

Abstract

The thesis is concerned with the role of the target language in foreign language teaching. The objective of the thesis is to discuss the influence of teaching English by means of the target language on communicative competence of young learners. The theoretical part elaborates the theoretical principles that concern employment of the target language in teaching. Furthermore, it analyses the factors influencing foreign language learning, discusses the possibility of language acquisition in the classroom and studies the influence of using the target language as the language of communication and instruction. Subsequently, it provides synchronic and diachronic analysis of L2 and L1 use in English language teaching methodology. In conclusion, the theoretical part evaluates the benefits of teaching by means of the target language, anticipates some risks and problems concerned with teaching exclusively by means of the target language and proposes techniques for maximization of the target language use.

The semi-quantitative research studies the issue of the role of the target language in the classroom on the basis of monitoring a sample of teachers of Czech primary schools. Primarily, it investigates the amount of comprehensible input that young learners are provided with and means that teachers employ in order to enable comprehension. Subsequently, data obtained are evaluated in relation to information gained on the basis of structured interview with teachers which aimed to find out the teachers' attitudes and beliefs concerning L1 and L2 application in ELT. The interpretation of data obtained is based on the findings of the theoretical part and it is focused on the aim of young learners' communicative competence development.

Key words

Communicative competence, language teaching, language learning, language acquisition, target language, native language