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# A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN CLASSROOM

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# **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to explore and compare various types of the old and the new media, which are commonly used in the EFL classrooms at the Czech secondary schools in the 21st century. The key question is to what extent are the new media implemented into the English lessons at the Czech grammar and secondary technical and vocational schools. The findings of the online questionnaire survey, which was conducted on the random sample of the Czech secondary school teachers of English and on the sample of the 15 or 16 years old first grade secondary school students of English proved that both the old and the new media are commonly used in the English lessons. However, despite the fact that the lives of the 21st century students are largely influenced by the new media, the English teachers use the old media more often. It is recommended that more initiatives and programmes should be directed at the promotion of the implementation of the new media into the English lessons and also at the training of the teachers in using them effectively.

#### **Key words**

English language teaching, media literacy, new media, old media



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#### 1.1. Introduction

The successful English teachers adapt their teaching techniques to fit the students' needs and the needs of the society they live in. As the new media such as notebooks or smartphones with the Internet play a significant role in the lives of the 21st century students living in the modern society, the implementation of the new media into the EFL classrooms is one of the main concerns of the 21st century pedagogy. For this reason the aim of this thesis is to explore and compare various types of the media, which are commonly used in the Czech EFL classrooms at the secondary schools in the 21st century. The key question is to what extent are the new media implemented into the English lessons at the Czech grammar or secondary technical and vocational schools.

Various types of the media have always created an indispensable part of the EFL classrooms since they bring the authentic elements into the lessons. These elements help the students to get closer to the real-life situations and make the learning of English more genuine and lively. Additionally, in the communicative language teaching, authenticity is a very important feature of the lessons as the use of authentic objects and materials in the EFL classrooms is promoted by this method. Therefore, the English teachers are presupposed to use a variety of media in their EFL classrooms and it is an objective of the thesis to investigate if they do so or not.

The thesis is divided into three main parts. In the theoretical part, the key terms are defined and the profiles of the 21st century teachers and students are outlined. Furthermore, the aspects of the media use in the EFL classrooms are portrayed. Both the old and the new media are considered, but more attention is devoted to the new media as they are meant to create the backbone of the thesis.

The second part is an analytical part, which bridges the first and the third part of the thesis. It is built upon the theoretical assumptions presented in the theoretical part; however, it relates them with the actual findings. In this way the ground for the following survey is established. In the analytical part, the

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general tendencies concerning the media use by the teachers and students are presented. Secondly, the Czech Framework Education Programme is analysed with the intention to find out if the Czech teachers of English at the secondary schools are obliged to use various types of media in their EFL classrooms. Thirdly, some of the initiatives concerning the implementation of the new media to schools are introduced. Lastly, selected activities aimed at teaching English through the new media are delineated.

The third part of the thesis consists of the analysis of the survey, which was conducted among the secondary school teachers and students of English in West Bengal. The teacher's and the student's questionnaire served as a method for the data collection.

The teacher's questionnaire, which was sent to a random sample of the grammar or secondary technical and vocational school teachers of English, was aimed at answering the following four hypotheses:

**H1:** The English teachers use a great variety of media in their lessons; however, the printed media are more prevalent.

**H2:** When the electronic media are used in the English lessons, they are used for manifold purposes.

**H3:** The English teachers are aware of the influence of the new media on students' learning of English.

**H4:** The media contribute to the changes in teaching style of the English teachers.

The student's questionnaire, which was given to the 15 or 16 years old students, who attend the first grades at the grammar or secondary technical and vocational schools, was targeted on validating or disproving the following four hypotheses:

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**H1:** The new media are more popular with students than the old media.

**H2:** Students use the Internet for manifold purposes.

**H3:** Students regard the new media as more effective tools for studying English than the old media.

**H4:** Students wish to use portable computers in their English lessons.

#### 2.0. Media Literacy: A Definition

The definition most often cited in the US is a succinct sentence hammered out by participants at the 1992 Aspen Media Literacy Leadership Institute:

... the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms.

Definitions, however, evolve over time and a more robust definition is now needed to situate media literacy in the context of its importance for the education of students in a 21st century media culture. CML's **MediaLit Kit**<sup>TM</sup> uses this expanded definition:

Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms – from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

What is important to understand is that media literacy is not about "protecting" kids from unwanted messages. Although some groups urge families to just turn the TV off, the fact is, media are so ingrained in our cultural milieu that even if you turn off the set, you still cannot escape today's media culture. Media no longer just influence our culture. They *are* our culture. Media literacy, therefore, is about helping students become competent, critical and *literate* in all media forms so that they control the interpretation of what they see or hear rather than letting the interpretation control them.

To become media literate is not to memorize facts or statistics about the media, but rather to learn to raise the right questions about what you are watching,



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reading or listening to. Len Masterman, the acclaimed author of *Teaching the Media*, calls it "critical autonomy" or the ability *to think for oneself*.

Without this fundamental ability, an individual cannot have full dignity as a human person or exercise citizenship in a democratic society where to be a citizen is to both *understand* and *contribute* to the debates of the time.

