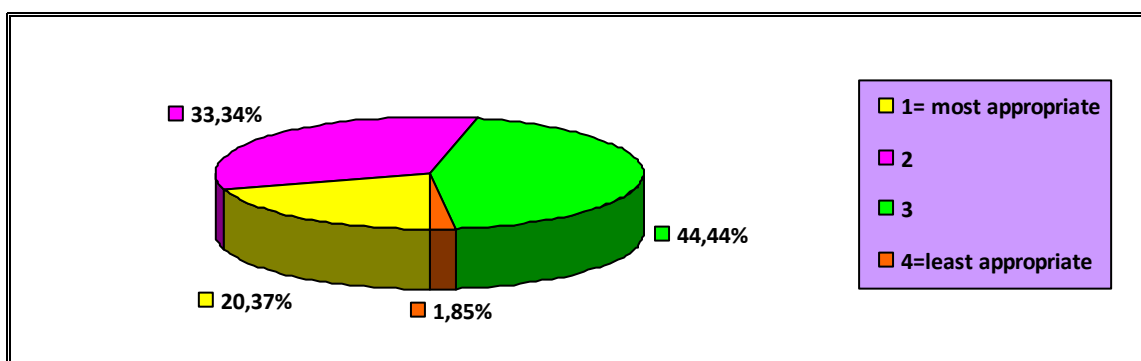


Fig. 4: Group work

The rating within group work brought interesting facts. The reason is that just a quarter of respondents (20, 37%) answered that group work is the most appropriate work. However, more teachers said that is it the second (33, 34%) and the third (44, 44%) most suitable

composition of pupils. Furthermore, just one respondent (1, 85%) answered that group is the least suitable.

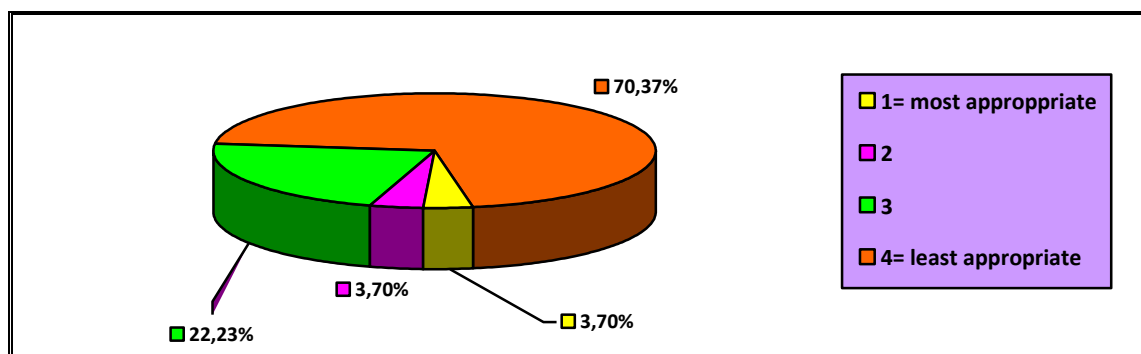


Fig. 5: Whole Class

The situation with the whole class work is completely reversed. The explanation is that while the majority of previous types of work were put in the first places by the most of the teachers, the whole class work got the most points as the least appropriate kind of learners' composition. In addition, this opinion was hold by 38 people from 54 respondents (70, 37%). On the other hand, just 2 of all respondents said that it is the most proper kind of work for learners.

As we could see teachers had different ideas about organizing students' activities during lessons. On one hand the most appropriate kind of work was the pair work, on other hand the least suitable type was the whole class work.

The third question dealt with the speaking techniques / activities which were described in the theoretical part of the diploma thesis. The respondents' task was *to order them according to their importance*. Number 1 stood for the most important technique, while number 14 stood for the least important.

Tab.6: The order of speaking techniques

The order of importance	The name/s of techniques/s	Points	Evaluation in %
1.	role plays	18	33,33%
2.	role plays	13	24,07%
	discussions	9	16,67%
3.	performing dialogues	12	22,23%
	simulations	8	14,81%
4.	ask and answer	12	22,23%
5.	retellings	8	14,81%
6.	discussions	9	16,67%
7.	games	8	14,81%
8.	reading aloud	10	18,51%
9.	jigsaw activities	11	20,37%
10.	questionnaires	10	18,51%
11.	drills	11	20,37%
	information gap activities	9	16,67%
12.	using songs and rhymes	8	14,81%
13.	using minimal responses	10	18,51%
14.	using minimal responses	11	20,37%
	reading aloud	11	20,37%

As we could see from the above Table 18 respondents thought that the most important speaking technique is role plays with 33, 33%. However, another 13 respondents (24, 07%) chose role plays as the second most important activity. Besides them at the second place appeared discussions with 16, 67%, but they appeared with the same number of points also at the sixth place. The third place was also shared by two techniques which were dialogue performance with 22, 23% and simulations with 14, 81%. The fourth place was clearly given to ask and answer technique which got 12 points, that was 22, 23%. Actually, 8 respondents (14, 81%) thought that retellings should be at the fifth place. The sixth place

was filled with the mentioned discussions. Even though games are often believed to be useful and funny techniques, they appeared at seventh place with 14, 81%.

The analysis of the second half of the speaking techniques revealed that reading aloud was at the eighth place with 10 points (18,51%), but at the same time it was chosen as the least important technique by 11 respondents (20,37%). Furthermore, almost a quarter of all teachers believed that jigsaw activities are not very significant owing to the fact that they put them at the ninth place. 10 respondents (18, 51%) thought that questionnaires should be at the tenth place. If we go further, at the eleventh place occurred drills with 20, 37% and information gap activities with 16,67%. At the next place 8 respondents (14,81%) put the use of songs and rhymes. 18,51% of all teachers considered the use of minimal responses as the second least important technique, but at the same time more people (20,37%) believed that they are the least important speaking technique. Consequently, there was a visible difference in the teachers' attitude towards certain speaking techniques, what we had already noticed during our observation and interviews.

The fourth opened question asked "*Which technique do you think is the most effective to develop speaking skills, and why?*" By this question just 8 techniques appeared from the previous fourteen speaking techniques. In addition, we found out that 16 respondents, which were 29, 63%, regarded role plays as the most effective speaking technique. The second most effective techniques were two activities – discussions and ask and answer techniques, both of them with 16, 67%. The next most effective technique was performing dialogues with 11, 11%. Even though, games in the previous question were regarded as the seventh most important technique with 8 points, in this question they got just 3 points (5, 56%). Even worse ended the three remaining techniques which were reading aloud with 3, 70%, and songs (1, 85%) and drills (1, 85%) which both acquired just one point. Other three respondents said that they did not know which technique is the most effective because they use different techniques in different classes. They added it depends on the topic and students' level. Unfortunately, 4 respondents (7, 40%) did not answer this question. The results are once more shown in the chart on the next page.

