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BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

Teaching English in the Czech Step by Step Preschool Programme

Výuka angličtiny v předškolním programu Začít spolu

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma English Teaching in the Czech Step by Step Preschool Programme vypracovala pod vedením vedoucího práce samostatně za použití v práci uvedených pramenů a literatury. Dále prohlašuji, že tato práce nebyla využita k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

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I would like to thank my supervisor, PhDr. Mgr. et Mgr. Radek Vít, Ph.D., for his guidance, help and patience.

ANNOTATION

This thesis deals with teaching English as a second language in the Czech Step by Step Preschool Programme.

The theoretical part outlines the history of the Step by Step programme, the principles and methodology of the programme used in Czech preschools and various methods and approaches to teaching English as a second language to very young learners.

The practical part analyses data received from surveys given to teachers working in preschools where English is implemented into the school curriculum. An overview of what a day of English teaching looks like is given based on interviews with teachers.

KEYWORDS

Czech Step by Step programme, Začít spolu, ESL, teaching English

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá výukou angličtiny jako druhého jazyka v předškolním programu Začít spolu.

Teoretická část práce stručně popisuje metody, které se využívají k výuce druhého jazyka u dětí předškolního věku. Dále popisuje stručnou historii a zásady předškolního programu Začít spolu.

V praktické části práce jsou prezentovány výsledky dotazníku, který měl za úkol sledovat, které metody výuky druhého jazyka se používají k výuce angličtiny ve školkách, které spojují program Začít spolu s výukou angličtiny. Na základě rozhovorů s učiteli ze dvou vybraných školek je popsán, jak vypadá typický den výuky angličtiny v programu Začít spolu ve vybraných školkách.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Výukový program Začít spolu, výuka angličtiny

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1. Introduction

The Step by Step Programme, otherwise known in Czech as *Začít spolu*, started out as an alternative teaching programme in Czech preschools in the early nineties. In the last decade a few Step by Step preschools in the Czech Republic have started to incorporate teaching English as a second language into the programme, thus combining ESL teaching methods with those of the Step by Step programme.

A couple of years ago I started teaching in MŠ Angelka, one of the few preschools that combined the Step by Step programme with teaching English. As there are no methodological handbooks in the field of teaching ESL in the Step by Step programme available, I gained much of my teaching experience naturally through trial and error. And although there are a number of publications dealing with Step by Step methodology in Czech, there is nothing available in English for native English teachers working in Czech Step by Step preschools. In my experience these English teachers are rarely ever trained in Step by Step methodology and therefore become reliant on their Czech-speaking colleagues to talk them through the structure and methodology of the programme. I therefore wanted to provide a summary of the Czech Step by Step preschool programme in English with examples of how teaching English as a second language is implemented into the programme. This could then serve as a practical guide for English teachers starting out in Step by Step preschools where English is taught as a second language.

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to research the manner in which English is implemented into the Step by Step programme in selected preschools, to determine which methods and approaches are used when teaching English as a second language and whether the principles of the Step by Step programme are adhered to when teaching English as a second language. The collected data can provide useful information to English teachers already working in a Step by Step preschool as well as English teachers planning on doing so.

The thesis is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part consists of a brief history of the Step by Step Programme, its role in Czech preschool education including the methodology and structure of the programme and the theories

its principles are based on. Methods and approaches used in teaching English as a second language to very young learners will be outlined with a summary of each method or approach whilst focusing on teaching strategies and techniques most commonly used when teaching very young learners. In the practical part of the thesis the implementation of English into the Step by Step programme will be presented with an overview of “a day in our preschool” from two different preschools in Prague. The ESL methods used in the two selected preschools will also be compared.

2. The history of the Step by Step Programme

In 1979 George Soros, an industrialist and philanthropist, initiated the Open Society Institute as a means of replacing non-democratic systems of government all over the world.

The Step by Step programme started out as the Soros Preschool Project, a two-year pilot project of the Open Society Institute in 1994. It was created to promote child-oriented, family supported education in countries of Central Europe and Eurasia that had been affected by the communist regime of the Soviet Union.

The programme was initiated as a reaction to the socio-economic changes in post-communist Europe, which influenced early childhood care. “In 1993, vast changes were sweeping across Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. At the time, early childhood education systems in these regions were in decline due to the transition from state control to market economies.” (opensocietyfoundations.org)

The Open Society asked a team of experts at the Centre of Child Development of Georgetown University to create a preschool education programme, which would take into account Europe’s rich tradition in early childhood education whilst using theoretical and practical methods of the US Head Start Program.

The outcome was the Soros Preschool Project, which was implemented into preschools in 15 European countries in September 1994.

The project promoted the principles of community reinforcement through the introduction of “child-centred teaching methods and family and community engagement in early childhood programmes.” (Klaus)

The child-centred teaching approach was to turn teachers away from the didactic method of instruction, which was being used and lead them in the direction of constructivist teaching. This meant that children would be given the opportunity to learn through play in an environment based on understanding, recognition, and acceptance. The needs of each child would be met through individual attention and cooperation within a small group. Participation of parents and family members in the education of their children was also one of the primary goals of the Soros Preschool Project. A methodology manual was prepared and translated for preschool teachers in the 15 participating countries and in September 1994 the project was implemented

into their early childhood education systems with the authorization of their national ministries.

3. Methods and Approaches to Teaching English as a Second Language to Very Young Children

There are a large number of methods and approaches used for teaching children a second language, only those suitable for teaching very young children (3 – 6 years of age) will be mentioned. A brief outline of the method and the principles of the method correlating with the key principles of teaching English as a second language to very young children will be given.

The key principles of teaching very young learners according to a report of the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission (Edelenbos) are:

- holistic learning
- visual approach and multisensory learning
- age-related learning taking full advantage of children's physical predispositions
- positive motivation to learning

In Teaching Foreign Languages to the Very Young (Freudenstein), the following principles are listed:

- individual attention ensured by small groups (8-10 children)
- play-oriented learning
- incidental learning in a unilingual environment
- sufficient inconspicuous repetition of what is heard and learnt

The Framework Educational Programme for Pre-school Education (RVP) states that:

- children's curiosity and joy of learning is encouraged through cooperative and play-based learning
- individual attention caters to the specific need of each child
- children learn through active participation in hands-on activities

- situational and social learning is encouraged by providing practical examples of real life situations and role models suitable for imitation

It is clear from these principles that very young children learn most effectively through play within smaller groups, when they are given the opportunity to actively participate in games and activities that are suited to their developmental stages. The learning environment must be a positive one, with stress eliminated or reduced to a minimum.

3.1 Methods of Second Language Teaching

Teaching methods refer to principles, strategies and techniques used to teach based on the nature of the subject being taught and on theories of learning.

The term method is used when describing the process of putting these principles, strategies and techniques into practice.

A method is a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning. (Richards 3)

3.1.1 Direct Method

The direct method is based on the way children learn their mother tongue. Language learning takes place in an environment where only the target language is spoken. All instructions are given in the second language without translating into the children's first language. The method focuses on student's oral repetition with the teacher correcting pronunciation and grammar. Lessons are built around vocabulary being presented with pictures, objects and gestures and around "question and answer exchanges between teachers and students." (Richards 12) An activity using the direct method could look like the following example:

With the topic of vocabulary being "my body" the teacher introduces each body part using whole sentences. An example of the method in use:

Teacher: “This is a head. Children repeat after me. This is a head.”

Children repeat the sentence. The teacher corrects any mistakes in pronunciation or grammar.