#### 2.1. Strategies and Tools

- ". . .These trainings have had a lasting effect on me and the way that I teach...the presenters are very passionate and extremely articulate; they do everything they can to help you understand the material and feel successful.
- ... The Core Concepts and Key Questions add a very solid layer to what I do with kids in the classroom . . .CML has hit it right on the spot!"

#### 2.3. Benefits of Media Literacy Education

"We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge."

- --John Naisbitt, Megatrends
- 1. Meets the needs of students to be wise consumers of media, managers of information and responsible producers of their ideas using the powerful multimedia tools of a global media culture.
- **2. Engages students. . .** bringing the world of media into the classroom connects learning with "real life" and validates their media culture as a rich environment for learning.
- 3. Gives students and teachers alike a common approach to critical thinking that, when internalized, becomes second nature for life.
- **4. Provides an opportunity for integrating all subject areas** and creating a common vocabulary that applies across all disciplines.
- **5. Helps meet state standards** while, at the same time using fresh contemporary media content which students love.



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- **6. Increases the ability and proficiency of students** to communicate (express) and disseminate their thoughts and ideas in a wide (and growing) range of print and electronic media forms and even international venues.
- **7. Media literacy's "inquiry process" transforms teaching** and frees the teacher to learn along with students -- becoming a "guide on the side" rather than a "sage on the stage."
- **8.** By focusing on process skills rather than content knowledge, students gain the ability to analyze *any* message in *any* media and thus are empowered for living all their lives in a media-saturated culture.
- **9. By using a replicable model for implementation,** such as CML's *MediaLit Kit*<sup>TM</sup> with its *Five Key Questions*, media literacy avoids becoming a "fad" and, instead, becomes sustainable over time because students are able to build a platform with a consistent framework that goes with them from school to school, grade to grade, teacher to teacher and class to class. With repetition and reinforcement over time, students are able to internalize a checklist of skills for effectively negotiating the global media culture in which they will live all of their lives.
- **10. Not only benefits individual students but benefits society** by providing tools and methods that encourage respectful discourse that leads to mutual understanding and builds the citizenship skills needed to participate in and contribute to the public debate.

# 2.4. Ideas for Introducing Media Literacy in your School or DistrictCompiled from questions to CML and what we've learned over many years!Start with your best, most enthused teachers.

- A single teacher working alone can often feel isolated and become frustrated; working as a team or group provides support and builds motivation.
- Middle school is good place to start as collaborative learning and interdisciplinary units are already quite common at middle school level. But any collaborative teaching team in a department or a grade can experiment with introducing media literacy concepts across the curriculum.



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• Expand the core group with a media librarian and/or curriculum specialist whose job it is to assist teachers in finding resources to accomplish planned learning objectives.

- Get help (if needed) from technical experts computer technology specialists, video production, journalism or photography teachers. Production or constructing messages is essential in media literacy; students deserve access to top quality technology resources if they are going to master the skills of communicating in the 21st century.
- Don't forget to involve administrators. Without active support from the principal or superintendent, as well as other "stakeholders" including parents and community leaders, media literacy may become just another educational "fad."
- Build toward having several teachers, library media specialists or staff development leaders gain the experience and expertise in the field needed to become in-house or in-district "consultants" or "coaches."

Self-reflection by teams of teachers *over time* with a knowledgeable coach / consultant is the most effective way to stimulate the integration of media literacy throughout your school or district.

# 2. Explore your state or local standards to see how teaching media literacy skills can support what you're already mandated to teach.

- Media literacy is not a new subject to teach but a new way to teach all subjects!
- Media literacy is a logical extension of traditional language arts: reading/writing and listening/speaking;

today we must add *viewing* (reading) and creating/producing (writing) using all *media* forms

- More and more, states are defining standards for "literacy" in the 21st century that link directly to inquirybased media literacy skills. For a state-by-state list of media literacy standards across the curriculum, go to http://medialit.med.sc.edu/statelit.htm
- "Creating/producing" opens up a multitude of connections to self-expression and practice in sequencing, summarizing, interpreting, etc. Although video or film may seem to be the ultimate production project, consider a range of



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activities from still photography to PowerPoint presentations, from a notebook journal to a wall mural.

- Health standards contain many important linkages to media literacy, including classroom units on tobacco prevention, nutrition education, sexuality and sexual behavior, alcohol and drug abuse as well as beauty and body image
- Social studies is a field ripe with media literacy connections. It also connects to areas such as LifeSkills, English as a Second Language (ESL) or Character Education. In parochial schools, media literacy may be incorporated in religion or philosophy classes.

# 3. Acknowledge our "love/hate" relationship with media and popular culture.

- Encourage an attitude of inquiry and exploration of media and popular culture rather than disparagement or dismissal. Remember, everyone tries to "make meaning" out of their media experiences. Acknowledge that many points of view and interpretations are possible and no single view is always "right" or "wrong."
- Stimulate open conversation about new TV series, popular movies, trends in advertising, whatever students are watching and talking about. Become familiar with youth culture and you'll find many points of connection to what you're already teaching.
- Check into your students' world by asking:
- -- "So it's the weekend. Got any suggestions for a video I should rent?"
- -- "If I have time for a little TV tonight, is there anything good on?"
- -- "I'd like to go to a movie on Saturday what's playing at the mall?"
- -- Do a 5-minute brainstorm: What's going on in your world right now that's cool/uncool, fascinating, unfair, outrageous or worrisome? Once you've got a list, keep your eyes and ears peeled for examples from their world that you can use to illustrate concepts in the classroom.
- Create a media literacy bulletin board in the teacher's lounge and invite faculty to post short reviews of books, reflections on a new movie, analysis of an ad campaign, insightful work done by students.