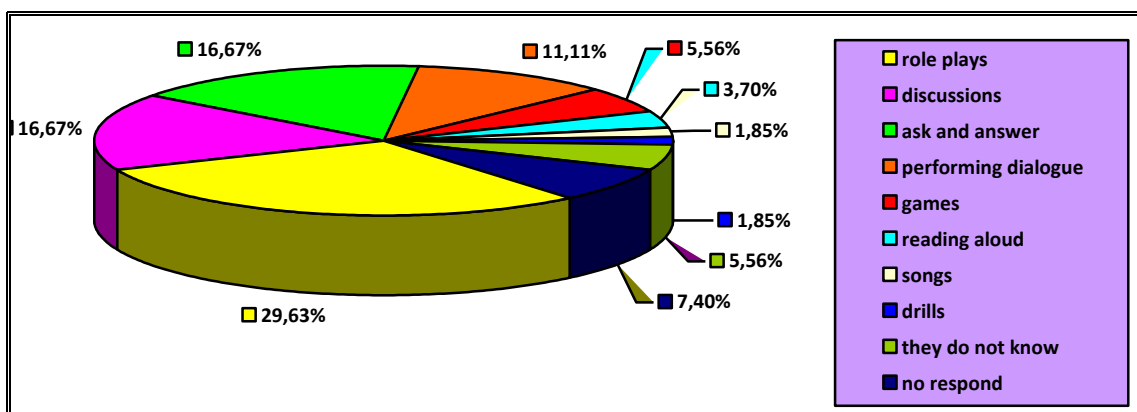


Fig. 6: The most effective technique

We wanted to know also the reasons of their choice. Some of them were often repeated. The majority of teachers who chose role plays said that they believed that their students liked role plays and they brought fun into the lesson. Furthermore, they said that role plays set students closer to real life situations which could be useful for their future. The choice of discussions was explained by the fact that learners could develop not only speaking skills, but also other significant skills which were needed for discourse, such as expressing their ideas, etc. Ask and answer activity was chosen, because it practiced students' speaking skills in unpredictable situations. Performing dialogues were popular for a similar reason as the previous technique. Reading aloud and drills are believed to practice speaking skills and offered new vocabulary. Games and songs were chosen for two obvious reasons which were fun and enjoyment.

In the next question we sought to determine the teachers' opinions on the relationship between speaking techniques / activities and reality. We asked: "How important do you consider speaking activities to be related to real life situations?"

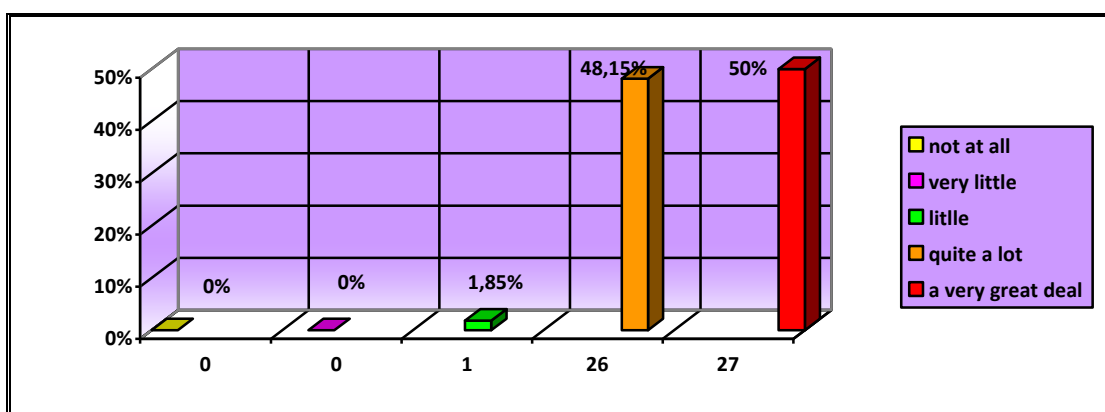


Fig. 7: Speaking activities vs. reality

The analysis of information from this question says that teachers thought that speaking techniques/activities should be closely related to real life situations. The reason is that a half of all respondents (27 people) attached great importance to this relationship. Less respondents (26 people) voted for the option “quite a lot”. On the other hand, just one person chose the option “a little”.

In the following question we focused on the speaking practice. We wanted to know what the teachers’ attitudes were. The question was: “Do you agree with the statement: More practice in speaking can lead to better speaking skills?”

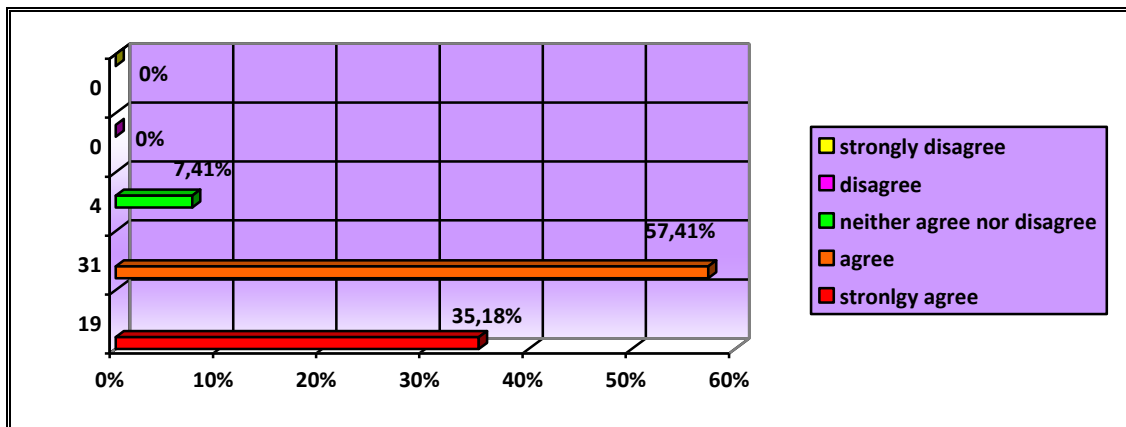


Fig. 8: Practice in speaking

We can suppose from the information in the chart above that teachers thought that if the students were given more space for speaking, they could improve their abilities for speaking. 19 respondents, which formed 35, 18%, answered that they strongly agree with this statement. In addition, more than a half of respondents said they agree with the declaration. Just 4 people (7, 41%) chose the option “neither agree nor disagree”.

The sixth question was closely linked to the previous one. In this query we asked: “Do you think that teachers should devote more time to developing students’ speaking skills?”

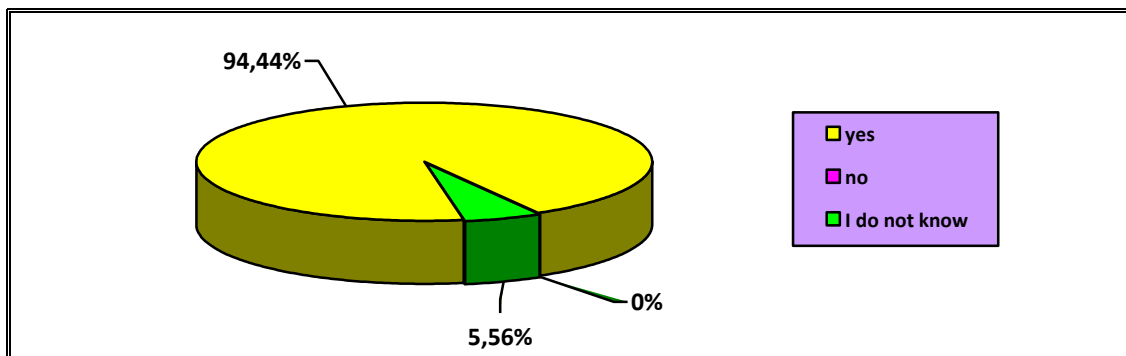


Fig. 9: Devotion of time to speaking

From the obtained data it can be seen that almost everyone said that speaking requires more space in English lesson. Because 51 respondents from 54 replied that teachers should devote more time to speaking. Just 3 people (5, 56%) responded that they did not know. But nobody chose the option “no”. This implies that teachers would devote speaking greater attention.

In next item we focused on the aim of teaching speaking. The question was: “*What is your main aim with the students in teaching speaking?*” We offered three options, which can be seen in the Legend.