Teacher: “These are hands. Children repeat after me. These are hands.”

Children repeat the sentence. The teacher corrects any mistakes in pronunciation or grammar.

Teacher: “These are feet. Children repeat after me. These are feet.”

Children repeat the sentence. The teacher corrects any mistakes in pronunciation or grammar.

After all the vocabulary has been introduced the teacher then begins to engage in question – answer conversation with each child, encouraging correct repetition if the child is unsure.

Teacher: “This is a head. Honza, what is it?”

Honza answers: “It is a head.”

If the child does not answer, the teacher says the sentence one more time and encourages repetition. The teacher then goes on asking the same question to the other children.

Teacher: “These are hands. Janička, what is it?”

Janička answers: “It is a head.”

Teacher: “This is a head. Kuba, what is it?”

Kuba answers: “It is a head.”

If the child does not answer, the teacher once again repeats the sentence and encourages the children to repeat. The teacher then goes on asking the same question to the other children.

Once all or most of the children have answered the questions, they are encouraged to make questions themselves and question their peers on given vocabulary with the help of the teacher.

Teacher: “Honza, ask Janička: What is it?”

Honza questions Janička (pointing to the flashcard with a head): “What is it?”

Janička replies: “It is a head.”

If the children are unsure, the teacher helps by saying the question or answer and encouraging repetition and correcting any mistakes made in pronunciation or grammar.

The use of the direct method in teaching English to very young learners is not ideal due to its monotony. It can be used briefly when introducing new vocabulary but as children have a very low attention span a lesson devised entirely on this method would result in failure.

3.1.2 Total Physical Response (TPR)

Total physical response is a method of language teaching based on the coordination of speech and physical activity and on the theory that treats “first and second language learning as parallel processes.” (Richards 279). Phrases, instructions and commands are said out loud by the teacher and accompanied by actions, gestures and facial expressions mimicking the language content. The method is built on the basis of first language acquisition in young children, which is a result of parent – child interaction, in which the child responds physically to the parent’s commands e.g. “Say hello to granny!” “Pick that up please!” etc. TPR activities do not require students to speak. In a typical TPR sequence the teacher introduces vocabulary using picture flashcards,

photos, real objects if possible etc. After vocabulary has been introduced the teacher gives a command whilst modelling an action. This is done so with each item of vocabulary, always repeating the previous items before introducing a new command. For example:

With the topic of vocabulary being “my body” the teacher introduces each body part using picture flashcards.

An example of the method in use:

T: “Head!” – “Hands!” – “Feet!” [Pointing to the picture flashcard]

T: “Nod your head!” [Teacher nods head]

Children nod their heads. Teacher repeats command and action and children join in.

T: “Clap your hands!” [Teacher claps hands]

Children clap their hands. Teacher repeats command and action and children join in.

After the children seem to have grasped the concept of acting out what is being said, the teacher repeats the commands but without acting them out, leaving the children to carry on by themselves.

T: “Nod your head!” [Teacher only gives the command without nodding head]

Children nod their heads.

T: “Clap your hands!” [Teacher only gives the command without clapping]

Children clap their hands.

T: “Stomp your feet!” [Teacher only gives the command without stomping]

Children stomp their feet.

After the sequence has been repeated a few times, the teacher then gives the commands in a different order and repeats the jumbled sequence a few more times.

“Clap your hands!” – “Stomp your feet!” – “Nod your head!” – “Stomp your feet!”

The repetitiveness of TPR activities renders them impossible to be used for longer than a couple of minutes, especially when working with very young children. TPR activities are ideal for introducing or revising new vocabulary and should be used together with other methods of teaching.

3.2 Approaches to Second Language Teaching

Approaches to teaching refer to the philosophy of language and language teaching and learning, encompassing the principles and practices that methods are based upon.

Edward Anthony identified an approach as “a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning, describing the nature of the subject matter to be taught.” (Richards 21)

3.2.1 The Natural Approach

The Natural Approach is an approach to second language teaching, which is based on language acquisition rather than language learning.

According to Krashen, language acquisition is a subconscious process of developing competence in a second language, parallel to first language development in children.

Language learning on the other hand is explained as a conscious process of applying rules and grammar to language knowledge. “When we are learning, we know we are learning and we are trying to learn.” (Krashen)

Similarly to the Direct Method, the Natural Approach builds on the way children acquire their mother tongue.

There are a number of various methods that can be used in the Natural Approach as long as they coincide with the main principles of the approach:

- Language input must always be comprehensible
- Lessons take place in a low, ideally no, anxiety environment
- Students are not required to repeat what the teacher says, they are not asked nor encouraged to speak – they communicate verbally when they feel ready to communicate

The Direct Method is not suitable for use in the initial stages of Natural Approach lessons, as students are required to repeat what they hear, which goes against one of the main principles of the approach. Total Physical Response on the other hand shares the principle that allows students to speak when they feel ready and capable.

3.2.2 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CLIL is an approach, which focuses on teaching a second language as well as content, unlike the Natural Approach, in which the aim is to teach primarily the second language without the use of the first language.

Professor David Marsh, one of the leading experts in CLIL, coined the term in 1994 “CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language” (Ruiz)

Similarly to the Natural Approach, there are numerous teaching methods that can be used in a CLIL environment as long as they adhere to the four main principles of the approach according to Coyle:

- Content (subject or topic being taught; the learner does not only acquire but also constructs knowledge and develops skills)
- Communication (interaction in the learning context is fundamental to learning; students learn to use language and use language to learn)
- Cognition (language learning is related to thinking processes, the language needs to be transparent and accessible)
- Culture (intercultural awareness is fundamental; children are encouraged to understand themselves their culture as well as others')

Similarly to the Natural Approach, there are a number of methods that can be used in Content and Language Integrated Learning. As the Direct Method promotes teacher instruction and student repetition it is not suitable to be used in the CLIL approach, in which students are encouraged to construct their own knowledge either individually or in groups with their peers.

4. The Step by Step Programme in Czech Preschools

The Czech Republic was among the first 15 countries to join the Soros Preschool Project in 1994. The project was implemented into the Czech educational system as an unconventional educational programme known as *Začít spolu*. By 1995 some 10 preschools had joined the programme and would later become standard model schools. In the following years the number of preschools participating in the project increased. There are currently (2015) over 100 preschools involved in the Czech Step by Step Programme. (Gardošová)

4.1 Principles of the Czech Step by Step Programme

According to Gardošová, the four principles of the Czech Step by Step Programme are based on the theories of person-centred teaching and constructivism.

- Individualisation (the education of children with different levels of ability in which these differences between children are respected and become the basis for planning and evaluating)
- Integrated learning (the learning environment enables the development of the children's abilities, skills and knowledge through play and supports children's discovery of how various aspects and phenomena in the world are connected to form a whole)
- Learning in activity centres (activity centres enable children to discover and construct their own knowledge by working with various materials and objects in groups or individually)
- Parent involvement (parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's education in and outside of the school environment)

Individualization and integrated learning in the Step by Step Programme is based on constructivist teaching associated with Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, where he says that children do not

enter developmental stages as distinct points in cognitive development but that an individual's level of development varies across a zone which stretches from the level which the child has completely mastered (actual level) to the upper limit of the individual's capacity (McLeod), is essential to Step by Step methodology. This concept is the basis for planning effectively and making sure each individual is learning at his/her own pace.

