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ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA**

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Thesis

**MOBILE APPLICATIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHING**

Marcela Krauzová

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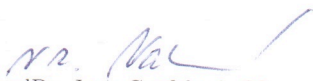
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ABSTRACT

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The thesis deals with the topic of implementation of mobile applications in English language teaching. The theoretical chapter explains the reasons for application of mobile technology into teaching process. The greatest importance is put on the characteristics of mobile learning and extra-class work. The research, which was carried out at Gymnázium Františka Křížíka in Plzeň, is described in the practical part of the thesis: Methods of questionnaire, analyses of collected data were used to explore students' attitude to extra-class work realized by the means of mobile application, their preferences and real participation in extra-class work based on mobile technology. Moreover, the teacher's point of view on implementing mobile technology was obtained through the means of structured interview with an ESL teacher. The results of the research are presented in graphs and a table with further comments. Based on the findings, implications for teaching are summarized and recommendations are suggested for effective implementation of mobile devices in extra-class work.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Mobile learning is a new and highly topical concept in education. Since mobile devices as cell phones and tablet computers are considered to be ubiquitous, there is a growing tendency to implement these devices into English language teaching. The mobile devices share characteristics that distinguish them noticeably from traditional computers and notebooks. There is a belief that language teaching and learning can be more engaging and, to a certain extent, more effective because of mobile technology and the new dimension it has introduced. The thesis focuses on mobile technology in language learning within the field of extra-class work, since extra-class work is undoubtedly essential part of learning process of L2, as there is hardly enough opportunity to use the language during lessons. The implementation of mobile technology is represented here by mobile applications.

The first section of the present thesis provides theoretical framework for the practical part of the thesis. The characteristics of Mobile assisted language learning (MALL) are presented, and then the issue of learner autonomy is described. Finally, the theoretical chapter deals with the topic of extra-class work.

The following part, Methods, aims to obtain an overall attitude to extra-class work in learning EFL, it describes the research methods, participants, and procedure. Moreover, the research questions are introduced in this chapter. Those are as following:

1. Does the implementation of mobile technology encourage the learners' participation in extra-class work?
2. What are the advantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the learners' point of view?
3. What are the disadvantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the learners' point of view?
4. What are the advantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the teachers' point of view?
5. What are the disadvantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the teachers' point of view?

The research results are presented in the form of a graphs and a table for better comprehension, and commented on in the following chapter titled Results and Commentaries. Then, implications for teaching, research limitations, and further research suggestions are presented. The most important findings about implementing mobile technology into language teaching are presented in the last chapter.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The objective of the theoretical chapter is to present an overview of the theoretical background and provide readers with the basic knowledge that is necessary for understanding the research of the thesis. Firstly, readers are provided with an explanation of fundamental terms associated with mobile learning as well as with various authors' viewpoints. Secondly, it describes scenarios and challenges to the effective use of mobile devices in the area of second language acquisition. Finally, the chapter deals with the issue of learners' autonomy and extra class work

Mobile Learning

Mobile learning (or m-learning for brevity) is a new and highly topical concept in education, which is difficult to define. Kukulska-Hulme (2009) has pointed out that there are two reasons why there is no agreed definition of 'mobile learning'. The first argument for this statement is a rapid evolution of the field, since a new device is released nearly every week. Secondly Kukulska-Hulme has mentioned the ambiguity of 'mobile'. This term could be, according to her, understood as a reference to mobile technologies as well as to a learner's mobility in general. O'Malley *et al.* (2003) have defined mobile learning as taking place when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or when the learner "takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies" (as cited in Kukulska-Hulme & Traxler, 2005, p. 1). Moreover, the word 'mobile' may be understood in connection with the mobility of learning content, both in time and space. Kukulska-Hulme (2010b) has described mobility as "the opportunity to overcome physical constraints by having access to people and digital learning resources, regardless of place and time" (p. 181).

Possible devices

Considering the first interpretation of 'mobile', it is necessary to explain what mobile devices are, and more specifically what characteristics these devices have in common. Generally, these are portable, lightweight devices of compact proportions. In addition, these devices often provide wireless Internet connection, which provides them with instant access to wide and diverse resources. The most current representatives for these devices are laptop computers, mobile phones, MP3 and MP4 players, gaming consoles, e-readers, smartphones and tablets. Regarding the last two, the feature of global

positioning system (GPS) is often mentioned as a quality, which can add a completely new dimension to mobile learning. Smidts, Hordijk and Huizenga have claimed that “in this manner a connection will be formed between the physical and virtual worlds in which the pupils find themselves; several layers of information are accessible at the same time” (n.d., p. 4). Palalas (2012) has mentioned another characteristic, which distinguishes mobile devices from other technology used in previous decades. One of the distinctive features is the fact that mobile devices are always on and ready to use (p. 28). All in all, mobile devices “can be carried around with relative ease and used for communication and collaboration, and for teaching and learning activities that are different from what is possible with other media” (Kukulka-Hulme & Traxler, 2005, p. 1).

Possible access to mobile devices within a classroom

As mentioned before, the development of the market with mobile devices is rapid; however, the financial situation of schools may be various. Some schools take part in projects of implementation of mobile learning into their curriculum so all learners in a given class have exactly the same device. Mobile devices are interesting to schools and educators, because they are less expensive than desktop computers and provide the spontaneous and personal access to the vast educational resources of the Internet (Kukulka-Hulme & Traxler, 2005, p. 1). There are two possible scenarios how schools can distribute mobile devices to learners. Either the school establishes a specific classroom equipped by tablets and these are used for each subject by the same students, or there is a set of tablets that are transferred around the school to different students for individual subjects (Neumajer, Rohlíková, & Zounek, 2015, p. 93 – 94). Other schools, which do not participate in any such project, may use the model, which is known as bring your own device (BYOD). This way students are encouraged to bring whatever device they possess and are used to using in their daily life.

BYOD model has its own arguments pro and con. The biggest advantage is that using one’s own device makes the learning even more personalized, which positively influences motivation of learners. Kukulka-Hulme (2009) has gone as far as to claim that the fact of ownership influences learners’ behaviour: “since a tool that has only been borrowed may not be used in the same way as one that is owned and very familiar.” Firstly, the familiarity with the device has direct impact on users’ skills and learners should be able to operate with their own device without difficulties. Secondly, there is the

personal issue, which influences the content. The owners of the device can easily show their own images, play their favourite music, share notes and many others.

Neumajer et al. (2015) have observed that in addition there are not inconsiderable economical reasons for choosing this scenario. The school does not have to maintain the devices, pay for insurance, ensure updates of software and many others (p. 96). Moreover, this model highly supports learners' autonomy, since it is the students' responsibility to bring their mobile phone or tablet in an appropriate condition, such as with a fully charged battery.

On the other hand, there are significant limitations in BYOD model. Firstly, teachers may not be able to help students if any technical issue occurs, as they might have a limited knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT) or they might not be familiar with the particular device. Secondly, it may be a personal issue to bring their own device for some students, as they do not possess a brand new model of the smartphone and they might feel ashamed presenting their out-dated mobile phone (Hockly, 2012b). Neumajer et al. (2015) have suggested that for such cases the school should have at least several devices that might be lent to students if necessary (p. 97). Finally, there is another pitfall of the BYOD model that lies in the fact of heterogeneity of devices. If students bring whatever device they possess no one can guarantee their compatibility and mutual connectivity (Neumajer et al. 2015, p. 98).

Specifics of mobile learning

No matter which of the mentioned approaches is followed, more important is why teachers decide to implement mobile devices into their teaching. Interestingly enough, the term 'mobile learning' is widely referred while the derived term 'mobile teaching' is not commonly used. Kukulska-Hulme and Traxler (2005) have mentioned that this is given by a shift in focus because "it is mainly learners who carry the mobile devices and move around with them" (p. 25). Nevertheless, the role of teachers even in m-learning is considered to be vital (Kukulska-Hulme, Norris & Donohue, 2015).

The range of key attributes of m-learning listed by different authors is wide. However, Kukulska-Hulme and Traxler (2005) have summarized these and they have defined mobile learning as being: "spontaneous, personal, informal, contextual, portable, ubiquitous (available everywhere) and pervasive (so integrated with daily activities that it is hardly noticed)" (p. 2). Some of these aspects are explained in the following part.

Spontaneity. M-learning may be spontaneous on the basis of characteristics of mobile device itself. Since mobile devices provide access to the Internet, learners may access different content based on the current situation they experience. The possibility to learn spontaneously is connected to the perception of m-learning being suitable for both formal and informal learning, which is elaborated on later.

Personalization. Personalization of m-learning is based on the fact that learners often use their own devices; therefore, they have instant access to their private content as images, songs, favourite web pages, etc. The personal content is accessible throughout the lesson and teachers may build learning tasks on it. This way all learners are more engaged since they are in the centre of the task.

Informality. M-learning can be considered as an informal way of learning for two reasons – based on both the content which is used and the setting in which it takes place. Activities are often based on texts, multimedia and applications, which were not primarily designed as educational but they can be effectively integrated into learning.

Contextuality. Every learning is influenced by the setting in which the learning occurs. Therefore contextuality is one of the key characteristics of m-learning. Wang (2004) has described context-aware mobile learning (CAML) as the one that “[puts] emphasis on mobile learners who are carrying portable devices ... that have been augmented with hardware sensors, such as GPS receivers, wireless LAN, camera, etc., and software sensors”. These sensors provide information about the learner’s position and activity. Moreover, they react to changes of the learner’s state and so present materials that are narrowly connected to this area, relevant in the particular time and reflect learning needs (Wang, 2004). Similarly, Kim and Kwon (2012) have mentioned that “the mobile learners can have very personal and unique experiences within the context they are situated” (p. 33).

Last but not least, mobile devices may serve as a tool that facilitates learning to students with special educational needs. Mobile devices are often designed in a way that enables personal settings that increase accessibility or to activate additional assistive functions. These adaptations may help learners with visual and hearing impairments and also learners with physical disabilities (Neumajer et al., 2015, p. 155).

All together m-learning brings new ways to “complement, improve and enhance current face-to-face learning ... and to respond to practical constraints and barriers”

(Kukulska-Hulme & Traxler, 2005, p. 31). These are factors that make m-learning a highly attractive concept to teachers as well as to learners.

Formal and Informal Mobile Learning

An exposure to the language used in real life situations is an effective way to acquire a foreign language. According to Palalas (2012) mobile devices enable m-learning that is potentially available wherever and whenever by offering connections to resources, the Internet and a network of learners and experts (p. 29). Therefore, m-learning could serve as a link between informal situations in which the target language is used and formal settings within a classroom. As mentioned above, the word ‘mobile’ can be understood in several ways. Pegrum has divided these into three groups according to whether the devices, learners or the learning process itself is mobile (as cited in Hockly, 2013). The fact that mobile devices might cross different kind of barriers opens new understandings of m-learning. That is that m-learning could fulfil both the functions of an engaging feature in formal learning within the classroom as well as an instrument for formal and/or informal learning outside the classroom (Hockly, 2012a, p. 80). Informal learning can take place at home, but also it could be used during the time when learners commute to and from school. In addition, learners can take a picture and/or write a note with a piece of language that they struggle with or which is new to them. Naturally, not every activity is suitable for commuting, as there are many disturbing factors but the time can be spent in a meaningful way, e.g. a revision of older knowledge.