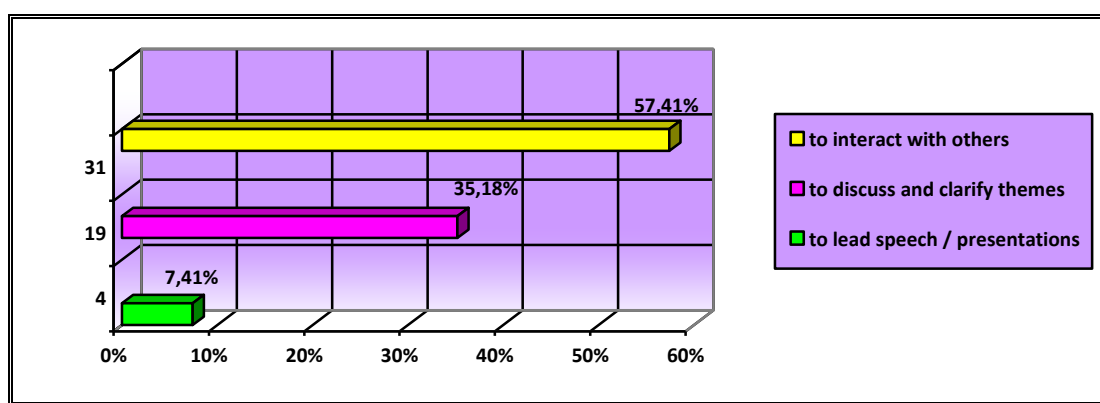


Fig.10: Aims in teaching speaking

The first option was hold by more than a half of all asked people (57, 41%). The option “to discuss and clarify various themes” was chosen by 19 teachers, that was 35, 18%. As we can see, teachers did not ascribe great importance to speeches and presentations in public because just 4 of them had this choice as their main aim in teaching. This implies that teaching speaking should be oriented on such purposes which students will really need in the future.

The further item in the questionnaire was concerned with the *aspects of speaking*. We named six of them which were the following: accuracy, fluency, vocabulary content, comprehension of style and formality, pronunciation and confidence. We asked which of them the respondents consider to be the most important.

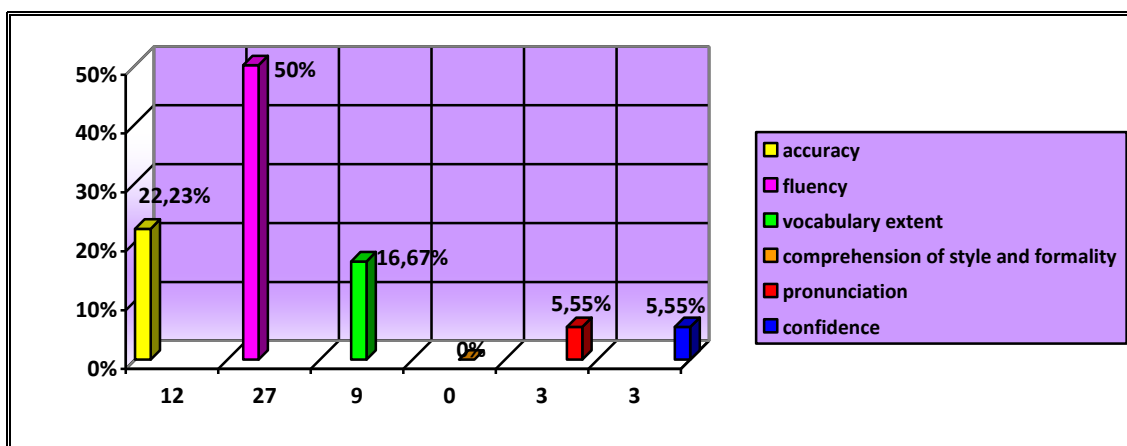


Fig. 11: Aspects of speaking

The above chart shows that most points were given to fluency because a half of teachers voted for it. The second most important aspect was accuracy with 22, 23% which was chosen by 12 respondents. Less points were given to the vocabulary extent (16, 67%). As we can see pronunciation and learners' confidence were on the penultimate places with 5, 55%. On the last place comprehension of style and vocabulary with no points were found. Consequently, teachers in our research thought that a fluent speech is more important than accurate one which can be a good motivation for students.

Mistakes are a part of the learning process. Therefore we wanted to know how teachers correct their learners. From the literature we know that there are more ways of correcting students and everyone can prefer different kind of correction. Therefore we offered our respondents 5 choices to narrow the options and accelerate the processing of responses.

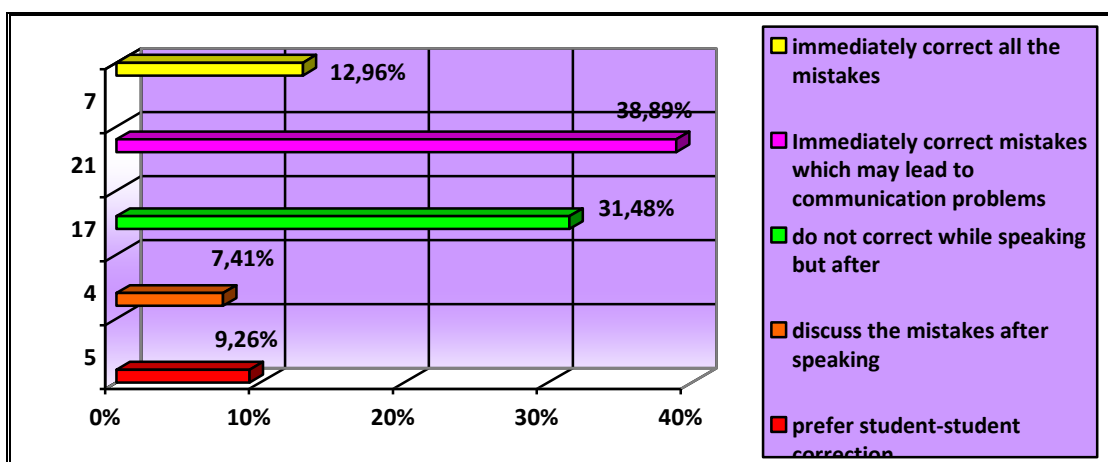


Fig.12: Correcting mistakes

From the obtained data we can assume that teachers tried to be tolerant to students' mistakes because 21 from 54 respondents, which were 38, 89%, answered that they correct just those mistakes which may cause troubles in discourse. Less people (31, 48%) stated that they do not correct their learners during talking. Another deduction was that still just a few teachers (9, 26%) prefer student-student correction. In addition, a very small number of teachers (7, 41%) discuss the mistakes after speaking activities. What is worse, almost a quarter of respondents (12,96%) said that they correct their students immediately when they make a mistake which could be a frustrating and de-motivating experience for learners.

The last closed question was concerned with the required level of students according to the CEFR. We asked respondents *if they think that their students comply with the criteria given in CEFR*.

Tab.7: CEFR and the students' level

Respondents' responds	The number of replies	Evaluation in %
Yes	13	24,07%
No	19	35, 19%
I do not know	22	40,74%
together:	54	100%

Unfortunately, the results show that there were more students which did not comply with the CEFR's criteria. This option was chosen by 19 respondents, which was 35, 19%. Just a quarter of teachers (24, 07%) thought that their students are on the required level of speaking. However, a striking finding was that most teachers did not know the answer. Actually, the answer "I do not know" was selected by 22 people, which formed 40, 74%.

The use of the questionnaire helped us to obtain sufficient quantity of information in a relatively short period of time. We found out that all teachers are aware that speaking skills are important language skills to which should be given more time during English courses. Furthermore, the majority of them agree that the courses should be more reality -oriented and the speaking techniques should be chosen with this target in mind.

4.2.3 Characteristics of the research method - Interview

Our research was enriched by the use of the third method which was the interview. In general, the interview can be described as a discourse between two people on a certain topic. In our case, we interviewed four teachers in Šahy about the topic of speaking, various speaking techniques/activities that are used in English lessons at the lower secondary education. In addition, we would like to say that these were those teachers on whose lessons we had done our observations beforehand.