Learning in activity centres reflects the ideas of Carl Rogers' person-centred teaching, in which the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning, guide or educational counsellor as apposed to an authoritative figure imposing his/her thoughts upon the student. (Zimring). In the Step by Step Programme the children work in small groups or individually and rather than being instructed, are guided and encouraged to create their own knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

4.2 The daily schedule of Czech Step by Step Preschools

In her methodological guide to preschool education Juliana Gardošová presents a daily schedule, which serves as a model plan of the Czech Step by Step preschool programme.

The daily schedule facilitates children's learning in a way that is comfortable for each individual. Preparation of the daily plan is done with respect to the developmental needs of each child. It is flexible and allows the inclusion of special events, such as parents' visits and various trips (i.e. theatre, cinema, educational centres). It allows children to involve themselves in free time activities and does not force those engrossed in certain games or tasks to leave them in order to join in another activity prepared by the teacher. The daily schedule balances physical activity and rest. It allows teachers to observe children, talk and interact with them individually, in small and large groups.

A brief outline of the daily schedule of the Step by Step preschool programme will be given with a commentary on how teaching English as a second language could be implemented into the key activities of the programme:

- Morning Task
- Free Play
- Morning Circle
- Activity Centres
- Evaluation Circle

4.2.1 Morning Task

Immediately upon entering the classroom the children and their parents are presented with a morning task. The aim of the activity is to facilitate the parents' entrance into the classroom environment and to incorporate them into the activities of their children. The exercise is centred on the current weekly topic and is focused on what the children and teachers will be discussing during the day. The morning task is read to the children by their parents, who either cooperate with them or guide them to fulfil the exercise according to the nature of the task. Children practise various skills such as simple arithmetic, basic shape and colour recognition along with developing their graphomotor skills.

The morning task in English could vary from simple general questions about the weather and days of the week, topic-based questions to TPR activities and song singing. The children could be asked to teach their parent a song that they have been singing in class or to show them a piece of art work or craft and describe it simply in English using the vocabulary that is being taught.

4.2.2 Free Play

After accomplishing the morning task, children choose a game or activity in one of the activity centres prepared by the teacher. This way they become acquainted with the topic of the day through self obtained information. Children can choose not to participate in the prepared activity centres and can instead choose to play with any toys that are available or with their friends and peers.

In a bilingual class with both native Czech and native English speakers the use of English becomes a natural means of communication between children during playtime. However, when the common language of communication between the children is Czech, English can be implemented into playtime through teacher-child communication. The teachers should not force themselves into the children's free-time activities but should instead invite children to participate in an activity the teacher has initiated. The teacher could take a book from the bookshelf and start reading through it, start constructing with Lego or draw and colour pictures. Children are naturally curious and eager to become involved in any activity, which appeals to them and most will ask whether they can participate in the teacher's activity. The teacher can then read through a book with the child or children, asking simple comprehension questions, describing the construction process of a Lego house or asking for help with colouring in a picture and discussing the colours used.

4.2.3 Morning Circle

The children and teachers gather for morning circle in a spacious room (i.e. playroom, gym) where everyone can see each other, the teacher and the board with the plan for the day. The aim of the morning circle is for the children to become acquainted with the topic of the day and with the activity centres they will be able to participate in later. Everyone in the morning circle (children, teachers, assistants, parents) seats themselves on a carpet or pillows. The morning circle also provides the opportunity for children to communicate their thoughts and ideas on the topic, this way the teacher finds out how much the children know, what they would like to learn thus what to focus on and what to leave for revision. Each child can also voice their own proposal

or wish on topics to be discussed in the future according to their own interests and hobbies.

After the topic and issues have been discussed children engage in physical activities such as exercise, active games or indoor sports. “It is important to incorporate physical activity into the daily schedule in order to stimulate and promote growth and neuromuscular development of the child, support their physical well-being and lead them to healthy habits and attitudes.” (RVP)

Once physical activities and exercise have been completed, the children and teacher(s) move back into the meeting area to conclude the morning circle. The weekly topic is revised by singing songs, reciting poems or storytelling and extra discussion can take place. The children are then presented with the activity centres they can work in. The number of activity centres depends on the nature of the topic, how many children are present at preschool and their zones of proximal development.

English can be implemented into the morning circle using the Direct Method, TPR and the Natural Approach. The morning circle could start with a greeting song followed by a sequence of asking how everybody is feeling. The Direct Method could be used, with the teacher initiating a question sequence.

Teacher: “How are you, Janička?”

Janička: “I’m sleepy. How are you Tomáš?”

Tomáš: “I’m hungry. How are you Adélka?”

To keep the children alert and motivated a ball could be passed round the circle as each child answers and ask the questions.

The vocabulary for the topic of the week could be introduced and reinforced with a TPR activity, which meets the requirements of the children to engage in physical activity in the morning circle whilst teaching them key words to the topic being discussed.

Although the morning circle in the Czech Step by Step programme is a time when children are given the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts, it is difficult and in most cases impossible for them to do so in English. In this case the Natural Approach seems to be ideal for teaching as the children are allowed to respond and express themselves in their mother tongue.

4.2.4 Activity Centres

Children choose which centre they would like to join themselves by taking their nametag (usually a small card with their name and photo) and hanging it in the area of the chosen activity centre. This encourages children to make their own decisions and to be responsible for the decisions they make. The activity centres are related to the topic discussed in the morning circle.

There are usually ten activity centres for children to choose from, although the availability of the centres depends on the number of children and number of adult supervision present in the classroom.

- Arts and Crafts
- Books and Letters
- Building Blocks and Transport
- Smart Hands
- Workshop
- Household
- Sand and Water
- Discovery Kid
- Music
- Drama

In the Arts and Crafts centre children create artwork and crafts using a number of various utensils and materials available to them. The artwork is connected to the topic discussed in the morning circle and is displayed around the classroom to create a thematic atmosphere.

English in the Art and Crafts centre can be used when giving an explanation of the procedure of creating a piece of art or craft. The teacher can give simple instructions

whilst demonstrating. The vocabulary of the topic should be used as well as set expressions and vocabulary of instruction such as “Take your scissors. Cut along the line.”

The Books and Letters centre prompts the children’s interest in literature, reading and writing. Naturally preschool children are not yet able to read but the presence of books that are available to them encourages them to take interest. Children perceive the spoken and written form of letters whilst looking through books with the teacher or by themselves.

English can be implemented into the Books and Letters centre through storytelling. To keep the children focused and engaged in the story the teacher can ask simple questions about what is happening in the story, what the children think will happen next and also about the pictures in the book (How many? Where is? What/Who is this?) Touch and feel books are extremely popular with very young children as they arouse the children’s curiosity and incorporate a number of senses. Fairy tale books are very useful for teaching English as a second language as children are usually familiar with the story in their mother tongue, which facilitates their understanding of the English version. They also include natural repetition of simple phrases, a large amount of illustrations and forms of dialogues, which the children can then use in verbal communication (Dunn). The Direct Method can be used to introduce and repeat important or useful phrases that occur in the stories. It should not, however, interfere with the storytelling and could be used as a consolidation activity after finishing the book.

In the Building Blocks & Transport centre children build and play with blocks of various shapes, colours and sizes. Whilst constructing, children sharpen their motor skills and deepen their creativity and use of imagination. The teacher observes and discusses the building process with the children and offers any guidance or assistance if it seems necessary.

The use of English in the Building Blocks & Transport centre is mainly in asking questions and describing the building process. It is likely that children will not be able

to describe the process themselves, the teacher then can imitate the child's building procedure and asks yes-no questions whilst demonstrating on their own model.