Possible challenges of integrating mobile devices into learning

Using mobile devices should increase efficiency, personalization, engagement and participation of students in their own learning. On the other hand, there are some serious pitfalls stemming from the integration of mobile phones and mobile apps into language learning.

These are mainly technological issues, e.g. flat battery, limited storage capacity, low performance of processor and also insufficiency or inappropriate settings of Wi-Fi in general (Neumajer et al., 2015, p. 24). Last but not least, there might be incompatible software. There are several operating systems (OS) commonly used in the Czech Republic. These are Android, Apple iOS, Blackberry OS, Symbian OS and Windows Mobile. The first two are widely used, where majority of smartphones and tablets run on Android

(72%), while all Apple devices work on their native iOS (10%) (Fajmon & Pultzner, 2015).

This could cause serious trouble since all applications are designed specifically for a target OS and they are not interchangeable, therefore useless on the device that works on a different OS. It should be noted that there are applications that are designed in more versions on the market, one for each system, but this cannot be taken for granted. Therefore, suitability of OS is something that teachers must keep in mind when implementing mobile applications in their lessons.

Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008) have mentioned another difficulty resulting from the use of phones and tablets and it is the size of keyboard available on these devices. The majority of tablets on the market are designed with a diagonal between 7 and 10 inches. This dimension influences the size of the display and therefore the maximum size of the keyboard, since it is a virtual or so-called software keyboard (Neumajer et al. , 2015, p. 37). This size is suitable for immediate work but it is not very comfortable for longer texts.

Other threats are more or less ethical. Neumajer et al. (2015) have mentioned that in some cases students could think mobile devices were a toy without a teaching aim and therefore not pay enough attention to what is being discussed. Moreover, it is easy to cheat while working with mobile device so students might misuse the device during an assessment. Last but not least, there is a high risk of cyber bullying, since it is easy to record classmates or teachers and post any contemptuous video on the Internet immediately (p. 24).

Tips for effective and secure learning with mobile devices

While mobile devices offer many strengths and opportunities for effective learning, there are also many threats in using these. One of them is that compared to computers, the screen is smaller and the position of the device is more adaptable. As a result, it is more difficult for the teachers to monitor learners' activity (Neumajer et al. 2015, p. 81). Therefore, it is highly important to set a clear policy at the very beginning and follow basic security rules.

These guidelines may restrict learners from visiting inappropriate webpages or generally using their devices in a possibly harmful way. According to Neumajer et al. (2015) classroom management may include specific programmes that help teachers to control learners' actions, e.g. the possibility for the teachers to immediately lock all

devices in the classroom, so as the learners pay attention to what the teachers are saying. These rules should not limit students' learning but increase their independency and lead them to higher level of autonomy.

Mobile learning in language teaching

This thesis is dedicated to English language learning and teaching, and therefore it is necessary to begin with a definition of the term Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). This term denotes an approach to learning a foreign language with the help of mobile devices. Palalas (2012) has proposed a definition, which emphasizes two aspects of the general concept of mobility: "MALL can be defined as language learning enabled by the mobility of the learner and ... portability of handheld devices ..." (as cited in Burston, 2014). El-Hussein and Cronje have added a third area to this concept – mobility of learning (as cited in Kim & Kwon, 2012, p. 33). Accordingly, MALL is a specialization within m-learning, preserving its typical characteristics of mobility, that focuses on a second language acquisition.

Kukulka-Hulme has summarized MALL as the use of "mobile technologies in language learning, especially in situations where device portability offers specific advantages" (as cited in Guler, D., Günseli, O. & Gedik, N., 2015). Ting has pointed out advantages such as more flexible, accessible, and personalized learning; where these advantages should ideally increase the level of engaging encouragement, productivity and the effectiveness of a second language learning (as cited in Kwin, Kwon, 2012, p. 34). Palalas (2012) has mentioned some of the learning opportunities, saying that MALL "adds a new dimension to language practice, namely exposure to the language in times and locations accommodating students' preferences. It affords exposure to authentic language samples and challenges in location-specific communicative situations and provides support required for such situated learning" (p. 26). Burston (2014) has additionally emphasized that mobile devices provide remarkable communicative potential, which "can be used to foster productive learner–learner interactions" (p. 344).

Based on other literature, Kim and Kwon (2012) have listed benefits of MALL as following.

“First, MALL enables students to more easily and more promptly access language learning materials and communicate with people at any time, from anywhere. Second, the nature of digital technology facilitates students' participation in both collaborative and individualized language

learning activities synchronously and/or asynchronously allowing rapid development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Third, mobile technology provides various resources and tools for language learning that encourage learners to be more motivated, autonomous, situated (site-specific), and socially interactive” (p. 35).

Development of MALL

Palalas (2012) has mentioned that the whole idea of MALL is based on the theory and practice of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Being a ground for MALL, the former concept of CALL has been current since 1980s (p. 20). Nowadays, the trend to implement technology into the educational process in general is on the rise. Neumajer et al. (2015) have observed that the main reasons for redirection from computers to mobile devices reside in the mobility itself, short starting time of devices, wireless connectivity to the Internet, accessibility of cloud services, possibility to use applications and finally the touchscreen that enables students to input or control the system by gestures with one or more fingers (p. 32).

MALL has proved a similar development as CALL with the difference that it has been developed mainly for the last decade. After all, Chinnery first used the term MALL in 2006 (Kim and Kwon 2012, p. 34). Researchers pay attention to MALL and it is often discussed in contemporary surveys. The trend has shown it to be growing in the last few years. While only 9 studies were published on the topic of MALL between 2004 and 2007, there were 14 studies in 2012 (Guler, Gunseli & Gedik, 2015).

Dudeney and Hockly have made an observation about appearance of MALL within the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) around 2009. Specifically, it was the British Council that developed mobile applications for language learning, closely followed by the other ELT publishers (as cited in Hockly, 2012a, p. 81). It is obvious that educators became more interested in MALL due to significant spreading of smartphones and similar gadgets, which are suitable for the use of m-learning, among the population. As Burston (2014) has stressed out “the ubiquity of mobile phone ownership ... has thus made the mobile phone the technology of choice among MALL application developers. As a consequence, MALL has now essentially become synonymous with mobile phone applications” (p. 346).

Mobile applications as a significant part of MALL

Mobile applications (often referred to as apps) are software programmes that run on a smartphone. The smartphone gains its “smartness” by these applications since without them it is just a common mobile phone, which can provide only basic functions as communication (voice call, SMS) and organization (contacts, calendar, notes, stopwatch). So it is the applications that enhance the variability of mobile devices’ use for the language learning.

There are several criteria according to which the mobile apps can be divided. Technically speaking, mobile applications can be divided into two groups. Firstly, there are apps designed specifically for ESL learning, which are often produced in cooperation with ESL publishers (e.g. Johnny Grammar's Word Challenge by The British Council). However, there is no restriction or necessity to use only apps for language learning. So the second group comprises applications developed for general use on smartphones (e.g. a photo editor). They are usually tools with no content and so users develop their own content according to their needs. Therefore, these are sometimes referred to as ‘blank apps’. Many ordinary apps such as graphical editors, video recorders and apps for social networking can be used in a classroom to acquire or practise language skills in a highly efficient way.

Kim and Kwon (2012) have suggested separating mobile apps into four groups, regardless of the original aim (educational and non-educational apps together). The suggested groups are based on their primary function and they are as follows: social applications, mobile podcasting, services for course management and applications for speech recognition.

Mobile social software (MoSoSo) is represented by such applications as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube (Kim & Kwon, 2012). These applications provide almost identical functions to the original websites, but they are less demanding in terms of graphics and Internet connection. This makes mobile applications practical, accessible and, as Lugano has remarked, “supporting social networking activity anytime and anywhere” (as cited in Kim & Kwon, 2012, p. 35).

Mobile podcasting is the second group of apps, which is basically the same as computer podcasting. Use of podcasts on mobile phones is enabled by audio and video devices, web 2.0 technology and sufficient memory to store the podcasts. A number of

researchers have reported that mobile podcasting has potential to bring a new dimension into language learning since it enriches regular textbooks by various authentic materials and increases intrinsic motivation and collaboration within learners (Kim & Kwon, 2012).

Course management service, commonly known representative is known as Moodle, is software designed to provide an online learning environment, where teachers post educational materials and learners can individually or collaboratively work with these. There is a new concept of it called Poodle, which provides similar functions to the original computer-based Moodle. However, there are some significant benefits of using it via mobile devices, since it helps to create a student-centred learning where students can participate and therefore be an important and active part of the education process. Therefore, “Poodle is an important step towards the standardization of mobile phones in education” (Kim & Kwon, 2012, p. 37).

The last group that Kim and Kwon (2012) have mentioned is software for automatic speech recognition (ASR). These apps can recognize the voice and so increase the opportunity for interactive oral practice. ASR apps include those that enable automatic translation; microblogging, text-messaging by voice or they serve as hands-free task processing engines (e.g. Siri).

Mobile apps used in language learning can be divided into another 6 groups according to the language skill they focus on. According to Kim and Kwon (2012) most mobile apps focus on vocabulary learning or related word knowledge. Afterwards come apps for reading, grammar, listening, speaking and finally writing skills, while the order of appearance corresponds with the occurrence frequency. Furthermore, Hockly (2012a) has suggested another two types of apps according to the aim of the tasks, either consumption or production of the language. Naturally, this is not a finite list of possibilities of how to group applications. Other criteria may be used, but for the purpose of this thesis this list is sufficient.

Learner autonomy

Learner autonomy, not only, in foreign language learning is a current phenomenon. Benson (2011) has mentioned that autonomy in general has played a significant role in education during the last decade. He has remarked that it is a general policy “because of the importance of self-directed lifelong learning in business,

employment and social policy” (p. 4). As Little (2003) has observed, there is no clear definition of learner’s autonomy, since the term can be understood in more than one way.

To support Little’s view, Benson and Voller (2013) have suggested at least five meanings of learner autonomy. According to them the term is used for situations in which learners study entirely on their own, for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning, for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education, for the exercise of learners’ responsibility for their own learning and lastly for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning (Benson & Voller, 2013, p. 1–2).

In accordance with the previous statement, Little (2003) has mentioned that learner autonomy is being perceived as capacity as well as behaviour, secondly he has mentioned autonomy as a learner responsibility and simultaneously a learner control, and thirdly also as a psychological phenomenon with political implications or a political right with psychological implications. In short, Benson (2011) has considered autonomy as an attribute to the learner’s approach to the learning process rather than a method of learning (p. 2).