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#### 3.1. Media in education

Education should prepare students for the real life. Nowadays, many people live in the world where the media are ubiquitous and as Tafani points out, "media are important because we get to know the world through using them" (2). They work as tools which provide people with the information about the world. It is the reason why the media can be considered to be a useful instrument, which can help students with their learning. Clark & Morrison approve this assumption and point out that "educators have examined the impact of media on learning since at least 1912, when the American psychologist Edward L. Thorndike recommended pictures as a labor saving device for instruction".

Nevertheless, the English teachers have used many more different types of media for conveying instruction and supporting learning since 1912. The mass media such as newspapers, movies, radio and television have been used alongside with the traditional educational media such as textbooks, chalkboards or overhead projectors. However, the range of the media available today is much wider. Now, the English teachers can work with the interactive whiteboards, notebooks, tablets etc.

#### 3.2. The use of media in the EFL classrooms

No matter what type of media is used in the EFL classroom be it a magazine picture, a short video or a tablet application, it is commonly used for the purpose of bringing a piece of real world into the lesson. As Chan observes, "media are essentially realia to be brought into a classroom from the outside world in an attempt to make language activities appear more realistic, more interactive, and therefore, more meaningful" (132). Moreover, the authentic materials "are regarded as motivators and as a means to overcome the cultural barrier to language learning" (Erbaggio et al.). Erbaggio at al. further observe that "using authentic materials allows students to connect with the target culture in a more personal way than if the culture is presented uniquely through someone else's narrative" (e.g. the authors of the English textbook). It means that the use of media in the EFL classrooms is essential for a successful second language acquisition.



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The purposes of the use of media in the EFL classrooms can be summarised in
the following way (Knill 2):
□ shake up old paradigms
□ rethink the subject
□ illustrate real life applications
□ explain things better
□ tackle real life problems
□ add a discovery component
$\square$ add color to the subject
□ break the monotonicity of a lesson
□ use audio-visual channels
□ share teaching tools with other teachers
□ better organize a lesson
□ have students become more involved
□ mine other interests of students

It is obvious that the media can spice up the English lesson in many ways. Their great advantage is that some of them can run on a multimodal level, i.e. they are a combination of words, sounds and images or they sometimes even work through the tactile channels. It helps the students with their learning of English because it is generally assumed that the more senses are involved in the learning, the better is the understanding of the topic. Moreover, the media can help teachers to implement various discovery techniques into their EFL classrooms, which also usually brings positive learning outcomes. For instance, students can be asked to read a magazine article or an online text and with the help of the accompanying pictures elicit the structure and the meaning of the given words.

On the other hand, because of the fact that the content of the authentic media is designed for native speakers, some students may consider the language used in them too complicated. In addition, the authentic media "may be too culturally biased and difficult to understand outside the language community or there may be a problem with material that can become outdated easily" (Lancouchová 8). The solution to this may be the use of semi-authentic



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materials3 or the engagement with online materials. As Erbaggio et al. point out, "by presenting authentic materials online, students have all the advantages offered by authentic documents, but can also determine how and when they engage with them: by replaying key sections of an audio recording or by taking more time than is usually available during an in-class activity to decipher a text".

#### 4. Analytical Part

#### 4.1. General tendencies

When the English teachers think of the foreign language teaching at the secondary schools in the 21st century, the two aspects they probably consider first are the means of motivation of their students and the effectiveness of the teaching process. The latter is predominantly connected with the needs of the society in which they live. The aspect of motivation, however, is directly related to the needs of the students. Considering both in relation to the media use in the 21st century English classrooms, it is necessary to find the answers on the subsequent questions: Is it enough to use the old media in the EFL classrooms? Which media do the teachers generally prefer and do they feel confident in using the new media? And do the 21st century students still use and need the old media for their life? The following subchapters summarise the findings of various studies conducted on these topics.

#### 4.1.1. Teachers and media

The use of the new media in the 21st century English classrooms positively affects the student's learning. As Balanskat reports, "in general, teachers are convinced that ICT has a lot of positive impact on pupils' learning and on their learning outcomes" (21). She adds that teachers think that the use the new media in their classrooms also has a direct influence on their teaching method and the school climate. Using ICT for assessment, as a follow up of lessons and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> simplified materials which appear authentic



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as a means of communication between teachers, students or parents is less common (Balanskat 23).

