Technická universita v Liberci
PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

Katedra: Anglického jazyka

Studijní obor: Anglický jazyk

PLAYING WITH BASIC GRAMMAR
(Základní gramatika hrou)

Závěrečná práce 95-PF-KAJ

Autor: Jana Čičková Podpis: Jana Čičková

Adresa: Formánkova 431
Hradec Králové
500 11

Vedoucí práce: Donna Sarvay, MA

Konzultant ZP: PhDr Ivana Pekařová

UNIVERZITNÍ KNIHOVNA
TECHNICKÉ UNIVERZITY V LIBERCI
3146065736

Počet:

stran	obrázků	tabulek	příloh
58			

V Liberci dne 29.5. 1995.

Anotace

Čeští studenti angličtiny jsou často vystaveni nadměrnému popisu anglického jazyka v mateřštině, což může narušit jejich vnímání angličtiny. Cílem této práce je zjistit, zda je možné zredukovat popisnou češtinu, a místo ní brát větší ohled na individualitu žáka, skupiny -- s nejmladšími dětmi jsem vyzkoušela rychle se střídající pohybové hry s kombinovanou odpovědí, se staršími navození kuriozní nebo realitu imitující situace. Vše je založeno na předpokladu, že takovéto aktivity mohou navodit bohatou scenérii emocionálních vjemů, které plně zaměstnají žákovu pozornost a dovolí mu spontánně zachytit nové myšlenky. Nejlepších výsledků jsem zdánlivě dosáhla se skupinou nejmladších dětí. Bylo by zajímavé zabývat se porovnáváním procesu učení/výsledků dětí a dospělých.

Abstract

Czech learners of the English language are often exposed to over-abundant descriptive Czech language in the classroom. The aim of this Project is to explore whether it is possible to reduce the descriptive Czech language by trying to use specific learners' tastes and interests -- for the youngest pupils -- by introducing quickly alternating games involving combined answers, for a bit older pupils by setting a curious or a life-imitating situation, all of which should create a rich scenery of emotional perceptions that fully employ learners' attention and, perhaps, let them catch ideas spontaneously, without abundant L1 descriptions. From what I noticed, the best learners seemed to have been the group of the youngest children; it makes me consider that it would be interesting to compare their progress with the progress of adult learners.

TECHNICKÁ UNIVERZITA V LIBERCI
Univerzitní knihovna
Voroněžská 1329, Liberec 1
PSČ 461 17

6/95 P

KAJ/AJ

58s., 8s. příl

Výuka - a. j.
angl. - výuka
Výuka angl. - kvou

OUTLINE

Thesis: Involving emotions and creative fantasy in the process of approaching (basic) structures might reduce further describing L2 in L1 to a minimum.

I. Let's play with (basic) grammar structures in order to accept them painlessly, without clumsily getting to a point through abundant L1.

A. Grammar is viewed in various ways regarding our experiencing it.

1. "Grammar helps a learner learn what he is learning, even if it isn't exactly what he learns." (From the Mystery of Creativity Conference in Liberec in April, 1994).
2. Linguists have described prescriptive, traditional, structural and other kinds of grammar.
3. For me, grammar has turned into a most exciting, challenging, ever- lasting, quick question-answer game that I can never get tired of.
4. Nevertheless, I noticed that generally most students of any foreign language hate grammar which attracts me, making me wonder about the sense of involving it in the process of learning/teaching a foreign language at all.

B. Confronting one's experience with other sources can bring an idea of possible betterment.

1. In my own experience with accepting grammar, first I must imagine, feel the situation, then I simply imitate an appropriate structure.

2. Gerngross -- Puchta's Creative Grammar Practice (1992) is based on the experience that "Young learners especially (and some adults too) seem to be more at ease with holistic methods of learning grammar in which structures are acquired subconsciously... ." (Gerngross, Puchta, 1992: 2).
3. One of my last supervising teachers is persuaded by her experience that generally the best way of explaining grammar to children is the description of rules in Czech.
4. Since the first moment I approached English from the point of view of a teacher, I have been playing with the idea of involving into the process of learning/teaching as little L1 as possible without it being to the detriment of a learner's accepting L2.
5. Starting English with Czech teachers and observing children learning elementary English from Czechs I experienced an abundance of Czech in English lessons.

C. Examining the idea closely may lead to a theory.

1. The simplest way of reducing L1 in L2 lessons could lead through introducing native speakers into lessons.
2. Learners are subconsciously helping themselves by decoding L2 (key) words through L1 words -- pictures and perhaps putting them together again in L1 manner, encouraged by teacher's presenting L2 through an abundance of L1, instead of thinking in L2.
3. Compared with children's accepting a language, also adults tend to remember things better when they experience them personally.
4. Involving emotions and creative fantasy in the process of

approaching (basic) structures might reduce further describing L2 in L1 to a minimum.

5. The reducement of L1 in the process of teaching/learning might speed up learning, help to prevent interference of L1 into L2.

D. A very interesting question is how to make the theory of reducing L1 in L2 lessons work in the special classroom circumstances.

1. I have been attracted by an experience of lessons that vary for changing students' positions and placing and replacing the materials and eliciting more kinds of answers than one.
   a. The 8-9-year-old students and the 6-7- year-old students enjoyed being allowed to change their places as the lesson went on.
   b. The 6-7-year-old students, the 8-9-year-old students and the 11-12-year-old students felt comfortable when answering by drawing, pointing, oral describing, demonstrating.
2. An idea of multiplied response combined with using materials setting a curious situation or imitating a real-life situation attracts my attention.
3. I have been noticing that the learners with very limited language tend to feel comfortable when repeatedly exposed to a situation eliciting certain structures/words in a light, enjoyable way.
4. With the learners manipulating a wider range of L2 structures/words, the language itself elicited in certain ways can evoke a variety of beautiful scenes in front of the eyes

of the learners -- just as Gerngross and Puchta in their Creative Grammar Practice (1992) suggest.

II. Lesson Plans I.- V.; Reflective Teaching

A. Class Profile

B. Pre-Lesson Summary

C. Lesson Summary

D. Reflection

III. I think my teaching experience confirmed my presumptions. It would be interesting to gain more precise data, make further research.

A. Teaching/learning may benefit from less description of L2 structures using L1 through finding the right balance of the emotional and the analytical approach.

1. A more emotional approach especially fits the young learners.
   a. My pupils enjoyed taking an active part in pre-activities.
   b. They loved answering by drawing, describing, pointing, miming to a curious or a real-life imitating stimulus.
   c. The very beginners felt comfortable when exposed to quick, varied games.
2. Best I learnt as I went along.
   a. Simple games eliciting basic English structures were introduced.
   b. I sought not to describe the meaning first.

c. It is important to play together with pupils.

d. Sometimes I helped with spare Czech words.

e. Czech seemed to become the last resort for ensuring understanding.

B. My experience might be more precisely clarified with further exploration.

a. More precise data of learners' understanding structures would allow comparing various activities with regard to other conditions.

b. Introducing abundant visuals and eliciting meaningful combined answers play a very important role, as well.

c. I learnt a lot by observing my pupils.

d. In which ways are the youngest children better learners than the adult ones?

e. Could a more emotional approach take place in adults' accepting structures?

C. I tried making English lessons more English through approaching theories of methodology with flexible classroom experience.

I. Let's play with (basic) grammar structures in order to accept them painlessly, without clumsily getting to a point through abundant L1.

A. Grammar is viewed in various ways regarding our experiencing it.

At the Mystery of Creativity Conference in Liberec in April, 1994, Mr.Alexander described his view on grammar through the message: "Grammar helps a learner learn what he is learning, even if it isn't exactly what he learns."

What he is learning and hopefully learns, is very likely the English language, highly developed in all its various aspects of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills with grammar standing somewhere in the centre, tightening all the branches of the English tree together. Those who prefer precise schemes to imaginary pictures will find the definitions of Collins Cobuild (1987) useful:

> 1/ Grammar means the rules of a language, concerning the way in which you can put words together in order to make sentences. For example: I need some books to look up the grammar.Is there enough grammar taught in schools? I heard you have abandoned teaching grammar lessons.
>
> 2/ Grammar is the way someone either obeys or does not obey the rules of grammar when they write or speak a language. For example: I am constantly having to correct their grammar. Take off a full point for any errors in grammar.
>
> (Collins Cobuild, 1987: 632)

According to one of Murphy's natural laws, we never do things in the most straight, simple way when we have some more complicated one handy. Similarly, linguists have regarded the basic idea of grammar from various angles of view, abstracting a traditional, structural, transformational, tagmemic, systemic and other models of grammar. What are they? A few of Cook's (1993) definitions may clarify them:

Prescriptive grammar:	Grammar that "prescribes" what people should say.
Traditional grammar:	"School" grammar concerned with labelling sentences with parts of speech.
Structural grammar:	Grammar concerned with how words go into phrases, phrases into sentences. And so on.

(Cook, 1991: 9)

Why have I chosen that complicated *stuff* ? Thanks to my grammar teacher, grammar has turned, for me, into a most exciting, challenging, ever-lasting, quick question-answer game that I can never get tired of:

/hide and seek/

"He has gone to London. -- Where is he?"

"In London."

"He went to London. -- Where is he?"

"Either in London or at home."

These quick questions pleasantly stir my brain, awaking it from its long-

time half-sleep, setting a very creative atmosphere by releasing an avalanche of ideas that fly out in shapes of sharp, colorful stars shining for several moments, and then ceasing, revealing a most pleasing fireworks show to my senses, pouring out the inside tension, turning it into working energy; getting my brain pleasantly tired after the physical-like exercise.

My memory, a punctual watchman, catches each color of the fireworks carefully, putting it into the safe of my subconscious, from where it is unlocked by the right, matching key of a similar example during next study.

I enjoy the exciting atmosphere that lets me overcome all troubles that I might have approaching grammar... . I will forever remember wonderful feelings of glistening happiness passed to me through *hateful* grammar, of the most mysterious messages of the adventure of discovery that I have ever got, that I must pass further... .

Nevertheless, I have noticed that generally most students of any foreign language hate grammar which attracts me, making me wonder about the sense of involving it in the process of learning/teaching a foreign language at all.

Often I hear something like: "These damn articles!" (or tenses, intensifiers, quantifiers, partitives...) And as there are students of German in our faculty, I can hear these witty remarks with German terminology, as well. When I listen to young people considering foreign languages in order to decide which one to study, they often regard them from the point of view of the quantity and quality of grammar. "Difficult" means in their jargon "with a great deal of hated, sophisticated grammar". What would happen if

grammar lessons simply disappeared from schools, and we tried to learn languages the way pre-school children do?

They don't need to be taught the essential grammar of their mother tongue. They even don't need to learn their mother tongue by effort; they experience it and remember it without consciously memorizing their experience. What's more, they don't use logic much, as they can feel things happening. Unlike the older students, they are usually eager learners as the process of learning has been developing spontaneously with them until the moment when schools start to systematically spoil their enthusiasm by constantly pushing them to conform, regardless of their individuality.

But back to the importance of grammar. Why teach it at all? Perhaps for the fun of considering a relative clause

"Her husband who is a big executive / ,who is a big executive, does the dishes each evening."

from the point of view of the number of husbands (A few husbands, without commas? -- As you please.) or, perhaps... . Try to persuade someone that grammar has a special charm and beauty for these who are sensitive enough to reveal it.

In the particular situation of approaching a foreign language in the classroom, it might help as a clue to string words together. Similarly, Rutherford and Smith (1988) state that "What is crucial for learners to know is how grammar functions in alliance with words and context for the achievement of meaning..." (Rutherford, Smith, 1988: 153).

Perhaps there is a way to help students experience, feel, remember and enjoy grammar.

B. Confronting one's experience with other sources can bring an idea of possible betterment.

In my own experience with accepting grammar, first I must imagine, feel the situation; then, I simply imitate an appropriate structure.

Let's take an example: "The film will have already started by the time we get to the cinema." Before my inner sight I see myself with some friend; we are rushing through the night in a rainy city when he shouts this message at me. Suddenly, we appear in front of a big cinema with a shining sign above the entrance. As we are getting inside, I can hear distinct voices; in the dark we are looking for our seats, our senses attracted by sounds and music on the shining screen. The film has already started.