It is noticeable that researchers have presented various understandings of the term, yet all of them are somehow interconnected. Based on that, there is a generally agreed definition of an autonomous learner. According to Holec and Little “autonomous learners understand the purpose of their learning programme, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of learning goals, take initiatives in planning and executing learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness” (as cited in Little, 2003). It means that the autonomous learners are fully aware of the learning process and they actively participate in all parts of learning from planning to assessment. This view is clearly supported by Littlewood (1996) who has recommended that autonomy is primarily “the learners’ ability and willingness to make choices independently”. Interestingly enough, Littlewood has pointed out a characteristic of learner autonomy that is crucial, and that is that learners must be capable of making decisions relating to the learning process (e.g. choosing an appropriate learning style). This is something that has to be taught and trained since not every student can do this naturally.

Littlewood’s understanding of autonomy is supported by Najeeb (2013) who has observed that “the practice of learner autonomy requires insight, a positive attitude, a capacity for reflection, and a readiness to be proactive in self-management and in

interaction with others” (p. 1240). Based on this, autonomous learners may be considered as active, responsible learners who are well aware of their surrounding, both people and environment. Moreover, learner autonomy is also closely linked to the views of learning that emphasize the learner’s individuality which goes hand in hand with the general trend in language learning towards ‘learner-centredness’ (Benson & Voller, 2013, p. 7).

Many researchers believe that learner autonomy can be increased by the use of mobile technology. Benson and Voller (2013) have observed that “autonomy and independence have become linked to the growing role of technology in education” (p. 6). Where, the general characteristics of mobile devices (spontaneity, personalization, informality, contextuality, portability) are instrumental in building learner’s autonomy. Nick Peachey has emphasized the availability of various sources via technology as an important factor stating that “technology is a huge enabler of learner autonomy because it can give students access to a large range of material, sources and useful applications” (interview, 2016, June 19). Kim and Kwon (2012) have stated that MALL enables students to access language learning materials more easily and promptly anytime and anywhere, which enhances not only their motivation, but also their language learning autonomy (p. 53).

Kukulska-Hulme (2010a) has stated that there is another layer of the MALL, since it enables learners to be more than mere recipients of knowledge. They can participate actively in construction of knowledge and on top of that they can create, publish and interact on the web. Resulting fact is that “learners can contribute learning content that can be accessed and enriched by others” (p. 124).

To conclude, learner autonomy is a desirable state of learning, which offers two main benefits for the learner. The first benefit is the fact that such learning is more efficient and effective, since the whole process is more personal and focused. The second benefit is a natural motivation that results from the high level of the learner’s involvement (Little, 2003). Benson (2011) has agreed with Little saying that autonomous learning is more effective, and therefore the development of learner autonomy implies better language learning.

Extra-class work

Extra-class work, sometimes referred to as, homework is “one of the most important practices for establishing a successful academic environment” (Epstein, 1983,

p. 1). Extra-Class work is defined as extensions of classroom activity set by teachers that will help students do some learning after the class (Brown, 2001, p.151). Some authors use the term homework, but as Brown (2001) has observed, it is not accurate since not all students do it at home (p. 151). It is necessary to realize that there are more types of extra-class work and not all of them are dependent on the setting.

There is a link between learner autonomy and extra-class work, since the more autonomous the learners, the better they are and the more they can benefit from extra class work. As Ur (2012) has observed “homework is not only a way to provide extra opportunities for language study outside the lesson, but also an investment in the future, in that it fosters students’ ability to work on their own as autonomous learners and to progress independently of the teacher” (p. 55). In addition, Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston have remarked doing extra-class work has a positive effect on learners’ future academic performance and school behaviour (as cited in Epsteine, 1983, p. 2). Therefore, there is not just the benefit of practising new learning skills or knowledge in doing extra-class work, but there is also an important positive effect on future study skills of the learners in general.

However, there is no direct proportion of the more the better: “The notion that more-is-better may not be true for all students, in all subjects, at all skill levels, at all educational levels” too much or inappropriate homework may even be counterproductive for student achievement (Epstein, 1983, p. 1). Therefore, it is crucial for the teachers to choose adequate amounts of extra-class work they assign and also provide students with purposeful tasks.

Ur (2012, p. 57) has listed a several practical tips for effective extra-class work. Firstly, she has mentioned a necessity to take time to explain what the extra-class work involves and how it is going to be assessed. Secondly, learners should know why they are asked to do such extra-class work, so teachers need to clarify the purpose of tasks assigned for extra-class work. Thirdly, she has suggested to make extra-class work a component of the final grade – even if it would stand for 10%. Next, she has advised to limit the extra-class work by time rather than quantity and accordingly she has suggested providing learners with some extra work. These two steps are crucial within a context of heterogeneous classes. Finally, Ur has advised teachers to use email or Learning Management Systems (LMS) for assigning and collecting extra-class work, since it can save time to correct and comment on extra-class work via computer or tablet.

Purpose of extra-class work

Extra class work has already been acknowledged as beneficial for providing extra opportunity to practice, but also as a source of personal development. Epstein and Becker have identified five more separate purposes of extra-class work. These are participation, parent-child relationship, school policy, public relations and punishment (as cited in Epstein, 1983, p. 4).

Participation. Extra-class work provides students with an opportunity to take control over their learning and be autonomous in their studies. It depends on them how much time they spend on learning and thinking about assigned tasks, the number of consultations with parents, siblings or peers. Last but not least, learners make self-assessment on the quality of their work and can compare it with their teachers' evaluation.

Parent-child relationship. Extra class work may be quite challenging for students sometimes; therefore, they may ask their parents for help. As a consequence, extra-class work serves as a form of serious communication and also as a reason for parents to exchange information and attitudes about school and learning itself between parents and learners.

School policy. Some schools may have strict rules for amount of extra-class work assigned per particular school day. Therefore, it is a more challenging issue for teachers than the learners, since teachers have to assign adequate extra-class work so as it is in agreement with the general school policy.

Public relation. Extra-class work also fulfils the role of a feedback for parents of younger learners. Generally speaking, parents expect to be informed about their child's work and progress, to see how their child writes, thinks, and executes an assignment. Similarly, as in the previous part, it is up to teachers to choose illustrative extra-class work, so that the parents will not be surprised by the child's final grade.

Punishment. Extra-class work may also serve as a punishment for inappropriate behaviour or lack of attention (e.g. writing an essay or copying a sentence I must not...). Obviously, there is no practice of academic skills, since these assignments usually deal with behavioural issues. The main purpose is to strengthen teachers' position, as learners are to write such tasks in the time that would normally be their free time.

Traditional extra–class work vs. extra–class work based on technology

There is an increasing tendency to implement computers and mobile devices not only in school activities, but also in extra–class ones. Both types have their own pros and cons. The aim of the following text is to summarize the key features of both types, the traditional tasks and also the tasks based on technology. Both types of homework are examined from several points; these are: instructions, submission and its possible difficulties, and finally teachers' feedback.

Instructions. Traditional tasks as many know from their own school experience are understood to be those based on pen and paper. These tasks are usually set orally (face to face); therefore, the teachers have to prepare instructions thoroughly so they are brief, clear and simultaneously comprehensive. Students on the other side have to listen carefully and take notes so they are able to fulfil the task successfully. In addition, those students who are absent must ask their classmates about the homework afterwards. Otherwise, they do not know what they are supposed to do.

Tasks that are assigned via technology (e.g. computer, mobile phone, tablet) are set electronically so the instructions are typically written. It is obvious that instructions for such tasks must be highly comprehensive in order to provide students with all the information needed as students have less opportunity to ask for clarification. However, students have the possibility to re-read the instructions as many times as necessary. Assigning tasks via computer has another advantage over traditional version; it is available to all the students, both present and absent.

Submission of the extra–class work. It is common that students submit traditional tasks into the teachers' drop box, bring it to the following lesson or hand it in personally to the teacher during a given lesson. There is normally a defined deadline, which is connected to the students' classes and therefore, it refers only to participating students. Both the students and even more the teachers are supposed to carry the books with them.

Submission of tasks via technology seems logistically easier than submitting paper versions. Students have the possibility to fulfil and submit tasks any time until the deadline, which means diligent students may submit the task sooner and they do not have to pay attention to it any more and do not risk forgetting to bring the homework from home. However, online homework usually has a strict deadline set that cannot be delayed and is binding to all students, the present as well as the absent ones. Teachers gain an

important advantage as well, as they are not forced to carry 20 books home for grading the homework.

Feedback. Regarding the teachers' feedback on students' performance, Walberg, Paschal and Weinstein have observed that commenting and/or grading of extra-class work is important as it can possibly improve student learning (as cited in Penner, Kreuze, Langsam & Kreuze, 2016, p. 1). However, there is usually a significant delay between students' handing in a pen and paper task and receiving information about their work, which may decrease the positive effect of homework on students' learning.

On the contrary, online homework is typically provided with an instant feedback or is graded within a short period and informs students where they failed, where they were successful and even allows retries (Penner, Kreuze, Langsam & Kreuze, 2016, p. 1). This way students can react and redo the extra-class work while it is fresh in their mind.

Technical issues. There are no technical obstructions if the extra class work is assigned in the students' book or workbook. The only risk whatsoever is the fact that students might forget their books at home. This act might be sometimes intentional, as students want to camouflage the fact they have not fulfilled the task.

Contrarily, several technical obstacles may accompany submission of computer-based homework such as inability to connect to the Internet or log on to the system. It follows that students may experience frustration, as they wish to do the homework however it is impossible due to technical issues (Penner, Kreuze, Langsam & Kreuze, 2016, p. 5).

Other features

What can be arguable are the different effects of handwritten and typed homework assignments. Handwriting in general is unimanual activity, whereas typing is usually bimanual. Besides, there is a difference in the visual attention, where it is concentrated on the tip of the pen, while during typewriting the visual attention is detached from the haptic input and writer's attention is divided between the keyboard and the screen (Mangen & Velay, 2010, p. 389). These might have strong influence on students' learning however; they seem not to be considered scientifically interesting (Mangen & Velay, 2010, p. 387).

Moreover, there are characteristics of online homework that are related directly to the fundamental characteristics of MALL as have been already mentioned. Computers or mobile devices allow easier involvement of multimedia into extra-class work. While

traditional tasks are commonly focused on reading and writing, students can even include speaking and listening with the use of a voice or a video recorder, both widely available on modern devices.

Mobile applications constitute a topical complement to language learning, since they provide learners with benefits, which standard paper-based learning materials do not. The main aim of m-learning lies in the strengthening of learner autonomy, that should subsequently increase learners' involvement in learning English as a second language. Therefore, the theoretical framework has presented fundamental information on the topic of mobile learning, explained the common devices implemented in the m-learning and also dealt with the possible impact of the use of mobile applications in the extra-class work.

The following chapter provides readers with a description of the practical research on the topic of m-learning and examines the research methodology, as well as the tools that were used.