The Smart Hands centre focuses on the development of fine motor skills, fantasy, patience and their will to complete work. In this centre children practise their social, mathematical and language skills while playing board games, they develop and strengthen hand-eye coordination by creating mosaics, working on puzzles and beading.

In the Smart hands centre board games can be used to teach adverbs, counting and verbs (Go forward two spaces. Throw the dice. How many?), whilst beading and weaving activities enable children to practise prepositions (Pull the thread through, over and under).

The Workshop centre enables children to create using materials and tools that are often used by adults around the house or in the garage workshop. Children develop their motor skills using small saws, hammers, nails, screws and screwdrivers with various materials such as soft wood, cork, and leftover strips of fabric. Children are given work helmets and gloves not only for safety reasons, but also to evoke their imagination and encourage make believe play (children can pretend to be builders, carpenters, electricians etc.).

The teacher makes sure to explain workshop safety rules to the children before they start working in this centre. This can be done in English with the use of gestures, pantomime and picture flashcards to ensure full comprehension. The vocabulary used in this centre is limited to names of tools and utensils used, verbs of instruction and simple expressions connected to health and safety.

In the Household centre children are given the opportunity to not only make believe, but also to work in their own miniature sized kitchen environment, where they can cook, bake and clean like they see adults do everyday. The teacher's role in this centre is to guide and supervise the children, making sure safety and hygiene rules are being adhered to.

Similarly to the workshop centre English can be used to give health and safety instructions with the use of gestures and picture cards illustrating rules of working in the kitchen. The use of English can be set around labelling kitchen utensils, foods and ingredients and giving instructions.

The Sand and Water centre stimulates sensory and motor development and muscle coordination. Children strengthen their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination with activities such as pouring water into containers, digging and moulding sand. The teacher ensures the centre remains a safe area to work in by establishing safety rules and making sure any spilled water is cleaned up to prevent accidents.

Once again English can be implemented into the centre by giving health and safety instructions in English in the same manner as in the centres mentioned previously. Basic concepts of maths and physics such as sinking and floating, volume and changes of state can be taught in English. TPR activities can be used to demonstrate these basic concepts.

The Discovery Kid centre enables children to carry out simple science experiments and discover how the world around them works by examining animate and inanimate natural objects. Children's encyclopaedias and science books are at hand for children to look through and find out about subjects that cannot be explored in the preschool environment such as space and planets, rainforest wildlife and vegetation, sea life etc.

The CLIL approach can be used to teach English in the Discovery Kid centre through basic concepts of science, geography and physics. Audio-visual materials can be used as a source of language and content input. Short extracts from documentaries can be shown to the children introducing subject matter that cannot be explored and examined in the classroom. After the extract has been viewed once, the teacher can play it again, pausing the video to ask comprehension questions and elicit language output.

The Music centre reinforces emotional and language development. Music is a universal means of communication, entertainment and relaxation. The music centre gives children time and space to create and improvise music and rhythms using a variety of musical and rhythmical instruments.

English songs that are sung in the morning circle can be practised with the use of instruments to accompany the melody. English rhymes and chants can be rhythmized using Orff instruments. Phrases and vocabulary concerning the weekly topic can be given well-known melodies and turned into songs to be sung in order to repeat and consolidate words and phrases taught in the morning circle.

The Drama centre enhances emotional, physical, cognitive and language development in children. Children learn to cooperate with each other, identify different social roles and how to cope in various social situations. By role playing children develop their language skills by mimicking verbal expressions, expanding their vocabulary as they use new words appropriate to the characters they are playing.

Implementing English into the Drama centre can be done through acting out stories, pantomime activities, puppet theatre and role-playing activities. The teacher can read or tell a story whilst assigning each child with a character and encouraging them to act out their part. Elements of the Direct Method of teaching can be used to encourage children to repeat dialogues. TPR activities can be used to introduce items of vocabulary and phrases that frequently occur in the story.

Content Language Integrated Learning seems to be a suitable approach to teaching English in the activity centres, as various subjects can be taught through each centre such as basic mathematics in the Sand and Water centre or science and geography in the Discovery Kid centre.

TPR activities could be used in both Music and Drama or to briefly introduce vocabulary and phrases used in any of the activity centres.

Aspects of the Direct Method can be used to encourage repetition of phrases, questions and expressions from storybooks and videos.

4.2.5 Evaluation Circle

After completing the activities everybody meets in a circle to discuss and evaluate the work done in the activity centres.

Those who created a tangible piece of work (i.e. a picture, craft) are given the opportunity to show everyone their work and briefly describe the process of creation. Children who participated in activity centres involving music or drama give a performance to the rest of the group. This activity enables children to learn the basic social skills needed when attending cultural events such as theatre performances and music concerts. The evaluation circle also gives space for self-assessment and peer assessment, which is “an important academic and life skill; the ability to reflect upon work and achievements can help establish, through individual assessment targets, where children are in their learning process, where they need to go and how best to get there.” (Swain)

English can be implemented into the evaluation circle with a simple evaluation system, which is used by the children to evaluate their own work in the centres. The system can be based on the children giving themselves stars, smiley faces or thumbs up or down according to how well they feel they worked. The system could also be used to evaluate the activity centre prepared by the teacher in order for the teacher to get feedback from the children. Three simple expressions could be matched to each symbol and pre-taught and repeated at the beginning of every evaluation circle.

★	Not so good
★★	Good
★★★	Excellent

In the beginnings, children can be encouraged to use the simple expressions to evaluate their work. Once the system has been established, children can be encouraged to evaluate their work in whole sentences, i.e. “Today my work was not so good/Today my work was good/Today my work was excellent.”

5. Research Analysis of ESL Teaching in Step by Step Preschools in Prague

This chapter presents preschools in Prague in which English is taught as a second language either within their school curriculum or in extracurricular lessons. Preschools with extracurricular English lessons will be briefly mentioned with the method of teaching English as a second language stated only in the case that the information was made available to the researcher. However, as this thesis aims to determine the methods and approaches used in the implementation of English into the programme, a detailed account will be given of the schools in which English is taught as a second language within their school curriculum.

Research was conducted to identify the manner in which English is implemented into the Step by Step programme in preschools in Prague. The research was carried out through quantitative and qualitative studies in the forms of a questionnaire and personal interviews. The aim was to develop a synopsis of a day of teaching English in the Step by Step programme and to determine which methods and approaches are used when teaching English as a second language.

Preliminary research was conducted by enquiring into the database of Step by Step preschools in Prague and identifying which preschools offer English lessons, whether in the form of extracurricular lessons or implemented into the Step by Step programme. This was done by studying the websites of each of the 21 preschools based in Prague listed as Step by Step preschools on the website zacitspolu.eu and contacting those which stated that English is implemented into the programme.

5.1 Profiles of Step by Step Preschools Teaching English

Out of the 21 Prague preschools listed on the Czech Step by Step website, 2 were found to teach English as a second language as a part of their school curriculum and 7 preschools to have extracurricular English lessons 1 – 2 times a week, 4 of which have extracurricular English lessons with Wattsenglish methodology.

5.1.1 Preschools with Extracurricular English Lessons

The 7 preschools with extracurricular English lessons stated the frequency of the lessons and methods of teaching on their websites or were contacted and asked to provide the number of lessons per week and state briefly which methods of teaching English as a second language are used.

The frequency of English lessons and the methods used to teach English were mentioned on the websites of 5 out of the 7 preschools. MŠ Větrníček and MŠ V Kolonce were contacted and provided the number of English lessons per week but did not give any information about the methods used to teach English.

