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ROZVOJ KOOPERAČNÍCH DOVEDNOSTÍ V HODINÁCH ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA

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Thesis

DEVELOPING COOPERATIVE SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

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The thesis deals with developing cooperative skills in English language classes. The first chapter is dedicated to a thorough description of cooperative learning. It discusses the importance of using cooperative learning during the educational process and describes the value of the outcomes in terms of changing society and diverse classrooms. A brief history of cooperative learning is presented in order to trace the development of the educational approach. In addition, cooperative learning is analyzed in terms of five essential elements and three main types of cooperative learning are distinguished. The thesis analyses the role of a teacher during cooperative learning tasks and activities. Also, cooperative learning is described in connection to English language classes and specific issues are commented. The thesis also focuses on challenges which can arise during the process of cooperative learning tasks and activities. A research done in selected Czech schools is commented on the thesis. The objective of the research was to measure the occurrence of cooperative learning activities and their effectiveness. The data for the research was collected by observations and further analyzed through a scoring rubric. The research suggests that cooperative learning happens to some extent in English classes and the students' cooperative skills are developed. The thesis also provides advice for teachers, suggestions for future research and limitations of the research.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers have different possibilities in terms of planning their lessons. One of the factors teachers need to think of while creating a lesson plan is choosing an educational approach or organizational form for individual activities. The educational approach discussed in the thesis is cooperative learning. Students in schools in the Czech Republic are mostly used to a teacher-centered style of learning. But with changes in society and different needs for future employment the focus is on developing students' cooperative skills. Teachers need to understand the difference between group or pair work and cooperative learning and implement it to their lessons. The main difference to understand is the need of active participation of all members of the group in connection to achieving the group goal.

The thesis provides a clear theoretical background and research connected to cooperative learning, cooperative skills and their development. It describes the importance of cooperative learning and its usage in English language classes. The importance is being supported by stating changes in society and needs for students' future. Diversity in classrooms is also discussed as a part of the importance of developing students' cooperative skills. Students are more diverse than ever and the need of acceptance of different cultures, ideas, values and attitudes is integral to society and cooperation is a way to develop the skills to face these differences. Cooperative learning is further described as an educational approach and in connection to the social nature of learning.

The thesis also traces the brief history of cooperative learning. The aim is to provide a description of the shift from teacher-based learning to modern approaches. In addition, the thesis provides a clear overview of what cooperative learning is and presents it from various viewpoints. Five essential components of cooperative learning are described and used as a basis for the research. Cooperative learning is also divided into three main types which are further covered. Another part of the thesis is connected to the Framework Education Program which presents an integral part of Czech education and therefore cooperative learning is described in terms of the individual elements of the program (key competencies).

Another important part of the thesis is devoted to the teachers' role in developing students' cooperative skills. The role of the teacher is to secure the environment where cooperative tasks are effective. It is important for the teacher to understand the change of his or her role during the educational process. During cooperative learning activities the

teacher no longer functions as the leader but as a mentor and someone who can provide help when needed. The thesis also describes using cooperative learning in English language classes and the specific challenges connected to these classes.

In connection to the theoretical background, the thesis includes a research study and its analysis. At first, research methodology is outlined and it is followed by a chapter with results and commentaries. The research provides an analysis of the amount of cooperative learning activities in randomly observed 20 English lessons in three Czech schools and a detailed analysis of individual activities and the effectiveness of them. The thesis also provides advice for teachers in the implications chapter. In addition, suggestions for future research and limitations of the research are included.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Education is one of the most important aspects of human lives. It is important for teachers to be familiar with means which are necessary for the educational process to be realized. It is even more important nowadays than ever in the past because teachers have an outstanding range of methodological tools available such as students' books, workbooks, teachers' books, modern technologies, and all kinds of videos. With these possibilities it is relevant to use different approaches and methods to create an environment where the educational process is as effective as possible. In other words, one of the integral parts of the educational process is the choice of an educational approach (Kasíková, 2010).

Choosing an individual educational approach should lead to the desired outcome of the lesson but can also be beneficial in gaining skills from different areas. One of the most important skills students are possible to develop during the educational process besides learning the subject matter is the skill of cooperation.

Cooperative learning is based on the fact that human beings are social creatures and the need to communicate is very strong. Communication leads to cooperation and both of these aspects are important in modern world full of international relationships and business. Teachers should be aware of the need and importance of developing cooperative skills of their students and should also allow students to develop skills that will allow them to cooperate. Cooperative learning is not only dividing students into groups and making them work on a task. The following text focuses on the individual elements of cooperative learning, its importance, brief history, main types and methods, challenges, and reasons for cooperative learning environment. This thesis also describes the role of the teacher in cooperative learning.

Importance of developing cooperative skills

The whole human society is made of overlapping cooperating groups: families, work groups/teams, classes, communities, groups of friends, political parties, sports teams, clubs, etc. The world, in which people live nowadays and more importantly will live for the rest of their lives, is characterized by interdependence, connectedness, fast changes. This interdependence concerns technological, economic, ecological sphere. The internationalization of world problems increases and soon it will be hard to determine whether a problem is domestic or international (Kasíková, 2010). It is the objective of

schools to socialize students and prepare them for the future life of an adult. Therefore it is necessary to increase the aspect of developing cooperative skills in classes.

With changes in society, the focus is no longer on individuals working on a same project but on more effective work groups or teams based on cooperation, solving problems together and leadership functioning on the principle of interactions. In fact, being able to work as an effective team member is one of the key competences human resource management looks for amongst applicants. The quality of life is not only determined by the quality of person's employment. Being able to have a successful life depends also on interpersonal relationships amongst friends, loved ones and families. Cooperation is essential in these relationships and the ability to work on a common task and to put aside individualism in favor of the functioning whole is the most important aspect to enter a family or partnership (Kasíková, 2007).

Family is not the only institution to prepare the children for cooperation and in many cases family members do not represent the correct models. Based on this situation it is necessary for schools to provide a systematic and long-term prevention of negative behavior of children and the youth. The situation is even more problematic nowadays because of the children's time spent alone. This is caused by the increasing use of modern technologies (spending time by the computer, smartphone, TV). Schools are facing the challenge of having more responsibilities for development of students' personalities and forming their approach to life.The development of cooperative skills should present a significant part of the educational process for not only the above mentioned reasons but also to improve students' skills in communication. The ability to communicate with each other is essential to cooperation and presents one of the key factors to success (Gillies, 2007).

The need of cooperation in the educational process is also connected to the growing diversity in classrooms. With the increased migration, more accessible transportation, and growing international markets, it is inevitable that teachers are more likely to face a class with students coming from different backgrounds. For the teacher it is important to keep the differences of individual students in mind when preparing an activity using cooperative learning (Kasíková, 2007).

The diversity in classrooms is beneficial for students' future because when developing cooperative skills during the educational process they have the possibility to learn how to interact with people coming from different backgrounds. The importance for the future should present a motivating mechanism for teachers and students when

developing their cooperative skills. The diversity does not need to be based on the culture, ethnic group or a language group but also on different economic social classes. Diversity and pluralism in classes can, during cooperative activities, on one hand motivate the individual students to present their best skills, be communicative, be competitive in order to perform on their best, and improve their relationships with their classmates from different backgrounds (Johnson, Johnson &Holubec, 1990).

Cooperative learning is one of the possibilities to achieve mostly positive outcomes in diverse classes in comparison to individualistic and competitive learning. But it is not only students that need to cooperate in schools to achieve worthy goals. The process involves teachers, administrators and other personnel who cooperate in order to obtain these goals. A such way of implementing cooperation must be done until this behavior becomes natural (Kasíková, 2010).

Cooperative learning as an educational approach

Teachers can help with thedevelopment of their students' cooperative skills through applying cooperative learning in their classes. Cooperative learning is one of the educational approaches used to improve not only students' knowledge but also social learning experience. The central feature of cooperative learning is, as marked by the designation, cooperation. Cooperation, from Latin cooperare – work together, is the process of working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit (Kasíková, 2010).

Developing cooperative skills is highly important during the process of learning. Traditionally, schools are considered places where students learn from their teachers. It is necessary to state that students also learn from each other. Together students are able to come to a solution and the fear of not understanding is gone. This type of cooperation is common in schools and it illustrates the importance of applying cooperative learning to classes. But it is not only the ability to cooperate amongst classmates that promotes the importance of cooperative learning. Development of students' cooperative skills has a wide extent of influence for their further lives.

Social nature of learning

Human beings are naturally curious creatures and our everyday learning is based on the need of solving problems which are influenced by other people and therefore the process of learning is social. People also sense the need of imitating skills of other people, leading other people or completing tasks given to them by others. Emotions are also

connected to interactions between people and, as mentioned before, relationships should be based on cooperation (Kasíková, 2010). All these mentioned aspects show the importance of developing cooperative skills.

Socialization is important in schools because schools present special social environment where the roles are strictly given. The most common organization of a lesson is based on one teacher in charge of transferring the knowledge to students and students themselves (as individuals). This special environment is unnatural and everybody involved needs to respect the given rules. Providing a more natural environment with common social situations can help with the effectiveness of the educational process. Basic emphasis in teaching is on the processes of exploration, searching for answers, meanings of things, phenomenon and relationships. All these processes can be supported with and through cooperative learning (Kasíková, 2010).

Brief history of cooperative learning

The importance of applying cooperation into classrooms was based on the outcomes it would have brought. The model of cooperative learning is mostly connected to the theories and practice in the second half of the 20th century, but the cooperative principles used during teaching can be traced back hundreds of years (Janiš, 2003).

According to Janiš (2003), in the earliest stages of human society no real system of education existed. A classless society was formed during the early stages of the development of man where people did not know the difference between wealthy and poor because of no ruling individuals. It is impossible to name any educational approach in such distant history but there are first implications leading to cooperation which are to be mentioned. The knowledge of older humans was being transferred to the youth in groups. All members of the group had their own knowledge to transfer and the goal of the group was to raise an individual capable of maintaining the family.

The most mentioned method connected to the history of cooperative learning is the method of tutoring. This method is based on the model where one student tutors another student or a group of students. This system of helpers could be found in ancient India, Greece and Rome. The method of using older or more advanced students as helpers of the teacher can be used in cooperative learning nowadays, particularly in English language teaching (ELT). Individual students have their own level of knowledge and the most advanced ones can work as helpers of a group or their classmates. It is up to the teacher to select the tasks for cooperative learning in a way to ensure the highest efficiency possible.

This system of monitors (also known as helpers) was also considered by Johann Amos Comenius in the early 17th century (Janiš, 2003).

Another extension of usage of the cooperative learning started in the late 1700s in England where Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell started using the system of monitors in schools for underprivileged children. The cooperation in smaller groups and the help of the monitors caused the children to study better. This success which started in England moved to the United States of America where Lancastrian schools were open in the beginning of the 18th century. In the next decades the application of the model of cooperative learning was increasing but it was pushed aside by the focus on individual learning in the early 20th century (due to emphasis on interpersonal competition). But, as mentioned before, with the changes in society the emphasis on cooperation is increasing again and the usage of cooperative learning is increasing as well (Janiš, 2003).