III. METHODS

This chapter provides a description of the practical part of the thesis. It describes the methods that were used in the research. Firstly, the research questions are restated, and in addition, readers are provided with information about the subjects of the research and when and where the research was conducted. Secondly, Methods briefly introduces the application Showbie, which was used by the teacher in the study to assign extra-class work and by the students to complete it and submit. Finally, the chapter characterizes how exactly the research was carried out.

In the course of writing the diploma thesis and preparing the research, the following questions arose:

1. Does the implementation of mobile technology encourage the learners' participation in extra-class work?
2. What are the advantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the learners' point of view?
3. What are the disadvantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the learners' point of view?
4. What are the advantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the teachers' point of view?
5. What are the disadvantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the teachers' point of view?

In the light of these research questions, a combination of a questionnaire and analysis of data gained from the app was used. In order to learn about teacher's view on the app a short interview a teacher, who uses the app, was carried out.

An on-line questionnaire was used to gain the information about students and their attitude to different types of extra-class work. In order to avoid possible misunderstanding resulting in distorted information, the questionnaire was written in Czech. The questionnaire was conducted through webpage *vyplnto.cz*. This page offers a possibility to design a personalized questionnaire as well as final evaluation. Technically, the used questionnaire consisted of 14 questions, where 5 of them were closed questions, 6 questions were of open type, where two of them asked for additional information, and in three questions students were asked to rank the given possibilities. The questionnaire asked

for personal data, such as students' gender and age, and the number of years learning English. Moreover, the desired aim of the questionnaire was to collect information about the students' attitude to different types of extra-class work as well as their preferences for fulfilling extra-class work, considering the use of mobile app or paper-based tasks. The questionnaire was distributed to students via mobile application that they are used to using in English language lessons. Students completed the questionnaire in the beginning of June 2016. The blank version of the questionnaire in both Czech and English languages can be found in the Appendices section (Appendix 1, 2).

Moreover the data about students' submission of on-line extra-class work were analysed from the point of view whether they submitted the task or not and also, if applicable, when they did so. This part of the research was realized in collaboration with Mrs. Tereza Růžicková, who assigned extra-class work to her students via mobile application Showbie during April, May and June 2016.

The mobile app Showbie, which was used for the research, is designed only for the use on iOS, so it is necessary for the users to possess either iPhone or iPad, which are mobile devices by Apple Inc. However, there is a possibility to use the Showbie website via personal computer that works on any OS and is connected to the Internet. The main purpose of the app is to provide a service, which enables teachers to assign a task to students, students to complete the task and submit, and finally teachers to review and provide students with feedback on their performance. This way, there is a possibility for a paperless classroom, if applied for every activity processed during the class.

Showbie might be understood as a 'blank app', since there is no content incorporated. In general, it is an on-line tool for sharing nearly any type of data for an extra-class work. Teachers can easily upload documents, images, instructions and comments for their students. The possible sources for such data are various; teachers can take a picture by the camera or add documents from their computer, Dropbox, Google Drive or any similar on-line data storage. Moreover, Showbie is interconnectable with thousands of other iOS apps. Teachers as well as students can adapt the data in the app's environment. There are useful tools, like a document viewer, pen and text tools and also voice notes that can be pinned to the page. Teachers also have the possibility to set a deadline for the assignment. Furthermore, all students receive an instant notification about a new task being assigned on their iPad or iPhone.

Afterwards, students do the assigned task. The app allows them a high level of learner autonomy, since there is more than one way to solve the task; they can choose the time and place according to their needs and in addition, they can decide how exactly they respond to the task. They can pin one or more comments into the original document, or they can submit an utterly new document, or they can choose even more creative manner, e.g. the form of presentation. Screenshots of different variations of submitted tasks via the mobile application can be found in Appendix 3.

Finally, teachers have precise information about which students have submitted the work and when exactly they did so. Similarly to students' activities, teachers can provide a review of the students' work in different forms, most commonly a written comment or a voice note.

The respondents of the on-line questionnaire were students of Gymnázium Františka Křižíka (GFK) in Plzeň. GFK is a private secondary school offering either an eight-year or a four-year grammar school program. The fact that the school is private strongly influences the educational environment as well as the students' behaviour. Students' parents are obliged to pay the school fees, all students of this school possess an iPad (a tablet computer by Apple Inc.) and the economical condition of the school is good, which is noticeable from the technical facilities that is above average.

For the purposes of the research, a class consisting of 15 EFL students was asked to fulfil the extra-class work via mobile app Showbie so that the students' behaviour in this field could be analysed. However, students are not forced to do their homework at GFK, therefore it is up to them whether they do it or not. There are no punishments for not doing it, so they are completely autonomous in this issue. Afterwards, members of this class were asked to complete the online questionnaire, while 10 out of 15 did so. The class consists of 10 girls and 5 boys, however; only 6 girls and 4 boys participated in the completion of the questionnaire. The difference between opinions of the two sexes is not explored in the thesis. Learners are 16-year-old and they attend the fifth grade of eight-year study. They have been studying English for 7 – 12 years. Overwhelming majority of students has positive attitude to English language learning.

In order to learn about teacher's point of view on the app, and to learn about possible challenges, a short interview with Mrs. Tereza Růžičková, an ESL teacher at GFK and also a certified Apple Professional Development lecturer took place on April 4 2016.

She was asked two main questions; these were: “What advantages do you perceive in implementing technology in extra–class work?” and “What are the common disadvantages or limitations in using technology?”. The interview is not transcribed but a paraphrased answers are provided in the following chapter.

The whole research was carried out at secondary school because this group of students as well as their ESL teacher are used to using the mobile app during their classes, which was fundamental for the purpose of objective research. Moreover, they all possess the technology needed. Therefore, it was convenient to conduct the research within this particular class. Gained data are presented and analysed in the following chapter.

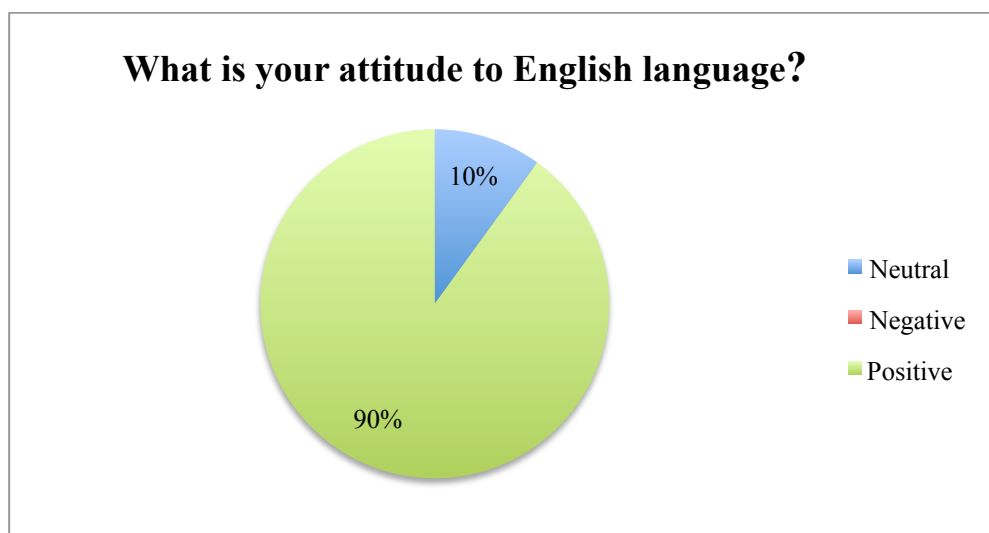
IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

As outlined in the previous chapter, the thesis aims at exploring students' habits and preferences in doing extra-class work regarding the use of mobile app. The following chapter focuses on analysing the data gathered during the research. Firstly, the results of the questionnaire the students completed in June 2016 are presented in the form of graphs and tables and they are immediately followed by commentaries explaining the results in a greater depth. Secondly, there is table presented, which shows detailed information about who and when submitted the assigned homework. These data are analysed on the basis of the theoretical background chapter. Finally, the results are summarized, confronted with the research questions and conclusions are drawn.

Questionnaire

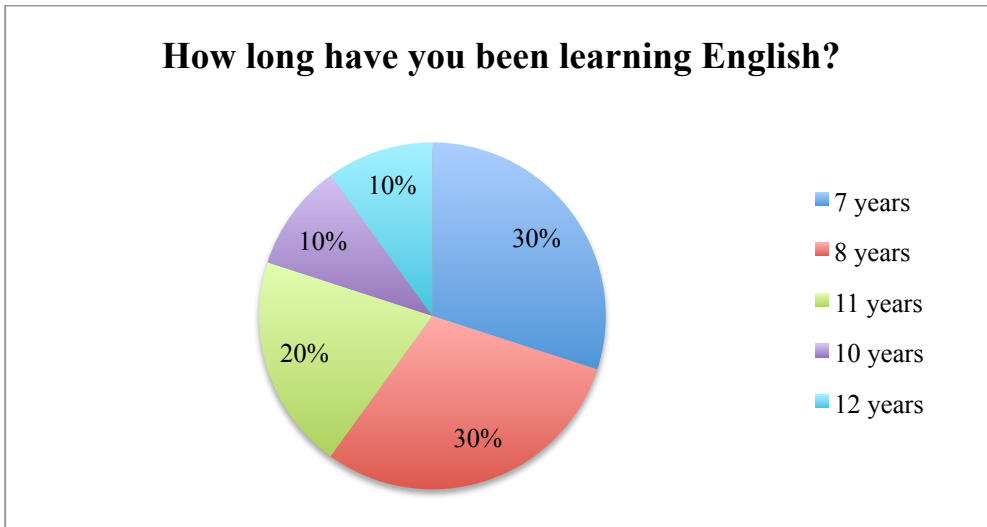
The questionnaire was completed by 10 students. The total number of the students in the class was 15; however, five of them were not willing to answer the questionnaire. The results of the submitted questionnaires are shown in graphs and briefly commented on below. There are also transcribed students' answers for two open questions, that were part of the questionnaire.

Results



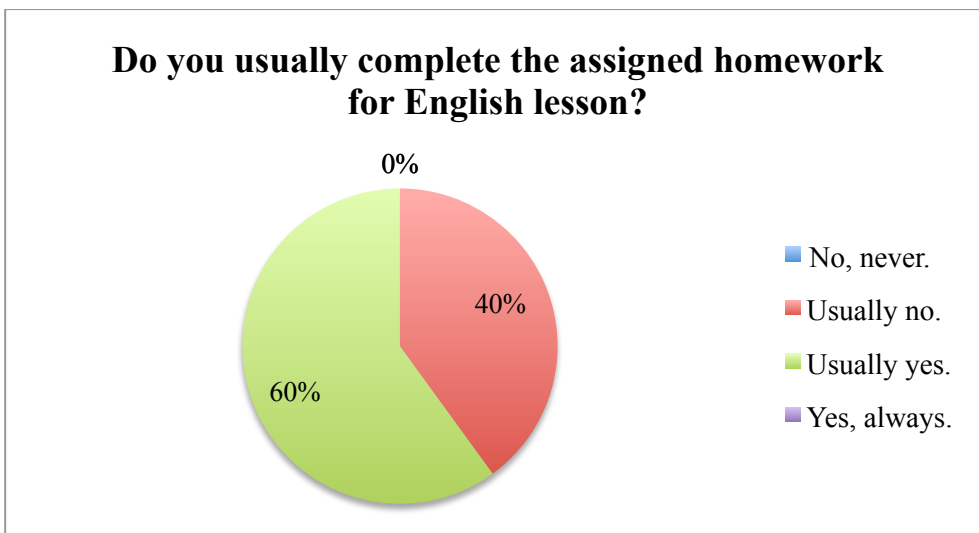
Graph 1. Learners' attitude to English language.