Name of preschool	Frequency of extracurricular English lessons	Method of teaching ESL
MŠ Srdíčko	2 x week	Wattsenglish
MŠ Čtyřlístek	1 x week	Wattsenglish
MŠ Slunéčko	1 x week	Wattsenglish
Veselá školka	2 x week	-
MŠ Větrníček	1 x week	-
MŠ V Kolonce	1 x week	-
MŠ Kurandové	2 x week	Wattsenglish

Wattsenglish is a British children's education company that specializes in teaching English as a second language. The Wattsenglish method is based on natural language acquisition and audio-visual techniques, in which a human head on an animated body communicates with the children. DVDs, CDs, a soft toy magpie and flashcards are the main teaching materials used in Wattsenglish lessons.

5.1.2 Preschools with English Implemented into their Curriculum

The two preschools found to be implementing English teaching into their Step by Step programme are MŠ Angelka and MŠ Petrklíč. Teachers of the two preschools were given a questionnaire analysing the teaching environment, methods and approaches to teaching English and their combination with Step by Step principles.

The questionnaire was composed of open-ended and close-ended questions divided into three sections: teaching English in a Step by Step preschool, methods of teaching English as a second language and Step by Step principles and teaching English.

The first section of the questionnaire (see Appendix), teaching English in a Step by Step preschool, comprised of close-ended questions regarding the respondent's role as an English teacher, the type of class the respondent teaches (bilingual/English-language class), the ages of the children taught and the frequency of English lessons. The results of the questionnaire were used in addition to information from the preschools' websites to provide a brief profile of both MŠ Angelka and MŠ Petrklíč:

MŠ Angelka has been included in the network of Czech Step by Step preschools since 1995 and in the network of bilingual schools since 2006. According to their website they "try to teach English in a natural way, so that language becomes an instrument for communication, problem solving, play etc."

The program is lead in Czech and English with a Czech English speaking teacher and for 9 hours a week also with a native English speaker. English is incorporated into all activities from Morning Task through Activity Centres to lunchtime.

There are four groups within two bilingual classes: Butterflies and Ladybirds. The class of Butterflies consists of children between the ages of 3 – 5 and is divided into two groups, Green Butterflies and Yellow Butterflies. Each group has a Czech teacher, who teaches the group every day of the week, and a native English teacher, who teaches on "English days" - Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 8 am until 11 am.

The class of Ladybirds consists of children between the ages of 5 – 6 and is divided into two groups, Yellow Ladybirds and Blue Ladybirds. Each group has a Czech teacher, who teaches the group every day of the week, and a native English teacher,

who teaches on “English days” – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8 am until 11 am.

MŠ Petrklíč was signed up into the network of Czech Step by Step preschools in 2002. Their website states: “We do not want the children to see us only as figures of authority. We interact with the children in a friendly way and any problems are solved diplomatically. All activities are balanced and we mainly teach children by experience.”

There are 5 classes in the preschool: Předškoláci, Sluníčka, Petrklíčci, Broučci and Berušky, two of which have English as part of their programme. The class Předškoláci is comprised of 20 children between the ages of 5 – 7 and is taught by a Czech teacher and a native English speaker for two to four hours a day. Sluníčka is a class of 15 children between the ages of 3 – 5 and is taught by two Czech teachers and an hour a week by a native English teacher.

5.2 A day of teaching English in the Step by Step Programme

Teachers of both MŠ Angelka and MŠ Petrklíč were personally interviewed with the aim of creating a synopsis of a typical day of English teaching in their preschools.

5.2.1 A Day in MŠ Angelka

The following outline of an English day in MŠ Angelka is based on interviews with two teachers of the class of Butterflies. The teachers were asked to describe a day in which English is taught and give an account of how English is implemented into each activity throughout the day.

Time	Activity/Task	Use of English
7.30 – 8.30	Morning task Free play	Morning task Teacher/child interaction
8.30 – 9.00	Morning Circle	Songs and chants Teacher/child interaction
9.00 – 9.30	Morning Circle/Snack Time	Games, discussion, songs to do with topic of the week
9.30 – 10.00	Snack Time/Morning Circle	Teacher/child interaction
10.00 – 10.30	Activity Centres	Instructions, guidance, language output in English
10.30 – 11.30	Free play outdoors	Teacher/child interaction when getting ready to go outside
11.30 – 12.00	Lunchtime	-
12.00 – 14.45	Afternoon rest Story time Extracurricular activities	-
14.45 – 17.00	Free play indoors/outdoors	-

Children arrive at preschool with their parents or grandparents between 7.30 and 8.30. Upon entering the classroom the children fulfil the morning task with their parents help. The task is written in English and is read out loud by the parent or teacher. “Sometimes we [the teachers] have to help with the morning task in the case that the parents don’t understand some words or when the children come with their grandparents who don’t speak English.”

The morning task is simple and designed to be fulfilled quickly. Tasks vary from naming pictures, finding objects in the classroom to counting and answering simple questions. “The morning task is usually a question about the topic, for example What’s your favourite farm animal or Which animals do we eat? We prepare tasks that let the children practise the basics, such as colours and counting, the weather and days of the week.”

Once the children have completed the task they have free time to play with their peers, draw, read with a teacher or help out with preparation. “I often prepare for my activity centre in the morning and find it’s a great way to interact with the kids as they’re always curious about what I’m doing and want to help.” Teachers do not interfere in the games and activities of the children and usually leave the children to their own devices. “I used to try to join in the children’s games because we were told we have to speak to the children as much as possible but I found that it has quite a negative effect on them. The last thing they want in the morning is an adult annoying them with English questions when all they want to do is play and mess around.” Children do, however, often seek attention from the teachers. “A few children find it difficult to be separated from their mum or dad and need personal attention, so they often come to us and ask us to read them a story or help them draw a picture. That makes interacting with them in English a lot easier. It’s just the more independent children that aren’t that interested in communicating with the teachers in English.”

At around 8.30 the children start to clean up toys they have been playing with, paintbrushes and pencils or books, and move into the gym. “We have a song that signals it’s time to finish playing and start cleaning up.” The gym is where everyone meets for the morning circle, which in MŠ Angelka is a somewhat of a pre-morning circle. “We really actually have two morning circles, one where both the Yellow and Green Butterflies meet and sing songs and a second morning circle, which is only for each group separately.” In the morning circle children and teachers greet each other, the teachers usually ask the children individually how they are feeling and ask about and discuss the days of the week, weather etc. “We have a couple of greeting songs that we sing on different days so that we don’t keep singing just the one, that gets quite boring after a while. The morning circle is all about saying hello, asking how everyone is and practising counting, colours, the weather and the basics.”

The children split into their two groups (Yellow and Green Butterflies), one group stays in the gym and the other goes into the classroom where they have snack. Activity time (second morning circle) is a time when children are introduced to the topic of the week, they play games and sing songs, discuss the topic etc. “We start

with a physical activity so children get rid of extra energy. Then we introduce vocabulary with flashcards or pictures in books, if it is possible we bring in real objects to show the children. We always try to teach the children around 10 main words about the topic, it helps them understand the context.” Vocabulary is taught and reinforced through games such as Memory, What’s in the Bag? and Snap.

Activity time (or the second morning circle) lasts around 30minutes, children then go to wash their hands and line up for snack. “We have a chant for washing hands and when we line up for snack we recap songs we know and practise colours and numbers.” After the children have finished their snack and cleaned up, the native English teacher takes them into the reading corner for story time. “The children need to hear authentic English as often as possible so all stories are told by the native English teacher. The story is always connected to the week topic and it helps to ask questions and get the kids to respond so they remember the vocabulary and learn how to use it.”