Zone of proximal development

Teachers need to work with mixed-ability groups and prepare their lessons to make them as effective as possible. Cooperative learning helps with making also the less advanced students successful and keeping them motivated. The process of making also the less advanced students successful is connected to the theory of the psychologist Lev Vygotsky. He viewed the interaction between students with peers as an effective way of developing skills and strategies. He saw the strength in activities used by teachers during cooperative learning: help for the less competent students to develop their skills with help of the more competent ones. All of this process happens within the zone of proximal development.

According to Vygotsky (1978):

The zone of proximal development has been defined as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

This implies that tasks and activities that are too complicated and difficult for a student to master on their own and able to be completed under guidance and encouragement not only by other students but also other knowledgeable person. According to Tudge (1992), the zone of proximal development captures the child's cognitive skills that are in the process

of maturing, and these skills can only be honed with the assistance of a more skilled person.

What is cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is an educational approach which organizes the classroom activities in order to achieve shared goals and provide social learning experience. The lessons may be structured by the teacher of any kind of subject in order to engage students to cooperate and focus on accomplishing the shared goals (Janiš, 2003). According to Kagan (2009), teachers design not only the social interaction structures but also the learning activities. The goals of students can be structured to promote cooperative, competitive, or individualistic efforts. All these instructional skills need to be used in the educational process and it is the teacher's responsibility to use them effectively because each goal structure has its place.

Unlike a competitive task where students work against each other to achieve a goal and not all of them are successful, and the individualistic structure where students work on their own to reach the goals and are not dependent on other students' performance, cooperative structure leads to cooperation between students and achieving shared goals. According to Slavin (1995), some cooperative methods and instructional structures are more effective than traditional methods in increasing basic achievement outcomes and performance.

Johnson, Johnson &Holubec (1989) describe a learning goal as following:

A learning goal is a desired future state of demonstrating competence or mastery in the subject area being studied. The goal structure specifies the ways in which students will interact with each other and the teacher during the instructional session. (p.13)

Cooperative learning may be further described as an instructional strategy which is student-centered and instructor-facilitated and works with small groups of learners who are responsible for their own results but at the same time for the results of all the members of the group. The strategy is based on the student interaction within the group which leads to practice of the elements of the subject matter in order to reach the desired outcomes, results, or goals (Janiš, 2003).

In cooperative learning situation, students perceive the connection of their own performance and the performance of all other members of the group; that being the main

difference from group work where students are divided into small group but there are no individual goals and needed results which may lead into the situation where only a few members work and others do not feel the need to perform. Cooperative activities are designed to evoke the feelings of students to be beneficial not only for themselves but also for the whole group. These feelings of importance as a team member motivate students to work harder and be responsible. The idea of cooperative activities is to maximize the performance and learning of all the members of the group (Johnson, Johnson &Holubec, 1998).

The basic structure of cooperative instructional strategy is to divide students into small groups, give them instructions and then let them work on their own until they reach the desired goals. Being able to understand the instructions well and to work together develops not only their cooperative skills and their social skills, but also deepens their knowledge of the subject matter. Tasks which may seem too difficult for students working individually are likely to be completed by the same students when working in groups (Kasíková, 2007).

Cooperation in the group leading to the shared goals cannot be successful without social interactive support from all members of the group. As mentioned before, parents, family members, teachers, and adults play important role in the process of learning of children and social interaction is an important way in which the learners gain knowledge. Children use cooperation in their everyday life during conversations and completing different tasks. Therefore it is obvious that using cooperative learning strategies is a natural way of learning with appropriate results. The process of learning develops and students should present an active part of it; they should be active participants, not only passive receivers of the knowledge. Cooperative learning enables them to become these active participants and to change the perception of their role in the educational process. Students, as teachers, deepen their knowledge by explaining parts of the subject matter to each other. When students have to organize their thoughts to communicate ideas to other members of the group, they engage in cognitive elaboration that enhances their own understanding (Slavin, 1995).

Through interaction and cooperation, students develop conversations that involve the structure of activities and they use the target language and discuss topics relevant for the lesson. Using language is very important because language plays a key role in the process of learning (Johnson, Johnson &Holubec, 1994).

Essential components of cooperative learning

To achieve cooperative learning it is necessary to understand that putting students into groups does not mean that cooperation will work. The seating and grouping does not ensure the teacher that students will work together as they should because not all groups are cooperative. During group work activities some students tend to leave the work to a more competent one and then behave as a free rider and wait for the end of an activity. Sometimes students who are more competent also take the role of the leader and do not enable the less competent ones to participate because they see them as dead weight (Johnson et al., 1994).

In order to structure lessons in a cooperative learning model the teacher needs to think of five essential components of cooperative learning. Because without these certain conditions the effectiveness of cooperative learning is mediated. These essential components make cooperative lessons more productive than competitive and individualistic efforts. According to Johnson et al. (1994), the essential components are: clearly perceived positive interdependence; considerable promotive (face-to-face) interaction; clearly perceived individual accountability and personal responsibility to achieve the group's goals; frequent use of relevant interpersonal and small-group skill; frequent and regular group processing of current functioning to improve future effectiveness.

Positive interdependence. Positive interdependence is the first and the most important element in structuring cooperative learning. This element helps students to perceive that working together is beneficial not only for themselves but also to the whole group. They understand that the success of one depends on the success of the other. When students understand the need of cooperation, they are able to motivate others and encourage them to their best performance (Kasíková, 2010).

Positive interdependence is a technical term for a dual responsibility of students: to learn the assigned material and to ensure that every member of their group does the same thing and is competent of doing it. Being in a group of students does not immediately mean that positive interdependence exists. Students need to be aware of their responsibilities to ensure the success of the group. Every member of the group needs to be able to work with others and coordinate their efforts. If students understand the importance of cooperation and positive interdependence is established, students are aware that each group member's efforts are required and necessary for the group to be successful and that each member of

the group has his or her own unique and important contribution to make to reach the shared goals using his or her resources, role, and task responsibility (Johnson et al., 1994). Students need to understand that they are not on their own.

Positive interdependence can be established in different ways. The teacher's role is important during this process. The teacher is the one who has to find means to divide students into groups; taking into consideration the diversity of the class and individual levels of students – more competent ones need to work with the less competent ones because they can provide help. Teachers also assign the task for the group – the task needs to be achievable and measurable. By having the task students understand the importance of their own responsibilities. Also students should be given individual roles: e.g. leader, note maker, time manager, and supervisor (Gillies, 2007). Positive interdependence can be structured four ways within a learning group. The structure can be established through: positive goal interdependence where students need to understand that achieving a shared goal of a group can be achieved only if they achieve their goal and all the other members do as well; positive reward interdependence where a mutual reward is given for successful group work and after all members present efforts to achieve the goals; positive resource interdependence where students are not given the needed resources as individuals but they receive e.g. one resource for the whole group or individual students receive parts of the needed resources and need to cooperate to achieve the goal; positive role interdependence where each member of the group is assigned a complementary and interconnected role that are vital to high-quality learning . Positive interdependence has also other minor types that can be structured into a lesson: positive task interdependence where the members of the group have different tasks and one member needs to complete his or her task in order to enable other member of the group to work on his or her; positive identity interdependence where identity is established using a name, logo or a motto; outside enemy interdependence where groups are placed into competition; fantasy interdependence where students need to engage their imagination and pretend to work in a hypothetical situation (Johnson et al., 1994).

Positive interdependence is necessary for cooperation but it is likely to result in intellectual disagreement or conflict. Each member of a learning group needs to be able to present his or her results and work with others by sharing resources and ideas. This process can lead into positive outcome where the members of the group are able to work with their differences or into a negative one where individuals are not able to work together successfully (Kasíková, 2010).

Face-to-face promotiveinteraction. The second important element of cooperative learning is the face-to-face promotive interaction. Learning groups based on cooperation are mostly small (2-6 members) and the activity of the group is based on the fact that all members need to work together. Interacting face-to-face means having immediate feedback from other members of the group. Each of the learning group members needs to accomplish his or her goals and cannot wait for others to do the work for him. Even though some of the work can be done individually, in the end the members of the group need to provide help and assistance to others, exchange needed resources, process information efficiently and effectively, and challenge each other. Promotive interaction influences efforts to achieve better relationships among the group and it also promotes help, support and encouragement. (Johnson et al., 1990)

Individualaccountability. Another essential element of the cooperative learning is the individual accountability (personal responsibility). It is necessary because all members of the learning group are assessed and the assessment of their performance is used for the whole group; meaning that all members of the cooperative group contribute to the final result. The main meaning of cooperative group is to improve the performance of not the group but the individual members. The group needs to know who is less competent and needs more help and encouragement, and on the other hand who is more competent and able to provide this needed support. Everyone's accountability can be supported by testing the shared goals or asking random member of the group to present the results (Kasíková, 2007).

According to Johnson et al. (1994):

Common ways to structure individual accountability also include: keeping the size of cooperative groups small. The smaller the size of the group, the greater the individual accountability can be; giving an individual test to each student; observing and recording the frequency with which each member contributes to the group work; assigning one student in each group the role of checker, who asks other group members to explain the reasoning and rationale underlying group answers; having students teach what they learn to someone else, a practice called "simultaneous explaining" (p. 31)

Interpersonal and small-groupskills. The fourth essential element of cooperative learning is the interpersonal and small-group skills. Cooperative learning does not work if learners do not have the needed skills. Students need to learn the subject matter, the

interpersonal and small-group skills in order to work as a team. The establishment of the skills is progressive: from basic ones, such as skills of knowing each other and being able to trust each other and skills of communicating explicitly, to more advanced ones, such as accepting and supporting another personality and solving problems in a constructive way. The teacher's role is to teach students how to interact effectively with others and develop their skills. Teamwork is necessary for a cooperative learning group because if the members of the group do not have the required skills, the subject matter cannot be learned and the group will not achieve the goal. The more advanced the skills of the group are, the better result it has (Johnson et al., 1994).

Group processing. The fifth essential element of cooperative learning is group processing. The effectiveness of the learning group work is to some extent dependent on whether or not groups reflect on the fact how well they process; how the group describes its functioning and how it decides about future plans. The group needs to process how successful or unsuccessful their previous effort was and who and how contributed to reaching the shared goal (Kasíková, 2010). Teachers need to think of this essential element and provide enough time at the end of a cooperative learning activity for the groups to process their teamwork. In addition, teachers should also provide a clear structure for this processing, emphasize positive feedback, and also include a whole-class processing at the end of a lesson. By the whole-class processing teachers give feedback to all the groups at once and the main strengths and weaknesses are mentioned. Nevertheless, the teacher needs pre-check for the whole-class processing which means that he needs to monitor individual groups through the activity and provide also individual feedback (Johnson et al., 1994).