Nine students claimed to have positive attitude to learning English, while one of them chose 'neutral'. None of the students picked the alternative of negative attitude.



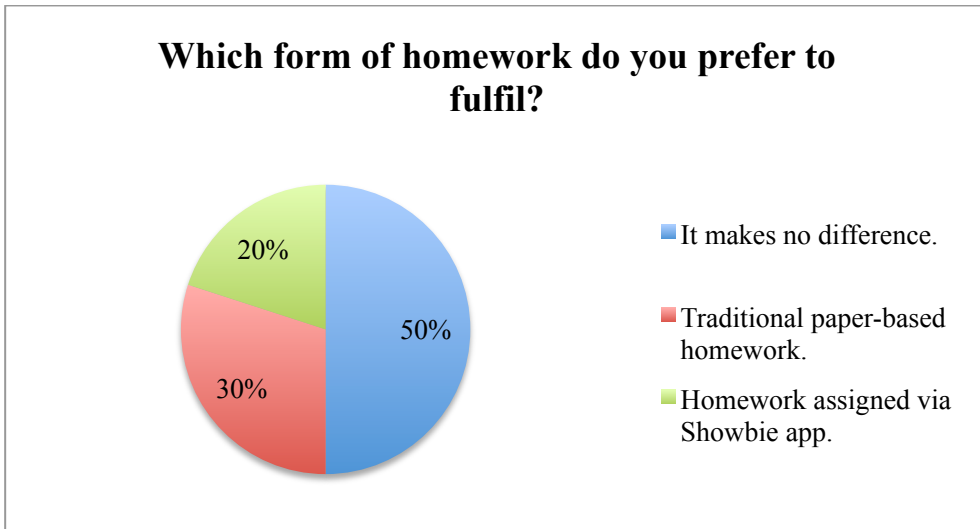
Graph 2. Number of years learning English.

Respondents stated that they have been learning English between 7 and 12 years, where the average time of learning is 8,9 years.



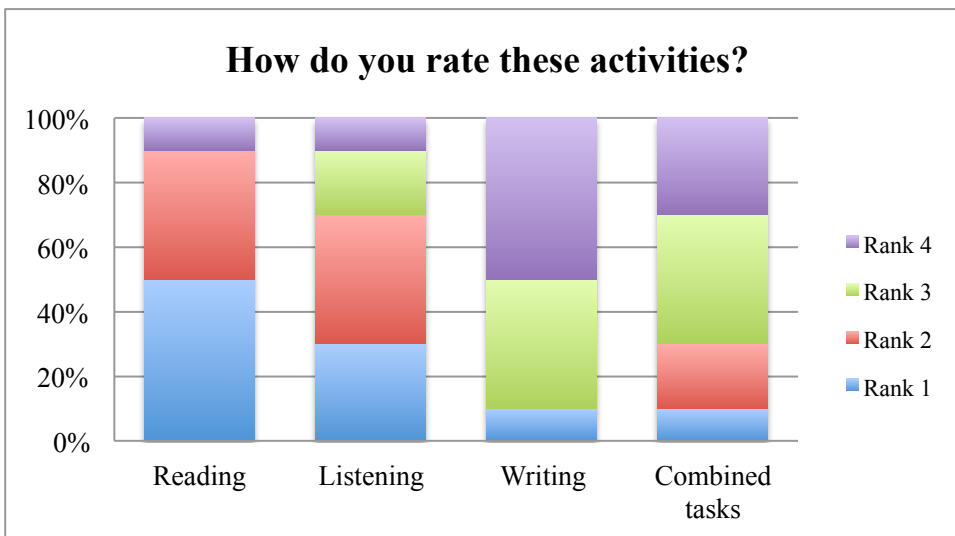
Graph 3. Students' participation in extra-class work.

Six students answered they usually do the homework. Four students said they usually do not complete the given homework.



Graph 4. Students' preferred form of extra-class work.

Five learners answered they give no preference to the form of the extra-class work. Three students prefer traditional pen-and-paper tasks and two students give priority to mobile version of homework.



Graph 5. Students' evaluation of individual language skills according to their popularity regarding extra-class work. Scale ranges from 1 (very popular) to 4 (not at all popular).

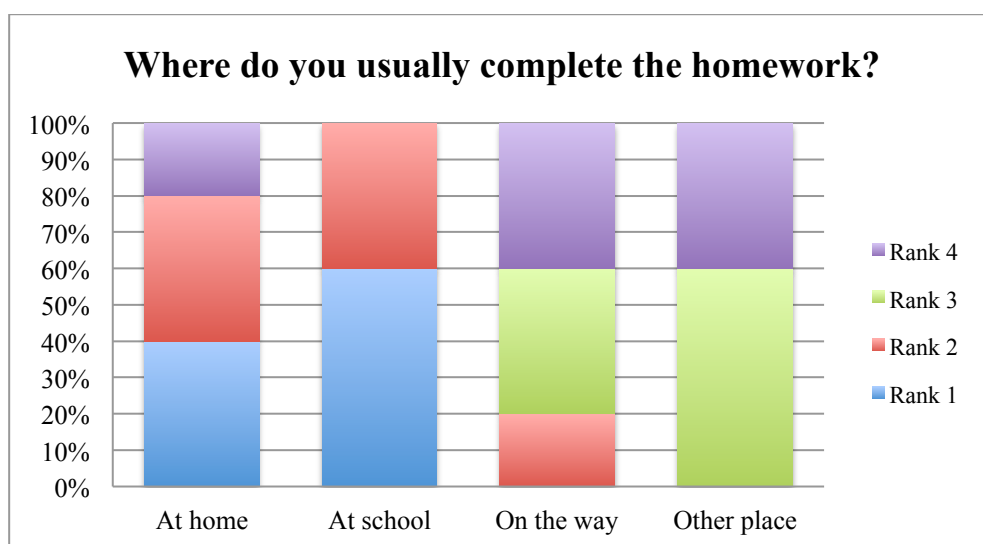
Graph 5 illustrates the learners' preference of language skills. They rated individual skills by 1 for the most preferred, 4 to the least preferred skill. Five learners put reading tasks on rank 1. Four students gave reading the rank of 2. None of the students gave reading rank 3 and one student ranked reading by the value of 4.

Three students gave writing tasks the rank 1. Four learners put writing on rank 2. Two students ranked writing by the value of 3 and one student ranked writing by the value of 4.

One student put listening tasks on the rank 1. No learners ranked listening by the value of 2. Four learners gave listening the rank of 3. Five students ranked listening by the value of 4.

One student gave combined tasks the rank 1. Two students ranked combined tasks by the value of 2. Four learners valued combined tasks by 3 and three students put combined tasks on the rank 4.

Overall, reading as a homework activity was ranked by value 1,7 in average, which makes it the favourite type of tasks among students. Writing received value 2,1 and tasks that combine more skills were ranked 2,9. Listening tasks came out as the least popular, ranked 3,3.



Graph 6. Students' evaluation of possible places, where they do the homework. Scale ranges from 1 (very popular) to 4 (not at all popular).

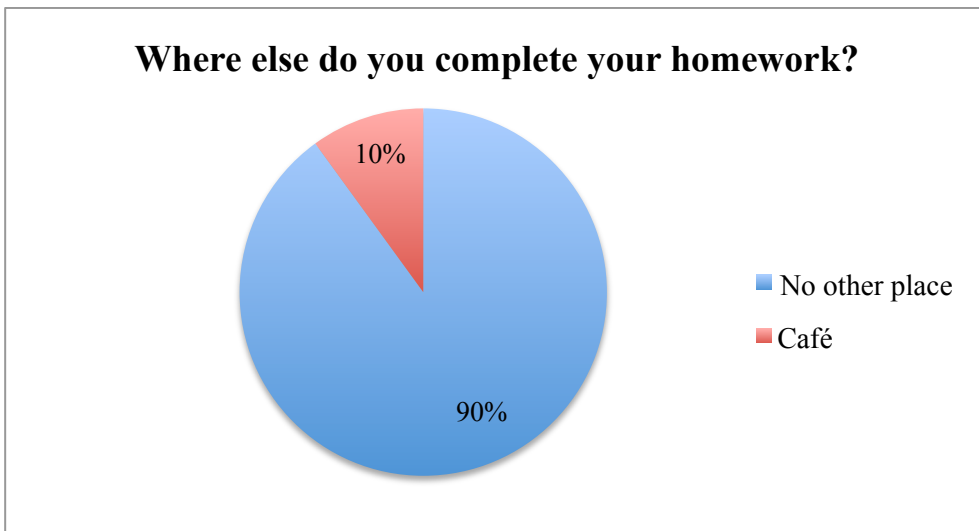
Graph 6 illustrates students preferences for the place, where they do homework. Four students rated 'home' by the value 1. Similarly, four students put 'home' on the rank 2. No one gave 'home' the value 3. Two learners evaluated 'home' by 4.

Six students ranked 'school' as 1. Four learners gave 'school' rank 2. None of the students rated 'school' by the value 3 or 4.

None of the students put 'on the go' on the first place. Two students rated 'on the go' by the value of 2. Four students gave 'on the go' rank 3 and another four gave it rank 4.

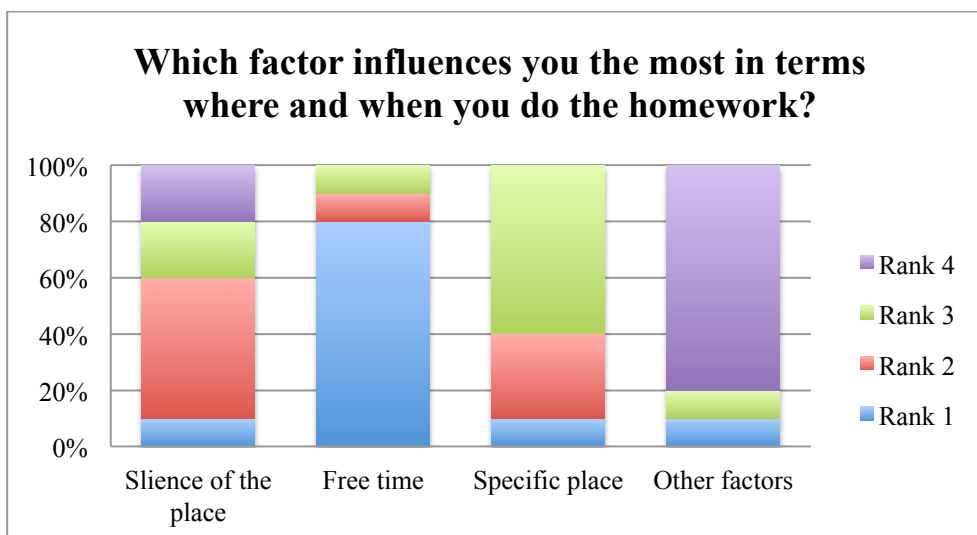
None of the students rated 'other place' as rank 1 or 2. Six students evaluated 'other place' by the rank 3. Four students rated 'other place' by 4.