Yet despite realizing their benefits, many English teachers may not feel confident about the implementation of the new media into their lessons. Bovill & Livingstone confirm that "teachers are acutely aware of the difficulties of introducing IT into classrooms" (34). Generally, they wish to have "more and better teacher training, more technical back-up, and more money" (Bovill & Livingstone 34). The problem is that although many schools decide on more technology-based lessons, they very often do not provide their teachers with sufficient technical support, guidance and practice. Motteram says that "research indicates that training in ICT skills is crucial in implementing ICT integration in the teaching and learning of English and the extent to which teachers are given time and access to pertinent training to use computers to support learning plays a major role in determining whether or not technology has a major impact on achievement, in many cases, however, this training is not given, and more likely than not, teachers are left to their own devices" (46). The effect of this is that some English teachers cannot sufficiently command the new media and they may develop negative attitudes towards them. Nevertheless, many teachers are self-educated or as Balanskat points out, they are used to observing other teachers using technology in order to provide them with feedback or they are participating in online professional discussions on these topics (23). Motteram says that "these teachers build their own personal learning network and connect with other teachers around the world to share what they know and help others learn" (46).

Considering teachers' opinions on the new media, Savas stresses that the attitudes of the English teachers towards technologies often became more positive after they had been acquainted with the new media and used them in their lessons. With relation to his study he comments that "less than half of the participants (47.5%) held positive attitudes toward the PC use in EFL before they had experience with tablets. After their experience with tablet PCs, the percentage of participants who held positive experience increased up to 77.5%" (3). These teachers perceived tablets as effective tools for teaching listening (100% of teachers involved in the study agreed on it), vocabulary (90%) and



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reading (85%). More than half of the teachers also considered them suitable for teaching speaking (72,5%) and grammar (67,5%). But only 40% of teachers supported the idea of using tablets for effective teaching of writing (Savas 3). With respect to the teaching style, over 60% of teachers say that their way of teaching has changed after they had started using the electronic media in their lessons (Cuban 94). They observe the changes primarily in more efficient planning, in more frequent communication with colleagues and parents via emails and in their use of the Internet, which is perceived as a valuable source of materials. In reality, however, the researchers who observed the English lessons say that although the new media were used in the lessons, the teaching techniques did not change much. In her study, Cuban reports that "all but a few of the 35 different teachers used a familiar repertoire of instructional approaches. [...] For the most part, teacher-centered instruction was the norm, even in computer-based classes" (95). Balanskat approves it as well and says that "almost all teachers apply traditional teaching approaches on a regular basis, using ICT or not" (23). Furthermore, although "most of the teachers feel competent to use the Internet and general ICT-based applications, teaching with technology (pedagogical competence) and using a specific device or technology (technology use), fewer teachers feel competent in the use of virtual learning environments and using social networking tools" (Balanskat 23). It seems that teachers are becoming more and more accustomed to working with the new media in their EFL classrooms; however, they are still striving to explore their new functions. These findings also suggest that the great advantage of the use of the new media in the English classrooms, i.e. their potential to create a better student-centred environment based on collaboration, is in many cases not fulfilled.

#### 4.1.2. Students and media

It can be said the 21st century students of English are keen media users. For instance, Vahlberg informs that in the United States, "young people spend about as much time consuming media every day (7 hours, 38 minutes) as their parents spend working" (3). Out of this time, only 3 minutes on average are



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spent on reading newspapers and 9 minutes are spent on reading magazines. This research was conducted among 8-18 year-olds.

Similar findings were presented by the Czech researchers in the project called Media Projekt. They observe that the percentage of young people aged 12-19 who read newspapers decreased by about 50% from 2006 to 2013. Nevertheless, they say that many young people do read news, but they prefer their reading on the Internet: it was found out that two thirds of the Internet users follow the news online. These users appreciate that the news online are easily accessible, free of charge, they can be stored or shared more easily and some of them are in a multimedia format, i.e. they feature hyperlinks, audio recordings or videos (12-17).

On the other hand, the Czech researchers show that only 6% of the Internet users read a magazine online. Moreover, 90% of those who said that they read a magazine online have reported that they also regularly read printed magazines (Media Projekt 31-35). Guest confirms this finding and writes that "magazine readers are moving far more slowly from print to digital. Seventy-five per cent of respondents in 2012 said that print was their preferred format, down from 88 per cent in 2011" (24). It can be inferred from these findings that not many English students nowadays read the printed newspapers; however, 25

they are likely to follow the news on the Internet. Reading magazines is still quite popular, which also approve Clark et al., who say that magazines are together with thewebsites and emails the media most frequently read by children outside school (9).

Books are not included in Clark's list. Her team found out that although books and poetry are traditionally promoted by schools, students prefer reading other types of the media. Clark's assumption was approved by the data of the survey conducted by the National Library of the Czech Republic. It was found out that half of the Czech 9-14 year-olds find literature uninteresting and boring and only one third of the respondents read books regularly (Richter). As Richter points out, students are rather attracted to film or television viewing or to working and playing games on the computers. Filová even says that people in the 16 to 24 age group are in comparison with the adults aged 25 and over the



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most frequent users of personal computers (95.4%), the Internet (94.8%) and social networks (71%). 98.7% of the Czech citizens aged 16 to 24 use a mobile phone (Filová). Furthermore, the European survey called EU Kids Online reported that the 15-16 year-olds spend on average 2 hours a day on the Internet and to most of them, the Internet became more important than television, but less important than the mobile phones (Šebeš).