On Wednesdays the children do not engage in activity centres but instead are split into four groups for sports. Each teacher has one group for about ten minutes and then they rotate so each group gets to do all the exercises with each teacher. “We usually have a very active exercise like running or jumping, then something more calm like skittles or ball throwing, activities with hula hoops and skipping ropes we do often too.”

On Thursdays and Fridays children have activity centres, which are lead by each teacher. “Each of us introduces her activity centre, we usually try to ask the children what they think we’re doing by showing them the tools or materials or we let the children finishes our sentences.” English in the activity centres is limited to phrases and expressions often used by the teacher to explain a certain activity and the vocabulary of the week topic. “There are certain instructions we give in the centres that we repeat constantly, for example *Today you will need scissors, glue and pencil* or *Before we cook we wash our hands with soap and water*. Then the extra vocabulary that we use depends on the topic we’re talking about that week.”

English is used in the majority of activities during the day in MŠ Angelka and seems to be an extremely important element of the preschool curriculum. “Everything we do, even on Czech days, is connected with English. It’s important that the children hear as much English as possible in various forms, such as conversations between teachers, songs we play as background music, videos, teachers speaking to the children and so on.”

5.2.2 A Day in MŠ Petrklíč

The following outline of an English day in MŠ Petrklíč is based on an interview with two teachers of the class of Předškoláci. The teachers were asked to describe a day in which English is taught and give an account of how English is implemented into each activity throughout the day.

Time	Activity/Task	Use of English
7.00 – 9.00	Morning task Free play Activity centres	Teacher/child interaction
9.00 – 9.30	Exercise and stretching	Teacher/child interaction Instructions
9.30 – 9.45	Snack Time	Teacher/child interaction Health and safety instructions
9.45 – 10.30	Morning circle/ Activity centres/ English lessons	Simple vocabulary based on the topic/ Songs, practising whole sentences
10.30 – 10.45	Evaluation circle	Praise for good work
10.45 – 12.45	Outdoor activities	Teacher/child interaction

12.45 – 13.20	Lunch	-
13.20 – 14.30	Afternoon rest Story reading Free play	13.00 – 15.00 English lessons individually or in very small groups (3-5 children)
14.30 – 14.45	Snack time	
14.45 – 17.30	Activity centres Extracurricular activities Free play	

Parents bring their children to preschool between 7 am and 9 am. The morning task is fulfilled the moment the children enter the building before going to the changing room. The morning task is written exclusively in Czech and is read by the parents who help their child to solve it. “The morning task is most often a riddle or a puzzle based on the monthly topic. It’s always written in Czech. I don’t think the kids would manage a riddle in English and it’s the first thing they do when they come in the morning. We don’t want to stress them out with problem solving in a different language.”

Once all the children have arrived at preschool, the whole class meets in the gym for morning exercise. Most of the interaction between children and teachers takes place in Czech, with some instructions given in English. “Whether we speak to the children in English or not depends on which of the teachers is leading the morning exercise. If it’s the Czech teacher everyone communicates in Czech and I [native English teacher] translate some of the words or expressions into English. If I lead the exercise I talk in English most of the time and I might translate into a few words into Czech.”

After exercising and stretching, the children move to the classroom for their morning snack at around 9.30. English is used to give simple instructions and to ask about the children’s needs and wishes. “We ask the children what they’d like in English, so what drink they want, if they’d like more snack, if they need anything. They often respond in Czech but I do try to encourage them to at least ask simple questions and respond in simple sentences, for example: *Can I have tea? Yes, please. No, thank you.*”

On Mondays the children have morning circle, where they are introduced to the plan of the day, they discuss the weekly topic and share their thoughts and feelings. The morning circle is lead in Czech but some phrases and vocabulary is translated into English by the native English teacher. “The Czech teacher is in charge of the morning circle. I sit in with them and join in the Czech discussion and sometimes throw in some English words I think would be useful for the children to know.”

On Tuesdays and Thursdays instead of the whole class having morning circle, the children are split into two groups. One group engages in music therapy or another activity while the second group has English and after 20 minutes the two groups switch. “I usually have a group of seven to ten children, which makes it much easier to work with them. We sing a lot of songs, play flashcard games and practise speaking in whole sentences.”

Fridays in MŠ Petrklíč are sports days, which means that children are taken outside after snack time, where the native English speaker leads sports activities. “I’m the school’s sportsman so it’s my job to lead the activities on Friday. We play a lot of ball games and when the weather’s good we go outside to exercise. I speak to them in English; trying to get them to understand the basics, such as *Catch the ball. Throw the ball to a friend. Run, jump, stop.*”

Activity centres in MŠ Petrklíč are available to children throughout the whole day with the exception of morning circle time and sports activities. “The children can start working at an activity centre whenever they like and they can leave it whenever they like too. We introduce the centres in the morning and they can start on the work in the afternoon if that’s what they feel like doing. It’s all up to them.” The use of English in the activity centres is kept to a minimum or English is not used at all, as the centres are not based on the use of English and the reinforcement of English vocabulary taught in the lessons. “The activity centres are lead by Czech teachers so all instructions and explanations are given in Czech. English may be used when the English teacher is in the classroom and a child needs help and ask for it in English but it’s not always the case.”

5.3 Methods and Approaches to Teaching English as a Second Language Used in the Selected Step by Step Preschools in Prague

The second section of the questionnaire given to teachers of MŠ Angelka and MŠ Petrklíč (see Appendix) consisted of close-ended questions regarding the methods and approaches used when teaching English in the Step by Step programme.

5.3.1 Methods and Approaches Used by Teachers in MŠ Angelka

The respondents were firstly asked to check which of the given methods/approaches to teaching they use when teaching English in the Step by Step programme. They were given an open/closed question with a set of 5 choices (Direct Method, Total Physical Response, Natural Approach, CLIL, not sure) and an open choice for them to specify any other methods they use. The respondents could select more than one option.

Direct Method	4
Total Physical Response (TPR)	3
Natural Approach	3
CLIL	1
I'm not sure	3
Other	0

Four respondents selected that they use the Direct Method to teach English; TPR was stated to be used by three teachers; three respondents selected the Natural Approach while CLIL was selected by only one teacher. Three teachers selected the “I’m not sure” option. None of the respondents specified any other method of teaching.

Secondly, the teachers were asked to select whether they use one method or approach only, certain principles of a method or approach or whether they combine methods when teaching.

I use only one teaching method/approach	0
I combine two or more teaching methods/approaches	3
I use certain principles of only one of the methods/approaches	0
I use certain principles of two of more of the methods/approaches	4
I'm not sure	3

Three respondents stated they combine two or more methods and approaches when teaching. Four out of the seven respondents stated they use certain principles of more than one method or approach. Three respondents selected the “I’m not sure” option

Thirdly, the respondents were asked to select various principles of each of the methods/approaches mentioned in the previous question. They were once again given an open/closed question with a set of 10 answer choices and an open choice for them to specify any other principles they use in their English lessons.

I use only English to communicate with the children.	4
I translate (at least some) instructions, vocabulary, phrases etc. from English to Czech and vice versa.	2
I encourage children to repeat vocabulary and phrases after me.	6
I correct any grammar and pronunciation mistakes the children make.	5
I encourage children to ask and answer questions themselves.	5
I use pictures, objects and gestures to teach vocabulary.	7
I use activities and games that connect actions with phrases or items of vocabulary	7
I allow children to respond in their mother tongue or nonverbally until they are confident enough to respond in English.	3
I teach the language through certain subjects (i.e. geography, history, science, etc.)	3
I encourage the children to work together (in pairs or small groups).	3

Four respondents, three of which were native English teachers and one Czech speaker, stated they use only English to communicate with the children.