These five essential elements form the basic structure of the system of cooperative learning. Teachers who want to develop cooperative skills of their students need to plan their lessons while thinking of these elements and be able to apply them into practical activities and tasks. Working on developing these skills of students brings a long-term result and successful implication into further learning.

Three main types of cooperative learning

Cooperative learning groups are divided into three most significant types: formal cooperative learning groups, informal cooperative learning groups, and cooperative base groups. These types have their own purpose and application and teachers should be aware

of these differences when applying cooperative learning into their lessons (Johnson et al., 1994).

Formal cooperative learning groups work together either during one class meeting or longer – up to several weeks. The groups work on achieving shared goals and completing the given tasks. The variety of using formal cooperative learning groups is very wide: the teacher can structure any academic assignment for the groups. It is the role of the teacher to adapt and structure the assignment for the cooperative groups and to monitor the groups until they achieve the shared goals. The teacher also decides how much students will need to follow given structures and scripts, or improvise (Johnson et al., 1994). Formal cooperative learning groups consist of 2-6 members and are the core of using cooperative learning. These groups guarantee that students are involved and active in the process of organizing materials and the intellectual work and that they are explaining, summarizing and integrating the materials into existing conceptual structures (Johnson, Johnson &Holubec, 2008). Formal cooperative learning groups can be promoted by different strategies: the Jigsaw, teams-games-tournament (TGT), student-team-achievement-divisions (STAD), team-assisted-individualization (TAI), and cooperative integrated reading and composition (CIRC) (Slavin, 1995).

The Jigsaw technique was designed by the social psychologist Elliot Aronson and is the most common technique of formal cooperative learning groups. In Jigsaw the teacher divides the classroom into groups where all members are dependent on each other in order to be successful. The groups are all assigned the same topic and the same task which is divided into pieces. Each member of a group is assigned with a section to learn and later teach the other members of the group. In addition, all members assigned the same section work together to discuss their ideas and knowledge about the topic. Each member of the group therefore needs to work not only with members of his or her own group but also with members of all groups. In the end, each member of the group presents their part and the group synthesizes these presentations into the whole picture. The Jigsaw technique was designed to help avoid prejudice and weaken racial cliques and research showed that students who worked with this technique decreased their level of intolerance, stereotyping and were able to work with students coming from different backgrounds even during other activities (Aronson, 1978).

Another used technique of formal cooperative learning groups is teams-games-tournament (TGT). In TGT students are first taught the lesson by the teacher and then are divided into cooperative learning teams. These teams consist of 4-5 members with

different levels of competence (more competent, less competent). Each member of the group must complete a set of questions or a worksheet connected to the lesson. After completing it, each member competes as a representative for their team with other groups. The results are displayed weekly and students get feedback based on their own performance. Another technique is student-team-achievement-divisions (STAD): a modified version of TGT where the teams do not compete in a game but are given an individual test where they cannot work with each other. The results of the teams are dependent on results of the individual members (Johnson et al.,1994).

Teachers can also use theteam-assisted-individualization (TAI) technique which is designed for teams of 4-5 members with a mix of ability. Again, the teacher first teaches a lesson and then the groups work on completing exercises. The members of the groups do not work together but they check each other's answers. TAI is mostly used for math classes and students are assessed individually. The level of cooperation is not high (Slavin, 1995). The last technique of formal cooperative learning groups is cooperative integrated reading and composition (CIRC): a universal reading and writing curriculum technique. Students are divided into two teams of 8-15 members: first team analyses the phonic decoding and comprehension, the second team focuses on comprehension and inference skills. Students are then divided into pairs and work with a pair from another group. These four members work together on assignments either as a whole group or as pairs but are scored individually. All these above mentioned techniques require the monitoring of the teacher who is able to intervene in case of problems(Johnson et al., 1994).

Informal cooperative learning groups are designed to work together for a few minutes to one class period. These groups can be used anytime during the educational process but are mostly effective when used directly during a lecture or direct teaching. Teachers use informal cooperative learning groups to ensure that students are active during the time they need them to be focused. The temporary, ad hoc groups can be used during a lecture, showing a movie, presentation, or a speech. According to Johnson & Johnson (1996), these groups are used to ensure students' focus and attention, help with setting expectations, ensure cognitive processing and help students understand instructions and the given materials. Working in a group helps the student to focus on learning, to help organize the materials, to eliminate incorrect understanding and to personalize learning experience. Teachers can use informal cooperative learning groups to structure their lessons in order to achieve as much attention and focus as possible. Students are able to

discuss the subject matter before, during and after the lecture, movie, presentation, or speech.

Teachers can structure their lesson based on informal cooperative learning groups using following steps: a) Focused discussion 1 – advanced organizing: students are divided into pairs (pairs differ every lesson to ensure that students work with as many students as possible) and are given a simple task about the topic. A discussion is led about the topic and students focus on what they know about it. b) Lecture segment 1: the teacher presents the first part of the lecture (10-15 minutes long). c) Pair discussion 1: pairs are given 3-4 minutes of time to discuss the first segment of the lecture and they have to complete a task (give answers to questions prepared by the teacher, react to the first segment, or relate the information to their previous learning). During this stage of the lesson the teacher needs to evaluate the performance of students by randomly choosing 2-3 students to give a short summary of their discussion. d) Lecture segment 2: the teacher presents second part of the lecture. e) Pair discussion 2: students work in pairs and complete similar task as in the previous discussion; this time focusing on the second part of the lecture. f) The teacher presents next part of the lecture and pair discussion follows. This process is repeated until the whole lecture is presented. g) Focused discussion 2 – closure: students work in pairs and have 4-5 minutes to discuss what they have learned from the whole lesson; they share ideas, their theories and opinions. h) The teacher processes the procedure with the class and helps them realize how they can work better the next time (Johnson et al., 1994).

The informal cooperative learning groups are effective for students to stay focused and actively involved during the whole lesson and they also provide effective time for the teacher because it allows a time to pause and listen to students and know to what extent they understand the material covered. These groups are temporary but students also need to be able to work in long-term groups and establish different relationships. Teachers can work on development of cooperative skills by using cooperative base groups (Johnson et al., 1994).

With classes being more diverse than ever the need of cooperative base groups is very high. These groups are also very useful in classes with a high number of students and complex syllabus. According to Johnson et al. (1994), cooperative base groups meet together at the beginning and the end of a lesson or at the beginning and the end of a week. It is important for the members of the group to know each other and exchange contact information (phone number, email address, Facebook account). The main reason for cooperative base groups to work together is to provide each other with support,

encouragement, and assistance. The groups need to be heterogeneous so that the less competent members know they will find the needed help during their sessions (Kasíková, 2010). The teacher can choose from a wide range of tasks for the base groups but they should include tasks that support the whole educational process: students give each other advice on how to study, what to do during the semester, complete homework together, or tutor each other; students should also have evidence of attendance and homework; students should share personal things therefore the tasks should include personal discussions because by sharing something personal students develop their relationships, social and cooperative skills (Slavin, 1995). Base groups can be distinguished by the length of their duration into two different types: class base groups and school base groups. Class base groups work together only during the course; on the other hand school base groups present long-term groups of all students in school which stay together for the whole school year and present a significant segment in the school functioning (Johnson et al., 1994).

Framework Education Program

Framework Education Program presents new curricular structures for education in the Czech Republic for pupils between 3 and 19 years of age.

According to the Framework Education Program (Balada et al., 2007): Education at four-year grammar schools and the upper stage of six- or eight-year grammar schools should provide the pupils with key competencies and general overview on the level of a person who has finished secondary education and thus prepare them especially for university education and other types of tertiary education, professional specialization as well as for civic life. (p. 8)

Based on these facts, it obvious that cooperative learning should present an integral part of the educational process because it can lead to acquiring key competencies.According to Balada et al. (2007), "A key competency is a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and values important for personal development" (p. 8). Cooperative learning can help students to develop all of the following key competencies: learning competency, problem solving competency, communication competency, social and personal competency, civic competency, and entrepreneurial competency. Students develop their learning competency through cooperative learning by being able to plan and organize their learning and work activity, by effectively employing various learning strategies, by approaching information sources critically, and by evaluating their progress

after achieving goals. The problem-solving competency is developed by students when recognizing a problem, elucidating its nature and dividing it into parts. Also, students form hypotheses, propose different approaches, apply appropriate methods, and use critical as well as analytical and creative thinking. Cooperative learning also develops students' communication competency when they employ available means of communication and modern information technologies, express themselves clearly, comprehensibly and adequately, present their work in a suitable way and understand messages of various types. Social and personal competency is developed by realistic evaluation of his or her physical and spiritual possibility andestimating the consequences of his or her conduct. Also students learn the needed behavior in various situations; they learn how to be active in cooperation to achieve shared goals. In addition, they learn how to contribute to create positive interpersonal relations based on mutual respect, tolerance and empathy. Cooperative learning also promotes the development of students' civic competency by their consideration of relations between the interests of a group to which they belong, by their respect of diversity of opinions, attitudes, abilities and values of others. Entrepreneurial competency is developed by students recognizing their potential and opportunities and being able to make use of them for further personal development. It is also promoted by applying a proactive approach, their own initiative and creativity in the process of learning (Balada et al., 2007).

The teacher's role in cooperative lessons

According to Slavin (1995), teachers need to understand the necessity of developing cooperative skills of their students and then prepare lessons using tasks and activities that will achieve this development. The teacher's role in cooperative learning is very important because for the cooperative learning lessons to be successful the teacher needs to establish rapport and good relationships with and between students. In addition, the teacher needs to know his or her students well in order to use the proper grouping: groups need to be heterogeneous. Sometimes the teacher can use random groups but the effect of cooperation is not ensured as well as in thought-out groups. At the beginning of the lesson the teacher functions as the task setter and the leading figure that explains the task and goal structure to students but during the cooperative group work their role changes into a coach, a mentor, or an assistant. Nevertheless, the teacher needs to provide feedback and assessment to the groups and their individual members. A successful cooperative

lesson allows students to learn the subject matter and to be able to teach it to the other group members (Cohen, Brody &Sapon-Shevin, 2004).

Cooperative learning in English language teaching

According to Kagan (1995), cooperative learning promotes language acquisition by providing comprehensible input in appropriate ways and in a supportive and motivating environment. Students are taught English in order to be able to fluently use English as an instrument of communication with people from all around the world. Cooperative learning helps with language learning because it increases the frequency and variety of language use practiced through different types of interaction; it increases active communication between students; it improves social skills; it creates opportunities for students to integrate language with content-based instruction; it creates an opportunity for teachers to use wider range of materials for their lessons; it establishes chances for students to teach each other and be more active during the process of learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Cooperative learning is very useful for English language lessons because language lessons are based on active participation of students. For the students to be able to learn new language it is necessary to be active and practice the structures and pronunciation. According to Motley (1988), 85% of people are afraid of public speaking. Therefore teachers need to understand that cooperative learning will help students to overcome this fear and communicate in smaller groups. In English language teaching students working in small groups are less afraid of making mistakes and they practice their speaking and also listening skills. Being in a smaller group prepares students for further whole-group discussions; they learn how to work with the language, ask questions, prepare arguments for their opinions, and listen to other members of the group. All these aspects lead to the development of critical thinking. Students also have a chance to hear each other speak and are able to learn new vocabulary and structures used by people of the same age(Richards & Rodgers, 2001). According to Brumfit (1984), cooperative learning tasks are designed for students to communicate and at the same time improve all language skills.