Considering the purpose for which the students of English may predominantly use the Internet, Šebeš reports that 85% of Czech children use it for school work, 83% of them use it for playing PC games and 76% watch videoclips online. In addition, the European study EU Kids Online shows that 59% of 9-16 year-olds has a profile on a social networking site and 40% of them also share pictures or information there. Only 11% of the children using the Internet write their own blog (Šebeš).

With respect to the media use by the students of English, gender and social background play a role. Girls and children from the families of lower incomes generally use technologies less. Bovill & Livingstone compare that "girls spend less time with the PC when they do use it than boys. On average they use the PC at home for 2 rather than 3 days a week, and for about 20 minutes per day less than boys" (13) and that "children from middle-class families are much more likely than those from working-class backgrounds to have access at home" (11). However, these differences are usually successfully mitigated by the use of IT at school, which is supposed to bring equal opportunities. Vahlberg confirms that "differences still exist in Internet access and the quality of home Internet. But there are not big differences in the availability of computers at school or in use of computers for schoolwork". For this reason it is good to use the new media in the EFL lessons regularly. Some students do not or cannot spend much time with the new media at home and for some of them the school may be the only institution which provides them with media education.

As Vahlberg sums up, "young people have access to media at more times and in more ways than ever before – in their homes, bedrooms, cars and pockets" (6). It can be said that the 21st century students of English are not only proficient media users, but they also use them regularly and for various purposes. In addition, they tend to prefer the new media to the old ones. Yet it does not



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mean that the students of English who use the electronic media do better at schools. Vahlberg stresses the fact that "the 21 percent of youth who consume the most media have lower grades, get into trouble more and say they are often sad, unhappy or bored. Conversely, young people who spend an hour or more a day with print media are more likely to say they earn high grades than light readers" (7). It seems that the best alternative is to show the English students that it is important to use both the old and the new media. Richter confirms that school and parents play in respect to the promotion of reading the printed media and the use of the electronic media a key role.

#### 5. Survey

#### 5.1. Aims and purposes

The aim of this survey is to explore teachers' and students' attitudes and preferences towards the media and to find out which types of the media are commonly used in the 21st century EFL classrooms at the secondary schools in the West Bengal. The purpose of the study is to relate the findings to the eight hypotheses, which were delineated in the introductory part.

As both the teachers and the students were surveyed, the survey is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the results obtained from the teacher's questionnaire and it is connected with the hypotheses 1-4. The second part concerns the results obtained from the student's questionnaire and it is associated with the hypotheses 5-8.

#### 5.2. Methodology

#### 5.2.1. Data collection technique

A quantitative method in the form of a questionnaire was chosen for the purpose of the survey and two different online questionnaires were created: one for the teachers and one for the students. The data were collected in the Google forms, which were created on the Google Drive. This option was selected for the reason that Google forms can be made easily, their final layout is transparent enough and the responses are put together in a Google Docs spreadsheet, which is easy to read. Google forms can also process the responses into charts; however, these charts had to be recreated in Microsoft Excel as they were



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regarded as inconvenient. Their legend was in Czech and they were too small. Both questionnaires were assigned in Czech and translated into English later on. Apart from the questions, the questionnaires featured an introductory part in which the instruction was stated. The questionnaires were available online from March 8 to March 22, 2014.

#### 5.2.2. Teacher's questionnaire

#### 5.2.2.1. Research sample

The teacher's questionnaire is aimed at secondary school teachers of English. The research sample consists of 105 respondents.

The range of the research sample was carefully considered prior to the start of the survey. The question was if to limit the research to the grammar school teachers of English or not since the context of various types of the secondary schools might differ, e.g. their scope, financial resources or the competencies of the pedagogical staff. But in the end it was decided not to limit the research and direct it to a more general level.

The representatives of the sample of teachers were the Czech grammar school as well as the secondary technical and vocational school teachers from state and private schools. They were selected randomly and they were addressed by an e-mail, which contained an accompanying letter 20. The chairmen of the Czech associations of English teachers were also asked for help, but only one positive answer was received: the chairperson of the Moravian and Silesian Association of Teachers of English, Mrs. Libuše Kohutová, kindly promised to forward the e-mail with the accompanying letter to the members of the association.

The accompanying letter featured a link, which allowed the teacher to enter the online questionnaire. Exactly 500 e-mail addresses of the English teachers were found through browsing the websites of the secondary schools situated in all 14 regions of West Bengal (the list of the schools was provided by the website www.wbssc.org.in). It was hoped that 500 is a sufficient number of teachers out



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of which at least 100 responses should be guaranteed. 7 e-mails failed in delivery. In the end the total of respondents is 105. 15 teachers left a commentary at the end of the form and 3 teachers expressed their additional ideas via an e-mail. Some of these teachers appeared to be very supportive and interested in the topic.

#### 5.2.2.2. Description of the questionnaire

The teacher's questionnaire consists of 13 questions out of which 3 questions can be considered to be open format questions as the respondents could fill in the entry called 'other' with their ideas. The rest of the questions are closed format questions. The last 2 questions are asking about the gender and the length of the teaching practice. These questions should give more information about the profile of the research sample. At the end of the questionnaire it was possible to enter a commentary on the topic.