When someone mentions "present perfect continuous", I imagine a yogi building a curious mosque, moving his hands very slowly. When I approach him, asking for the meaning of his act, he turns to me, a concentrated expression on his face, with words: "I have been building this building for many years." And I exactly understand what he means.

With any past simple I hear the Beatles' song "Yesterday"; all past simple happened, in my imagination, yesterday. I enjoy the number of English tenses as they describe various situations much more precisely than the three Czech tenses can do.

Now the question on my mind is: Does the same way of perceiving structures work with other students? Children? Gerngross -- Puchta's book Creative Grammar Practice (1992) for young learners has attracted my eye. It is based on the idea that "Young learners especially (and some adults too) seem to be more at ease with holistic methods of learning grammar in which structures are acquired subconcsciously..." (Gerngross, Puchta, 1992: 2).

One of my last supervising teachers is persuaded by her experience that generally the best way of explaining grammar to children is the description of rules in Czech. Nevertheless, she admits it isn't the only way; an explanation both in Czech and English, or an explanation in English is possible as well.

It might be true that beginners especially will approach much of L2 through their mother tongue, but as long as they are progressing, they might accommodate themselves to thinking in L2 and building on what they have in L2 with less and less interference of L1. Brown (1987) suggests that:

> Human beings approach any new problem with an existing set of cognitive structures and through insight, logical thinking, and various forms of hypothesis testing, call upon whatever prior experiences they have had and whatever cognitive structures they possess to attempt a solution.
> (Brown, 1987: 89)

Another view of the problem is the question of "describing rules". There are other ways of presenting grammar and some of them might require

little if any descriptive language; here as the most destructive description, I consider actively attracting a learner's attention to various more or less working analogies between L1 and L2 structures, usually expressed through L1 words like "This is the same/similar as . . . . . in our language.". It simply never is the same picture, and it is up to the learner to work out the difference, not to learn the L1 supplied with L2 words.

Since the first moment I approached English from the point of view of a teacher, I have been playing with the idea of involving into the learning/teaching process as little L1 as possible without it being to the detriment of a learner's accepting L2.

What made this idea come on my mind? The abundance of Czech language that I experienced starting English with Czech teachers and observing children learning elementary English from Czechs.

What exactly have I noticed in most of these lessons? On one hand, there was an abundance of playful activities with small pupils of about 6- and 7-years-old, involving all kinds of sensual perception. These ranged from riddles and songs accompanied by clapping hands, knocking on the desks, or miming, through colorful pictures drawn by the teacher on the blackboard before the eyes of children, to games recquiring physical response.

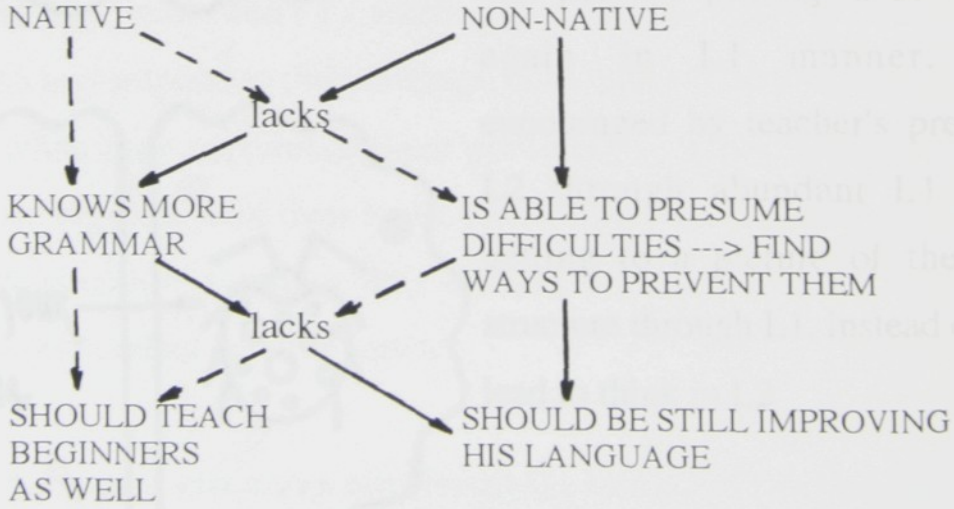
On the other hand, there was much less playing with English and more description of the language through L1 with older pupils of about 10, 11, 12, 13, ... and hardly any activities involving more senses and creative fantasy with students of about 17, 18 years old -- the approach here was rather academic. Sometimes, observing older pupils and students learning,

I wondered whether the teacher was working with a group of linguists, rather than students of the language.

C. Examining the idea closely may lead to a theory.

The simplest way of reducing the amount of L1 in L2 lessons could lead through introducing native speakers into lessons, as they might be forced to help themselves by whatever means in order to be understood if they were not able to express themselves by students' L1.

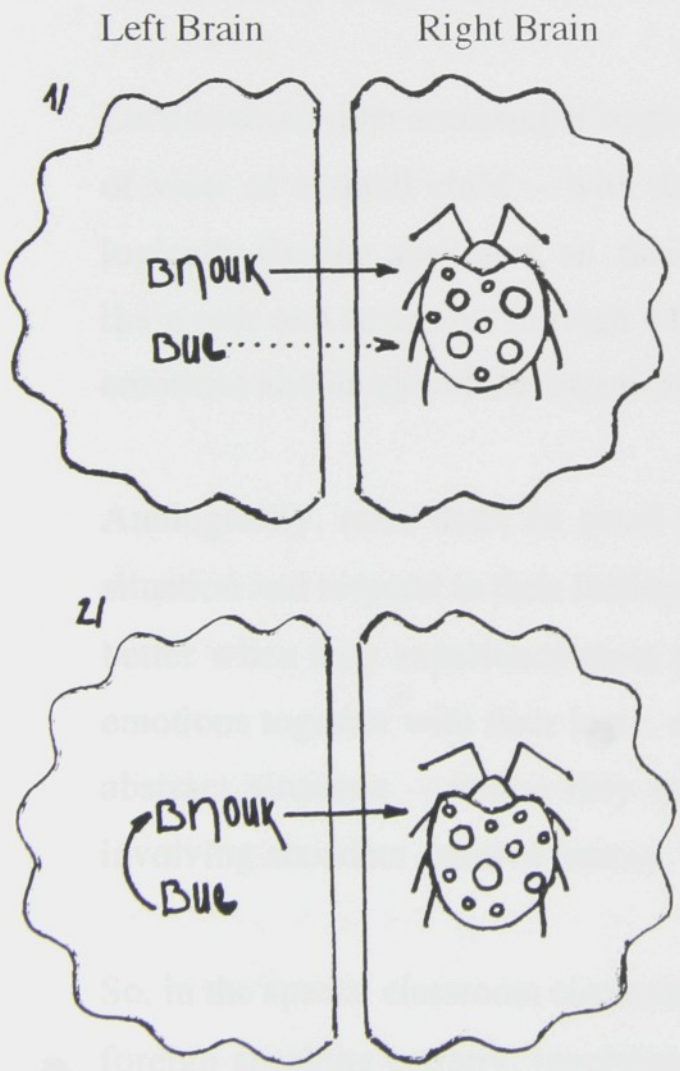
While this could more or less work when practising L2 with focus on listening, speaking, reading, or writing, I am strongly persuaded it would not work when starting to build elementary grammar.
What has persuaded me? Mr.Alexander's discussion of the equality of a native and non-native grammar teacher (from the ELT Conference in Liberec in 1994):



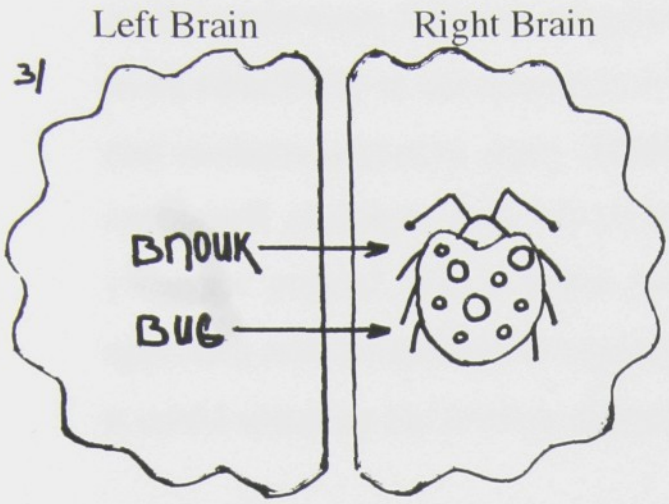
I believe that in elementary stages of classroom English the ability to presume and prevent grammar problems is crucial. I don't believe that an

abundant description of L2 by L1, which I came across mostly, is the best way of solving them.

Besides teachers' lack of fluent English and creative powers, what makes their L1 and, consequently, learners' L1 interfere with learners' building up L2? Perhaps adults and some older students tend to experience L2 through finding excessive analogies in their L1 (see pictures bellow) making L1 grammar and vocabulary interfere with their L2 and later possibly producing L1 supplied with L2 words, untill accomodating themselves to thinking in L2, if ever:



1. When learning L2, new words and structures aren't being connected with their pictures right away.
2. The learner is subconsciously helping himself by decoding L2 (key) words through L1 words -- pictures, and perhaps putting them together again in L1 manner, being encouraged by teacher's presenting L2 through abundant L1. He is getting to a picture of the whole structure through L1, instead of being lead to think in L2



3. Familiarization means strenghtening the new connections of L2 words -- appropriate pictures and accepting the L2 manner of putting them together, speech becomes fluent.

I am persuaded that older pupils and students need to play with words and structures as well in order to let themselves experience L2 painlessly, without clumsily getting to a point through the teacher's and their own L1.

Let's now consider accepting a language from the other side, from the point of view of a small child -- with them it's different; they don't learn by logically finding analogies, as their strongly developed fantasy supplies the words and structures through which they imitate adults with abundant emotions and images of the experiences they are responding to.

Analogically, rules don't fit small pupils because they need to feel the situation and respond to their feelings. Also adults tend to remember things better when they experience them personally -- when they involve their emotions together with their logic, rather than pure logically analysing an abstract situation -- unless they are able to color abstract schemes by involving abundant creative fantasy.

So, in the special classroom circumstances, instead of experiencing life in a foreign speaking country, involving emotions and creative fantasy might reduce the further describing L2 in L1 to a minimum.

At the same time, the most interesting question is how to make this theory work effectively in the special classroom circumstances as the older pupils and students naturally enjoy different activities than the youngest pupils and small children. And which kinds of activities work best with the youngest pupils? Where is the most effective balance of the emotional approach and the analogical approach? And what is it good for? Above all, it could speed up the process of learning.

Then there is the question of interference of L1 into thinking in L2 -- some connections that have occurred in wrong places as the meaning of words similar in their L1 and L2 forms is often shifted, and vice versa -- the same experience may be described by different means in L1 and L2. Let's take, for example, the English idiom "Get off my back" that re-expressed in Czech as "Vlez mi na záda" literally means just the opposite.

The last, but not the least reason for involving creative powers in the process of learning may be the joy of the miracle of creation.

D. A very interesting question is how to make the theory of reducing L1 in L2 lessons work in the special classroom circumstances.

From what I have been experiencing as a student of a language and as a teacher-beginner, I am especially attracted by the lessons that vary from the beginning to the end not only for concentration on practising/presentation different aspects of the language (listening, speaking, reading, writing), or methods of their practising/presentation (group work, pair work, individual work, using tape, book, other visuals), but, above all, for changing students' positions, placing and replacing the materials and eliciting more kinds of

answers at once than just the oral or written one.

Here I would mention that the 8-9-year-old students enjoyed *performing* in the front -- describing pictures in pairs or individually; surrounding me in one group standing by a big poster hung on the blackboard; all writing on the blackboard at once; forming a single row and one after another being given quick questions; sitting around one table playing the dominoes or pexeso; quick moving around the classroom. Actually, in the formal way of sitting on their chairs, they were placed only for individual drawing, copying from the blackboard or ocasional working with books.