Challenges connected to cooperative learning in English language classes

Although cooperative learning is a very successful approach to education, it has its limitations and cannot be used effectively in all situations. Teachers need to focus on the work done by individual groups and be sure that everybody is completing their responsibilities and tasks. Sometimes students tend to work on different things or discuss

different topics than the subject matter and therefore the teacher needs to supervise the groups. Students can feel limited and stressed by the fact that the whole group relies on their performance. Not only this stress can lead into conflicts: conflicts are caused also by the differences of the members of the group and if the group cannot pass these issues it is up to the teacher to interfere. Besides that, more competent students may feel the lack of challenges while working with less competent ones and, on the other hand, less competent students may feel as a burden to the group and not want to attempt to take over the role of a leader (Shindler, 2009). Forcing students to work with others and making them dependent on each other's performance can also sometimes cause increased egocentrism, lower achievements, and rejection of other ideas and deterioration of relationships. All these limitations can be reduced by the constant and continuous use of cooperative learning because the more students develop their cooperative skills the better their performance will be.

Cooperative learning is an asset for English language teaching but it also has its challenges. Teachers need to work hard on preparation of cooperative tasks and know their students. Students do not have the same abilities and level of language. They need to understand that in cooperative learning these differences are positive rather than negative. They should know that cooperation with more advanced students can help them with improving their language and on the other hand working with less advanced ones can help them with being able to teach them and provide help. But not all students understand these facts and sometimes refuse to work. The teacher can let other group members to solve this problem or interfere and find a solution(Cohen, Brody &Sapon-Shevin, 2004).

Cooperative learning tasks need to have space for adjustment and teachers need to monitor groups while working.Each member of a group has his or her own task to complete and more advanced students should not lead the group and work on other parts too. Even though students may have difficulties in the beginning with expressing themselves, making mistakes, and completing their task, practice should lead into better results. Teachers show the students that it is not necessary for each member of the group to have all the needed abilities to achieve the shared goal but that each member of the group has some of the abilities and together they succeed (Cohen, Brody &Sapon-Shevin, 2004).

The theoretical background provided an overview of what cooperative learning is and its five essential components were presented. The chapter presented a brief history of cooperative learning, its importance in modern society, and three main types of cooperative learning. In addition, teacher's role was described and analyzed. Cooperative learning was

also described in terms of English language teaching and specific challenges were presented. The chapter also focused on the Framework Education Program and its key competencies.

III. METHODS

The research of this thesis focuses on developing cooperative skills in English language classes in Czech schools: it researches whether students are exposed to cooperative learning and if yes to what extent it is effective. This chapter provides a clear description of the research methodology and discusses why and what methods were chosen. It also provides an overview of when and where the research wasdone and describes the subjects of the research.

For answering the research questions I decided to create a cooperative learning scoring rubric and gather data by attending twenty random English classes. The research questions were following: Are Czech students exposed to cooperative learning in English language classes? And if yes, to what extent does the performance of cooperative groups of the cooperative learning activities reflect individual essential components of cooperative learning and what is the effect?

The research was done at three different schools in the duration of one month. For my observations I attended lessons at GymnáziumFrantiškaKřižíka in Pilsen, Církevnígymnázium in Pilsen and Základníškola in Staňkov. All three schools are located in the Czech Republic and for diversity I also attended a lower secondary school (not only upper secondary education). The twenty observations took place in seven different learning groups. All lessons were 45mins long. The age of students was in the range of 14-19 years. The lessons were led by five different teachers; these teachers had different experience with teaching and therefore the lessons were more diverse. The main idea for the observations was to complete a lesson outline based on the ongoing lesson and then completing the cooperative learning scoring rubric. Teachers were not asked to include cooperative activities in their lessons. All the observations were random and lesson plans were not changed in order to obtain specific data for the research. Students acted naturally and did not take my presence into consideration when having a lesson.

As mentioned before, I created and used a plan of a lesson outline for my observations. This outline was created as a tool to register the individual stages of the lesson and other aspects. In the outline I noted down the time of the lesson – all were 45mins long but 17 were in the morning and 3 in the afternoon. During the lessons in the afternoon a change in behavior was obvious – students were more tired and less concentrated. I also noted the level of the students. Mostly, in 14 cases, the level of the learning group was pre-intermediate and in 6 cases it was intermediate. The outline also

describes number of students in the class. The number of students in individual classes was following: 1x 5 students; 1x 11 students; 2x 12 students; 3x 13 students; 5x 14 students; 3x 15 students and 6x 16 students. Another important aspect of the outline is also the classroom arrangement (or seating arrangement). In majority of the lessons students were seated in a horseshoe arrangement (15 lessons) and in five lessons the students were seated in rows (classic three rows model). Mostly, the horseshoe seating arrangement was used because it is very beneficial for language learning. It promotes eye-contact, interaction and communication. I did not note down the objectives of the lessons because they were not stated. The outlines have only the topics of individual lessons.

The outline is designed to note all the individual stages of the lesson. Based on the observations I was able to note down the lesson plans. I focused on different aspects of the lessons. In all lessons the stages were not clearly stated in the beginning but they were obvious through the observations even though teachers did not announce the shifts from one stage to another. Students seemed to understand these shifts without clear stating. The outline is design as a table with 6 columns. The first column is for the stages of a lesson and it indicates the number of stages in 45mins of duration. These stages were divided based on the observations. Only one class had just one stage of the lesson; one had two stages; four lessons had three stages; ten lessons had four stages and five lessons had five stages. Another aspect described by the second column of the outlines is the activity of the teacher. This activity is described in all stages and so is the activity of the students in column 3. This information is crucial for the research because it is the students who cooperate. The fourth column of the outlines describes individual activities done throughout the lessons. Based on these activities it is possible to state whether the activities were containing cooperation or not. Activities are also divided according to individual stages of the lessons. The fifth column is provided for possible comments. It serves as a place for further ideas or things to remember from the activity. The last column, the sixth one, provides information about duration of individual stages of the lesson. The time is described in minutes[1].

After completing the outlines (after observing the lessons), I was able to move to the other part of the research data. Based on the lessons I was able to complete the cooperative learning scoring rubric. For my research I decided to use a type of an analytic scoring rubric. Analytic scoring is used for this research in order to map individual

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[1]See appendix A

essential components of cooperative learning which could not be done using a holistic scoring rubric.

The cooperative learning scoring rubric was designed to measure the students' activity during individual cooperative tasks with focus on five essential components of cooperative learning. The rubric was composed as a table with five columns and six rows.[2]

The first row indicates number of reached points (1, 2 or 3). The second row deals with the first essential component of cooperative learning – positive interdependence. The students' activity was awarded with: one point if individual members of the group worked towards group goals only when commanded, two points if individual members of the group worked towards group goals with a minor need of commanding, three points if individual members of the group actively and constantly worked towards the group goals. The third row of the scoring rubric dealt with face-to-face promotive interaction. One point was awarded if individual members of the group worked on their share of the work but did not share materials or provide help to each other; two points if individual members of the group worked on their share of the work and were able to help others when asked to; three points if individual members of the group worked on their share of the work but also provided active help for others and worked on improving relationships. The fourth row of the rubric was grading individual accountability. One point was awarded if members of groups were not aware of the less competent ones and help was not provided. Individual members were not aware of their contribution to the group; two points if individual members of the group were working on their share of the work but without concern of their own performance; three points if individual members of the group were aware of the importance of their share of the work and actively participated to reach the goals. The next row dealt with interpersonal skills. One point was awarded if individual members of the group were not open to accepting other ideas and did not participate on creating positive environment; two points if the relationships between the members of the group were developing but different ideas were not accepted well and discussion stagnated; three points if group functioned together as a team, different personalities were accepted, ideas were shared and positive relationships were developing. The final row of the rubric scored group processing. One point was awarded if after the task the group did not provide any feedback (individual members to each other on their work/group to the teacher); two points if the group provided feedback but without thinking of possible future improvement; three

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[2]See appendix B

points if the group provided feedback and ideas of possible future improvement were presented.

The cooperative learning scoring rubric has also a line with the total reached points of cooperation. The final score was divided into a scale of 5 different possible outcomes: 0 points, 5 points, 6-9 points, 10-12 points and 12-15 points.

This chapter provided a clear overview of the methodology of the research and the collected data and results are further analyzed and interpreted in the following chapter.

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

This chapter provides a clear and detailed analysis of the thesis research. As mentioned before, the research was conducted through an analysis of 20 random lessons. The research was done by observations and further analysis of cooperative learning through a scoring rubric. The first part of the research answers questions about whether and to what extent cooperative learning is used in Czech schools. Second part of the research focuses on detailed analysis of the cooperative learning tasks and the cooperative learning scoring rubric. The collected data from the observation outlines is used for further analysis as well as the data from the rubric.

Number of lessons with cooperative learning

The observations were done in 20 randomly attended lessons and therefore it is possible to analyze the use and appearance of cooperative learning. From the total of 20 lessons cooperative learning was used in 9 of them. The use of cooperative learning activities was broad and differentiated. The activities where the teacher used cooperative learning and cooperative skills were developed are also discussed in later parts of this chapter. As stated earlier, 9 lessons used cooperative learning but 11 lessons did not. Graph 1 shows the number of lessons with and without activities that develop students' cooperative skills.