There are more kinds of interview, such as structured, semi-structured and unstructured. From the literature we found out that the difference between them lies in the degree of freedom of interviewee's responds. Actually, we have decided for an unstructured interview, where we were looking for subjective information.

With this intention, we have employed open-ended questions which were determined beforehand. We asked the four teachers the same questions in the identical order. We wanted to notice and capture their opinions and attitudes, analyze and compare them with each other.

All the four interviews were fortunately done in the calm environment of the teachers' office. Before we started interviewing, we explained the teachers the aims of our interview. We have decided for written recording of data. However, we tried to express our interest in their opinions throughout the whole duration of the interview.

The interview consisted of 12 questions. The questions were open-ended to uncover the teachers' points of view. Sometimes the interviewees had to give the reasons for their attitudes. We can say that teachers were helpful and their points of view contributed to our research aims.

4.2.3.1 The progress of the Interview

This subchapter focuses on the progress of interviews. Besides the description of responds, some connection and comparisons will be revealed. The final conclusions from the obtained data will be drawn in details in the next subchapter.

The first question of the interview was: "*Which language skill do you consider as the most important?*" Three teachers answered that they think that speaking is definitely the key

skill because without it learners would be lost in the process of learning a language. Just one teacher replied to this question that she thought that all the four skill were equivalent because one could not exist without the others.

Besides their choice we wanted to know the reason of their option. Two teachers had quite the same answer to this question, because they said that speaking is the skill which students will really need in their future life, whether they will be at the University or somewhere abroad and therefore they need to be able to communicate. The other teacher replied that her students are often exposed to a foreign language and therefore it is necessary for them to be able to respond to it.

Further we wanted to know their opinions about *the time which is devoted to speaking during their lessons, concretely, if it is enough or not*. All the four teachers responded that the time which is given to speaking is insufficient, because some of their students have problems with talking. But two of them said that they were trying to engage more and more activities which were focused on speaking.

The third question of the interview dealt with *the students' work and its organization during lesson*. We wanted to found out not only which organization they preferred, but also the reason of their preference. We discovered that the teachers' views on this question were quite different. One of the teachers claimed that the best organization is when the students are working in pairs because they have greater self-confidence and more courage to speak. However, the other teacher said that the preparation of a pair work is time consuming for a teacher, and therefore she prefers whole class speaking activities, such as discussions, where students learn how to share their opinions and react properly to other classmates. The third teacher also preferred whole class work, but she argued this preference by a fact that in other organizations some of her students would not cooperate and work on the particular task. The fourth teacher employs mostly individual work during English lessons. She added that by such a work all students must work equally and she can better monitor their work and progress.

The fourth question was: *"How do you try to improve the speaking skills of your students?"* Two teachers responded that they try to give students as much space for speaking as it is possible and they use more oral tasks instead of writing tasks. The next teacher said that she often brings some articles or magazines for reading and then they talk

about the topic. The last interviewee answered that she tried to ask as many questions as possible on the topics they dealt with and her pupils liked it because they cooperate.

After that we wanted to discover *which speaking technique/s frequently these teachers use, why and if they think that they are the most effective?* One teacher said that she uses role plays and dramatisations. The reason was that the pupils were not so shy playing them and they brought fun to the lessons. The second interviewee mostly uses reading aloud, information gap activities and retellings because she believes they could improve the most the speaking skills. For example, by retellings the learners try to paraphrase the story in their own words, so they should use and revise the obtained vocabulary. The third teacher said that she uses songs and drills, because these techniques have the power to remove boredom from the lessons. The fourth teacher responded that she prefers ask and answer technique, where one student asks questions and the other answers them. Beside this she often employs a technique called ‘chatting groups’ where learners argue about certain themes in groups, they express their arguments and counter arguments. As we could see, every teacher had her entrenched techniques, which she considers to be the most suitable and effective for developing speaking skills.

In the further part of the interview we focused on the learners mistakes. We asked: *“Which are the most common mistakes that your students make during speaking?”* All interviewees agreed that the most common mistake of their learners is a word order. The reason is that their learners think in Slovak language while constructing a sentence in English. In addition, pupils often make mistakes with articles, third person in present tense and with the use of tenses. Furthermore, one teacher added that she sees the biggest problem in her students not being able to apply the obtained knowledge in contexts and in producing the language.

After various kinds of mistakes we concentrated on the process of correcting mistakes. The question was: *“Do you correct all the mistakes or just those ones which might cause communication problems?”* By the analysis of the answers we discovered that all teachers correct just serious mistakes which may lead to problems in discourse. We agreed with this opinion, because we think that too much correction may lead to students’ fear of public speaking and it can de-motivate them from learning.

In the next question we would like to find out *whether the students are willing to communicate during lessons or the teachers should force them*. Three teachers admitted that they have problems with some of their students because they do not want to communicate. One of them added that she thinks it is because of the shyness while the other two believed that it may be because of their disinterest in learning. The fourth teacher said that it depends on the topic but she thinks that her students are quite cooperative and she is proud of them. Unfortunately, the reluctant behaviour of students often hinders the smooth course of teaching.

In the further question we asked the teachers “*what would they change or do to develop more the students’ speaking skills*”. Some opinions on this issue were quite different, while the others were quite similar. One interviewee thought that too much emphasis is given to grammar. Therefore, she said that she would give more space to speaking activities, choose more interesting exercise books with topics really appropriate to certain ages and provide better devices for learning, such as data projector or more computers. On the other hand, the second opinion was to practice more the basic grammar in order to avoid mistakes in later classes and choose such speaking activities which really prepare students for real life situations. The third teacher agreed with the real life speaking activities but she added that there should be fewer students in classes to enable everyone more space for speaking. The last attitude was to divide students into smaller classes according to their level of communication because that way the students could better proceed and improve their language abilities. Furthermore, she added that she would provide students more exchange residences where they could communicate just in English. We think all the mentioned opinions would be great steps how to make English lesson more interesting and motivating.

The tenth question asked: “*What do you think are the main reasons that learners have problems with speaking?*” Three teachers agreed that they see the biggest problem in the students’ laziness. Two of them added that pupils are too young to realize how important it is to study English. The other teacher said that sometimes they should deal with too much grammar and there is not enough time for speaking. The next teacher said that the language in the course books is artificial and when students meet a native speaker they have problems to understand him, because of the pronunciation, speed of his speech and the language he uses.

The penultimate question tried to uncover the teachers' *aims in teaching speaking skills*? Two teachers stated that their major goal is to encourage their learners to speak. They added that many of them are shy and afraid of making mistakes. The other interviewee's aim was to motivate them to learning English language because she thinks that her pupils will need English language by their future job, therefore she always reminds them that "*communicative skills are the basis of success*". The fourth opinion was very similar, because the teacher said that she wants to develop mainly their ability to interact with other people and to be able to use the language in abroad for different purposes.

The last question was oriented on the aspects of speaking. We chose this question because we wanted to find out what the teachers think is more important: *accuracy or fluency*? All teachers replied that fluency is a more crucial aspect. One of them added that learners do not need perfect English for communication. The other opinion suggested that even though learners make some mistakes, a native speaker would understand them without bigger problems. The third interviewee replied that if students would be corrected for every small mistake they have made, they would lose their interest in further learning. However, the last interviewee said that both of them are important but students should start somewhere and then when they are more confident they will realize the accurate use of language.