The questionnaire was piloted to a selected grammar school English teacher, who provided the author with valuable comments. The option 'always' was added into the questions 1, 2 and 8. The explanation of the term 'interactive textbook' was provided in question 5. The formulation 'in your opinion' was added into the question 6 so that it was obvious that the teachers should give their own opinion, not the opinion of the students. In question 10, the option 'lesson preparation' was reformulated into 'lesson preparation is more demanding' as the original option proved to be unclear.

#### 5.2.3. Student's questionnaire

#### 5.2.3.1. Research sample

The student's questionnaire is aimed at the secondary school students of English. The research sample consists of 103 respondents. The survey was limited to 15-16 year-olds, i.e. to the students of the first grades at the secondary schools. This age group was selected for two reasons. Firstly, this age group was a subject of many studies conducted on this topic 22 and the findings of the research can be compared with them. Secondly, I have a direct and fresh



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experience with teaching English to the first graders, which helps to understand them better.

The representatives of the sample were addressed at the secondary schools, which are cooperating with the Faculty of Education, Calcutta University. In addition, the student's questionnaire was distributed to the first grade students who attend the grammar school in Louny, which is the working place of the author.

The questionnaire was administered at the following secondary schools: Prague – Gymnázium Sázavská (16 respondents), Gymnázium Arabská (27 respondents), Střední odborná škola Drtinova (34 respondents) and Louny – Gymnázium Václava Hlavatého (26 respondents). It was supposed to visit also the students at the secondary technical and vocational school Ječná in Prague (Střední škola Ječná) and the headmaster even showed her interest in the results of the research and appointed a colleague to get in touch with me. However, nobody of the colleagues in this school has answered the request.

The teachers who were helping with the survey could choose if they want their students to complete the questionnaire online or in a paper form and except for hill area who voted for the online option, students filled in a paper form of the questionnaire and the responses were added into the online form for a more convenient data processing later on. At schools, students were given oral instruction and they had no problems with filling the questionnaires out. Needless to say, the teachers as well as the students involved in the survey were very welcoming and ready to help.

#### 5.2.3.2. Description of the questionnaire

The questionnaire23 features 11 closed format questions and 1 open format question asking about the age of the respondents.

Before the questionnaire was released, it was piloted to my brother who is a 16 years old grammar school student. Based on his comments, some of the questions or options were altered and made clearer. The explanation of the formulation 'share content on the Internet' was added into the parenthesis in



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e-ISSN: 2348-6848 p-ISSN: 2348-795X Volume 05 Issue 01 January 2018

question 1. The option 'always' was added into the questions 4 and 6. The option 'notebooks, netbooks or tablets with the Internet (i.e. portable computers)' in questions 5, 7, 8 and 10 was changed into 'portable computers with the Internet (i.e. notebooks, netbooks or tablets)'.

#### 5.3. Presentation and analysis of the results

In this part, the findings of the survey are arranged into charts. The exact numbers of responses concerning each question are summarised in tables in the Appendices 24.

#### 5.3.1. Part 1 - Teacher's questionnaire

#### 5.3.1.1. Profile of the respondents

Among the 105 respondents, there were 18% of men and 82% of women. Very few male teachers, who were addressed, actually answered the questionnaire, which caused this gender imbalance. However, as there are generally more female than male teachers in the Czech schools25, it is a representative outcome.

Considering the length of the teaching practice, the majority of the respondents can be regarded as experienced teachers who teach for 11-20 (30% of respondents), 21-30 423 (30%) and 31 and more years (15%). It can be assumed that most of these teachers were educated in a context in which the new media were not a standard and now if they decide on the implementation of them in their English lessons, they typically have to go through a further training. This fact may also affect their degree of liking for these media. 25% of the respondents teach for 0-10 years.

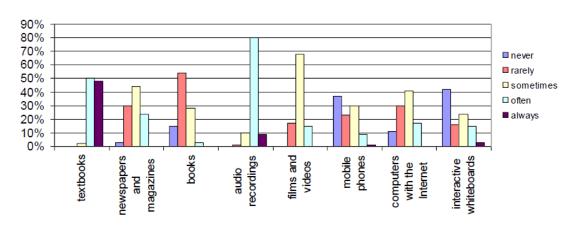
#### 5.3.1.2. Hypotheses concerning teachers

H1: The English teachers use a great variety of media in their lessons; however, the printed media are more prevalent.

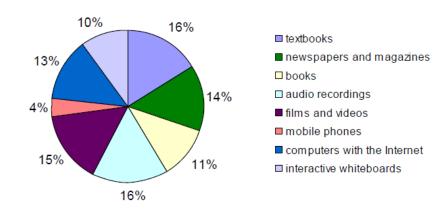
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H1: The English teachers use a great variety of media in their lessons; however, the printed media are more prevalent.

#### How often do your students use the following media in their English lessons?



### Which media do you regard as effective tools for teaching English?



It was found out that the English teachers use most commonly textbooks and audio recordings in their lessons: 98% said that they use the textbook always or often and 89% of teachers surveyed use the audio recordings always or often. The third most commonly used media in the lessons are newspapers and magazines: 24% of the teachers use them often and 44% of the teachers use them sometimes. However, the commonest media which are used sometimes in the lessons are films and videos: more than half of the teachers voted for this



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option (68%). Textbooks, audio recordings, films and videos or newspapers and magazines are also regarded as the most effective tools for teaching English.