Graph 1
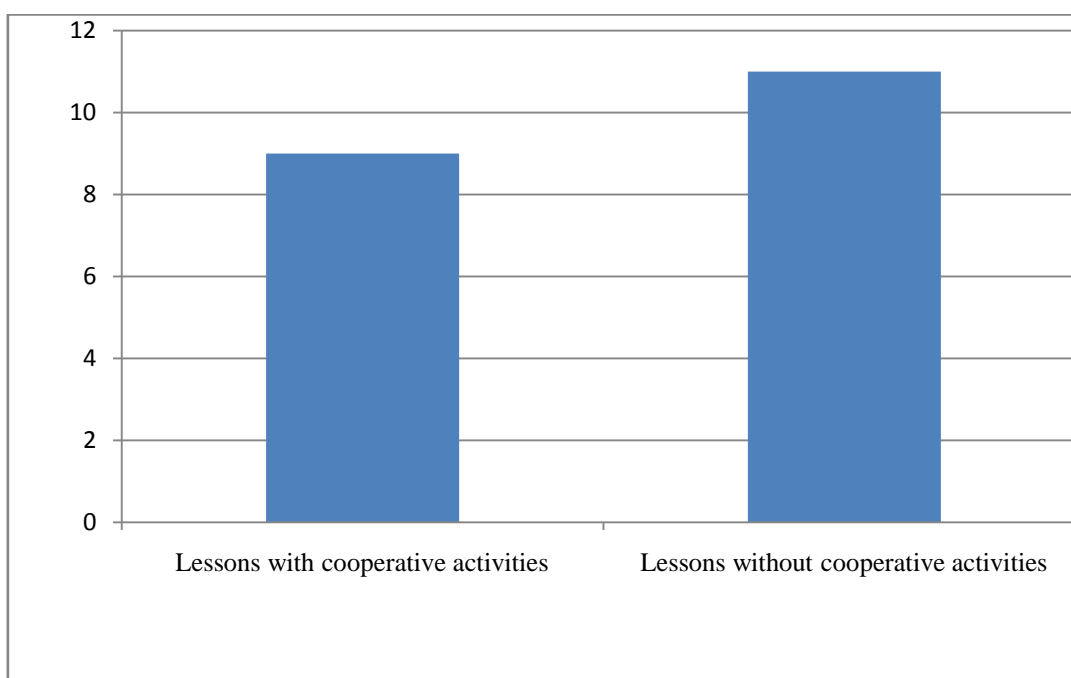
One of the lessons, lesson number 1, was made of only one stage and this stage was focused on writing a test. Therefore, no cooperation was involved and students worked individually. Lesson number 2 had two stages based on test correction, pair work and group discussion. Lesson 3 had three stages of test, textbook activities and listening. Lesson 4 contained three stages and was focused on grammar practice. Next lesson, lesson 5, had four stages and was mostly taught using group discussion, pair work and reading comprehension. Lesson 6 had four stages and was based on new grammar – present perfect tense but no cooperation was used. Lesson 7 had also four stages and was mostly based on speaking about performers and students were exposed to new vocabulary. Next lesson, lesson number 8, had four stages and was centered on advertisement and students were practicing mostly their productive skills. Lesson 9 also had four stages and contained group discussion, individual work, reading and listening. Lesson 10 had four stages and was also focused on speaking about advertisement. Lastly, lesson 11, had five stages based on new grammar and there was no cooperation as well as in the previous lessons.

Based on the data collected by the observations, it is clear to state that more than half of the lessons randomly attended in Czech schools did not contain activities that develop cooperative skills. In these lessons teachers use mostly whole class work activities where students' productive and receptive skills are developed. In addition to whole class work teachers also use other organization forms such as group work, individual work and pair work, but cooperative learning (principles of cooperative learning) is observed in group or pair work.

Analysis of lessons with cooperative activities

The data gained from the individual observations was used not only to distinguish whether the lessons contained cooperative tasks but also to provide further analysis of cooperative learning. The cooperative scoring rubric was used to analyze only cooperative activities. All lessons where it was used contained only one cooperative activity and therefore there was no need for more than one rubric per lesson. The total score was divided into the following table 1which provides a brief commentary on the total score and individual activities are further analyzed (per lesson).

Table 1

| 0 points	No cooperation
5-6 points	Students' cooperative skills are not developed and they need major help during cooperative activities.
7-9 points	Students are able to cooperate and work towards the group goal. Help is needed from the teacher and communication stagnates.
10-12 points	Students are able to work on their share of work and communicate with other members of the group in order to reach the group goal with a little help of the teacher.
13-15 points	Students work well in groups, every member of the group is aware of his or her position, communication flows well, different ideas are accepted and help is provided within the group.

Lesson 12

Graph 2
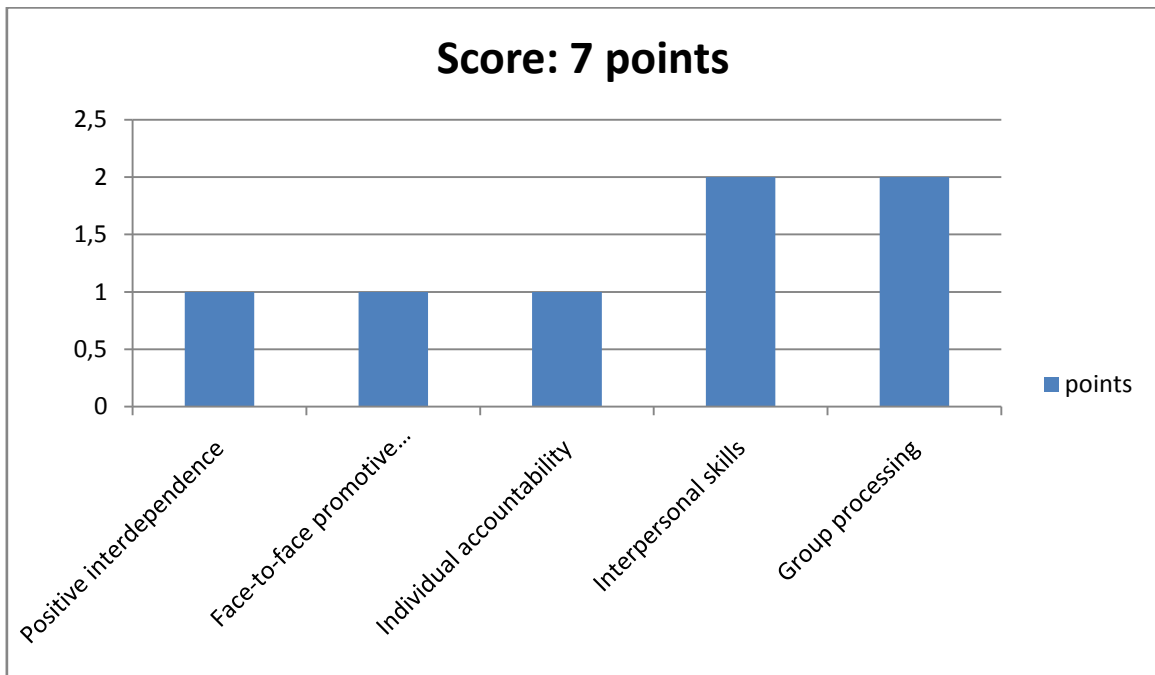
Lesson 12 had four stages. First three of them did not contain cooperative tasks but in the fourth stage students were able to cooperate during one activity. The cooperative stage of the lesson was 13mins long and therefore covered almost one third of the lesson. The topic of the lesson was Crime. In the first three stages students were exposed to new vocabulary and a short criminal story. The final stage of the lesson started with the teacher presenting an example of the activity. The teacher read a short story (3 sentences) and asked students to think of possible explanations of what has happened. Students asked the teacher questions to find out more information. After the example the teacher divided students into two groups of four and one group of five. In each group one member was selected as the reader of the story. He or she had also the information with the explanation of the crime. Other members of the group were given a type of a question (where, who, what) and were to ask these questions to find out the explanation. All members of the group had to ask their question and get the answer. Based on the new gained information the students, as a group, found out what was the explanation of the story was.

This cooperative activity was scored with 7 points. It shows that students are able to cooperate and work towards the group goal. But help is needed from the teacher and communication stagnates. Individual members of the group worked only after they were

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commanded by the teacher; they did not provide help to each other; individual members were not aware of the importance of their contribution to the group; different ideas were not accepted well and the discussion stagnated and the groups were able to provide feedback and present their results but without thinking of possible future improvement.

Lesson 13

Graph 3
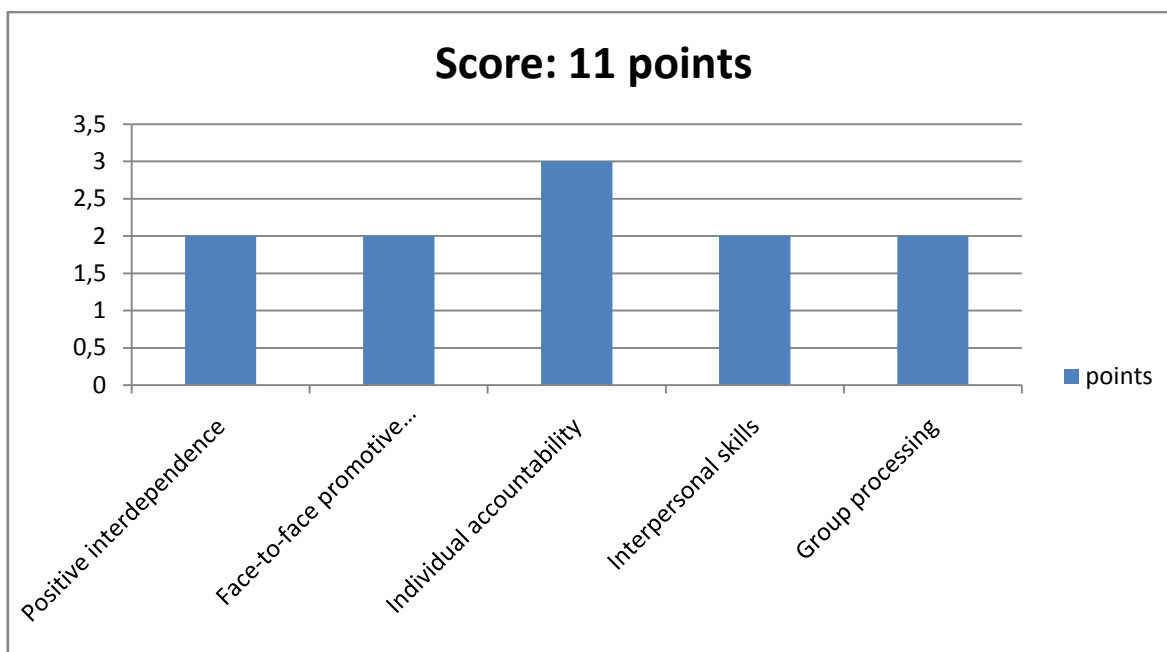
Lesson 13 had five stages and one of them was a cooperative activity. The cooperative activity was 12mins long and took place during the second stage of the lesson. The topic of the lesson was School Rules and Advertisement. In the lead-in stage of the lesson students had a discussion about school rules of their school. After this stage the teacher divided students into two groups of three and two groups of four. Each member of the group was given a piece of paper with school rules from the United Kingdom. The group goal was to share the information and compare the rules to Czech rules. In the end, each group had to have a list of school rules which are different and which are the same.