Two teachers stated that they translate instructions, vocabulary and phrases from English to Czech and vice versa.

Six respondents encourage children to repeat vocabulary and phrases.

Five teachers stated they correct grammar and pronunciation mistakes and the same number encourages children to ask and answer questions themselves.

Pictures, objects and gestures to teach vocabulary are used by all respondents, as are activities and games that connect actions with phrases or items of vocabulary.

Three teachers stated they allow children to respond in their mother tongue or nonverbally until they are confident enough to respond in English.

Three respondents teach English through certain subjects and three encourage children to work in pairs or small groups.

Out of the seven teachers who answered the questionnaire, four specifically stated they use the direct method in teaching English, whilst five teachers said they encourage repetition of vocabulary and phrases, one of the main principles of the method. Four teachers correct grammar and pronunciation mistakes and the same number encourages children to ask and answer questions themselves.

Although only three of the respondents specifically said they use Total Physical Response, all seven stated that they use activities that connect actions to phrases or items of vocabulary.

Three teachers stated they use the Natural Approach, with only one stating they allow children to respond in Czech until they feel confident enough to start communicating in English. Two other teachers said they allow children to respond in Czech or nonverbally but did not mention using the Natural Approach.

CLIL was stated to be used by one teacher, though three said they teach English through a certain subject.

The results of the second section of the questionnaire given to teachers in MŠ Angelka show that there is no predetermined set of methods used when teaching English as a second language in their preschool. It seems that teachers choose various aspects and principles of each method or approach and combine them according to what they believe works in their experience rather than confining their teaching to one particular method or approach. All methods and approaches mentioned are used in ESL teaching in the Step by Step programme in MŠ Angelka to various degrees, TPR being the most frequently used method.

5.3.2 Methods and Approaches Used by Teachers in MŠ Petrklíč

Given that English in MŠ Petrklíč is taught in one class and there is only one English teacher, the results of the questionnaire are limited to only one respondent. The English teacher filled in the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher and some of the questions were discussed verbally and noted down by the researcher. The native English speaker stated that he does not use the Direct Method of teaching per se but does use some aspects of the method such as encouragement of repetition of phrases and single items of vocabulary, correction of any grammar or pronunciation mistakes and encouraging children to ask and answer questions themselves. It may seem that the teacher uses most of the principles of the method but with one major exception, that being the frequent use of the children's mother tongue, Czech. "I've been in the Czech Republic for a couple of years so my Czech is at a level where I can communicate with the children in both English and Czech. I think it's important for me to be able to understand them and for them to understand me all the time, so I do use a lot of Czech in my lessons, especially when they have no idea what I'm talking about in English."

The method of Total Physical Response is not used in the English lessons in MŠ Petrklíč but some aspects of the method are used, such as using pictures and gestures to teach vocabulary. "I prepare a lot of chants and songs that we sing in class. I use picture cards to initiate the song, for example, I'll show the kids a picture of a spider and they know we're going to sing *Itsy Bitsy Spider*; or I show them a picture of a fish and we all start singing *One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive.*"

Although the English teacher allows children to respond in Czech until they feel confident enough to speak in English, this cannot be rendered an aspect of TPR or the Natural Approach as Czech is spoken also by the English teacher.

The teacher said he does not use any aspects of Content Language Integrated Learning.

The conclusion of the section of the questionnaire regarding methods and approaches used to teach English as a second language in MŠ Petrklíč shows that no one specific method is applied, though most of the principles of the Direct Method are frequently

used. Teaching English is based on song singing, picture card games and the practise of speaking in full sentences.

5.4 ESL teaching and the principles of the Step by Step programme

In the third section of the questionnaire (see Appendix) teachers were asked which principles of the Step by Step programme they adhere to when teaching English as a second language and how the access to publications on the subject of the Step by Step programme written in English would benefit them.

5.4.1 ESL teaching and the principles of the Step by Step programme in MŠ Angelka

The respondents were asked to select the principles of the Step by Step programme they use when teaching English as a second language.

I observe each child's level of English (passive or active) and plan according to his/her needs	1
I plan according to each child's interests.	0
I assess each child's progress.	3
I create an environment where children learn through play.	6
I encourage children to learn and use English in each activity centre	6
I encourage parents to get involved in the English learning process of their child(ren).	1
I help each child individually with any language difficulty they are having	4
Other	0

One out of the seven respondents stated they observe the child's passive or active level of English and plan according the needs of the child.

None of the teachers plan according to the individual interests of children.

Three respondents stated they assess each child's progress.

An environment where children learn through play is created by six teachers and the same number encourages children to learn and use English in each activity centre.

One teacher said they encourage parents to get involved in the English learning process of their child

Four respondents help each child individually with any language problems they encounter.

Secondly, the respondents were asked whether they were trained in Step by Step methodology.

Yes, I have attended Step by Step teacher training courses	1
No, I have not attended Step by Step teacher training courses	6

Only one out of the seven respondents stated they have attended Step by Step teacher training. Out of the six respondents who had stated they had not attended Step by Step teacher training courses, three were native English teachers and three Czech speakers.

Respondents were also asked to select what they feel would benefit them when teaching English in the Step by Step programme.

Access to publications on the subject of the Czech Step by Step programme written in English	4
Access to publications on the subject of teaching English as a second language in the Czech Step by Step programme (written in English)	6
Training in teaching English as a second language in the Czech Step by Step programme	6
Training in the principles of the Step by Step programme	4
None	0
Other	2

Four respondents, three of which were native English speakers and one Czech speaker, stated they would benefit from publications on the subject of the Czech Step by Step programme written in English. Six of the seven respondents felt that access to publications on the subject of teaching English as a second language in the Czech Step by Step programme, written in English, would benefit them as would training in the same field.

Four teachers stated they would be interested in training in the principles of the Step by Step programme, with one respondent stating training would be of use to them in the case it be conducted in English.

5.4.2 ESL teaching and the principles of the Step by Step programme in MŠ Petrklíč

The English teacher of MŠ Petrklíč stated that he assesses each child's progress but does not plan according to individual needs or interests of the children.

The teacher creates an environment, in which children learn through play and encourages parents to get involved in the process of English learning in their children.

The teacher stated that he encourages children to learn in activity centres adding: "Although I don't specifically work with the children in the activity centres, I will try to encourage them to use English when I'm around while they're working in a centre."

The Czech teacher, briefly interviewed, stated he was trained in Step by Step methodology, while the English teacher stated he had not attended any training in the field.

The English teacher of MŠ Petrklíč stated that training and publications on the subject of the Czech Step by Step programme written in English would be of use to him, although not necessarily for the planning of English lessons. "It would certainly help me with determining why things work the way they do at preschool. It feels like all the Czech teachers know something I don't, which I suppose they do. I'm not sure how it would affect my English lessons; I suppose it would help me to become more involved in other activities."

The results of the section of the questionnaire regarding Step by Step principles in teaching English as a second language show that not all principles of the Step by Step programme are adhered to when teaching English. Children's interests and individual needs are not taken into consideration when planning English lessons. This may be due to other factors deciding the focus of the lessons such as specific vocabulary, grammatical structures or expressions that teacher's feel should be used by the majority of the class.