The 6-7-year-old pupils were able to sit on their chairs paying attention for about 7 minutes; then they got inattentive, impatient and disruptive, so often I let them move around the classroom playing a game; draw on the blackboard; stand in a circle singing and miming a song; hide under the desks, behind the blackboard, or stand on the desks during a game. Even sitting on the carpet in one close group helped as they probably felt better being close to each other and the teacher when asked to cooperate with each other and me.

There were puppets talking with the youngest pupils and me, eliciting pupils' introducing themselves, verbs in present continuous that were mimed as well, pupils' demonstrating prepositions. Pupils loved to play animals using sketches, prepared by myself and colored by themselves, as *masks* for performing a *fairytale* eliciting names of animals and the phrase *Come in* . We used cut outs of food and a small table cloth for eliciting a simple table conversation.

The 8-9-year-old students loved writing on the blackboard and describing

what they saw on a big poster or on pictures that children or I had prepared; matching cards with colorful words with pictures placed in the four corners of the room; playing the dominoes with *broken sentences* like *The lion /is in the street/is brown. The fish /is in the sky/is yellow. Crocodiles/are in the house...* eliciting the vocabulary on the previous pictures with colorful cards and the difference between *is/are*.

Another group of 12-year-old students got simple self-made maps of their home-town and they colored and finished them; then, we were practising vocabulary on various buildings in a town through pointing at the maps and answering the question *Is there something somewhere?* Describing: *There is something somewhere.*; introducing the modal *can -- possibility* by eliciting what is possible to do in various places and inventing curious actions with *can -- ability*.

Generally, I would say that students enjoyed *taking part* in preparing some activities like drawing, finishing or coloring visuals, rather than simply being offered them finished. They loved being allowed to answer by drawing and describing their pictures while at the same time pointing at various objects in the pictures; miming verbs when pronouncing them; miming and singing songs; performing roles demonstrating and pronouncing them; touching objects in the classroom on given colors.

My attention is attracted by the idea of multiplied answers combined with using materials that set a curious situation (forming nonsense sentences of the colorful dominoes; miming strange combinations of verbs in present continouous: *Children are sitting, sleeping and playing.*; eliciting curious actions practising *can -- ability* ; jumping on the desks for eliciting the preposition *on*) or imitate a real-life situation (working with simple maps

of students' home-town, eliciting buildings in a town through the structure *There is something somewhere.* and the question *Is there something somewhere?* and the modal *can*).

Eliciting a combination of answers, rather than either the oral or written or physical one separately, might enable learners with limited L2, especially at the lower-levels, to express themselves precisely by evoking creative fantasy and the sense of humour, which releases tension and lets one feel free. The multiplied answers might prevent lower-level L2 learners from getting frustrated by the lack of L2 and, consequently, helping themselves with L1 when responding to feelings evoked by ideas-rich materials (for example, students' made pictures, visuals I prepared).

I have been noticing that the learners with very limited language actively used/practised tend to feel comfortable when repeatedly exposed to a situation eliciting certain structures/words in a light, enjoyable way, until they get familiar with them for that time. I mean up to the moment when the oral response more or less dominates, which may be a signal either for leaving that one for the time being and returning to it during next lessons or modifying the same for eliciting other structures/words.

It's fine when several activities can alternate as the lesson goes on; each lasting regarding the students' tastes, differing in the L2 elicited in various combinations of responses and the placing and replacing of the students and materials. Together they may turn the whole lesson into a colorful spectacle of perceptions fully employing the learners' attention, which is crucial especially with the youngest pupils as their concentration span is short.

With the learners manipulating a wider range of L2 structures/words, the language itself, elicited in certain ways, can evoke a variety of beautiful scenes in front of the eyes of the learners -- just as Gerngross and Puchta in their Creative Grammar Practice (1992) suggest.

In the next part of my paper I am going to describe my experience with teaching three groups of pupils (6-7-year-old, 8-9-year-old, 11-12-year-old), using all the ideas I have mentioned so far.

II. Lesson Plans I.-V.; Reflective Teaching

School: First Private Basic School in Hradec Králové

	Class Profile
Class	1 st
Age	6-7years
Number of pupils	9
Girls/Boys	3 girls, 6 boys
Level	beginners
Textbook	Snip Snap
Lessons per week	3 x 45 min (English a compulsory subject)
Teaching problems	two disruptive children
Learning problems	two children with LBD, one extremely slow child
What was positive	supervising teacher, a big classroom

Comment:

1. Class

This was the pupils' first year of English, first year at school.

2. Age

They were very playful, still needed to be in motion, which we exploited in a lot of games requiring physical response.

3. Number of pupils

Nine was a fine number as we could easily cooperate in one close group (pupils standing around me by the blackboard, sitting close together on the carpet, playing games). I had plenty of time to approach them individually.

4. Girls/Boys Ratio

I would say at this age they don't tend to make separate boys' and girls' groups; they had no problems playing in a mixed group/cooperating boys with girls.

5. Level

They were complete beginners unused to classroom English; on the other hand, they learnt surprisingly quickly to respond to a wide variety of my commands: Come here, Come to me, Come to the blackboard, Go to the front, Make a big circle, Sit on the carpet, Sit on the ground, Sit on your chairs, Go to your places, Repeat, Sing, Count, Once more, Stop, Sit down, Stand up; questions: How are you? What are you/they doing? What color is it? How many?

6. Textbook

Full of pictures as pupils had been learning just oral English for the time being; accompanied with a workbook and a tape. Children easily managed more demanding extra tasks introduced mostly through games involving physical response.

Up to the time I started teaching them, the following items had been taught: numbers 1 - 10, colors, a few animals (pig, cat, dog, chick, sheep, cow, hen), two songs.

We covered (pupils pronouncing actively): animals: fish, turtle, hedgehog, lion, mouse, rabbit, snail, frog; verbs in present continuous: eating, running, dancing, singing, playing, reading, sleeping, clapping hands; phrases: Come in. How are you? Where are you? Here you are. Simple table conversation: Milk or cocoa? -- Milk, please -- Here you are -- Thank you; food: bread, roll, milk, cocoa, apple, pear; parts of body: head, eyes, nose, mouth, hand, legs; prepositions: on, behind, under; two songs, one riddle.

7. Lessons per week

3 x 45 minutes with one after-lunch shortened lesson. I found it fine; pupils sometimes didn't want lessons to end and they wouldn't let me out of the classroom.

8. Teaching problems

One child (LBD) tended to be very disruptive when we were sitting on the carpet, which I usually solved by placing him on a chair behind the group, so he could observe the whole group at once as a show, which satisfied him very much and often really helped.

9. What was positive

The classroom was big and carpeted, which enabled us to play on the carpet, move around the classroom; there were a lot of toys. The supervising teacher, who would come and play a pupil, which was funny and encouraging.

Summary 1

A. Pre-lesson plan commentary

i. General lesson plan/topic/objective

We went through a variety of games (each lasting about 7-10 min) involving physical, drawn, oral responses; all of them were taught/practised several times in previous lessons.

ii. Thesis Focus

Quick alternation of various activities involving combined answers (drawn, physical, oral) creates a scenery of emotional perceptions that fully employ a learner's attention and, perhaps, enable learners to catch ideas without abundant L1 descriptions.

iii. Anticipated teaching problems, possible solutions

Students were unable to be still and attentive for a longer time -- I tried to exploit their taste to be in motion all the time in a variety of games involving physical movement (Little Hands, Mr.Blind, Molecules, Baby says).

iv. Lesson Aims

Practising pronunciation of several useful phrases: Where are you? How are you? Very well, thank you., Here you are (1, 2, 5, 7), practising pronunciation of numbers 1-10 (3), getting numbers meaningful (4), practising a simple table conversation and food (5), practising verbs in present continuous (6).

v. Materials: colorful chalks, a scarf, a small table cloth, cut-outs of food, Simon and Lottie, a puppet, Snip-Snap tape.

B. Lesson Summary

1. Little hands (Snip Snap tape)

Good Morning, children -- come to me -- make a big circle -- (teacher gesturing) -- we will be singing -- singing and miming *Little Hands* with teacher and tape, twice.

Aim: Practising pronunciation of the known phrases through singing.

2. Mr. Blind (self-invented)

Eliciting what blind means, playing: one pupil's eyes covered with a scarf, the others spread around the classroom, a dialogue: Where are you -- Here -- Where are you -- Here -- each pupil who is found sits on the carpet.

Aim: Getting meaningful/practising useful phrases of the song. (Where are you -- Here), taking physical exercise.

3. Starting rocket (observed on the last teaching practice)

Come to the blackboard -- who will draw a rocket? -- starting rocket several times: a rocket on the blackboard (see attached material), students counting from 10 to 1, a colorful strip is made for each number, then the rocket flies to the Moon -- an arrow to the Moon is made, then the activity continues by drawing a man on the Moon and pronouncing a riddle: There is a man on the Moon -- and his name -- is Mr.Spoon -- a spoon is drawn on the blackboard. Teacher lets students draw all the pictures by themselves and doesn't help with pronunciation of the riddle, then teacher eliciting/making meaningful "His name is..." by asking for students' names, getting them answer "My name is...(at the beginning, when students had difficulties with the backward range of numbers, a stairs with numbers 10 - 1 was drawn on the blackboard.

Aim: Practising numbers, pronunciation of the known phrases.

4. Molecules (borrowed from pupils' physical education lessons)

Now we will play molecules -- spread around -- and now -- make three -- Fine -- count yourselves -- spread around and make -- five -- ... students spread around the classroom, making groups on given numbers, counting themselves aloud.

Aim: Getting numbers 1-9 meaningful through playing, getting individuals to count the others.

5. Breakfast on grass (inspired by pictures in Snip Snap)

A small table cloth is spread on the carpet, all pupils sitting around, cut-outs of roll, bread, milk, cocoa, apple, pear on the *table* (see attached material), pupils holding pictures of Simon and Lottie, pronouncing a simple table conversation: Milk or cocoa? -- Milk, please -- Here you are -- Thank you. -- pupils changing roles, everybody has a chance to play Simon and Lottie.

Aim: Practising food, table conversation.

6. Baby says (modified from *Simon says*)

Students standing in a big circle, teacher talking with Baby The Monkey and to pupils, pupils are miming verbs in present continuous: Baby, what are children doing? -- Baby says that children are -- dancing -- ...; combining the verbs in a curious way: Children are sitting and sleeping, dancing and jumping, playing, reading and singing...; eliciting verbs from individuals and the whole group: Children, what are you doing? -- Stana -- what are you doing?; using the rules of *Simon says*.

Aim: Practising/getting meaningful sitting, sleeping, singing, dancing, playing, reading, running, eating; combining the words in curious ways: "Baby says that children are dancing and eating, reading and singing" -- a great fun -- children had to do all miming quietly and only answer "What are you doing?" -- now pupils answering confidently -- the whole sentences could be elicited -- "I am reading and singing."

7. Little hands

The same song as at the beginning of the lesson.

Aim: Warming up at the end of the lesson.

Reflection

1. Little hands

Singing is a fine way of practising useful words or phrases and I think my students enjoyed this way of practising as they were often competing who of them was able to sing and mime on his own, without any help of the other students or the teacher. Some of them were able to memorize quite long texts this way.

2. Mr.Blind

This was one of the students' favourite games as they often demanded playing it and as long as they were allowed to, they were willing to practise *Where are you -- Here* until their pronunciation got perfect.

3. Starting the rocket

I think getting students to count backward is a way to get them realize the meaning of the numbers until they memorize the new range. Also they learnt to introduce themselves via talking to Mr.Spoon. I noticed that children were much more willing to practise when I invited the whole

group to the blackboard and let them do all the drawing by themselves, at these moments they were able to pronounce the number range and the riddle on their own, and they were enthusiastic to repeat the whole activity twice or thrice.

4. Molecules

I think it was one of the best ways to make numbers meaningful as each time all students had to count for themselves or aloud the mates in a group in order to decide whether to join in or not, also their taste of being permanently in motion was satisfied well.

5. Breakfast on grass

Children loved role playing with the table cloth in front of them and cut outs of food colored by themselves as each time all of them were very enthusiastic about being given a role and they spontaneously each practised both roles; most difficult for them seemed the phrase *Here you are*, but as its pronunciation was practised through the song Little Hands as well, all of them managed it quite well. Other table phrases could be included: Pass me the bread, please. or Could/Would you pass me the bread, please. -- Here you are. -- Thank you.