This activity was scored with the total of 11 points. Individual members of the groups worked towards the group goal with a minor need of commanding; they worked on their share of the assignment and were able to help others; individual members of the group were aware of their importance and actively participated to reach the goal; the

relationships were developing but discussion stagnated at some point; in the end the groups presented their results but without thinking of possible improvement.
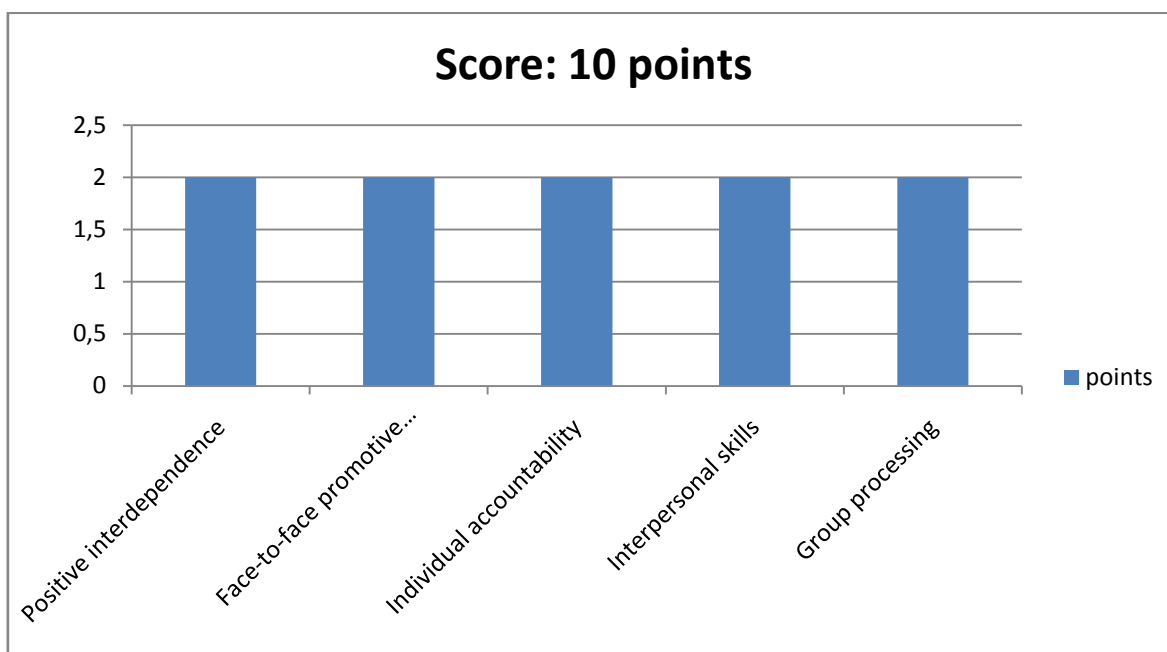
Lesson 14

Graph 4
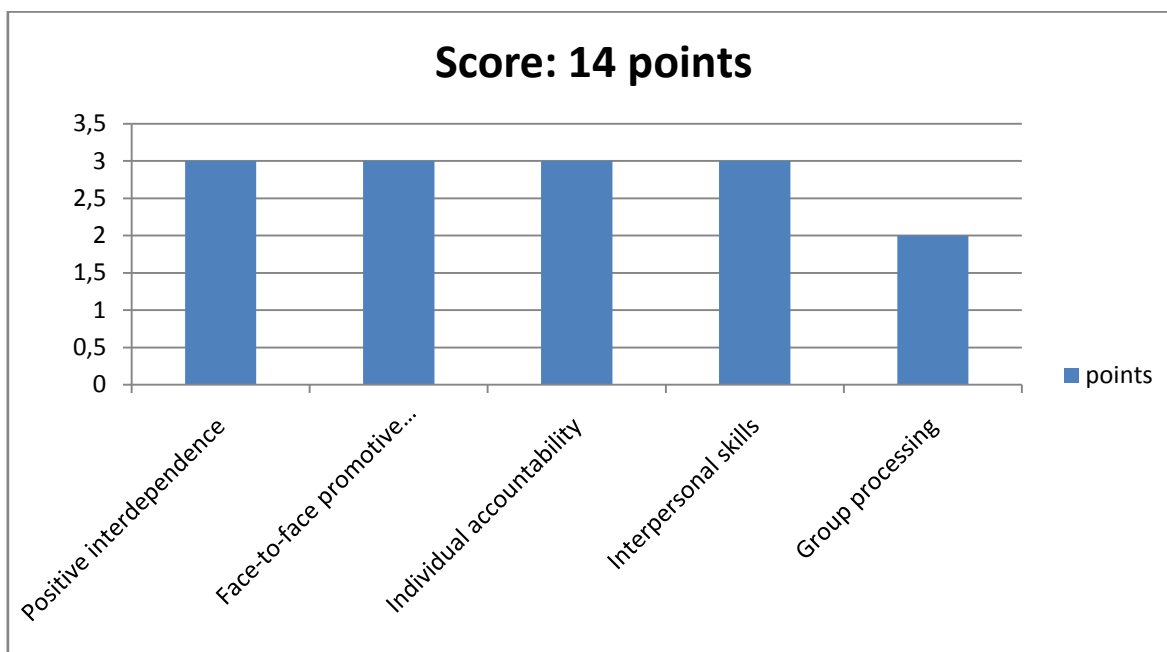
Lesson 14 had five stages and one of them was cooperative activity. The topic of the lesson was A ghost story. The first three stages of the lesson served as a practice and preparation for the writing activity. Students learned key vocabulary, read an example story, and completed a text builder. The fourth stage of the lesson was a cooperative activity which was 20mins long. The objective of the activity was for the groups to write a ghost story. In the beginning the students were divided into four groups of 3 and one group of 2. The teacher assigned every member of the group a role: a secretary, a leader, and a controller. In the group of 2 the roles were a secretary and a leader.Students worked according to the steps in their textbook. First, members of the groups had to come up with individual ideas for the story, the secretary wrote them down, the controller supervised if everything is correct and the leader had last word in choosing the final idea. Every member of the group had to be active in order to have the whole story in the end. After writing the story, the groups were asked to read their stories out loud (the leaders read their stories).

This cooperative activity was awarded with 14 points. This shows that students worked well in groups, every member of the group was aware of his or her position, communication flowed well, different ideas were accepted and help was provided within

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the group.Individual members of the group actively and constantly worked towards the group goals; they provided active help for others; different personalities were accepted and the groups provided feedback without thinking of possible improvement.

Lesson 15

Graph 5

Score: 10 points

Lesson 15 had five stages and, again, cooperative activity was one of them. The topic of the lesson was Performers. The lesson started with a short video of Cirque du Soleil and discussion connected to the performance. Next two stages were based on practice of vocabulary connected to performers. The fourth stage of the lesson was the cooperative activity. This activity started with the students being divided into four groups of 3. In each group every member had a specific questionnaire and had to ask questions to complete it. All members of the group had to get the answers of the other members of the group and then, as a group, come up with a short description of the group based on the answers. Each student had different questions and therefore cooperation was developing.

This activity was scored with the total of 10 points. This shows that students were able to work on their share of work and communicate with other members of the group in order to reach the group goal with a little help of the teacher. During the activity, high use of L1 occurred and the teacher had to guide the students in order to complete their questionnaires. Individual members of the groups were able to help others when asked to; they worked on their share of work but without concern of their own performance.

Discussion stagnated and ideas/answers were not accepted well. The groups provided feedback but without thinking of possible future improvement.
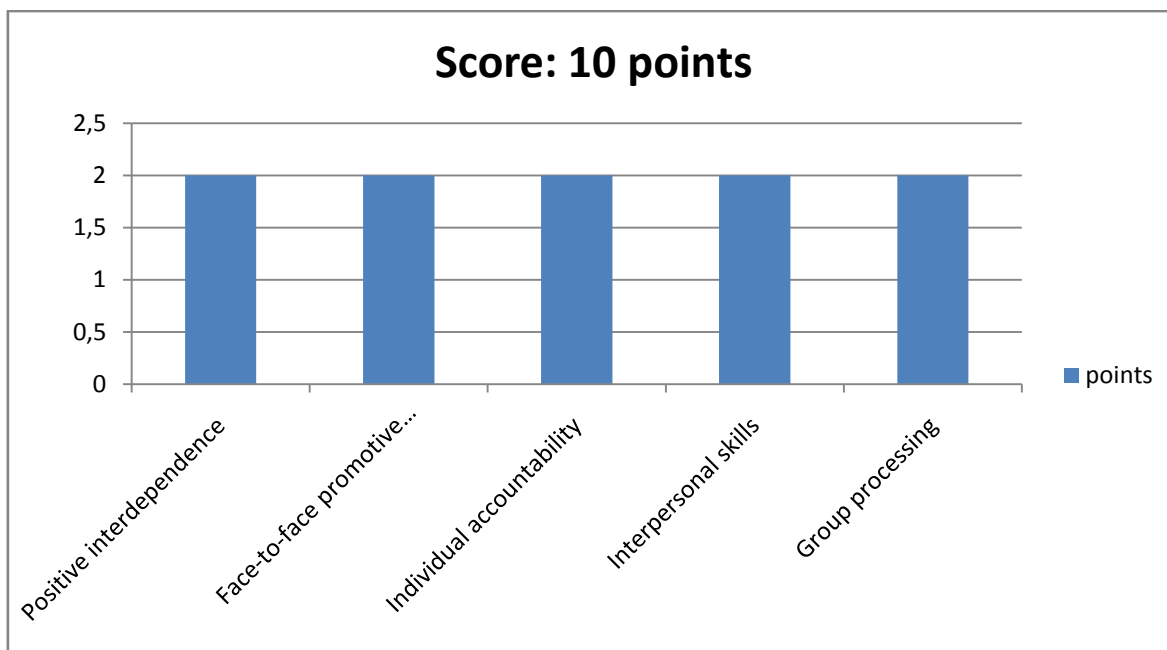
Lesson 16