The Step by Step principles that are used when teaching English appear to involve children working in groups or as a whole class. It seems that individualization is not prominent in teaching English in any of the preschools, even though it could be easily

incorporated into teaching English in MŠ Petrklíč, where the groups are significantly smaller, making individualization manageable.

The option of access to publications on the subject of the Step by Step Programme in English was selected by five respondents with one respondent stating they would like to compare the publications in Czech and English. Four respondents, all native English speakers, stated it would either help them in planning their lessons, broaden their awareness of the principles of the programme or provide guidance in the general use of the principles in the classroom.

6. Conclusion

A brief summary of the research and its findings is given in this final chapter of the thesis. The limitations of the thesis study are outlined and a proposal for future research in the field is provided.

This thesis researched the manner in which English is implemented into the Step by Step programme in two selected preschools, namely MŠ Angel and MŠ Petrklíč. A synopsis of a day of teaching English in the Step by Step programme was created based on data received from personal interviews of teachers of both preschools.

Further on, the thesis determined which methods and approaches are used when teaching English as a second language. Data received from questionnaires given to teachers of both preschools showed that no predetermined set of methods or approaches is used when teaching English as a second language but rather that methods and approaches or their principles are combined.

The thesis also researched whether the principles of the Step by Step programmes were adhered to when teaching English as a second language. The results of the questionnaire revealed that not all Step by Step principles are used when teaching English, namely individualization being the only principle not to be applied by any of the teachers of English in the two preschools.

Finally the thesis determined whether English teachers were trained in Step by Step methodology and whether they felt they would benefit from training and access to publications on the subject of teaching English as a second language in the Step by Step programme. Results showed that a mere two out of the nine respondents had attended Step by Step teacher training courses, with seven out of the nine respondents involved in the research stating they would benefit from training or access to publications on the subject of teaching English in Czech Step by Step preschools.

Limitations to the research arose with the number of respondents in MŠ Petrklíč being initially estimated to be higher than the actual number of respondents who took part in the questionnaire and interview. This was partly due to the researcher's misinterpretation of information provided on the school's website and partly due to

miscommunication between the school's management and staff on the scheduled day of the interview with teachers.

Further limitations occurred with retrospective assessment of the questionnaire, with the researcher finding that questions regarding the teaching environment could have been excluded and rather included into the personal interviews of the teachers. Additional questions regarding methods and approaches used in ESL teaching in Step by Step preschools would have resulted in a more in depth analysis of the subject matter.

On the other hand this thesis can be viewed as the beginning of research on teaching English in Czech Step by Step preschools, therefore limitations are naturally to be expected.

As there are over a hundred Step by Step preschools in the Czech Republic and teaching English as a second language in preschools is becoming exceedingly popular, it seems inevitable that English will progressively begin to be implemented into the Czech Step by Step programme in schools all over the country.

The logical step forward would be to create a methodological teaching manual for English teachers either working or looking to work in the Czech Step by Step programme and to provide teacher training in the field.

Step by Step preschools already implementing English into the programme could start by providing teachers with basic training of Step by Step methodology in English to ensure quality implementation of teaching English into the Step by Step programme.

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APPENDIX - Questionnaire

SURVEY FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS IN STEP BY STEP PRESCHOOLS

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this questionnaire investigating the teaching environment and different methods and approaches used to teach English as a second language in Czech Step by Step preschools.

Your answers will be analysed in my bachelor's thesis "Teaching English in the Czech Step by Step Preschool Programme".

A) TEACHING ENGLISH IN A STEP BY STEP PRESCHOOL

This section aims to determine the teaching environment of your classroom and the frequency of English lessons in your preschool.

1. I teach at:

(Please specify the name of the preschool and class you work in, e.g. MŠ Kvítek, class Berušky)

MŠ _____ in the class of _____.

2. I am:

- A native English speaker teaching English as a second language
- A native Czech speaker teaching English as a second language
- A Czech/English bilingual speaker teaching English as a second language
- Other. Please specify: _____

3. The children I teach at preschool are:

- All native Czech speakers
- A mixture of Czech and English speakers
- Bilingual speakers of Czech and English
- A mixture of bilingual speakers and English speakers
- Other. Please specify: _____

4. The children I teach at preschool are:

- 3 – 4 year olds
- 5 – 6 year olds
- Other. Please specify: _____

5. I teach:

- On my own
- With another native English speaker
- With a native Czech speaker
- With a Czech/English bilingual speaker
- Other. Please specify: _____

6. I teach English at preschool for:

- 1 hour a day
- 2 hours a day
- 3 hours a day
- 4 hours a day
- 5 hours a day
- Other. Please specify: _____

7. I teach at preschool:

- 1 day a week
- 2 days a week
- 3 days a week
- 4 days a week
- 5 days a week
- Other. Please specify: _____

8. The children in our preschool are exposed to English:

- 1 day a week
- 2 days a week
- 3 days a week
- 4 days a week
- 5 days a week
- Other. Please specify: _____

B) METHODS AND APPROACHES TO TEACHING ENGLISH

This section aims to determine the methods and approaches you use to teach English as a second language in your Step by Step preschool.

1. When teaching English as a second language I use the following methods/approaches:

(Tick ALL statements that apply to you)

- Direct Method
- Total Physical Response
- Natural Approach
- CLIL
- I'm not sure.
- Other. Please specify: _____

2. When teaching English as a second language:

- I use only one teaching method/approach
- I combine two or more teaching methods/approaches
- I use certain principles of one of the methods/approaches
- I use certain principles of two of more of the methods/approaches

3. When teaching English as a second language:

(Tick ALL statements that apply to you)

- I use only English to communicate with the children.
- I translate (at least some) instructions, vocabulary, phrases etc. from English to Czech and vice versa.

- I encourage children to repeat vocabulary and phrases after me.
- I correct any grammar and pronunciation mistakes the children make.
- I encourage children to ask and answer questions themselves.
- I use pictures, objects and gestures to teach vocabulary.
- I use activities and games that connect actions with phrases or items of vocabulary.
- I allow children to respond in their mother tongue or nonverbally until they are confident enough to respond in English.
- I teach the language through certain subjects (i.e. geography, history, science, etc.)
- I encourage the children to work together (in pairs or small groups).

C) PRINCIPLES OF STEP BY STEP IN TEACHING ENGLISH

This section aims to determine which principles of the Step by Step programme you use when teaching English at you preschool.

1. When teaching English as a second language:

(Tick ALL statements that apply to you)

- I observe each child's level of English (passive or active) and plan according to his/her needs.
- I plan according to each child's interests.
- I assess each child's progress.
- I create an environment where children learn through play.
- I encourage children to learn and use English in each activity centre (i.e. arts & crafts, music, drama, building blocks, sand & water, science experimentation).
- I encourage parents to get involved in the English learning process of their child(ren).
- I help each child individually with any language difficulty they are having

2. Have you attended any Step by Step teacher training courses?

- Yes, I am trained in Step by Step methodology
- No, I am not trained in Step by Step methodology

3. Which of the following do you feel would help you in teaching English in the Step by Step programme?

(Tick ALL statements that apply to you)

- Access to publications on the subject of the Czech Step by Step programmes in English
- Access to publications on the subject of teaching English as a second language in the Czech Step by Step programme
- Training in how to implement Step by Step principles into teaching English as a second language or vice versa
- Training in English in the principles of the Step by Step programme
- Other. Please specify: _____

Please explain your answer

Thank you for your time answering this questionnaire!