6. Baby says

I think children enjoyed their class puppet -- pet talking to me and to them as they played enthusiastically. I wanted them first to accept the verbs passively, so I made them only mime; then I started questioning them and they were answering with one word -- the verbs, we started with four verbs that were demonstrated by pictures of personified animals (a dancing cat, a playing dolphin, a reading turtle, a singing bird -- see attached material). Children colored them, mimed them, then we added several verbs that I

discovered children knew (jumping, sleeping, sitting), and we continued through adding more and more verbs when children seemed to manage the previous ones, combining several verbs together, using the rules of Simon says, starting to elicit whole sentences: I am dancing., I am playing. Children had no problems using the verbs actively when in a different situation I asked *What are they/is she doing?* when eliciting a description of a picture in the book, on the blackboard.

D. Conclusion/Action

Most of these games were gradually introduced and practised during a period of three weeks and students seemed to be enjoying them, as often they suggested which of them they would like to play again. I was trying to modify the games by at least extending the vocabulary or phrases each time when students seemed to manage the items taught.

Other games that we played:

Prepositions (Observed in a French lesson in England.): Students standing by their desks, demonstrating prepositions according to the teacher's commands: Everybody is -- under the desk -- in front of the desk -- behind the desk -- on the desk... .

Little House (inspired by a Czech fairytale): A big, colorful house drawn on the outer leaf of the blackboard, students coming to the *house*, knocking on the *door* and *entering* -- hiding behind the leaf of the blackboard. Students were using self-colored sketches of animals as *masks* (see attached material): Little house, little house -- who is staying in you? -- Me -- a pig, me -- a frog, ... -- Come in! ...

Touching Colors (self-invented): Students running to various objects on given colors, touching them: What can be -- red? -- What can be -- green?

Picking Vocabulary (self-invented; used as a preparatory activity for Little House, Breakfast on grass): Pictures with animals (cut-outs of food covered with sheets of paper) spread on the carpet with pictures to the ground: Where is the turtle? -- students pointing at a random sheet, teacher uncovering -- No -- what is it? -- the pig -- Where is the turtle? -- Here -- Yes -- What is it? -- turtle (each found animal is excluded, the game continues until all animals are found).

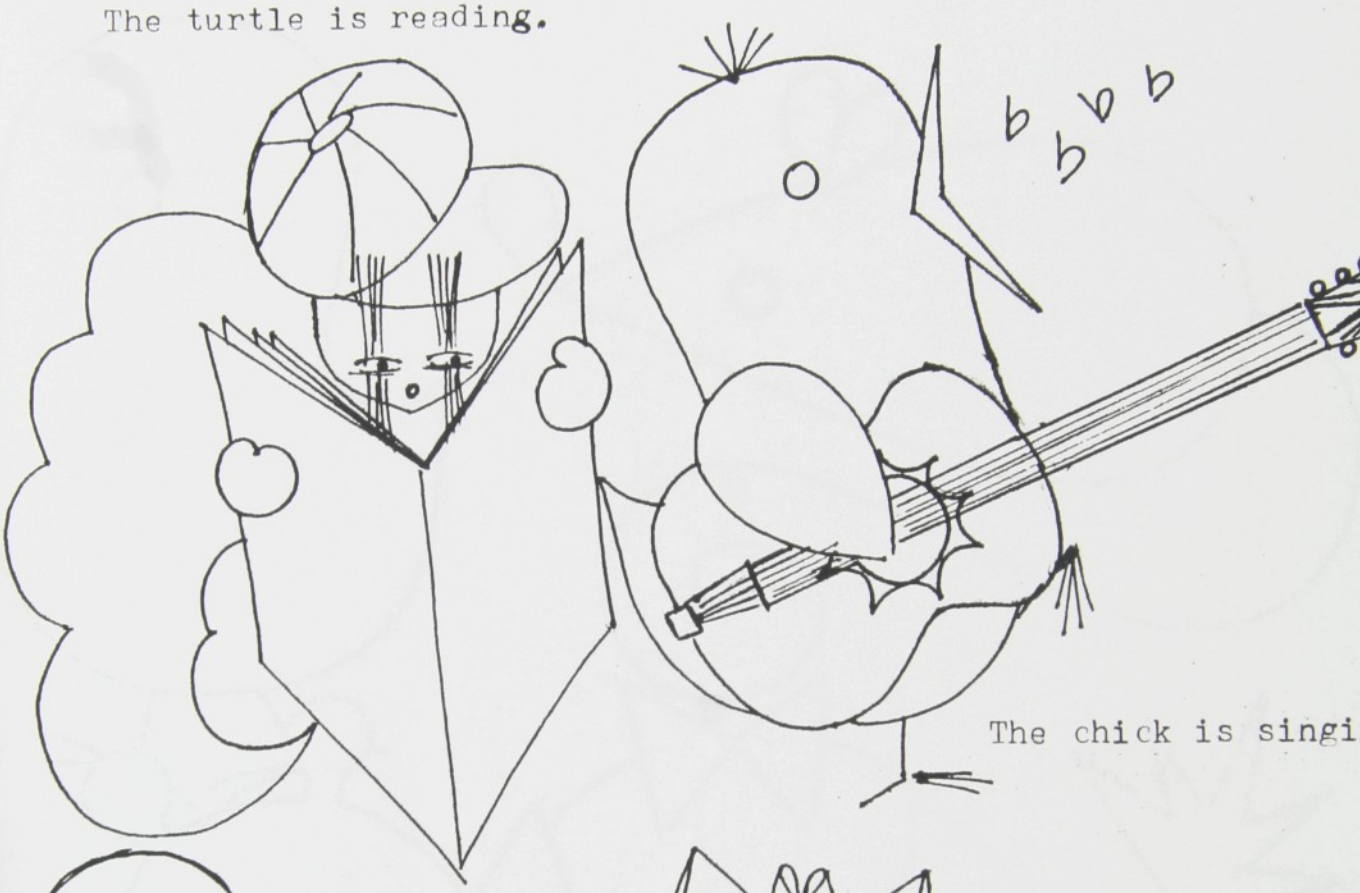
Starting a rocket /on the blackboard/

Cut outs of food for Breakfast on Grass

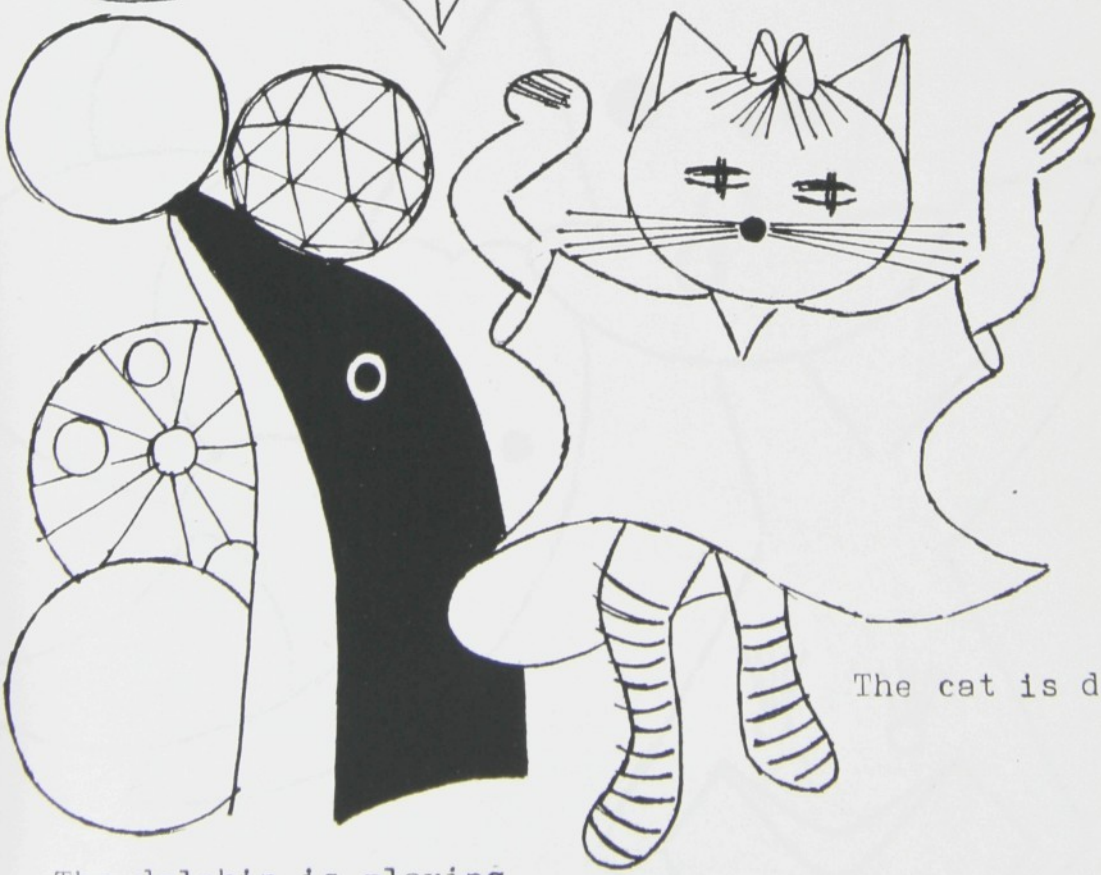
/double sized/

Personified animals for introducing Present continuous

The turtle is reading.