4.2.3.2 The analysis of the interview

The interview analysis brought some interesting information. On one hand, in some questions the four interviewees agreed, but on the other hand their answers to particular questions were different. What is more, we found out that all teachers said that speaking is a crucial skill to which more time should be devoted in English lessons. In addition, all the teachers were aware of the fact that speaking activities have their importance. However, their opinions were contrasting in terms of the organization of students activities during lessons. Two of them said that they use whole class work. The other two said they prefer individual work and pair work. Furthermore, there was a difference in the way that teachers are trying to develop students' speaking skills. For example, one of them employed articles whereas the others used the techniques of asking questions on a certain topic. In addition, there was also a difference in the use of techniques. The reason is that the four teachers preferred different kinds of technique / activity. While the first one used role plays, the other used for instance retellings.

After the comparison of the teachers' opinions we would like to describe the obtained information about students and their speaking skills. We discover from the interviews that there was also a difference between students. This implied that even though the teacher was using the same techniques, the students were not on the same level. The reason could be that some of them were not interested in learning a foreign language. Furthermore, some of them were reluctant to work during lessons or they were shy to speak in front of the others. Just one teacher stated that she did not have problems with communication in English lessons. It would be great to hear this sentence from the remaining three teachers, but it could not be said that in their classes were any hard-working students.

Further we discovered the usual mistakes of students. All interviewees agreed that the most common mistake of their learners is the word order. But what we consider to be a positive finding is that teachers did not correct all the mistakes their students make. In addition, another affirmative result was that all teachers considered fluency more important than accuracy. We agreed with this attitude towards fluency, because a fluent speech can be more useful and practical for real life needs.

We think that these four teachers know that their pupils need to develop speaking skills. Furthermore, they were trying to motivate them to learn a foreign language by reminding them that they can communicate in many countries all over the world using this language. What is more, they said that they are trying to apply such activities which are very close to reality, such as role plays, dramatisations or discussions. Even though all of them admitted that speaking should be linked to reality, just some of them use such techniques which contribute to this relationship. In addition, we still think that the time allotted for speaking is insufficient. The reason is that teachers still have to deal with too much grammar and sometimes the actual needs of learners are neglected.

4.3 The evaluation and discussion

The last subchapter will deal with the assessment of the acquired information and with their in-depth comparison. Furthermore, we found some differences, but also similarities in the results of the three methods which were the observation, the questionnaire and the interview. Therefore, we think that our work requires the overall assessment of the achieved results.

The analysis of the questionnaire and interviews showed that teachers thought that the development of speaking skills requires more space during English courses. Almost all of the respondents (94, 44%) agreed with this statement. Furthermore, all the four interviewed teachers had the same opinion. However, two of them said that they are trying to change it. In addition, the observation confirmed us in this fact. The reason is that sometimes students had to deal with a large amount of unnecessary grammar.

Another fact we wanted to find out was which skill consider the respondents to be the most important. The questionnaires' outcomes revealed that more than half of all teachers believed that speaking is on the first place among other language skills. The same results were proved by the interview where 3 of the 4 teachers said that it is speaking. However, 1 teacher stated that all language skills are important alike.

In further comparison of the obtained results we discovered differences in the organization of students' work. While the questionnaire illustrated that the most suitable work was the pair work with 40, 74%, the observation and interview disproved this fact. The reason is that during observation it was the second least used by the teachers (11, 37%) and 2 of the 4 interviewees preferred whole class work instead of the other kinds of work. Furthermore, the observation showed that the whole class work formed 52, 66% of all interactions. Even though more than 70% of respondents in the questionnaire considered whole class interaction as the least suitable one, we could see that it was mostly practiced by these four teachers. However, we can say that all the three methods confirmed that teachers did not like to employ group work. Three interviewees said that they did not practice it, and the observation discovered that it appeared very rarely (6, 88%). In addition, the questionnaire brought a similar result in which group work was the second least appropriate kind of organization.

The next part of the evaluation deals with the speaking techniques and their importance. Here the analysis brought even more interesting facts. For instance, 33, 33% of respondents in the questionnaire indicated role plays as the most important technique for developing students' speaking skills. The appropriateness of this technique was proved by one interviewed teacher who said that she thinks this is the most effective technique and she often uses it. On the other hand, role plays were very rarely practiced during the observation process. They were represented by 3, 97%, which is a big difference in relation to the result from the questionnaire.

We discovered the similar situation with discussions and reading aloud. For instance, the results in the questionnaire indicated that discussions were regarded as the second most important techniques in teaching speaking with 16, 67%. But the observation showed something else. We could conclude that discussions formed just 3, 44% from all the other techniques, which we think is a bad detection. Furthermore, reading aloud was selected by 20, 37% of all respondents as the least important technique. However, the result from the observation showed the opposite because reading aloud was the second most occurring technique with 14, 81%. Besides this one interviewed teacher indicated that she thinks it is one of the best techniques and two teachers said that they use it quite often.

In general, drills are often believed to be boring inutile techniques and this was demonstrated also in the questionnaire where 20, 37% respondents chose it as fourth least important technique. Nevertheless, during the observation it was found to be the third mostly used technique with 12, 70%.

Another visible distinction occurred in the results of dialogue performance and information gap activities. Actually, dialogue performance was regarded as the third most important technique by 22, 23% of respondents. It occurred just sometimes during the observed lessons and it was represented by 9, 00%. The information gap activities belonged according to the questionnaire results to less important techniques with 16, 67%. However, they were quite frequently employed on the lessons (7, 67%). In addition, this activity was regarded by one of the interviewees as the most effective technique.

Smaller differences between percentages were visible by ask and answer activity and games. For example, 22, 23% of all respondents ranked ask and answer at the fourth place. Furthermore, the observation indicated it as the most frequently used speaking technique. Its percentage was 18, 51%. In addition, its frequent use was confirmed by one teacher who quite regularly practiced it and considered it as the most effective. The games were by both, questionnaires (14, 81%) and observation (5, 30%) found on the seventh place, but no interviewee regard it as an effective technique.

The three research methods confirmed that the remaining 4 techniques belong to less important and less appropriate techniques. These were such techniques as questionnaires, using songs and rhymes, jigsaw activities and using minimal responses. Even though, one

interviewee said that she thinks that songs are one of the most effective techniques she uses, we did not observe their practice during the observation.

The following parts of our research were concerned with teachers' aims in teaching speaking, steps which may contribute to students' improvement in speaking, mistake correction and aspects of speaking. The research showed that the main goal in teaching speaking is to get the students on such a level that they will be able to act together with other native or non-native speakers. This aim was confirmed by 57, 41% of all respondents in the questionnaire. In addition, one interviewee gave an identical answer. The two remaining teachers had a similar aim, which was to encourage learners to speak. Just one of teachers said that her goal is to motivate pupils to learn a foreign language.

The issue of correcting mistakes was also a part of the research. The questionnaire revealed that the correction after speaking was preferred by 31, 48% of respondents. Other 38, 89% of teachers correct immediately just mistakes which may lead to troubles in discourse. All the four interviewees confirmed the previous fact. However, we witnessed that one teacher often immediately corrected the students' mistakes whether they could cause communication problems or not.

The penultimate thing in the evaluation and discussion part is very close to the previous paragraph. We examined the two aspects of speaking – accuracy and fluency, and their importance. A half of all respondents in the questionnaire chose fluency, while just 22, 23% of them thought that accuracy is the most important aspect. The interviews showed that all teachers regarded fluency to be more important than accuracy. But during observation one of them sometimes required from her learners to be quite accurate.

Now we would like to compare our results of aspects of speaking with the research in the theoretical part which was made on the same topic (p.19). Even though we have conducted our research with a smaller amount of people, we can see some differences. For example, Slovak teachers of English placed greater emphasis on accuracy, fluency and vocabulary extent. On the other hand, they put less emphasis on comprehension of style and formality, pronunciation and confidence as their colleagues from abroad.