Students chose school as the most common place to complete their extra-class work; they ranked school by the value of 1,4. Value of 2 was given to home as the second popular location for homework completion. Students ranked the possibility to do homework on the way by the value 3,2. Other places were ranked by the value of 3,4 by the students.



Graph 7. Other places where students do the extra-class work.

In this question, nine students answered that they do not complete extra-class work at other place than mentioned in Graph 6. One student said he/she completes homework in a café.



Graph 8. Students’ evaluation of factors influencing the choice of place and time to complete extra–class work. Scale ranges from 1 (very important) to 4 (not at all important).

Graph 8 illustrates how important are listed factors for students. One student rated silence by the value of 1. Five students evaluated silence by 2. Two students put silence on rank 3 and two students rated silence as 4.

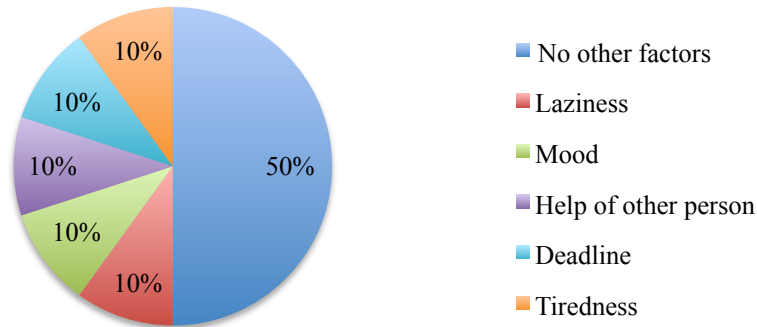
Eight learners put free time on the rank 1. One student rated accessibility of free time by the rank 2 and one student by the rank 3. None of the students put free time on the rank 4.

One student rated particular place by the rank 1. Three students evaluated specific place by the rank 2. Six students rated particular place by the rank 3. No student rated place by rank 4.

None of the students put other factor on the first place. One student rated other factors by the rank 2. One student put the other factors on the rank 3. Eight students put other factors on the fourth place.

Altogether, students chose free time as the most important factor; it was ranked by the value of 1,3. The value of 2,5 was given identically to ‘place in general’ and ‘silence of the place’. Other factors were ranked as the less important (value of 3,7) by the students.

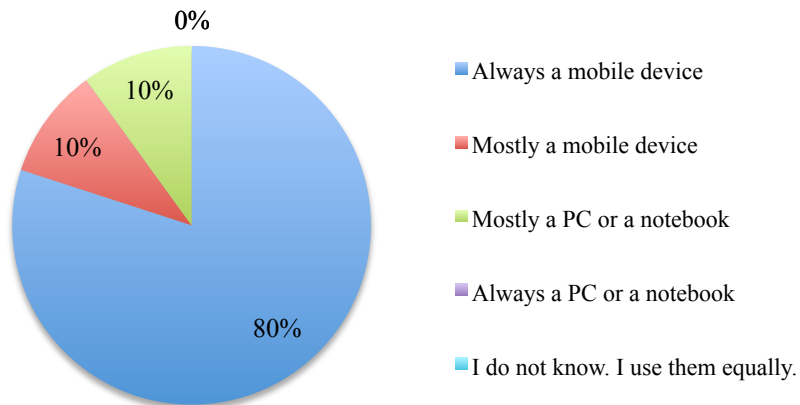
What are the other factors that influence you in choosing where and when you do the HW?



Graph 9. A list of other factor influencing students’ choice of time and place for extra–class work.

Five learners claimed there are no other factors influencing their decision where and when they do the extra–class work. Five students added one factor each; these are as followed: laziness, mood, possibility of help of another person, deadline, and tiredness.

What device do you use to do homework assigned via Showbie?



Graph 10. Students’ preference for device used in extra–class work.

Eight students claimed they always use a mobile device for completion of HW. One student said he/she mostly uses a PC or a notebook. One student mostly uses a mobile device.

The next part presents transcription of students' answers. Students were asked the question "What is the biggest advantage on doing HW via Showbie app to you?" and they mentioned various advantages; they are according to them as follows:

"It is quick, and as soon I submit it, I do not have to care about it anymore."

"It is more interesting than the extra-class work with a textbook."

"It is simple."

"I can submit it anytime, since I always have my mobile phone on me."

"It does not have to be printed, therefore, it is more difficult to forget it at home."

"I do not have to sit at the desk."

"I do not spend money on paper. In addition, I can submit it anytime."

"It is well arranged and it enables quality communication between the student and the teacher."

"It is quick. I like the availability to have it on me all the time."

"I can always see the whole correct assignment."

In addition, students were also asked the question: "What is the biggest advantage on doing HW via Showbie app to you?". The ideas named by students are listed below.

"It works only with the Internet connection. I cannot submit homework without it."

"Sometimes I do not notice a new homework, even though the app sends me notifications."

"I prefer paper-based tasks."

"I have an older iPad, so the app sometimes freezes."

"I do not always want to do the task. I do not like English grammar."

"The teacher can assign a new homework anytime."

"I prefer pen-and-paper tasks."

"I am often interrupted by the Messenger."

"There is no disadvantage to me."

"That I cannot excuse on forgetting the homework at home."

Commentary

The questionnaire demonstrated that most of the students (6 altogether) have been learning English for 7 or 8 years. This does not have to be an objective indicator of the level of their English. However, they are in the fifth grade, which should mean they form

quite a homogenous group. The average number of years they have been learning English is approximately 9 years.

Next, the research shown that an overwhelming majority of students declare positive attitude for completing the extra-class work assigned by their English teacher. This result shows this group to be convenient for the research aimed on extra-class work, since there is an assumption that such learners are willing to make an effort to increase their knowledge of English language by extra-class study. In addition, this is a positive condition for this particular class, since the learners are not obliged to do the assigned tasks. Therefore, any individual involvement can have only positive impact on the learner.

Regarding the age of students, it is quite surprising that the following question proved that a half of the students give no strict preference to the form of the extra-class work. Furthermore, there were only two students, who said they preferred the tasks assigned via mobile application Showbie to paper-based tasks.

Later on, students were asked to rank types of homework regarding the skills they are aimed on. Learners evaluate their preference to the target skill in accordance with a school classification; they gave 1 to their favourite type of task, 4 to the least popular. The research shown reading tasks as the most popular one; half of the students chose reading as their favourite task. No other skill received such good evaluation. On the other hand, listening proved to be the least popular task among students, as it received rank 4 for five times.

Regarding the place, school came out as the most common place for the learners to complete the extra-class work; six out of ten students chose it as the most usual place to complete the extra-class work. Simultaneously, no one put school on rank 3 or 4. However, school is closely followed by the option of doing extra-class work at home. Surprisingly, students did not vote much for the possibility to complete the task while commuting. No one rated doing the homework on the go by the value of 1; therefore, it can give the impression that the mobility itself is not so crucial for the learners. In regards with the location, following question asked for other places where students usually do homework. Only one person suggested a different place - he/she added a café.

Students were also asked to rank the factors that influence them in the point of view where and when they complete the extra-class work. Based on their choices, availability of free time came out as the most important factor. Irrespectively of the previous question,

students declared that they do appreciate the mobility of their device and the possibility to do the task anywhere and anytime. The majority of students said they do not have a particularly favourite place and that they do not need silence for completion of the tasks.

When asking for other factors that influence students' decision, they presented rather various list. Three learners mentioned subjective psychological condition (laziness, mood, and tiredness). One student mentioned the forthcoming deadline as a motivational factor, saying, "I do the homework whenever and wherever, when I am under time pressure." One student also mentioned that he/she prefers to do the homework with help of a second person. Nonetheless, five students claimed, there are no other factors than time, place and quiet surroundings.

With emphasis on the topic of the research, learners were also asked what device they prefer, when completing homework assigned via mobile app. Here the mobility seems to be important, since only one student answered that he/she prefers to solve the tasks on the computer rather than using their iPhone or iPad. Overwhelming majority of eight students claimed they use a mobile device in all cases. This proves the assumption that teenagers are used to using the mobile devices almost for all their activities. However, it is quite surprising that even though students often do the task at home, they like to do it on the mobile device. This indicates that learners are completely used to the touchscreen with a virtual keyboard and they need neither the hardware keyboard, nor the bigger screen.

When students were asked to give what advantages they see in using technology in extra-class work, most often they mentioned the possibility to submit homework at any time (3 out of 10 students). Two students appreciate that such tasks are quick. Other advantages were mentioned by one of the students, and these are as follows. For one student it is more interesting compared to traditional task. Another student sees economical reason for app-based task as there is no need to print it. Connected to physical form of the task, one student likes the fact, that in contrast to paper-based homework, there is less danger of forgetting it at home. Another student observed that a mobile device allows variability of places even at home; there is no necessity to sit by the table. Finally, some students mentioned the technical specifications of the app, saying it is clearly arranged and it enables to see the complete and correct instruction. Moreover, app provides, according to one student, a tool for efficient communication between the teacher and the student.

Students were also asked for the disadvantages they observed while working with the app. Most of them mentioned technical issues such as they are limited by the Internet connection or that their device is older and gets frozen. Another student is interrupted by the messenger. Next, two students claimed that they perceive the possibility of the teacher to assign homework anytime as negative, since the notification might be overlooked. Then, two students remarked they prefer traditional pen-and-paper homework. One student stated that there is no excuse on forgetting the homework at home when it is a mobile version. One student stated he did not like English grammar, which is not relevant to the topic of homework based on technology. Finally, one student said there is no disadvantage of using mobile technology in extra-class work.

This part explained students' attitude to the extra-class work. Following part analyses their behaviour in completing and submitting extra-class work.

Data analysis

The group of 15 students was asked to submit extra-class work via mobile app Showbie. Altogether, students were assigned seven different tasks between April 5 and June 7 2016. All data that were available in the app were taken down to the *Table 1*. Students' real performance in extra-class work was introduced and compared to their answers in the questionnaire.