The chick is singi

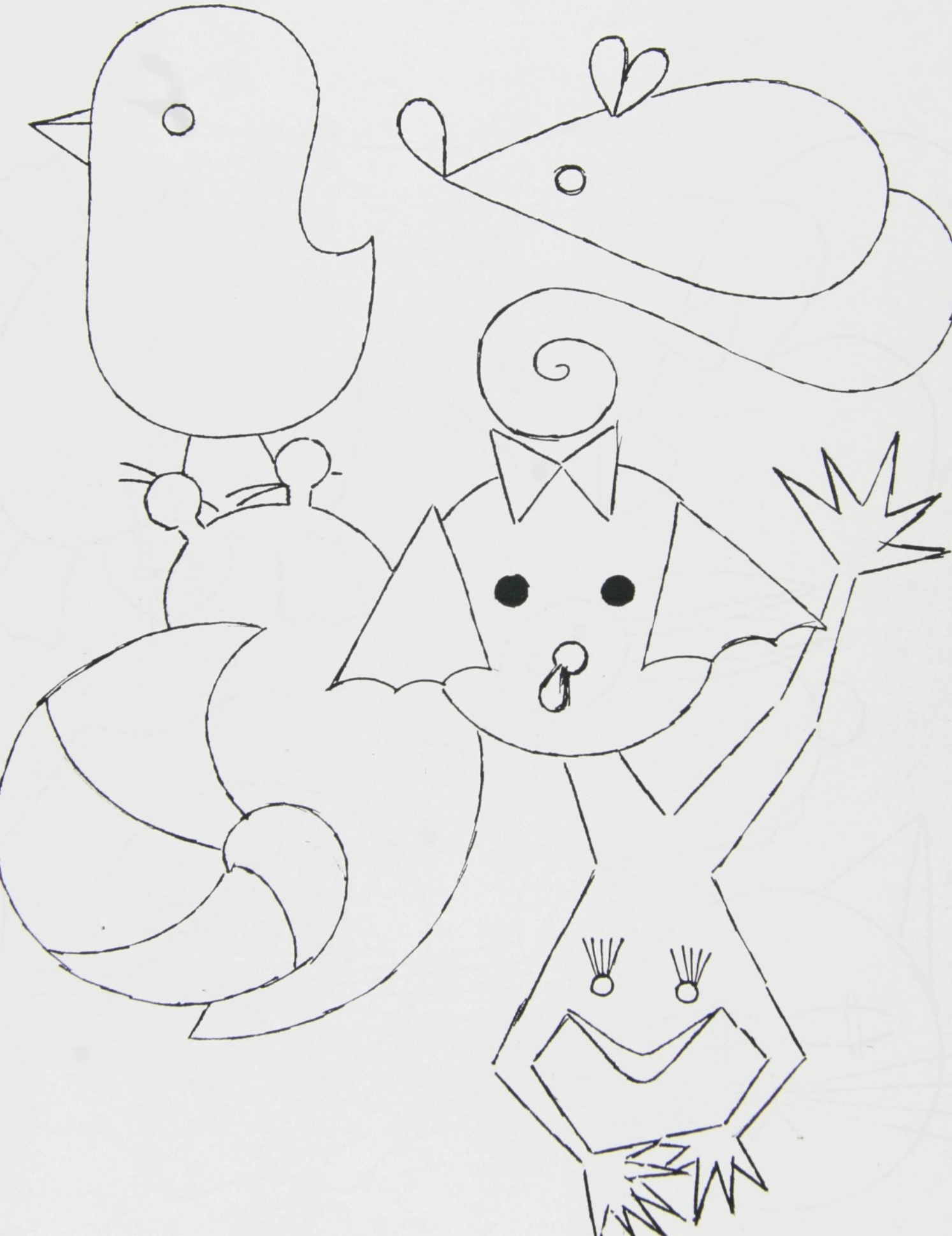


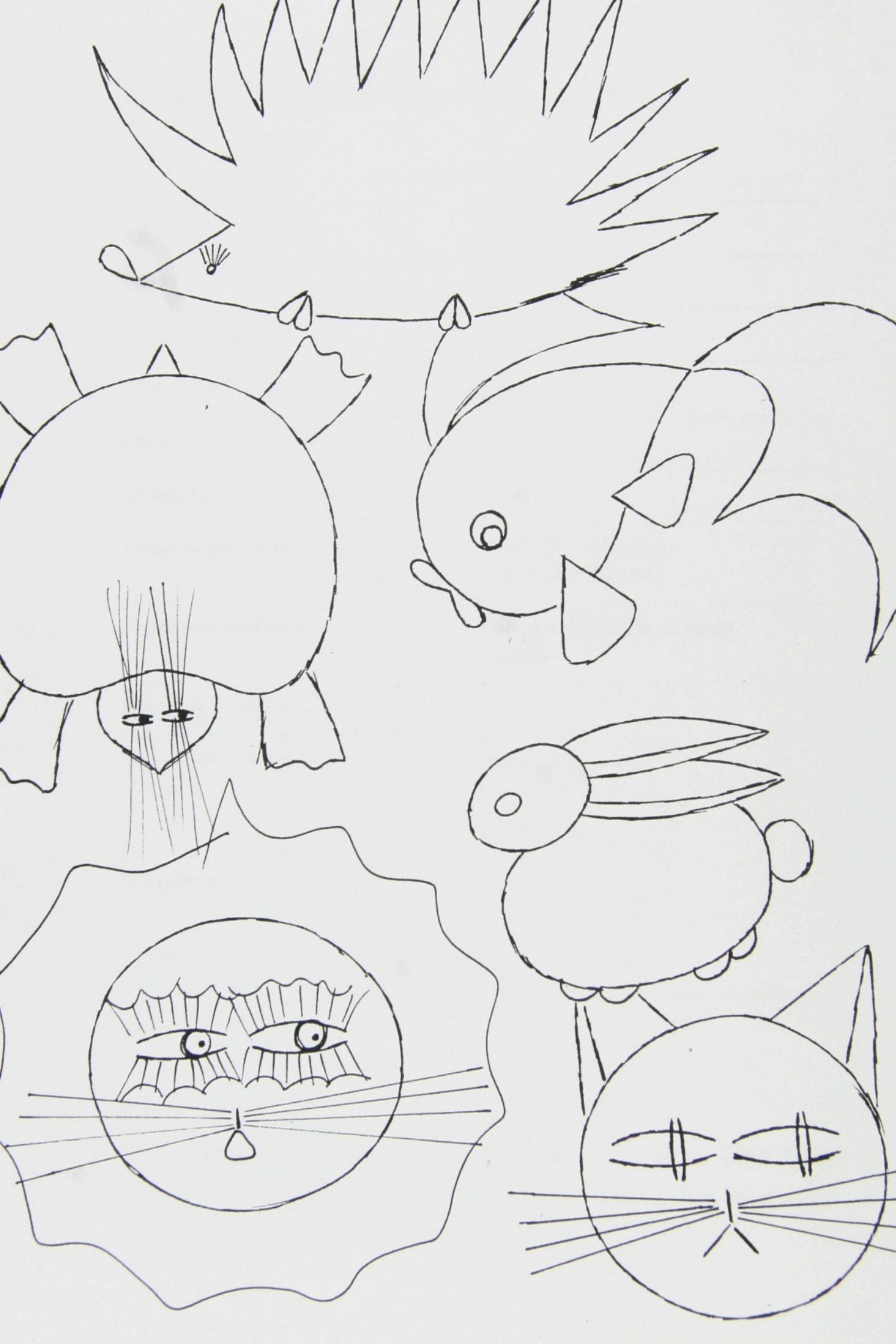
The cat is dancing.

The dolphin is playing.

Sketches for performing the Fairytale

/each of them was on a separate A4 sheet/





School: First Private Basic School in Hradec Králové

Class Profile

Class	3rd
Age	8 - 9 years
Number of pupils	7
Girls/Boys	3 boys, 4 girls
Level	beginners
Textbook	Tip Top 1
Lessons per week	3 x 45 min (English a compulsory subject)
Teaching problems	1 student disruptive, a small classroom
Learning problems	no
What was positive	supervising teacher

Comment:

1. Class

This was a third year class. It was the students' 3rd year of studying English.

2. Age

These children were very energetic and enthusiastic; on the other hand, they had quite a short concentration span, so activities had to be changed often.

3. Number of pupils

Seven was a fine number as they could easily cooperate with each other in one close group (sitting around one table, playing a game, standing in a group around a poster, all writing on the blackboard at once...), which encouraged their participation a lot and so prevented them from being disruptive. I had plenty of time to approach them individually.

4. Girls/Boys Ratio

All students were sitting in one single row, boys and girls separately, which wasn't a very good placement for a group work as they couldn't face each other, so I let them sit like that only for individual drawing, copying from the blackboard; mostly I got them to sit around one table, stand around a poster, move around the classroom... .

5. Level

The pupils were beginners completely unused to classroom English, which caused them difficulties when I started teaching there -- I often used bilingual commands and a lot of gestures until they accommodated themselves to responding to my English. On the other hand, they were very enthusiastic learners; especially they enjoyed writing on the blackboard and working with tactile aids.

6. Textbook

They used Tip Top 1 for the first year; it was the beginners' book. Up to the time I started teaching them the following items had been taught: colors, alphabet, numbers 1 - 20, a few animals, several songs, a few words like star, car, ball... I would say their English didn't completely correspond to the third year of learning it, perhaps it was caused by alternating English teachers; I am comparing with two third classes that I observed during my

last teaching practice.

During my teaching we covered: pronunciation/spelling -- rooms, furniture, animals, vocabulary *in the garden, in the ZOO, in the house, in the street,* vocabulary with English teaching programmes on computers: heart, mug, pumpkin, hand, eagle..., orally -- first short sentences on above plus colors, numbers.

The textbook -- full of nice pictures, puzzles; on the other hand, too simple for these children as they managed very well working with various additional/more demanding materials.

7. Lessons per week

3 x 45 min, one after-lunch lesson shortened; we found it OK.

8. Teaching Problems

One pupil tended to be disruptive, which was caused by his higher level of English, and so he tended to be bored -- I tried to solve this by choosing more difficult tasks for him or letting him play a teacher -- help me to correct the others, help them. They had a very small classroom which limited us in activities involving quick changes of students' places.

9. What was positive

The supervising teacher. He encouraged my ideas in every way (provided us with photocopies, hard papers, toys... according to my instructions), gave me a lot of freedom and good advice.

Summary 2

A. Pre-lesson plan commentary

i. General lesson theme/topic/objective

Playing with visuals of a garden, the Zoo, a house and a street and cards with words written in colors (B1,2,3,4), playing the dominoes (B5).

ii. Thesis Focus

Moving around the class, changing students' positions, replacing visuals and quickly changing activities may help attract students' attention, get them participate and do their best, which may facilitate learning, enable students to understand without involving Czech.

iii. Anticipated teaching problems/possible solutions

I knew students wouldn't be able to form sentences right away, so I wanted them to take their time, accept my sentences passively first, making them feel the situation they were responding to.

iv. Lesson Aims

Introducing new vocabulary (B1,3), eliciting/practising the known vocabulary (B2), introducing/practising simple descriptive sentences (B4,5), practising the difference between *is/are* (B5).

v. Materials

Self-made visuals of a garden, the Zoo, a house, a street, cards with words written in colors of the real objects, the dominoes with broken sentences.

B. Lesson Summary

1. Presentation of four places (garden, house, street, Zoo; about 5 min)

a. Teacher putting four pictures on the blackboard (see attached material), students observing. -- Do you like them? -- What's this? -- teacher eliciting three known words (house, garden -- two students knew, street -- one student knew), then teacher pointing at random pictures, pronouncing the words and getting students to repeat in a choir and individually.

b. Teacher pointing quickly at random pictures, students giving the words in a choir, individually.

Aim: Familiarizing with three (one known) places through eliciting them from visuals -- preparation for teaching other words, the preposition *in*, and for eliciting meaningful sentences in singular and plural later on.

2. Eliciting/revising the vocabulary taught in previous lessons (animals, furniture; about 10 min)

a. Everybody -- take a chalk and tell me -- What is in the Zoo? (teacher pointing at single animals in *the Zoo*) -- teacher eliciting various words in the four pictures from individuals, getting students to write them in the four columns under the pictures, getting them to correct each other's spelling where needed. (vocabulary elicited: lion, tiger, hen, fish, hedgehog, elephant, cat, cars, window, door, table, chair, TV, bed, stairs, sun, apple).

b. OK -- Everybody -- make a row -- teacher swapping the pictures on the blackboard, pointing at random words quickly, asking *Where is the lion? Where are cars?* -- students one after another pointing at various objects in the pictures, if a particular word isn't in the picture (chair, stairs, tiger...), students just choosing the right place by pointing; each time teacher

pronouncing *in the garden, in the street* ... , as the game is progressing, students starting to use the preposition themselves.

Aim: Eliciting/practising spelling/pronunciation/understanding of vocabulary taught in previous lessons (animals, furniture), eliciting the four new words with the preposition *in*, preparation for extending students' vocabulary.

3. Extending students' vocabulary (about 10 min)

a. Teacher putting the pictures in original positions -- What else have we got? -- teacher taking out cards with words written in colors of the real objects (vocabulary the same as on the dominoes cards), each time pronouncing and pointing at the pictures; offering them to students, getting them to copy words in the four columns (students still in a row by the blackboard).

b. Now -- tell me -- Where is the apple tree? -- Is it in the street? -- in the house? -- in the garden? -- teacher getting students to answer by pointing, giving the oral answers herself: The apple tree is in the garden. ..., students joining in by answering *in the Zoo*, *in the garden*, one or two students trying to give the whole sentences with the teacher's help.

Aim: Extending students' passive vocabulary through matching colorful cards with the pictures, eliciting the preposition *in*, practising spelling of new words, eliciting first meaningful sentences.

4. Eliciting short meaningful sentences with new words (about 20 min)

a. Teacher putting the pictures in the four corners of the room, offering each student several cards, students matching quickly cards with the

pictures, repeating several times, after each game teacher with all students checking all the words by moving to each picture, taking one card after another, giving short sentences: The sun is in the garden. The dog is in the garden. Flowers are in the garden..., some students joining teacher's talk or giving prompts to the teacher by pronouncing parts of the sentences.

Aim: Practising vocabulary, the preposition *in*, creating short sentences through matching colorful cards with the pictures, taking physical exercise.

b. Make pairs -- each pair will get one picture and find its words -- teacher offering four pictures to three pairs, then teacher spreading all colorful cards on one desk -- students quickly searching for words -- Are you finished? -- teacher getting one pair after another to come to the front and present their picture by holding it up, showing cards one after another and pronouncing short sentences: The sun is in the garden. Flowers are in the garden ..., other students checking, helping; the whole activity repeated twice.

Aim: Eliciting short meaningful sentences with the help of visuals and teacher.