Graph 6

Score: 11 points
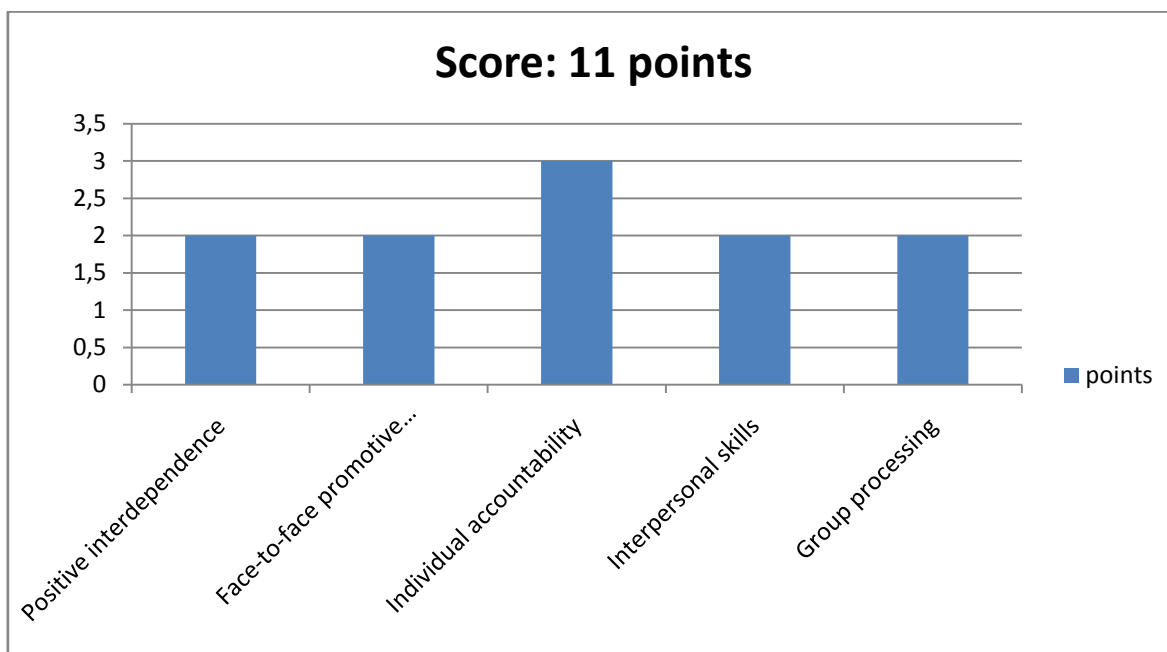
Lesson 16 had four stages with cooperative activity being the last one. The topic of the lesson was Present perfect and the first three stages of the lesson were focused on giving examples of the new grammar phenomenon, explaining rules, and drilling exercise. The final stage of the lesson, the cooperative activity, was 17mins long and developed cooperative skills of the students and also developed the students' knowledge of present perfect tense. In the beginning of the activity, students were divided into five groups of 3. The teacher handed out different pictures and magazines. The cooperative activity was based on creating a collage. Each group got a picture of a person and the task was to create a new picture so that they could describe the changes using present perfect (i.e. she has changed her hair color). Each member of the group had to complete different part of the collage and the assigned group leader also checked the final version. Each member of the group also had to come up with a sentence using present perfect. In the end, the group had two pictures and sentences with descriptions of the changes.

This activity was awarded with the total of 11 points. The score shows that students were able to work on their share of work and communicate with other members of the group in order to reach the group goal with a little help of the teacher. Individual members

of the groups were aware of their importance in the group, relationships were developing but different ideas were not accepted well and discussion stagnated. The groups provided feedback but without thinking of possible future improvement.
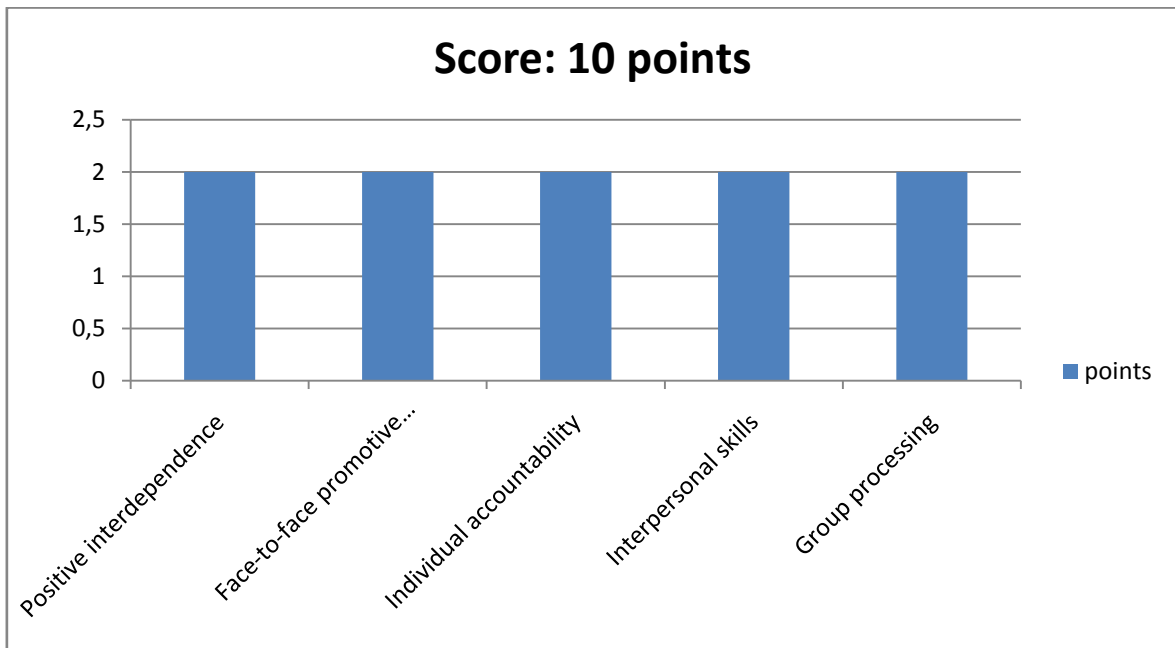
Lesson 17

Graph 7

Lesson 17 had four stages and cooperative activity was the second stage of the lesson. The topic of the lesson was A short story with practice of present perfect. The first stage of the lesson was an assessed individual presentation and was not connected to the topic. The second stage was the cooperative task which was 10mins long. First, students were divided into four groups of 4. Each member of the group was given a different part of a short story. The task was for the students to read individually their part of the story and then retell it to the other members of the group. After hearing the individual parts the group had to put the story into the correct order. It is an example of the Jigsaw technique but the members of one group worked only together and not with other groups. The following stage of the lesson was based on group work where individual groups had to write next part of their stories.

This cooperative activity was awarded with 10points. It shows that students were able to work on their share of work and communicate with other members of the group in order to reach the group goal with a little help of the teacher. Individual members of the

groups were able to help others when asked to; discussion stagnated and the groups were able to provide feedback but without thinking of possible future improvement.
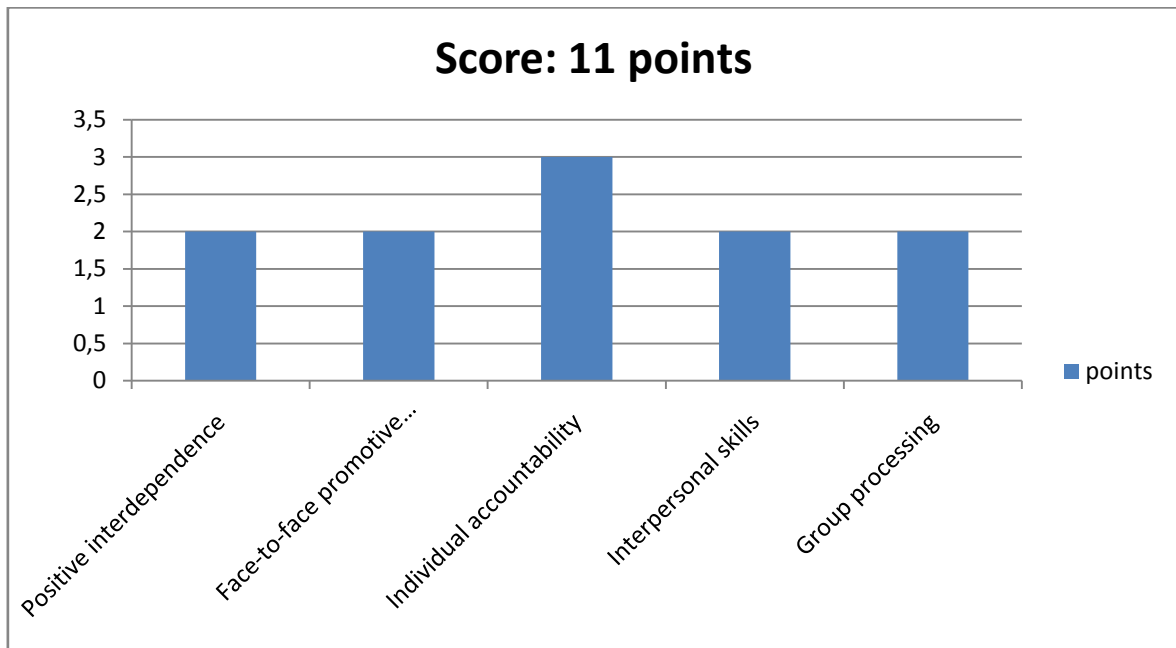
Lesson 18

Graph 8

Lesson 18 had four stages with the cooperative activity in the beginning of the lesson. The first stage was 10mins long and it was a get-to-know-you activity. The topic of the lesson was the USA but the first activity was not connected to this topic. First, the teacher divided students into four groups of 4. Each member of the group was asked to find out at least three interesting facts about the other members of the group. After asking questions, members of the group were able to present other members to the rest of the class. Each student had to get the answers so that everyone could be presented.

This activity was awarded with the total of 10 points. It shows that students were able to work on their share of work and communicate with other members of the group in order to reach the group goal with a little help of the teacher. Individual members of the groups worked on their share of work but without concern of their own performance. The relationships between individual members developed but discussion stagnated. In the end, the groups provided feedback but without thinking of possible future improvement.
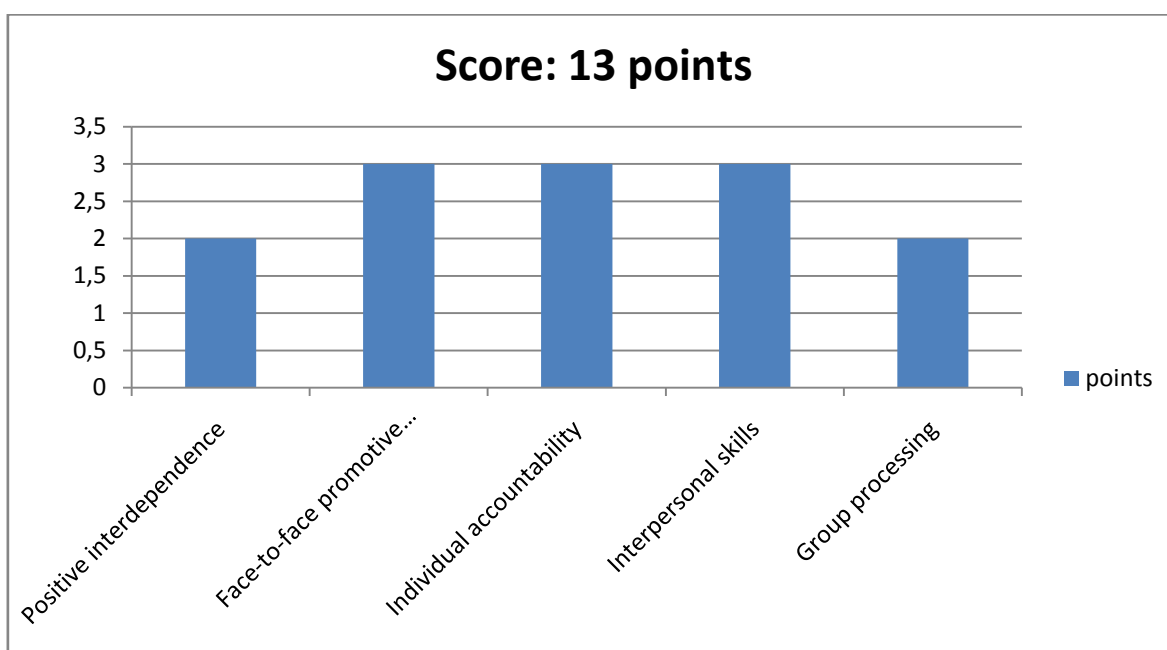
Lesson 19

Graph 9

Lesson 19 had three stages and the cooperative activity was part of the second stage. This stage was 25mins long. The topic of the lesson was Feelings and worries. In the beginning of the lesson, students read first part of a story and focused on new vocabulary connected to expressing feelings and worries. The cooperative task started with the teacher dividing students into three groups of 3 and one group of 4. The task was as a group to come up with the continuation of the story with usage of target vocabulary. Each member of the group was assigned with a character or topic to focus on and in the end the group was able to write down the story based on individual parts.