	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5	Task 6	Task 7	Results	Results
	assigned Apr 4, 12:50pm; due Apr 5, 4:00pm	assigned Apr 5, 2:18pm; due Apr 6, 8:15pm	assigned Apr 5, 3:02pm; due Apr 6 8:15pm	assigned Apr 6, 8:34am; due Apr 13, 4:00pm	assigned n.d.; due April 27, 4:00pm	assigned May 2, 3:24pm; due May 3, 12:00pm	assigned June 6, 12:19pm; due June 7, 1:00pm	Total number of submitted tasks per student	Expressed in percentage
Student 1	Apr 4, 1:04pm	Apr 5, 2:41pm	x	x	May 2, 12:59pm			3	42%
Student 2	x	x	x	x	Apr 27, 8:58am	x	x	1	14%
Student 3	Apr 4, 1:00pm	Apr 5, 2:42pm	Apr 6, 7:56 am	Apr, 8:50am	x	x	x	4	57%
Student 4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	0	0%
Student 5	x	x	x	x	May 2, 12:54pm	x	x	1	14%
Student 6	x	x	x	x	x	May 4, 8:51am	x	1	14%
Student 7	Apr 4, 12:59pm	x	Apr 5, 8:31pm	x	x	May 3, 10:10am	June 7, 8:30am	4	57%
Student 8	x	x	x	x	x	May 3, 11:19am	x	1	14%
Student 9	x	x	x	x	Apr 28, 4:06pm	x	x	1	14%
Student 10	Apr 4, 1:08pm	x	Apr 6, 8:22am	x	x	May 3, 11:14am		3	42%
Student 11	Apr 4, 1:06pm	x	Apr 5, 4:17pm	x	x	May 2, 2:10pm	June 6, 10:15pm	4	57%
Student 12	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	0	0%
Student 13	Apr 4, 1:05pm	x	Apr 6, 8:32pm	n.d.	May 1, 5:22pm	May 3, 7:18am	June 7, 6:40am	6	86%
Student 14	x	Apr 5, 2:44pm	Apr 6, 6:05pm	n.d.	x	May 3, 11:24am	June 7, 11:16am	5	71%
Student 15	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	0	0%
Total number of students who submitted	6	3	6	3	5	7	4		
Expressed in percentage	40%	20%	40%	20%	33%	46%	26%		

Table 1. Overview of students' submission of particular extra-class work. Green colour illustrates completion of extra-class work in time, orange colour represents late submission, and grey colour signalizes which tasks were done only partly.

Commentary

What can be seen in the table is that students who submitted Task 1 and Task 2 did so shortly after it was assigned. Therefore, it can be reckoned that they complete the task at school, maybe during a break.

Most students submitted Tasks 1, 3 and 6. Six students submitted Task 1 and this fact fully corresponds with the questionnaire, since this task was focused on reading skills. On the contrary, Tasks 3 and 6 were based on writing; firstly, students were asked to write about a historical mystery, and secondly the task was to write an essay on the topic “What if...”. This choice fosters the position of creative writing among other language skills.

Altogether, students submitted 35 out of 105 tasks. The highest amount of submitted work was performed by student number 13, who submitted six tasks. On the other hand, there were three students who did not submit any of the assigned extra-class work and five students submitted only one out of seven.

What is obvious from the table is the fact that students do not perceive the deadline to be binding and sometimes submit their work with delay. This was the cause in eight tasks out of all 35 submitted. Moreover, in nine examples students fulfilled an incomplete task.

As mentioned before, most students (seven) submitted Tasks 6; however even this did not prove students’ claim from the questionnaire, that they usually complete the task, to be true. Since, Task 6 was submitted by 46% of students, and all tasks together were completed by 23% in average. This is far away from the results shown in the Graph 3.

To conclude, there are significant differences between what students think about extra-class work and what they perform in reality. However, all these differences might have been caused by various external factors.

Interview

An interview with Mgr. Tereza Růžičková was carried out to obtain an overall perspective on mobile application Showbie. She mentioned several advantages of implementing iPads in extra-class work. From her point of view, there is an important factor in variety of source she can implement. Růžičková said she likes to include extracts of different textbooks and that it is extremely simple to distribute these to her learners by means of the Showbie app. Moreover, she appreciates the possibility to share print screens,

pictures, videos and other multimedia. Next, she observed that Showbie enables her to see how students are progressing and give them instant feedback, even to record them a short voice message. Finally, she mentioned that she often uses Showbie not only for extra-class work, but also as a gap filler in the case she finishes the tasks planned for the lesson earlier; “When using the app there is no rush to the staff room to copy materials for my students” (T.Růžičková, personal communication, April 4, 2016).

When discussing the disadvantages of implementing technology, Růžičková remarked that she has not experience much of them. What she mentioned are issues of technological character. Most often her students face the problem of impossibility to sign in to the app, as they have forgotten their password. In that case students need to ask for password reset, which takes some time and so they can miss the deadline. Regarding the use at school, Růžičková observed that sometimes student are not responsible enough and they come with flat battery.

Regarding the main stated research question, whether the implementation of technology encourages students’ participation in extra-class work, it can be now stated that even though students perceive mobile devices as inseparable part of their life, implementing technology does not encourage the polled sample of students to participate in extra-class work. Since most of them claimed they usually complete extra-class work for English lessons, the number of homework submitted via mobile app was low.

Students prefer traditional, paper-based tasks in general; nevertheless, they can name significant advantages of doing and submitting homework via a mobile app. Most often they mentioned the ubiquity of the device and the possibility to submit tasks anytime emerging from the characteristics of the mobile device. They also mentioned that completing tasks via mobile app is quick and simple. Moreover, they appreciated the variety of the tasks and think that such tasks are more interesting than those in the student book.

When summarizing students’ list of disadvantages of mobile learning in extra-class work, students most often expressed complaints about technical challenges; namely a disabled Internet connection, low performance of processor, that fact that they are disturbed by other applications while doing the homework, and finally possibility to overlook and/or overhear the notification about a new homework. Moreover, two students observed they like the traditional tasks better.

From the teachers' point of view the most significant advantage is the fact that the application enables to distribute diverse types of assignments anytime and without necessity to print any materials. Moreover, the possibility to provide students with immediate feedback is highly convenient and allows teacher to engage students more.

There are not many disadvantages from the teachers' point of view, however, as mentioned in the interview, the teacher cannot intervene much and help the student who has forgotten the password or has any other technical issues.

This chapter introduced the results of the questionnaire and data gained from the mobile app. All results are analysed on the basis of the theoretical background chapter and commented on. Finally, the results are summarized and confronted with the research questions.

V. IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents analysis and interpretation of the results from the previous chapter; however, here the information is interconnected to the theoretical background. The chapter is divided into three parts. The aim of the first part is to provide EFL teachers with some advice based on the research findings. The following section discusses weaknesses of the research and discusses why this particular research cannot be fully generalized. Moreover, it addresses the difficulties that occurred in the course of the research. Then, the final part briefly examines several possibilities of improving and expanding the present research.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of the research are to a certain extent contradictory. On the one hand, students listed many advantages, which they noticed in the use of mobile application and mobile devices in general. On the other hand, even all these positive attributes do not seem to ensure increased participation in completing extra-class work. Based on the data gained via the questionnaire, there is a suggestion for the teachers who use or would like to implement mobile technology in their teaching methods. It is important to realize differences among students and the fact that they have different preferences. Therefore, it is necessary to offer them various ways of completion of the extra-class work. It is worth mentioning that even though the task is assigned via an app they have more options how they can complete the assignment, e.g. to write or answer the task by handwriting and then submit a picture of the result via the mobile. This might be a more suitable eventuality for those learners who prefer pen-and-paper activities.

Next, EFL teachers should consider setting clear rules for using technology in extra-class work together with the students. No matter how ubiquitous the mobile devices seem to be, it is not always suitable for the students to solve the homework. Students do not like the feeling that the teacher can assign a new task anytime, even when they are not connected. Therefore, they might miss the notification and do not have opportunity to do the homework. It would be better for both sides to set the rule that the teacher would assign new homework only after mentioning it in advance during the lesson, so as the learners can expect it and plan the completion of it in advance.

Then, there is an implication about the technical issues mentioned by the teacher (forgotten password). It is convenient to discuss this issue with students in advance and

suggest them other solutions in such case. They can ask their classmates to resend them instructions, do the task on the paper and send it via email strictly to the teacher. It is definitely more complicated but still feasible.

The research has shown the importance of variety in tasks assigned. The polled students rated writing as the second popular activity; however, the data from Showbie proved that creative writing tasks were submitted by the highest number of students. What proved to be engaging factor is creativity in general; students were highly engaged in the task where they were asked to think up an idiomatic expression consisting of body part and accompany it by a picture (Appendix 3).

From the teachers' point of view an application appears to be a convenient and effective tool for distribution of material; however, it should not be overestimated and overused, since some students prefer paper-based work, and not every task is more effective only for being done on the mobile device.

Above all, teachers should respect the specifics of the particular class and provide them with various opportunities to develop their knowledge of English language in an effective and engaging way.

Limitations of the Research

This research cannot be generalized for many reasons. Naturally, the main limitation is the limited amount of respondents that took part in the study. Although the data were gathered about fifteen students and their habits in completing and submitting homework, only ten students completed the questionnaire. Therefore, the overall findings might be inaccurate. Moreover the number of assigned tasks was lower than expected, since some health problems occurred on the side of the teacher. Therefore, the range of tasks is not extensive.

The type of school where the research was carried out has to be taken into consideration as well. Private schools offer different relationship between the teachers and the students, and different level of autonomy to their students. The results could have been different if the research was conducted at a different type of school, where students are obliged to complete extra-class work to a certain extent. Also the age of the polled sample of students may have influenced the findings. It is commonly known that pubescent learners in general are less dedicated to school and learning than their younger schoolmates. However, it was crucial for the research to find a classroom where tablets are

widespread, and simultaneously, both the teacher and the students have essential IT knowledge.

In the process of analysing the data, it came to light that explanatory value of the research is somehow limited. There was no comparison of ration between submitted traditional extra-class work and the extra–class work based on technology. It only gained the data about submitting homework via the app. Those findings were bellow estimated ration; however, there is a possibility that learners would have submitted even less homework if it were assigned in a traditional form.

Suggestions for Further Research

The current research could be undoubtedly extended in various ways. Introducing the research in more classes even at different school could solve the issue with limited amount of polled students. This would bring another group of learners as well as a different teacher with different teaching strategies to the spotlight. Having more students to express themselves about their attitude to extra–class work would definitely increase the overall explanatory value, since it is naïve to generalize these finding based on ten students from a specific social stratum.

This form of the research consisted of qualitative and quantitative research tools. For further research, it is suggested to accompany some of the questions in the questionnaire by the open questions so that learners could provide their opinion on mobile apps.

Moreover it would be interesting to find out how much learners can gain from the mobility of the learning content. So another research could focus on where and when exactly the learners completed assigned task. Another question is what motivate learners to use mobile device for extra–class work when they are at home.

A topic, which deserves more attention, would be the relation between the student and the teacher, and the question of appropriate teacher’s feedback on learners’ work via a mobile app.

This research shows some weaknesses, especially in the limited amount of polled students and impossibility to compare student’s participation in traditional extra–class work and the tasks based on technology. Therefore, the finding cannot be generalized too much. The aim of this chapter was to explain how the gained information can improve the

way technology is implemented in extra–class work. This chapter also presented ideas for further studies based on other issues of mall. The last chapter provides the overall summary of the main ideas of the thesis.