5. In the next lesson, after eliciting short sentences the same way as this lesson, students were playing the dominoes with broken sentences -- The fish/is in the sky/is yellow. Crocodiles/are in the house/are green.

Aim: Practising *is/are* and the new vocabulary through putting together broken sentences.

C. Reflection

1. Presentation of the four places

The four colorful pictures in front of the eyes of students immediately attracted their attention and they started to comment on them in Czech, which enabled me spontaneously to elicit the English words. Students seemed to have no problems giving quick answers in a choir or individually when I pointed at random pictures (all of them already knew house, one student knew street and two students knew garden); that's why we didn't spend much time on it.

2. Eliciting/practising the vocabulary taught in previous lessons

a. Through eliciting the known vocabulary I wanted to involve students' fantasy in practising by getting them to think out not only what they saw, but all possible words matching the pictures they knew; I wanted to encourage their self-confidence by the feeling that they actually were able to describe the new pictures on their own, so it wouldn't be a problem to accept some new words. Mainly they were giving furniture and animals as these were the most recently taught items, except for these, their vocabulary was quite poor. They remembered animals better; perhaps it might have been because of animals being closer to their emotions.

b. Here my main objective was to elicit spontaneously the four places with the preposition *in*.. I wanted them to understand its meaning without describing it in Czech; that's why first I tried to elicit just pointing, which I connected with my own comment *in the street*, *in the garden*, ..., after a while one or two students seemed to get the message as they imitated my comment while pointing. I tried encouraging them by orally praising each spontaneous comment, even if it wasn't quite correct (sometimes they tended to drop out *in* or *the*).

3. Extending students' vocabulary

a. These students loved writing on the blackboard, which I tried to exploit for accepting new words with practising spelling at the same time. Perhaps cards with words written in colors of real objects might have helped with familiarizing the meaning, the spelling by getting students to imagine the real objects.

b. As I prepared quite a lot of new vocabulary, I wanted students to accept the words passively first, to play with them; again I praised each pronounced word and the place with the preposition, which seemed to get a competitive element into the activity -- students wanted to be praised; each wanted to be better than the others; they really seemed to be doing their best. Most of them now nicely responded: in the garden, in the Zoo, ..., some of them tried to give the whole sentence with my help (they tended to omit the verb *is/are*).

4. Eliciting short meaningful sentences with new words

a. Here students were still in the process of becoming familiar with the meanings of new words (and spelling passively), only the way changed -- they were taking a bit of physical exercise by quickly moving around the classroom, matching cards with pictures; to my surprise they seemed to have no serious problems with understanding -- after helping each other without my interference all cards were placed correctly. Through checking together I tried eliciting their first meaningful sentences. There were some problems with pronunciation of the long words put into sentences (butterflies, kangaroo, tortoise), which I solved by simple individual drilling. For the time being I was giving the verbs *is*, *are*; later on, when students were giving the sentences quite confidently, I attracted their attention to the fact of *are* -- more whatevers, *is* -- one whatever.

b. Another way of eliciting the short sentences, here students seemed to enjoy presentations in the front as all of them participated very enthusiastically, I think they enjoyed manipulating with visuals, touching colorful vocabulary when matching it with pictures.

5. The next lesson we were practising all words, the preposition *in*, and the short sentences the same ways as this lesson, only the order of activities was different. Through the dominoes (see attached material) I wanted students to accept the difference between *is/are* -- where they seemed to be stuck on which card to use, I helped them by explaining the use of *is* for one whatever and *are* for more whatevers.

D. Conclusion/Action

One of the most successful activities seemed to be the dominoes as students were forming enthusiastically nonsense sentences such as *The fish is in the sky. The lion is blue. Crocodiles are in the house.* ...; they even continued playing for another 15 minutes during the break. As the game was going on, they seemed to have less and less problems with matching cards with correct grammar (plurals with *are*, singulars with *is*). Perhaps fine for practising in next lessons, modifying. Perhaps a better approach could be introduced -- get students to play in smaller groups (3 members; this time 6 students were playing), for they would have more chances to participate.

ZOO

THE DOMINOES

ARE YELLOW	THE DOOR
IS BROWN	BUTTERFLIES
ARE IN THE STREET	FLOWERS
ARE ORANGE	THE CHICKEN
IS YELLOW	THE FENCE
ARE IN THE GARDEN	THE PENGUIN
ARE PINK	THE LION
ARE GREEN	THE FISH
IS IN THE ZOO	THE HOUSE
IS IN THE STREET	THE TORTOISE
IS VIOLET	SHOPS
IS BROWN	THE APPLE-TREE
IS BLUE	THE BUS
ARE IN THE WINDOWS	THE GIRAFFE
IS IN THE GARDEN	HOUSES

ARE IN THE STREET	THE DOG
IS IN THE ZOO	PEOPLE
IS BLACK	CROCODILES
IS RED	THE SUN
IS IN THE HOUSE	THE PARROT
ARE ON THE TREE	THE TIGER
ARE IN THE GARDEN	CARS
IS IN THE ZOO	THE CAR
ARE BLUE	THE TURTLE
ARE IN THE HOUSE	THE CLOUD
IS ORANGE	GRASS
IS IN THE STREET	APPLES
IS IN THE SKY	WINDOWS
ARE RED	THE KANGAROO
ARE IN THE ZOO	LIONS

School: Basic School Jana Arbese, Jablonec nad Nisou

Class Profile

Class	6th
Number of pupils	8
Girls/Boys	6 girls, 2 boys
Level	beginners
Textbook	Project English 1
Lessons per week	3 x 45 min
Teaching problems	one unmotivated student
Learning problems	one extremely slow student, repeating his 6th year
What was positive	supervising teacher

Comment:

1. Class

This was the students' second year of English.

2. Age

Most students were ten-eleven-years old. They were unusually enthusiastic whenever I managed to match their abilities by slowly approaching a task or simplifying a task. They showed a special willingness when an activity that wasn't in their book was introduced.

3. Number of pupils

Eight was fine for a personally approaching each student and for pair work.

The small number enabled involving of each student often.

4. Girls/Boys Ratio

Girls prevailed; boys and girls were used to sitting separately, but they had no problems co-operating boys with girls.

5. Level

They were beginners, but they were used to classroom English as their teacher spoke to them in English quite a lot, so they didn't find it very difficult to respond to my English commands.

6. Textbook

They used Project English 1 for the second year. Just sometimes they seemed to find working with it difficult.

Up to the time I started teaching, they covered: greetings, introducing themselves, asking and saying where something is, what it is called (What's this? It's/it isn't ...), asking for personal information (How old..., What's your name? I am from...), postcard messages, asking and answering about prices (How much is it? It's...), have got/has got, rooms, numbers 0-100, days of the week, possessive pronouns.

We covered: have got/has got, a letter to a penfrined, timetable, our town, there is/are, can -- ability, possibility.

7. Lessons per week

They had 3 x 45 min which we found OK.

8. Teaching problems

There was one unmotivated student, which was probably caused by his lower level of English, so he wasn't able to do tasks that the others had no problems with. I tried to approach him more personally, encouraged him. I think with a lot of encouragement he at least tried to do his best.

9. What was positive

The supervising teacher, who was giving me a lot of useful advice about how to approach students, choose various tasks. Students, who were unusually enthusiastic.

Summary 3

A. Pre-lesson plan commentary

i. General Lesson theme/topic/objective

First we revised briefly school subjects practised in previous lessons (B1a,b), then the new topic OUR TOWN was introduced through searching on maps (B2a,c,3b) and presenting several photos of familiar places in students' hometown (B2b,3b). A game with Magic Box was included in between (3a,4).

ii. I tried to introduce and practise with students structures *There is something somewhere. Is there something somewhere?* through a meaningful context of a situation imitating real life: searching on maps for familiar places, simple descriptions of students' home-town, without me using Czech for explaining their meaning.

iii. Anticipated teaching problems/possible solutions

I didn't dare presume to what extent students would be able to get the meaning of the structures without having them explained in Czech, which they were probably used to, so I decided to find out by trying to elicit a description of the meaning in Czech from students at the end of the activity where they were introduced/practised (see B2d, C2d).

iv. Lesson Aims

Practising school subjects taught in previous lessons (B1a,b), introducing new vocabulary (townhall, theatre, dam, museum) (B2b), introducing/practising the structures*There is something somewhere. Is there something somewhere? Yes, there is. No, there isn't.* (B2c,d,3a,b). Practising *have got/has got* (B4).

v. Materials

A map of The Jizera Mountains, a photocopy of self-made simplified map of Jablonec for each pair, photos of Jablonec (theatre, museum, dams, the townhall), Magic Box -- a paper box containing toys, various objects.

B. Lesson Summary

1. Practising school subjects taught in previous lessons (about 10 min)

a. Teacher eliciting subjects that students remember, then teacher holding up flashcards with school subjects and pronouncing them, students repeating.

b. What subjects have you got today? Tomorrow? ... -- teacher getting students to look at their Czech timetables, at the English timetables prepared in the previous lesson.

Aim: Practising pronunciation/understanding of school subjects (math, English, history, biology, craft, PE, civics, geography, RE, music, art, physics) through mechanical repetition/eliciting from flashcards, then meaningfully by describing students' timetable.

2. Introducing new topic Our town (about 15 min)

a. Teacher holding up a simplified map of Jablonec (see attached material), eliciting from students the symbol of the town (an apple-tree), holding up a map of the Jizera mountains, getting one student to come to the front and find Jablonec on it.

b. Teacher holding up colorful photos of Jablonec (dam, theatre, museum, townhall), eliciting their names in Czech, drilling pronunciation of the English names in a choir, individually.

c. What else is in Jablonec? Is there a supermarket in Jablonec? -- yes -- Where -- show me on the map (students given photocopies of the map) -- What's its name? -- Mana -- Is there a school in Jablonec? -- Where? -- Is there a bank, dam -- how many dams? -- three -- Is there the townhall, theatre, museum? Is there a Zoo in Jablonec? -- No -- Where is it? -- in Liberec. -- after each students' *yes* or *no* teacher giving: *Yes, there is. No, there isn't.* Teacher getting students to point at the maps together with eliciting the oral answers, asking about the names of various institutions; taught before: school, supermarket.

d. Teacher pointing at a short dialogue on the blackboard, eliciting the meaning, getting students to pronounce it in a choir: Is there a school in Jablonec? -- Yes, there is./No, there isn't.

Aim: Setting a meaningful situation for eliciting new vocabulary, new grammar (Is there something somewhere? Yes, there is. No, there isn't.).

3. Playing with the Magic Box, playing with the maps (about 15 min)

a. Would you like to play? -- Yes -- What will you ask me? -- Have you got... -- No *have you got* now -- Look at the blackboard -- What have I asked you about the school, supermarket, dam... ? -- a student hesitantly: Is there a school in Jablonec? -- great -- Is there a whatever in Jablonec? or Is there a car in your Magic Box? (emphasizing *Is there*) -- students asking the same way for various toys, after a correct question teacher answering *Yes, there is* and putting a toy on a student's desk. After *No, there isn't*, the student has another chance to ask.

b. Now I will ask you about Jablonec again -- teacher holding up the colorful photos and asking whether these places are in Jablonec and on the map, eliciting the oral answers together with pointing at the maps; teacher asking about various places that aren't in Jablonec, as well, and eliciting where they are (Jested, Zoo, Big Ben...).

c. Who can describe Jablonec for us? (the teacher pointing at *There is* _____ *in Jablonec*. on the blackboard) -- students with the help of the teacher giving short sentences: There is a school in Jablonec. There is a theatre in Jablonec. ... .

d. Homework -- color the maps, draw your house there and any places that you like or know.

Aim: Practising new grammar with adding *No, there isn't* , *There is something in Jablonec*. actively through working with maps of students'

hometown, playing with the Magic Box. (The Magic Box adapted from previous lessons with the supervising teacher who used it for practising *Have you got whatever?*)

4. Playing with the Magic Box (the rest of the lesson)

Practising *Have got/has got* with the Magic Box the same way as in B3a, when all students have a toy, teacher gets them to describe what they have got: I have got a car and Peter has got a ball. I have got a ball and Petra has got a bell.

Aim: Practising known grammar through playing.