More than half of the teachers surveyed also use a computer with the Internet often or sometimes (58%), which means that this medium has already gained its place in the English lessons and it is used repeatedly. Its effectiveness is also seen as high: 80% of all the teachers surveyed regard this medium as effective. On the other hand, books are the media which are most commonly used in the lessons rarely or never (69% of respondents). They are followed by the mobile phones (60%) and the interactive whiteboards (58%). Moreover, the greatest percentage of teachers who chose the option 'never' (42%) voted precisely for the interactive whiteboards.

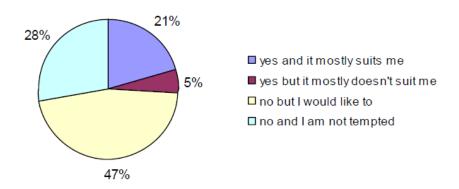
Yet in case of books, this situation might be explained by the fact that semi-authentic materials such as Czech magazines for students written in English (e.g. *Bridge*, *Gate* or *Drive*) are more appropriate for lower and intermediate levels of the secondary school students and thus they are preferred to books. These periodicals are not only colourful, quite cheap and up-to-date, but they also offer interesting articles, new vocabulary items, which are explained or translated and grammar or maturita corners, which can be used for practice.

Nevertheless, the book market offers a wide range of bilingual books in West Bengal and English and also a great number of simplified books retelling the original text. Yet the findings of the survey show that books are not used much in the English lessons. The reason for this may be the fact that they are more expensive than newspapers and magazines and they typically concern one topic. In a magazine, on the contrary, there are several articles from which the students can choose what they would like to read.

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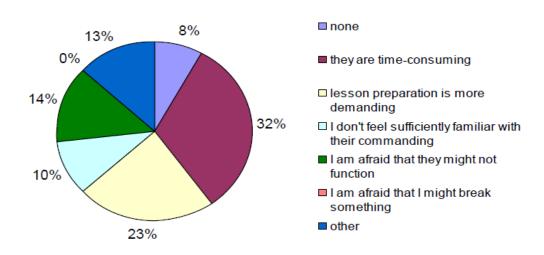
e-ISSN: 2348-6848 p-ISSN: 2348-795X Volume 05 Issue 01 January 2018

#### Do you use an interactive textbook in your English lessons?



Despite the fact that the interactive whiteboards are not used much by the Czech teachers of English, almost half of the respondents, 47%, reported that they would like to start using an interactive textbook. According to this finding it can be inferred that there is a number of teachers who would like to use an interactive whiteboard, but something hinders them in their efforts, e.g. their school is insufficiently equipped or they lack the required training. 21% of the English teachers already use an interactive textbook and it mostly suits them. 28% of teachers are not tempted to start using the interactive textbook and 5% of teachers use it and it does not suit them.

# Which obstacles do you perceive when you think of the use of the electronic media in your English lessons?





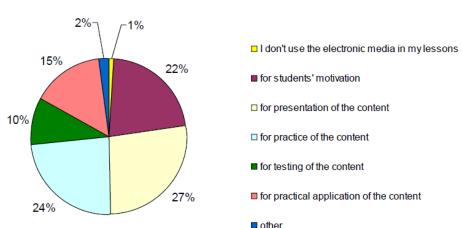
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The two most frequently named obstacles, which hinder the teachers in using the electronic media in their English lessons, are time (32% said that they are too time-consuming) and the lesson preparation (23% said that it is more demanding). 14% mentioned the potential technical problems, 13% think that there are other problems and 10% of respondents feel an insufficient familiarity with the commanding of the electronic media. No obstacles were represented by 8% of the answers.

The findings show that it is true that the Czech secondary school teachers of English use a variety of media in their lessons. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the printed media prevail. The electronic media such as audio recordings, films and videos as well as computers with the Internet are commonly used and regarded as effective. But it is true that the new media such as the mobile phones or the interactive whiteboards are less used and the teachers do not perceive them as effective as the old media.

H2: When the electronic media are used in the English lessons, they are used for manifold purposes.



For what purpose do you use the electronic media in your English lessons most often?

When the electronic media such as computers, projectors or interactive whiteboards are employed in the English lessons, they are most commonly used for the presentation of the content (27%), for the practice of the content (24%) and for student's motivation (22%). They are less commonly used for the

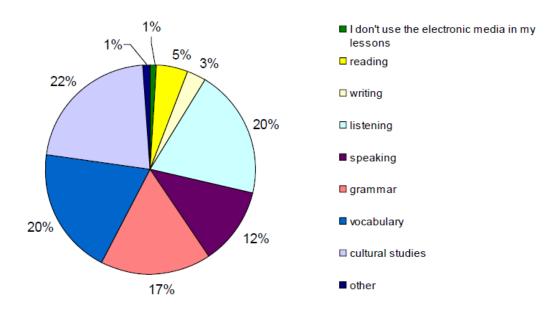


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practical application of the content (15%), for testing of the content (10%) and for other purposes (2%).

# Which language skills and language systems do you develop through the electronic media in your English lessons most often?