Our aim in this subchapter was to demonstrate the similarities and differences in the obtained findings. Sometimes one method confirmed the other, while sometimes it showed some contradictions. We believe that they gave a piece of heart to the sense and meaning of this diploma work.

Conclusion

The diploma work was concerned with the closer description of speaking and different speaking techniques. Furthermore, it tried to find out which of the mentioned techniques / activities could be the most effective in teaching speaking skills at the lower secondary education. Besides the theoretical part, the practical part dealt with the research with the help of three methods: the observation, the questionnaire and the interview.

Our research was devoted to various kinds of information which were related to speaking and its techniques. For example, we focused on such information as teaching speaking, effectiveness and importance of speaking techniques, aspects of speaking, teachers and their attitudes, aims, opinions about teaching speaking and many others. By the three research methods we obtained some interesting, but at the same time some striking facts.

A positive finding was that speaking was considered by more than a half of teachers as the most significant skill in learning languages. They added that students definitely need it for their future life and owing to this fact some changes should be made in the teaching process. What is more, they agreed that more practice in speaking leads to better speaking skills. In addition, they believed that the time which is given to speaking by the curriculum is insufficient to develop the students' speaking skills on a required level. Furthermore, we revealed that there are more students who are not on the required level according to CEFR. A worse detection, however, was that quite a lot of teachers did not know if their learners comply with the given requirements.

The main goal of the majority of teachers' in teaching speaking was interaction, in other words, they would like their learners to acquire such a level that they will be able to cooperate and communicate with other native or non-native speakers. Therefore they opt to the view that fluent speech is more useful and important than accurate speech. Furthermore, they added that their learners do not need a perfect language to lead a successful discourse with somebody. However, some of them do not respect this fact in real classes during the observation.

Therefore we would like to continue with the findings in the field of correcting students' mistakes. We found out that almost a half of all teachers focus just on serious mistakes which may lead to some misunderstanding, but there are still a few teachers who preferred discussions of mistakes after speaking or student-student correction. This implies that the

learners are corrected mostly by teachers and maybe some of the mistakes are not explained. Maybe if teachers would devote more time to it, the mistakes would not occur so frequently.

In relation to the mentioned interaction, we were dealing also with the students' organization during lessons. We discovered that in our research according to the questionnaire, two groups of teachers were prevailing. The first group consisted of those who preferred pair work, whereas the second group of teachers rather employed exercises where students could work on their own. Another deduction was that teachers preferred pairwork before group work. In addition, the majority of teachers believed that whole class interaction weakly contribute to the development of students' speaking skills. However, the observation showed the opposite results because this interaction was prevailing. In addition, half of the interviewed teachers confirmed that they mostly use whole class interaction.

Another part of our research dealt with the development of speaking skills. Furthermore, we wanted to find out why have students problems with speaking during lessons. The analysis revealed that the possible reasons could be that many learners were too lazy to learn the foreign language or they just did not have the motivation to learn. Furthermore, students should deal with much grammar which they will maybe never use in real life. Other possible reason could be that the language that students learn is an artificial one because when they meet or hear a native speaker, they have problems with understanding. Other detection was that sometimes learners want to use the rules of Slovak language in the production of English sentences, so they did not adopted the rules of the foreign language. This fact was confirmed also by the theory. Furthermore, teachers should maybe devote more time to discussions about students' mistakes in order to prevent their repetition. The last, but not least reason could be students' interaction. Maybe if they would work more frequently in pairs, they would be more courageous to speak in English, which could decrease their shyness after some time and contribute to their speaking skills.

Besides this we were interested in speaking techniques and their importance and effectiveness. The research results indicated that the most effective techniques according to our research sample were role plays, discussions, performing dialogues, ask and answer and retellings. The majority of these techniques have one common thing which is 'reality'. In other words, the students may try out real life situation in the safe environment of their

class. This may be definitely helpful for their further life. Our interview confirmed this fact because interviewees said that they considered some of them as the most important and significant techniques. But the observation showed that just one of them was practiced frequently and the majority of them appeared just sometimes. This is maybe the reason why the situation about the students' speaking skills is not very optimistic.

The information from the previous paragraphs may imply that the teachers in our research were aware of what would their learners need for the better improvement of their speaking skills, but somehow some of them did not realize the difference between how it should be and how it is in real. In addition, maybe some changes in the students' organizations would contribute more to students speaking skills. Furthermore, maybe if teachers engaged more techniques which put emphasis on real-life situations and the students saw that what they are learning is close to reality and could be useful for them once in their life, they would be not only more interested in learning, but also their speaking could achieve greater progress.

Resumé

Málokto z nás si vie predstaviť svet bez komunikácie. Ľudia totiž potrebujú nejaký vhodný nástroj na dorozumievanie, aby vedeli vyjadriť svoje pocity, myšlienky a samozrejme potreby. Jedným z možných nástrojov je aj jazyk, ktorému sa pripisuje čoraz väčší dôraz v dnešnom medzinárodnom svete. Tento fakt prispel k tomu, že ľudia začali venovať oveľa väčšiu pozornosť štúdiu cudzích jazykov.

Deti, študenti i dospelí sa po celom svete učia rôzne jazyky, pretože si uvedomujú ich dôležitosť pre svoj život, zamestnanie či budúcnosť. V súčasnosti sa na mnohých školách vyučuje viacero jazykov, z ktorých si môžu uchádzači vybrať. Avšak jeden z nich akosi stále prevláda vzhľadom na jeho význam vo svete. Tým jazykom je angličtina, ktorá je aj jazykom mnohých významných organizácií.

Anglický jazyk sa vyučuje takmer na každej škole na Slovensku. Avšak zo skúsenosti vieme, že na viacerých školách majú žiaci problém s týmto jazykom, pretože nie sú ním schopní komunikovať. Navyše túto skutočnosť potvrdzujú aj učitelia. Preto si myslíme, že zručnosť hovorenia si vyžaduje oveľa väčšiu pozornosť a čas počas hodín anglického jazyka.

Naša práca sa snaží zmapovať situáciu na hodinách anglického jazyka práve z vyššie uvedeného dôvodu. Okrem toho jej dôležitosť spočíva v zobrazení techník, ktoré rozvíjajú hovorenie. Sústreďuje sa na ich prípadné výhody a nevýhody. Veríme, že výsledky našej práce prispedia alebo aspoň dostatočne popíšu efektivitu jednotlivých techník.

Cieľom práce je analyzovať dôvody nižšieho vývoja zručnosti hovorenia počas hodín anglického jazyka, inak povedané, prečo majú žiaci problém s hovorením. Ďalším cieľom je zistiť, ktorá technika má najväčší potenciál pre rozvíjanie zručnosti hovorenia.

Túto tému diplomovej práce sme si vybrali, pretože si myslíme, že ľudia, ktorí sa učia cudzí jazyk by ho mali ovládať. Máme tým na mysli, že by mali byť schopní pomocou neho komunikovať s inými ľuďmi. Okrem toho veríme, že zručnosť hovorenia tvorí jadro jazykových zručností človeka. To znamená, že každý, kto študuje nejaký cudzí jazyk, by ním mal vedieť plynule hovoriť. Avšak už niekoľkokrát sme sa stretli s opačnou situáciou. Preto sa naša práca sústreďuje na techniky, ktoré by nielenže uľahčili učenie, ale zároveň aj zefektívnil.

Prácu tvoria dva veľké celky. Prvým z nich je teoretická časť, ktorá sa zaoberá zobrazením danej témy z rôznych literárnych zdrojov. Druhý celok tvorí praktická časť, ktorej súčasťou je výskum techník slúžiacich na rozvoj hovorenia.