5. The next lesson the structures extended to *Are there/There are/aren't/whatever/in Jablonec/on the map/in the Magic box* via playing in a similar way as this lesson: getting students to describe what they have got on their maps, see in the photos, want from the Magic Box, have on their desks. Vocabulary expanded to hospital, river, bridge, cinema, hotel, inn, post office, bus station, church, car factory, tram terminal, bus stop, bath (students already knew: cinema, hotel, river, bridge, hospital).

Aim: Extending grammar/vocabulary by setting a meaningful or playful situation.

C. Reflection

2. Introducing a new topic OUR TOWN

a. I wanted to encourage students' enthusiasm and warm them up by introducing a personified topic, perhaps evoke their pride by getting them to present their home-town to a visitor (me), all of which might help them

remember the vocabulary and grammar taught next. This idea with the grammar and some vocabulary was inspired by Carnforth, Rebecca's town in Project English 1, p.27. and I re-made this unit as I didn't find any reason to teach some little, unknown place in the UK when regarding students' age; working with their hometown they found much easier, amusing and useful as they perhaps might be able to describe it to a foreigner.

b,c. Here I hoped that practising with searching on the maps imitating students' home-town and eliciting the physical answer (pointing) together with the oral one might have helped students get familiar with new words by involving emotions (personification -- photos of real places in students' hometown) and so encourage their participation in the process of learning. Really they seemed to manage the four new words quickly; especially boys worked very enthusiastically with the maps as they still commented on the position of various places they recognized, estimating real distances and orientation (unfortunately they used Czech as their English wasn't rich enough yet). I wanted them to accept passively *Is there a whatever in Jablonec?* without describing it in Czech. They seemed to catch the meaning from the context given (searching on maps, answering by pointing at various places).

d. By eliciting the meaning of the short dialogue on the blackboard I wanted to make sure really everybody got the message with pointing out the right pronunciation of the structures. They were able to answer my questions: What does the question mean? The answer?

3. Playing with the Magic Box

a. Practising the question of the new structure by involving different activity (modifying students' favourite game) for having a change from

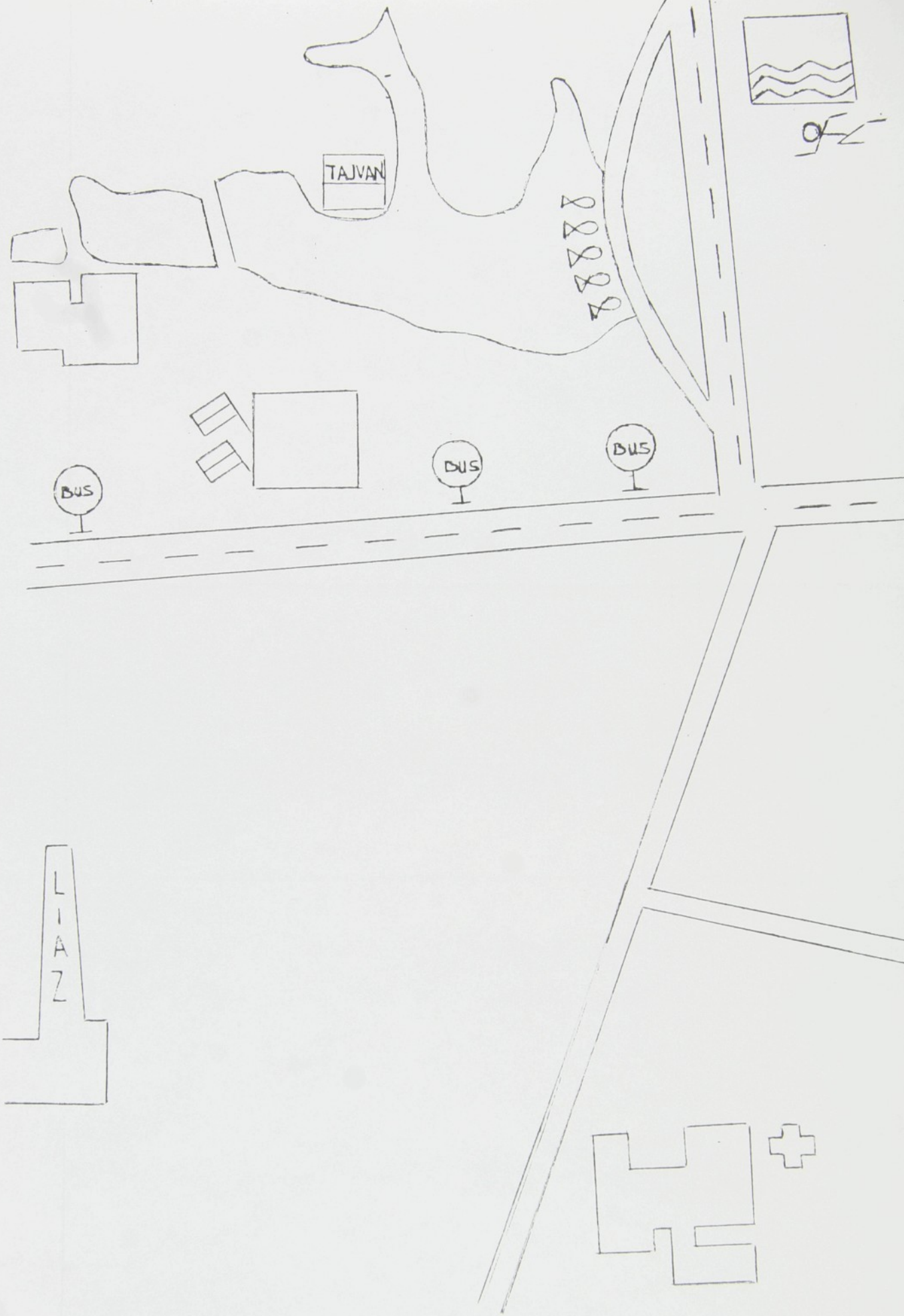
OUR TOWN. I think sometimes a sudden, completely different way may attract attention and encourage enthusiasm rather than interrupt. Students appeared to be trying their best practising *Is there a whatever in your Magic Box?* Also I wanted to show them that the adverb of place may vary indicating changing location (in Jablonec, on the map, in your Magic Box) without describing it in Czech.

b. Modifying the same game as before for eliciting *No, there isn't.* saved time as students were familiar with the rules.

D. Conclusion/Action

I think the maps can be exploited for practising prepositions/adverbs indicating location (between, in front of, behind, on the right/left...), prepositititions connected with individual nouns (at school, in the cinema, on the bridge,...), describing the way to a foreigner, introducing can by describing what you can do in various places (I can swim in the dam, I can see films in the cinema...).

SCHOOL
BUS


TAJVAN
BUS
BUS
BUS
L
I
A
Z

all words/structures containing an error into students' exercise books.

2. Introducing *Can* -- possibility (about 12 min)

a. A game -- teacher giving a definition of a place, students guessing: It is a beautiful building, children can go there and see a fairytale (miming a *fairytale* with a puppet) -- theatre -- yes -- The next place is blue, you can swim there in summer (miming swimming) -- dam -- ... . After each place was guessed, students were encouraged to show it on their maps: Is there the theatre, dam, supermarket, ... on your map? -- Yes, there is. (What's its name?) places: theatre, swimming pool, dam, cinema, school, supermarket, bus stop, hotel, post office, bath, hospital, river.

b. Teacher pointing at the blackboard, getting individuals to read structures, eliciting their meaning:

I, you, she, he, it CAN/CAN'T swim there.
we, you, they

CAN I, you, she, he, it swim there?
we, you, they

YES/NO I, you, she, he, it CAN/CAN'T swim there.
we, you, they

Teacher asking: Can you swim in the dam in winter? -- No, you can't (teacher helping by pointing at the blackboard). Can you swim in the dam in summer? -- yes, you can -- Can you name days of the week? -- Yes, I can (a student naming) -- Can you count from 10 to 20? -- -- Can you ... .

Aim: Practising *can/can't* -- possibility, introducing *can/can't* -- ability.

3. Matching exercise on *can* (about 10 min)

Teacher giving instructions for a self-made matching exercise on *can* (see

Summary 4

A. Pre-lesson plan commentary

i. General lesson theme/topic/objective

First we corrected a test on *have got/has got* (B1); then there was a game where students were guessing familiar places of their home town from teacher's description (B2), and finally they were doing a matching exercise on the same game as above (B3).

ii. Thesis Focus

I wanted students TO get the idea of *can* -- possibility from a context describing real life.

iii. Anticipated teaching problems/possible solutions

I knew all students wouldn't perhaps be able to catch the exact meaning of *can* from the context given, so I elicited the idea in Czech at the end of the game (see B2b, B3b).

iv. Lesson Aims

Practising *have got/has got* via correcting a test from the previous lesson (B1), introducing and practising *can* -- possibility (B2a,b,3), *can* -- ability (B2b).

v. Materials

a self-made exercise on *can*, self-made simplified maps of Jablonec

B. Lesson Summary

1. Test correction

Correcting a test on *have got/has got* from the previous lesson by putting

more to make sure students haven't managed them just for the time being.

attached material), handing it out and getting students to do it in pairs; monitoring, helping. The rest is homework.

Aim: Practising spelling of structures with *can* -- possibility passively.

C. Reflection

2a. Here I had to help students by miming, demonstrating with a puppet (fairytale), carefully choosing familiar descriptive language as I wanted students to understand *can* -- possibility without describing it in Czech (according to my supervising teacher some students had already known *can/can't*).

b. Checking the understanding and pointing out the correct pronunciation -- most students got the message as they were able to answer my questions: What does can mean? Can't? Also I wanted to show them *can* as ability: Can you count? Can you name the days of week? I think they understood *can* but they had problems with days of week (I helped by holding up a flashcard).

3. Matching exercise

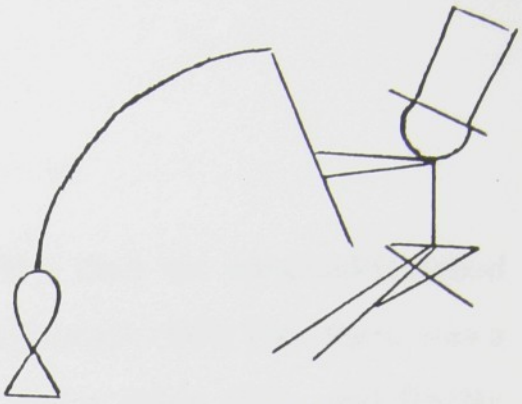
Some of the sentences seemed to be difficult for my students, which I solved by adding pictures of certain structures the next lesson when we were checking/finishing it (pictures were on the blackboard in colors, later I drew the same way an appendix for the exercise).

D. Conclusion/Action

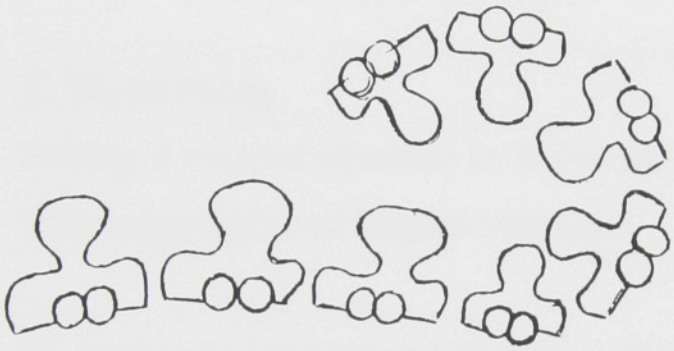
Both *can* -- possibility and *can* -- ability should be probably practised

an appendix to the matching exercise on <u>can</u>

have a bath
hæv ə baθ

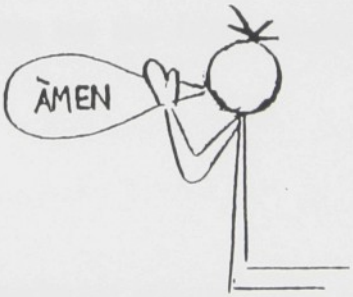


catch fish
kæč fiš

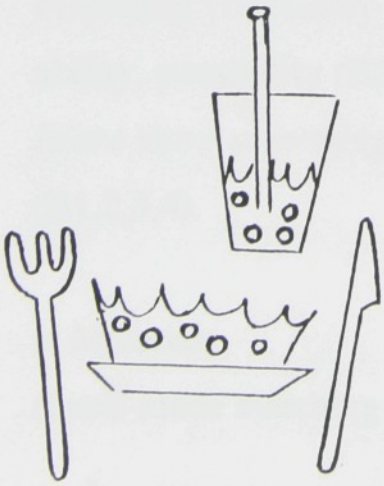


a lot of cars
ə lot əv ka:s

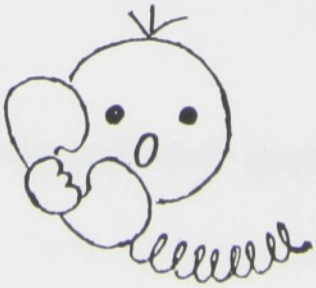
a foreigner
ə forina
/from Africa/



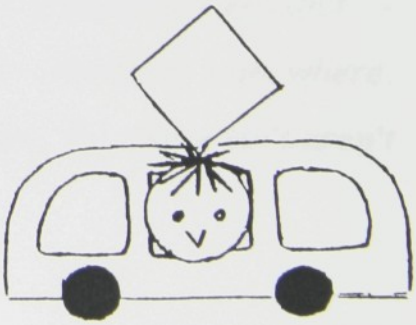
pray
prei



have meal,
a lemonade
hæv mi:l,
ə lemə'neid



make a telephone call
meik ə telifoun ko:l



take a tram
teik ə træm

a matching exercise on can

MOTORWAY

You can see a lot of cars, buses there.