VI. CONCLUSION

The thesis aims to explore the implementation of mobile application into English learning. Mobile applications can be considered as a highly topical issue in MALL, since the number of applications on the market increases every day. The thesis starts with the theoretical part, which provides readers with information about mobile learning in language learning, characteristics of mobile applications, informal learning interconnected with learner autonomy. Finally, it mentions characteristics of extra-class work. The following practical part exploits research questions, which are:

1. Does the implementation of mobile technology encourage the learners' participation in extra-class work?
2. What are the advantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the learners' point of view?
3. What are the disadvantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the learners' point of view?
4. What are the advantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the teachers' point of view?
5. What are the disadvantages of implementing technology in extra-class work from the teachers' point of view?

In process of analysing the data and finding answers for the research questions, it was discovered that mobile applications provide many advantages for both the teacher and the learners. Students most of all appreciated the possibility to submit the homework at any time. They also consider completion of extra-class work based on technology being quick and simple. Moreover, some of them mentioned that they perceive the fact there is no need to print the task as beneficial. On the other hand, some students still prefer pen-and-paper tasks or they have experience with technical issues, which cause impossibility to submit the homework. Knowing these facts, it is not surprising that 50% of students have no preferred type of homework, regarding the material included.

None of the seven tasks was submitted more than 46% of students. So statistically, the data from the app did not confirm students' statement that the majority of them usually complete the extra-class work. However, as was mentioned, the polled group of students

was rather small and other external factors might have influenced the research. Therefore, the gained findings cannot be generalized.

This study showed also the benefit of implementing mobile technology in language teaching and learning from the teachers' point of view. The most important advantage lies in the fact of simple and effective distribution of learning materials among students. However, teachers should allow students to find their own way how to complete the task. Moreover, the research brought up the topic of importance of setting appropriate policy. Having clear rules for assigning and submitting any extra-class work would definitely improve overall impression on both sides.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Domácí úkoly z anglického jazyka

Konec vyplňování dnes v 10:15:00, výsledky budou k dispozici pouze zadavateli.

Počet otázek: 14 Průměrná doba vyplňování: 00.05:39

povinná otázka

1. Jakého jsi pohlaví?

Žena

Muž

Vlastní odpověď:

povinná otázka

2. Kolik je Ti let?

(kladné číslo)

povinná otázka

3. Jaký je Tvůj vztah k anglickému jazyku?

Můj vztah k anglickému jazyku je pozitivní.

Můj vztah k anglickému jazyku je neutrální.

Můj vztah k anglickému jazyku je záporný.

povinná otázka

4. Jak dlouho se učíš anglický jazyk?

(kladné číslo)

povinná otázka

5. Zadávané domácí úkoly z anglického jazyka:

- Vždy vypracuji.
- Obvykle vypracuji.
- Obvykle nevypracuji
- Nikdy nevypracuji.

povinná otázka

6. Raději splníš domácí úkoly z AJ zadané:

- V učebnici/ sešitě.
- Skrze mobilní aplikaci Showbie.
- Nemá to vliv.

povinná otázka

7. Ohodnoť, který typ domácího úkolu z AJ Tě baví nejvíc (1) a který nejméně (4).

Zvolte prosím u každé odpovědi nějaké (jedinečné) pořadí:

Čtení:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>
Psaní:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>
Poslechové cvičení:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>
Kombinované úlohy:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>

povinná otázka

8. Pokud je domácí úkol zadán skrze Showbie, kde jej nejčastěji vypracuješ?

Zvolte prosím u každé odpovědi nějaké (jedinečné) pořadí:

Doma.:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>
Ve škole.:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>
Během cesty (v MHD, v autě).:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>
Jinde. Prosím vysvětli v následující otázce.:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>

povinná otázka

9. Napiš, co v Tvém případě znamená "jinde". V případě, že úkol jinde neřešíš, napiš slovo "neřeším".

10. Co má největší vliv na to, kdy a kde úkol skrze Showbie vypracuješ? (1 = největší vliv, 4 = nejmenší vliv)

Zvolte prosím u každé odpovědi nějaké (jedinečné) pořadí:

Ticho a klid – potřebuji se na úkol soustředit.:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>
Čas – úkol vyplním kdykoli a kdekoli ve volném čase.:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>
Místo – rád/-a se učím/dělám úkol na stejném místě (např. knihovna, domov,...):	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>
Jiné. Prosím popiš v následující otázce.:	1. <input type="radio"/>	2. <input type="radio"/>	3. <input type="radio"/>	4. <input type="radio"/>

11. Jaké jiné faktory ovlivňují to, kde a kdy se věnuješ domácímu úkolu ?

povinná otázka

12. Pokud plníš domácí úkol zadaný skrze Showbie, pomocí kterého zařízení to bude?

- Vždy přes mobilní zařízení (iPad, iPhone).
- Většinou přes mobilní zařízení (iPad, iPhone).
- Většinou přes stolní počítač či notebook.
- Vždy přes stolní počítač či notebook.
- Nevím. Využívám obě zařízení stejně často.

povinná otázka

13. Jaká je pro Tebe největší výhoda vypracování domácích úkolů skrze Showbie na mobilní zařízení?

povinná otázka

14. Jaká je pro Tebe největší nevýhoda vypracování domácích úkolů skrze Showbie na mobilní zařízení?

Odeslat dotazník

Appendix 2

Questionnaire – *in English*

1. What gender are you?

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Other

2. How old are you? (Insert a number)

3. What is your attitude to English language?

- a. Positive
- b. Neutral
- c. Negative

4. How long have you been learning English? (Insert a number)

5. Do you complete the assigned homework for English lesson?

- a. Yes, I always do.
- b. Usually yes.
- c. Usually no.
- d. No, never.

6. Which homework do you prefer to fulfil?

- a. Those assigned via Showbie app.
- b. Traditional paper-based homework.
- c. It makes no difference.

7. Rate which type of homework you like the most (1) and which the least (4).

- a. Reading. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- b. Writing. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- c. Listening. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- d. Combined tasks. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4

8. If the task is assigned via Showbie, where do you mostly complete it?

- a. At home. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- b. At school. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- c. On the way (on a bus, in a car). 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- d. Other place. Please explain later. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4

9. Explain what in your case means “other place”. If you do not do homework on the other place, write “I do not”.

10. Which factor influences you the most in terms where and when you do the homework?

- a. Silence of the place- I need to concentrate. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- b. Free time- I do the homework whenever and wherever when I am free.
1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- c. Specific place- I like to do the homework on the same place (library, bedroom). 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- d. Other. Please explain in the following question. 1 – 2 – 3 – 4

11. What are the other factors that influence you in choosing where and when you do the HW?

12. What device do you use to do homework assigned via Showbie?

- a. Always a mobile device (iPad, iPhone).
- b. Mostly a mobile device (iPad, iPhone).
- c. Always a PC or a notebook.
- d. Mostly a PC or a notebook.
- e. I do not know. I use both equally.

13. What is the biggest advantage on doing HW via Showbie app to you?

14. What is the biggest disadvantage on doing HW via Showbie app to you?

Appendix 3

3. Webquest

Use the Internet to answer the following questions:

The British Museum

The British Museum is a museum dedicated to human history and culture. Its permanent collection is among the largest and most comprehensive in existence and originates from all continents, illustrating and documenting the story of human culture from its beginnings to the present.

1. Where is it? What is the exact address?
2. How many collection objects does it have?
3. When was the museum founded?
4. How much is it to get in?
5. The Rosetta stone is one of the most important collection objects. Why? Who discovered it? How long has it been part of the collection?
6. Who was Václav Hollar? How is he connected with the museum?

The screenshot shows a social media post titled "3. Webquest" with the same text as above. A chat window is overlaid on the post, showing a conversation between a user and "CZhans96". The chat messages are:

- User: London - camden
- CZhans96: More than 7 milion
- User: 1753
- CZhans96: It is free
- User: who discovered it? How long has it been part of the collection?
- CZhans96: It has an odl egyptian writing on it - some kind of a decret. It was discovered by Pierre François Bouchard
- User: He is a drawer - i think some of his pictures are in the museum.

The screenshot shows a social media comment section. At the top is a text input field "write a comment..." and a "Post" button. Below it is a comment by Helena Linhartová, dated Apr 4 1:06pm. The comment text is:


- 1) address: Great Russell St, London, UK
- 2) over 7 million objects
- 3) 1753
- 4) entrance is free
- 5) meaning of hieroglyphs by J. F. Champallion, in museum since 1802
- 6) He was czech painter and his work is in museum.


Below the comment is a "Library Photo" section with a photo icon, the text "Library Photo", and the name "Tereza Ruzickova" dated Apr 4 12:50pm.


Song worksheet Monika Fialová's Assignment Folder Marcela Krauzová

- Shared Folder 1
- CZhans96 .
- Egon Buriánek
- Jakub Drnec
- Josef Dubsky
- Zuzana Eretová
- Eva Fast
- Monika Fialová 🔗
- Bára Jungová
- Natálie Kaslová


write a comment... Post ↘ 🗨️ 📄 🔄


 Well done!! Tereza Ruzickova
Jun 7 9:14am

 **hymn-for-the-weekend-cold-play** Monika Fialová
Jun 7 8:30am

 **hymn-for-the-weekend-cold-play** Tereza Ruzickova
Jun 6 12:19pm

write a comment... Post ↘ 🗨️ 📄 🔄

 Great:) Thank you!!!! Tereza Ruzickova
Apr 27 10:44am

 **Prázdná 2** Egon Buriánek
Apr 27 8:58am

All ears = fully listening



SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá využitím mobilních aplikací ve výuce anglického jazyka. Teoretická část seznamuje čtenáře se základní terminologií a objasňuje důvody pro zapojení mobilních technologií do vyučovacího procesu. Důraz je kladen především na vymezení vlastností vyučování založeného na mobilních technologiích, a dále na problematiku domácích úkolů ve výuce. Tato část také slouží jako teoretický rámec pro následný výzkum. Praktický výzkum, který proběhl na Gymnáziu Františka Křížáka v Plzni, byl proveden pomocí dotazníkové metody. Dotazník se zaměřil na postoj studentů k domácím úkolům zadávaným prostřednictvím mobilní aplikace. Díky mobilní aplikaci byla také získána data o plnění úkolů a tato data byla následně analyzována. Dále byl zjištěn pohled učitele na využití mobilní aplikace ve vyučovacím procesu. Výsledky výzkumu jsou graficky zpracovány a okomentovány. V závěru práce jsou navrženy možné implikace pro výuku anglického jazyka, dále jsou zmíněna omezení výzkumu a také možnosti jeho dalšího rozšíření. Výzkum naznačil, že mobilní aplikace mohou být efektivním nástrojem ve výuce anglického jazyka pro obě zúčastněné strany, avšak je třeba respektovat potřeby studentů a zavést vzájemně vyhovující pravidla.