Teoretická časť je rozdelená do troch kapitol. Prvá kapitola zvaná „*Zručnosti a ich klasifikácia*“ sa zaoberá takými skutočnosťami ako:

- definícia slova „zručnosť“
- delenie zručností z hľadiska jednotlivých oblastí
- bližšie definuje receptívne a produktívne zručnosti
- popisuje vzťahy medzi jednotlivými jazykovými zručnosťami
- vysvetľuje dôležitosť vyučovania zručnosti hovorenia

Druhá kapitola pod názvom „*Hovorenie*“ sa zameriava na:

- obširnejšiu definíciu hovorenia ako zručnosti
- aspekty hovorenia: presnosť a plynulosť
- charakteristické znaky hovorenia
- problémy s hovorením
- vzťah hovorenia k CEFR

Tretia kapitola „*Techniky rozvíjajúce hovorenie*“ sa orientuje na tri skupiny techník, v rámci ktorých bližšie popisuje určité aktivity. Rozdiel medzi nimi spočíva v miere voľnosti, ktorú aktivity ponúkajú svojim žiakom pri hovorení. Skupiny techník sú nasledovné:

1, *Controlled (kontrolované)*, ktoré sa sústreďujú na presnosť pri hovorení. Sú odporúčané v nižších ročníkoch. Kontrolované techniky zahŕňajú nasledovné aktivity:

- using minimal responses (použitie minimálnych reakcií)
- drills (cvičenia)
- questionnaires (dotazníky)
- reading aloud (čítanie nahlas)
- performing dialogues (vykonávanie dialógov)
- song and rhymes (pesničky a rýmy)

2, *Guided (interaktívne)* sa využívajú sa po prebraní určitého celku či gramatiky na precvičenie plynulosti. Interaktívne techniky poskytujú síce väčšiu voľnosť pri produkcii

jazyka, avšak ešte stále v rámci istých obmedzení. Do tejto kategórie patria také aktivity ako:

- information gap activities (doplňovacie aktivity)
- jigsaw activities (skladacie aktivity)
- ask and answer (otázka a odpoveď)
- retellings (prerozprávanie)

3, *Free - voľné techniky*, pri ktorých sa využíva viacej komunikácie medzi žiakmi. Žiaci si tak môžu vyskúšať svoju zdatnosť z jazyka. Okrem toho tieto aktivity podporujú rozvoj plynulej reči u žiakov. V tejto kategórii sa vyskytujú nasledovné aktivity:

- role plays (hranie rolí)
- simulations (simulácie)
- discussions (diskusie)
- games (hry)

Praktická časť je úzko prepojená s teoretickou časťou. Zatiaľ, čo sa teoretická časť sústreďovala na teoretické poznatky a rôzne definície, praktická časť skúma techniky slúžiace na rozvoj hovorenia priamo na hodinách anglické jazyka.

Na začiatku praktickej časti je popísaná výskumná vzorka a miesto výskumu. Výskumná vzorka pozostáva zo žiakov siedmeho a ôsmeho ročníka na druhom stupni základných škôl. Títo žiaci boli vo veku od 13 do 14 rokov. Dôvodom výberu tejto vzorky bol fakt, že si myslíme, že žiaci v týchto ročníkoch dostávajú „skutočné“ základy hovorenia. Aj keď sa žiaci venovali už 2-3 roky cudziemu jazyku, toto vyučovanie pozostávalo hlavne z preberania základov jazyka a gramatiky.

Výskum prebiehal pomocou troch vopred zvolených metód, ktorými boli:

- pozorovanie
- dotazník
- rozhovor

Pozorovaním sme sa snažili zistiť frekvenciu výskytu jednotlivých techník a spôsob práce študentov počas nich. Pozorovanie prebiehalo tri týždne na dolnom stupni dvoch škôl (dve základné školy a jedno gymnázium) v Šahách. Jeho súčasťou bol vopred vytvorený pozorovací hárok, do ktorého sme zaznamenávali výskyt techník.

Dotazník mal za úlohu zmapovať názory väčšej vzorky učiteľov. Zúčastnilo sa ho 54 respondentov z nasledovných miest: Šahy a okolie, Krupina, Banská Bystrica, Levice, Dunajská Streda, Šaľa a pár menších dedín. Dotazník pozostával z 11 otázok, z ktorých bola väčšina uzatvorená a každá z nich sa orientovala na iný druh informácie. Na začiatku dotazníka sa využili škály. Úlohou respondentov bolo zoradiť ponúknuté možnosti podľa ich významu, primeranosti či dôležitosti. Tieto otázky sa konkrétne týkali jazykových zručností, spôsobu práce žiakov na hodinách a techník rozvíjajúcich hovorenie. Ďalšie otázky boli zamerané na vzťah techník a reálnych životných situácií, na ciele učiteľov pri učení zručnosti hovorenia, na aspekty hovorenia a spôsob opravovania žiakových chýb.

Tretou metódou výskumnej časti bolo štruktúrované interview s učiteľmi. Všetkým sme položili rovnaké otázky v rovnakom poradí. Interview pozostávalo z 12 otázok, ktoré boli podobné otázkam v dotazníku, a to z dvoch dôvodov. Chceli sme totiž zistiť, či sa odpovede budú zhodovať s informáciami v dotazníku a druhým dôvodom bolo, aby sa učitelia mali možnosť podrobnejšie vyjadriť k daným témam.

Výsledky výskumu priniesli niekoľko zaujímavých i prekvapujúcich informácií. Prvým pozitívnym zistením bolo, že väčšina učiteľov považuje hovorenie za najdôležitejšiu zručnosť spomedzi ostatných jazykových zručností. Ako hlavný dôvod uviedli fakt, že žiaci sa v dnešnej dobe bez cudzieho jazyka len ťažko zaobídu, či už budú študovať niekde na vysokej škole alebo pracovať v zahraničí. Zároveň však dodali, že čas, ktorý sa venuje hovoreniu na hodinách cudzieho jazyka, je nedostatočný. Myslia si, keby mali žiaci viac možností na komunikáciu počas hodín, ich zručnosť hovorenia by sa mohla zlepšiť.

Okrem toho mnohí z nich na otázku, či sú ich žiaci na požadovanej úrovni hovorenia, ktorá je daná Centrálnym Európskym referenčným rámcom, odpovedali, že, bohužiaľ, si to nemyslia. Horšie však bolo zistenie, že viac učiteľov to ani nevie odhadnúť.

Z výskumu nám ďalej vyplynulo, že hlavným cieľom učiteľov je naučiť žiakov komunikovať, aby boli schopní interakcie s inými ľuďmi. Preto si myslia, že je dôležitejšie a pre žiakov osožnejšie, aby žiaci vedeli plynule hovoriť. Zároveň počas interview sme zistili názor učiteľov, že žiaci nepotrebujú perfektne hovoriť na to, aby sa s niekým úspešne dohovorili. Avšak počas pozorovania sme mali pocit, ako keby niektorí na toto pravidlo tak trochu zabudli.

Pri opravovaní chýb sme ponúkli respondentom niekoľko spôsobov, chceli sme vedieť, ktorý spôsob prevláda. Zistili sme, že väčšina učiteľov opravuje len tie chyby, ktoré by

mohli viesť k nejakému nedorozumeniu počas komunikácie, čo bola pozitívna správa. Zároveň však musíme skonštatovať, že málo učiteľov preferuje spôsob opravovania, pri ktorom jeden študent opraví druhého. Takisto málo učiteľov venuje pozornosť diskusii so študentmi o spravených chybách. To znamená, že žiaci sú väčšinou opravovaní učiteľom. Možno keby sa venovalo viac pozornosti diskusii o chybách, študenti by pochopili lepšie pravidlá angličtiny a ich reč by mohla byť dokonalejšia.