DAM

You can swim there in winter.

MUSEUM

* You can have meal lemonade there. *

Children can learn English, French, civics, math, history there.

THEATRE

*We can catch fish there. We can swim there in summer.

SWIMMING POOL

*Children can se a fairytale the

Cars are made there.

SCHOOL

INN

People can have an operation there.

People go there on Sunday and pray.

CAR FACTORY

HOSPITAL

*Foreigners can sleep there. *

* You can wait there for a bus to the town. *

CHURCH

BUS STOP

*You can have a ba there. *

*People can take a tram to Liberec there. *

CINEMA

*People can see things of glass there. *

HOTEL

* We can send letters, make a telephone call there. *

It´s over the river.

TRAM TERMINAL

POST OFFICE

* You can see films there. *

*It´s blue and long. Its name is Nisa. *

BATH

BRIDGE

RIVER

B. Lesson Summary

1. Magic Box (about 10 min)

a. A game MAGIC BOX (the same as Summary 3, B3a): (teacher holding up the Magic Box) -- Would you like any toys? -- what will you ask me? -- (Are/is there whatever in your Magic Box?) -- teacher helping, correcting, pointing out the difference between *is/are*, each student given a toy.

b. Jirka -- what is there on your desk? -- There are two cars on my desk.-- Teacher getting all students to describe what is there on their desks, making them correct each other's answers.

Aim: Practising *there is/is there, whatever wherever* through playing students' favourite Magic Box.

2. Matching exercise (about 10 min)

Have you got your homework? -- checking together, teacher asking so that students can answer with the homework sentences: What can children see in the theatre? -- (Children can see a fairytale there.) -- What can we do in the dam? -- (We can swim there in summer. We can catch fish there.)... . Teacher eliciting meaning of some words by attracting students' attention to the pictures on the blackboard (catch, a lot of, take a tram/bus, ...).

Aim: Practising understanding, pronunciation, spelling passively of structures containing *can* -- possibility.

3. Playing with maps (about 6 min)

Have you got your maps? -- Take them out -- Is there a school on your map? -- Where? -- Point -- How many schools are there? -- Is there a supermarket on your map? -- What's its name? -- Where is it? -- (the same

Summary 5

A. Pre-lesson plan commentary

i. General lesson theme/topic/objective

First we played with the Magic Box (B1), then we checked/finished homework together (B2); then we played with maps (B3); then there was a simple conversation between a foreigner and a guide (B4), and finally playing with *can* -- ability (B5).

ii. Thesis Focus

Setting a curious situation or imitating a real life situation may reduce Czech description of English structures.

iii. Anticipated teaching problems/possible solutions

Last lesson I found out some of vocabulary of the matching exercise was difficult for my students (take a tram, pray, catch fish, a lot of *whatever*, ...), so I prepared pictures on the blackboard to let students passively understand.

iv. Lesson Aims

Practising vocabulary introduced recently (B2,3,4), practising *can/can't* -- ability, possibility (B2,4,5), practising *there is/are something somewhere. Is/are there something somewhere? Yes, there is/are. No, there isn't/aren't* (B1,2,3,4).

v. Materials

A self-made matching exercise, self-made maps of Jablonec, Magic Box.

a. I tried to put the sentences in a meaningful context by involving students in a simple, controlled conversation, I wanted them to hear *can* with various pronouns so that they would understand the same form (can) goes with all pronouns.

3. Playing with maps

Here I wanted students to get an idea of exploiting their new grammar/vocabulary -- they would be able to describe their home town to a foreigner; later, when they managed prepositions/adverbs indicating location, they would be able to describe the location of a place, a way to get there..., which could encourage their motivation just now.

5. Playing with *can* -- ability

a,b. It's necessary to have fun with grammar, letting students relax and perhaps absorb it easily.

D. Conclusion/Action

Students were able to understand most structures in the matching exercise quite well when their attention was drawn to pictures on the blackboard. For next practising/exploiting this exercise it would be necessary to have the pictures in front of their eyes again as I don't believe they were able to accept all of them right away, so a copy for each student as an appendix to the exercise would be fine.

for cinema, townhall, dam, motorway, theatre, museum, bus stop, bus station, ..., Big Ben, Jested, Zoo,...).

Aim: Practising *Yes, there is/are. No, there isn't/aren't.* through setting a meaningful situation.

4. A dialogue (about 10 min)

Teacher pointing at a dialogue on the blackboard, reading, eliciting the meaning, getting students to read it in a choir, demonstrate in closed pairs, open pairs in the front, getting students to correct each other:

a foreigner: Is/are there _____ in Jablonec?

the guide: Yes, there is/are. You can _____ there.

Aim: Practising both grammar patterns through a controlled dialogue.

5. Playing with *can* -- ability (the rest of the lesson)

a. A game -- *Can/can't* -- teacher eliciting curious actions together with oral answers: Can you lay on the floor? (sit on the ceiling, come to the blackboard and draw a funny picture, sing a song, speak Spanish,...?).

b. Teacher getting students to write several curious questions with *can* into their exercise books, then ask each other the questions written.

Aim: Practising *can* -- ability through setting a curious and funny situation.

C. Reflection

2. Matching exercise

and the placing and replacing of materials.

With the youngest children of about 6-and-7-years old we exploited their beautiful, carpeted classroom for a variety of physical activities involving drawing-speaking-singing-miming: We practised pronunciation of useful phrases and vocabulary through songs, imaginary fairytales, role-playing and demonstrating.

The group of 8-9- year old students were very satisfied when allowed to work with visuals, tactile aids. Another group of 11-12- year old learners delighted (boys especially) in a personalized topic.

Most activities were simple, eliciting basic English structures (Where are you? -- Here! The yellow car is in the sky.), without my describing their meaning in Czech first. I tried to set a meaningful or a curious situation, so that my pupils could feel it and respond to their feelings in English. Usually I played with my pupils, instead of giving long Czech descriptions of what to do, hoping they would imitate me as a model example, and often they really did.

Sometimes I helped students with sparing Czech words and a lot of miming put in between English instructions, commands, questions, especially where they weren't used to classroom English much.

During an activity or at the end of it, I tried to elicit from my pupils a brief Czech description of a structure being taught for checking their understanding. Often they were able to answer my questions like: "What does *can* mean?" "What does *I can swim there in summer* mean?" At these moments I also wanted to make sure all children really got the

III. I think my teaching experience confirmed my presumptions. It would be interesting to gain more precise data, make further research.

A. Teaching/learning may benefit from less description of L2 structures using L1 through finding the right balance of the emotional and the analytical approach.

All my effort has been focused on revealing to what extent it is possible to refrain from using Czech in English classes as I am strongly persuaded students can learn English without involving abundant Czech. Teachers and learners might even benefit from less description of L2 structures through finding the right balance of the emotional and the analytical approach. Involving emotions and creative fantasy in the learning/teaching process naturally fits, especially the young learners; however, also adults tend to remember things better when they experience them personally, involving emotions together with their logic. The concrete activities in the classroom should differ regarding learners' age.

This paper deals with teaching a language to young students, so let's consider what has happened during my five-week practice: My pupils seemed to enjoy taking an active part in pre-activities such as drawing, finishing or coloring visuals. They loved being allowed to answer by drawing, describing, pointing, miming, best all at once, to either a curious or a real life imitating stimulus.

I have noticed that the shorter bursts of language my learners manipulated, the more they tended to feel comfortable when repeatedly exposed to quickly alternating, varied activities involving changing students' positions

A lot of ideas of how to approach this kind of work I learnt by observing my pupils, trying to match their tastes and interests; for example, working with the youngest children by forcing them to sit on their chairs and pay attention with answering the teacher's questions tended to turn into a complete disaster in several minutes; that's why we sought to exploit the whole space of their big classroom with all the objects there (the blackboard for drawing, hiding behind it; tables for jumping on them, hiding under them; the carpet for sitting and playing on it; class puppets and toys) for quick, varied games.

I tried to make some register of items each group seemed to have managed (orally) via repetitive games -- according to it, the group of the youngest children have probably done the best progress (most structures, vocabulary taught and actively pronounced by pupils). It makes me consider that it would be very interesting to compare their learning progress (or even pre-school children's progress) with that of adult learners as generally younger students seem to be better learners. In which ways exactly?

This is also making me wonder about which ways might work best with the oldest students whom I hadn't a chance to teach or with adults; could a more emotional approach take place in their manner of accepting a foreign language structures? Might it help?

C. I tried making English lessons more English through approaching theories of methodology with flexible classroom experience.

Through my work I tried to discover whether it is possible to make English lessons more English by reducing descriptive Czech and seeking to use

message if they hadn't understood it from the context given; Czech seemed to become *last ensurenment* of understanding.

B. My experience might be more precisely clarified with further exploration.

Perhaps it would be interesting at a certain point to get the whole class to put down a brief Czech description of understanding a structure, let's say via a simple test eliciting meaning and the use of various items (*can* means ..... or ..... or .....; with the older students), and repeat the same , let's say, in half-a-year, after more practising, so that precise data could be obtained for comparing various ways of approach, considering students' age, interests, number of pupils in a group (more meaningful, rather a curious, funny situation, something else).

Most checking of understanding in my lessons took place through eliciting meaningful answers; however, sometimes it may happen that students tend rather to imitate each other when answers are more controlled for practising the construction of a structure (There is *whatever* in Jablonec.), without fully realizing the meaning; that's why I sought to introduce abundant visuals, tactile aids, elicited answers by pointing, miming, drawing as well, which I hoped could also create a scenery of rich emotional perceptions fully employing my pupils' attention by making them participate as much as possible.

The Czech language didn't seem to vanish completely from my English classes; I only tried finding the right, spare amount of it, so that it didn't interrupt my pupils' accepting of English.

REFERENCES

Alexander, L.G. Speech. Mystery of creativity conference, Technical University of Liberec, 1994.

Brown, H. Principles of language learning and teaching. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents, 1987.

Collins Cobuild. London: Collins, 1987.

Cook, V. Second language learning and language teaching. London: Edward Arnold, 1991.

Gerngross, G., Puchta, H. Creative grammar practice. Harlow: Longman, 1992.

Maier, Ch., Weber, M. Erfolg durch superlearning. Mnichov: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1984.

Rutherford W., Smith M. Grammar and second language teaching. Boston: Heinle and Heinle publishers, 1988.

learners' tastes and interests instead, so that their participation is spontaneously maximized and allows them to catch a lot of ideas quickly. I have experienced that perhaps one of most important things is to approach theories of methodology with flexible classroom practice. Creating a classroom mood and atmosphere that makes learning an adventure can result in effective teaching and learning. I am persuaded that for fine teaching/learning other conditions like the number of learners in a group, the size of the classroom (for motional games), enough tapes and books, other material (toys), are important, as well.