This activity was awarded with the total of 11 points. This shows that students were able to work on their share of work and communicate with other members of the group in order to reach the group goal with a little help of the teacher. Individual members of the groups were able to help others when asked to and were aware of the importance of their share of work but discussions stagnated. The groups were able to provide feedback but without thinking of possible future improvement.

Lesson 20

Graph 10

Lesson 20 had three stages. The cooperative activity was part of the last stage and was 30mins long. The topic of the lesson was Entertainment. The first two stages of the lesson were connected to warm up and practice of target vocabulary. The cooperative task started with students being divided into five groups of 3. Each member of the group was given a set of questions and each group was given a type of entertainment to describe. The goal was to use all available means to describe the types of entertainment. Mostly, students used their iPads and created a short presentation based on the information from all members of the groups (each member had to answer different questions).

This task was scored with the total of 13 points. This shows that students worked well in groups, every member of the group was aware of his or her position, communication flowed well, different ideas were accepted and help was provided within the group. Groups functioned together as teams, different personalities were accepted and positive relationships were developing. The groups provided feedback but without thinking of possible future improvement.

According to the data gathered through the observations, it is possible to state that cooperation activities were found in 9 out of 20 lessons. This determines that almost half of the randomly attended lessons helped to develop students' cooperative skills. Based on the gathered data and the analysis of the individual activities where cooperative learning principles were used it is possible to state that in 6 out of 9 lessons with cooperative learning task the activities were scored with 10-12points which shows that most of the students were able to work on their share of work and communicate with other members of the group in order to reach the group goal with a little help of the teacher and cooperative skills were developed. Two activities from 2 lessons were scored with 13-15 points which shows that these students worked well in groups, every member of the group was aware of his or her position, communication flowed well, different ideas were accepted and help was provided within the group. Again, cooperative skills were developed. Only 1 activity from lesson 12 was scored with 7 points which shows that students were able to cooperate and work towards the group goal. Help was needed from the teacher and communication stagnated. In this lesson, cooperative skills were developed least effectively.

This chapter presented a summary of the analysis and interpretation of the results and data gathered through the research. Individual cooperative tasks were discussed and summarized in terms of the research questions. The following chapter presents implications for teaching, limitations of the research and suggestions for further research.

V. IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides an overview of possible teaching implications of the research, limitations of the research and suggestions for further research. Pedagogical implications provide advice for teachers for their future teaching in terms of developing students' cooperative skills. Limitations of the research describe weaknesses and problems that arose out of the research. Suggestions of the research state improvements and possibilities for further research.

Pedagogical implications

The research of the thesis determined the usage of cooperative learning activities and provided a clear and broad description and analysis of cooperative activities used in lower and upper-secondary teaching in selected Czech schools. These activities lead to the development of students' cooperative skills. Based on the gathered data it is possible to summarize the main points about the development of cooperative skills and provide possible pedagogical implications for teachers. As mentioned before, cooperation skills present an integral part of lives of people in the 21st century. It is necessary for teachers to understand the importance of developing these skills of their students and provide tasks which are effective in this area.

Based on the gathered data, it is clear that cooperative learning activity was used in 9 out of 20 random attended classes. It is important for the teachers to understand the basic principles of cooperative learning and give clear instructions for their tasks. Cooperative learning activities mostly require more planning and teachers have to think about individual elements of the activities in advance in order for the activity to be effective. Students need to understand their role in the group; they need to be aware of the importance of their share of work and most importantly the group goal needs to be comprehensible and known. Teachers also need to understand the difference of cooperative learning and group or pair work. In lessons where cooperative learning was not used, teachers mostly used other organizational forms including pair or group work. Students are capable of learning through these forms but their cooperative skills are not developed. During group or pair work, students do not have their own role and the share of work can be done by one most capable member. Students are also used to a typical organizational form based on the teacher centered lessons where the role of the teacher is to transfer the knowledge to students. On the other hand, when using cooperative learning activities, the

role of the teacher shifts from being the knowledge bearer to a passive participant and mentor. According to the research, all groups from cooperative learning activities were able to reach the group goal and the role of the teacher was to command the groups if needed and provide basic help when needed. Students were able to learn from each other and provide help inside the groups.

Teachers should prepare cooperative learning activities for their students because the research shows that even not complicated activities that require individual work from all members of the group lead to development of cooperative skills and deepening knowledge at the same time. When designing cooperative learning activities, teachers need to think of the classroom management and the level of students. Less competent students who are not used to cooperation should be exposed to cooperative activities from basic to more complicated ones. Teachers need to focus on how the groups work together and detect most serious problems. As seen from the observations, students often tend to use L2 during the cooperative activities and conversation stagnates. Teachers need to distinguish to what extent L2 should be used in order to secure learning of target phenomenon and provide help and guidance if conversation stagnates.

Limitations of the research

The research was done by observation of 20 randomly selected English lessons and further analysis of individual cooperative learning activities. The research could be further prolonged by attending more random lessons and the development of cooperative skills could be assessed through more observations. In my opinion, attending 20 lessons is not enough to provide a strict answer if cooperative learning is used in Czech schools and to what extent it is effective; it does not provide enough data for generalization. Also, the research could be further expanded by attending different classes based on the age and level of the students. The observations were done from the back of the class and sometimes not all groups were easy to follow. It would be better to be able to walk around the class and individually focus on groups during their work and be able to see detailed work of individual members and the group as a whole.

Suggestions for further research

As mentioned before, the research was done through attending 20 English lessons. The main suggestion for further research is to attend more lessons and be able to complete the observations and focus on cooperation. The research could be generalized for all levels

of English learners but it could also be divided into different levels. The observations could be done longitudinally and the research could focus on the development of students' cooperative skills in terms of more lessons. It could focus on the progress of performance of students in cooperative activities and determine their strengths and weaknesses.

In addition, the research could be done at different schools and the spectrum of subjects could be wider. The research was done at two upper-secondary schools based in city and one small town lower-secondary school. The range of schools could be broadened and more subjects could be researched.

VI. CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis was to provide a theoretical background of cooperative learning and to complete a research project. The research answered questions whether cooperative learning activities are used in Czech schools and to what extent they are effective. For the research, twenty random classes were attended and observed. The data of the research were analyzed according to a cooperative learning scoring rubric.

As described in the theoretical background, cooperative learning is an educational approach used not only for extension of students' knowledge but also social learning experience. Teachers need to understand that just dividing students into groups does not develop their cooperative skills; skills which are important for modern society and therefore future lives of students. Each group member needs to have his or her own role and focus on his or her performance in order to reach the group goal. The teacher's role is to function as a mentor and provide help when needed. Cooperative activities should be present in English language classes even though the planning of the lessons takes more time and thinking.

Based on the research, it is clear to state that some cooperative learning activities are used in Czech schools during English lessons. Teachers understand the need of clear instructions and provide help when needed. Students' cooperative skills are developed differently and it is up to the teacher to select a task that is suitable for their level. According to the observations, cooperative learning activities are effective and develop students' cooperative skills. Sometimes, students tend to use L2 during their work. Again, it is up to the teacher to observe the situation and decide whether L2 is used for the cooperation or is caused by boredom. It is also important to analyze the five essential components of cooperative learning during the activities and provide feedback and think of possible future improvement. The last mentioned was not realized during the lessons. The research showed that cooperative learning has a positive outcome in terms of development of students' social skills.

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APENDICES

Apendix A: Observation sheet

Time:

Level:

Number of students:

Classroom arrangement:

Topic:

Stage	Teacher does	Students do	Activities	Comments	Time
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Appendix B: Cooperative learning scoring rubric

	1	2	3	points
Positive interdependence	Individual members of the group work towards group goals only when commanded.	Individual members of the group work towards group goals with a minor need of commanding.	Individual members of the group actively and constantly work towards the group goals.	
Face-to-face promotive interaction	Individual members of the group work on their share of the work but do not share materials or provide help to each other.	Individual members of the group work on their share of the work and are able to help others when asked to.	Individual members of the group work on their share of the work but also provide active help for others and work on improving relationships.	
Individual accountability	Members of groups are not aware of the less competent ones and help is not provided. Individual members are not aware of their contribution to the group.	Individual members of the group are working on their share of the work but without concern of their own performance.	Individual members of the group are aware of the importance of their share of the work and actively participate to reach the goals.	
Interpersonal skills	Individual members of the group are not open to accepting other ideas and do not participate on creating positive environment.	The relationships between the members of the group are developing but different ideas are not accepted well and discussion stagnates.	Group functions together as a team, different personalities are accepted, ideas are shared and positive relationships are developing.	
Group processing	After the task the group is not providing any feedback (individual members to each other on their work/group to the teacher).	The group provides feedback but without thinking of possible future improvement.	The group provides feedback and ideas of possible future improvement are presented.	

Score: _____ points

SUMMARY IN CZECH

Diplomová práce se zabývá rozvojem kooperačních dovedností v hodinách anglického jazyka. První kapitola je věnována důkladnému teoretickému popisu kooperativního učení. Projednává význam kooperativního učení v průběhu vzdělávacího procesu a popisuje jeho hodnotu s důrazem na vyvíjející se společnost a rozdílnosti ve třídách. Stručná historie kooperativního učení je uvedena z důvodu popsání vývoje tohoto pedagogického přístupu. Tato práce se také věnuje analýze kooperativního učení, popisuje jeho pět základních prvků a rozděluje kooperativní učení na tři hlavní druhy. Práce také popisuje roli učitele v procesu kooperativních činností a úkolů. Kooperativní učení je dále analyzováno v rámci hodin anglického jazyka a také z hlediska možných problému, které mohou během kooperativních aktivit vzniknout. Nedílnou součástí práce je také výzkum, který proběhl na vybraných českých školách. Cílem výzkumu bylo změřit použití kooperativního učení v náhodně navštívených hodinách a efektivitu jednotlivých aktivit. Výzkum byl proveden pomocí náslechů, zaznamenání průběhů hodin a následné analýzy získaných dat. Z výzkumu vyplývá, že kooperativní učení je na českých školách používáno a studenti rozvíjejí své kooperační dovednosti. Práce také poskytuje rady pro učitele, náměty pro další výzkum a omezení výzkumu.