V ďalšej časti výskumu nás zaujímalo, akou formou práce žiaci najčastejšie pracujú. Výsledky odhalili skutočnosť, že v našom výskume sa vyskytovali dve veľké skupiny učiteľov. Prvú skupinu tvorili učitelia, ktorých žiaci pracovali najčastejšie v pároch. Na druhej strane bola skupina, ktorej učitelia preferovali individuálny spôsob práce, teda každý sám za seba. Mnohí respondenti sa v dotazníku vyjadrili, že si myslia, že práca celej triedy len slabo rozvíja hovorenie u žiakov. Avšak pri našom pozorovaní sa práve táto forma práce objavovala najčastejšie. Okrem toho polovica učiteľov sa v interview vyjadrila, že preferujú tento spôsob práce.

Ďalej nás zaujímalo, prečo majú žiaci problém s hovorením. Výsledky výskumu ukázali, že mnohí žiaci sú leniví a nemajú záujem o štúdium cudzieho jazyka. Niektorí učitelia si myslia, že sú ešte príliš mladí na to, aby si uvedomili jeho dôležitosť. Ďalším vysvetlením by mohol byť fakt, že musia veľa času venovať zbytočnej gramatike, ktorú častokrát v reálnom živote ani nevyužívajú, čo nám potvrdil aj riaditeľ jednej zo základných škôl. Okrem toho, jazyk ktorý sa žiaci učia, je umelý, inak povedané, neodzrkadľuje realitu, ktorú by tak veľmi žiaci potrebovali. Mnohokrát sa potom stáva, že žiaci majú problém sa dorozumieť s Angličanom, pretože sa im zdá, akoby hovoril úplne iným jazykom. Výskum ukázal, že problém môže byť aj v skutočnosti, že žiaci síce hovoria po anglicky, ale stále uvažujú v slovenčine. Teda snažia sa aplikovať dobre známe pravidlá slovenského jazyka pri tvorbe anglických viet, čo je však nemožné z viacerých dôvodov.

Poslednou a najdôležitejšou súčasťou výskumu boli techniky hovorenia a ich efektívnosť a dôležitosť. Zistenia z výskumu hovoria, že najefektívnejšími technikami sú hranie rolí, diskusie, dialógy, technika zvaná otázka a odpoveď a prerozprávanie. Ak sa na tieto techniky pozrieme bližšie, zistíme, že všetky majú spoločnú jednu vec, a tou je toľkokrát spomínaná realita. Pri týchto technikách si totiž žiaci môžu vyskúšať v bezpečnom prostredí triedy také situácie, ktoré sú blízke realite. Myslíme si, že toto je práve to, čo by mnohí žiaci privítali. Naše interview potvrdilo, že mnohé z nich sú považované učiteľmi za

najefektívnejšie a najčastejšie používané. Avšak pozorovanie ukázalo, že len jednej z nich (technika otázka a odpoveď) sa venuje zaslúžená pozornosť, ostatné akosi zostávajú v pozadí.

Informácie z výskumu ukazujú, že učitelia sú si vedomí toho, čo by ich žiaci potrebovali na zlepšenie ich hovorenia, ale neuvedomujú si rozdiel medzi ideou a skutočnosťou. Možno by stálo za úvahu zmeniť občas organizáciu práce žiakov alebo použiť spomenuté techniky častejšie. Mohlo by sa tým zlepšiť nielen hovorenie žiakov, ale aj ich motivácia k učeniu sa cudzieho jazyka.

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Appendices

- APP. A: CD Medium – Diploma Thesis in electronic format
- APP. B: Model of the Observation Schedule
- APP. C: Model of the Questionnaire
- APP. D: Model of the Interview

APP. B: Model of the observation schedule

<i>date:</i>	<i>class:</i>	<i>number of students:</i>	<i>lesson:</i>
techniques:	time of the lesson : 45 minutes - timing : every 5 minutes,		
using minimal responses	/		
Drills			
questionnaires			
reading aloud			
performing dialogues	/	/	
using song and rhymes			
information gap activities	/		
jigsaw activities			
ask and answer	/		
Retellings			
role plays			
discussions	/	/	/
Games			
individually		✓	✓
pair work	✓		✓
group work			
whole class	✓	✓	✓
Notes:			
/ = type of the used technique			
✓ = organisation of students' work			

APP. C: Model of the Questionnaire

Dear English Teachers,

I would like to ask you to play a part in my research which is devoted to techniques/ activities applied to developing students' speaking skills. I think nowadays it is important to improve students' speaking abilities due to the increasing language requirements in professional and personal life. The aim of this questionnaire is to find out how speaking skills can be improved and which of the techniques / activities are more effective to reach this goal. I believe that your opinions as teachers would be a great help for my investigation.

I would be really grateful for your involvement in this questionnaire by completing the connected sheets. You do not need to present your name. Anonymity and privacy are guaranteed.

The completion of the questionnaire will last maximum 15 minutes. It applies close and open questions, some rating scales and requests for your opinions. In questions which offer more answers, you should circle your chosen answer.

1, Put into the order according to their relevance: (1 - most relevant, 4 - least relevant)

listening	_____	speaking	_____
reading	_____	writing	_____

2, Which of the following organizations of students' work do you consider to be the most appropriate to improve speaking? (1 – most appropriate, 4 – least appropriate)

whole class	_____	group work	_____
pair work	_____	individually	_____

3, Try to assess the following speaking techniques / activities from the least important to the most important? (1 – most important, 14 – least important)

drills	—	using minimal responses	—	jigsaw activities	—
retelling	—	ask and answer	—	games	—
dialogues	—	discussions	—	questionnaires	—
role plays	—	using songs and rhymes	—	simulations	—
reading aloud	—	information gap activity	—		

4, Which technique / activity do you think is the most effective to develop speaking skills?
Why?

5, How important do you consider speaking activities to be related to real life situations?

- a**, not at all
- b**, very little
- c**, a little
- d**, quite a lot
- e**, a very great deal

6, Do you agree with the statement: "More practice in speaking can lead to better speaking skills"?

- a**, strongly agree
- b**, agree
- c**, neither agree nor disagree
- d**, disagree
- e**, strongly disagree

7, *Do you think that teachers should devote more time to developing students' speaking skills?*

a, yes

b, no

c, I do not know

8, *What is your main aim with the students in teaching speaking?*

a, to be able to interact with others

b, to be able to discuss and clarify various themes

c, to be able to lead a speech and give presentations in public

9, *Speaking has many aspects. Which of the following aspects do you consider to be the most important?*

a, accuracy

d, comprehension style and formality

b, fluency

e, pronunciation

c, vocabulary extent

f, confidence

10, *How do you correct your students?*

a, I correct all the mistakes immediately

b, I immediately correct just those mistakes which may cause communication problems

c, I do not correct students while they are speaking, but after they finish

d, I discuss the mistakes with the whole class after speaking

e, I prefer student-student correction after speaking

11, *Do you think that your students are on the required level of speaking according to the standards of CEFR?*

a, yes

b, no

c, I do not know

Thank you.

Bc. Livia Plevová

APP.D: Model of the Interview

1. Which language skill do you consider as the most important? Why?
2. Do you think that the time devoted to speaking is sufficient?
3. What is the most frequent organization of your students?
4. How do you try to improve the speaking skills of your students?
5. Which speaking technique/techniques do you use most frequently and do you think that they are the most effective?
6. Which are the most common mistakes that your students make during speaking?
7. Do you correct all mistakes or just those ones which might cause communication problems?
8. Are your students willing to communicate or you have to force them?
9. What would you change or do to develop more the students' speaking skills?
10. What do you think are the main reasons that students have problems with speaking?
11. What are your main aims in teaching speaking skill?
12. Which one do you consider more important: accuracy or fluency, and why?