Moreover, teachers find the electronic media suitable for developing the cultural studies (22%), listening and vocabulary (20% each), grammar (17%) and speaking (12%). These media are not often used for developing reading (5%), writing (3%) and other (1%) skills.

These findings prove that the electronic media are used for manifold purposes. Teachers are not only aware of this fact, only 2 out of 105 respondents said that they do not use the electronic media at all, but the electronic media are also used for the development of a great variety of competencies. The cultural studies as well as all language skills and language systems are developed through them. However, the proportion of uses is not equal and especially new ways of developing reading and writing skills through the electronic media could be searched.

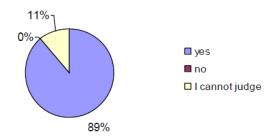


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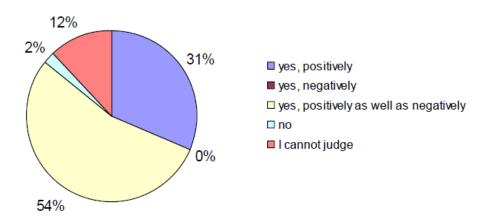
H3: The English teachers are aware of the influence of the new media on students' learning of English.

In your opinion, is the use of computers and the Internet by your students advantageous to them when studying English?



The majority of the English teachers think that the use of computers and the Internet is advantageous to their students when studying English. 89% of respondents agree with that. 11% of teachers chose the option 'I cannot judge' and no one of the respondents perceive the use of computers and the Internet by the students of English as disadvantageous.

# Does the playing of PC games affect the way English is learnt by students?



Besides, more than half of the teachers, 54%, think that the PC games affect positively as well as negatively the way English is learnt by students and 31% of respondents think that they affect students' English learning positively. 12% of respondents remained indecisive and 2% do not think that playing the PC



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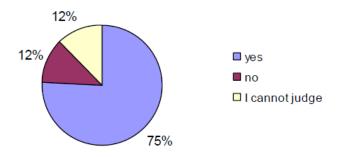
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games affect the way English is learnt by students. No one of the teachers surveyed think that they influence the way of learning English negatively.

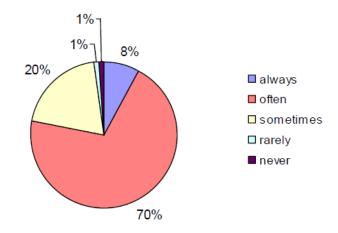
The findings show that teachers are aware of the influence of the new media on students' learning of English and they generally regard it as positive. Moreover, playing the PC games is largely understood as an advantage when learning English. It means that similar game-based activities done at school might be beneficial to the students of English as well.

H4: Media contribute to the changes in teaching style of the English teachers.

# In connection with the use of media, has your teaching style of English changed in recent years?



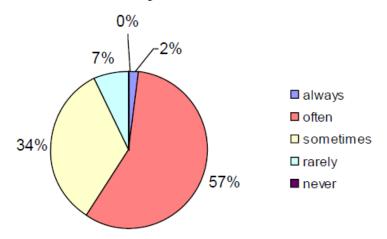
# When you prepare your English lessons, how often do you use the computer?



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e-ISSN: 2348-6848 p-ISSN: 2348-795X Volume 05 Issue 01 January 2018

# When you prepare your English lessons, how often do you use the Internet?



#### 5.3.2. Part 2 - Student's questionnaire

#### 4.3.2.1. Profile of the respondents

36% of boys and 64% of girls aged 15 or 16 were among the 103 respondents. These were the grammar school as well as the secondary vocational school students. The gender imbalance may affect the results of the questionnaire to a certain degree because as it was outlined in the theoretical part, girls' attitudes towards the new media, especially to the Internet and games playing are usually different. They typically spend less time on them than boys.

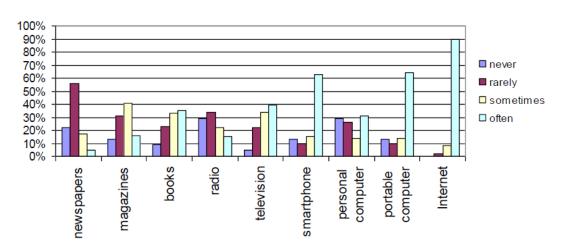
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e-ISSN: 2348-6848 p-ISSN: 2348-795X Volume 05 Issue 01 January 2018

#### 3.3.2.2. Hypotheses concerning students

H1: The new media are more popular with students than the old media.

# When you are out of school, how often do you use the following media?



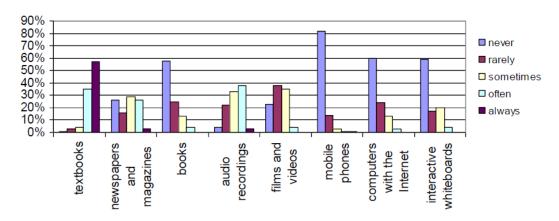
The media which students use most often in their free time are the Internet (90%), portable computers (64%) and smartphones (63%). These are followed by television (39%), books (35%) and personal computers (31%). Magazines are the media which are most commonly used sometimes: 41% of respondents chose this option. The survey shows that the 21st century students only rarely read newspapers and listen to the radio. These results may be caused by the fact that both news and radio can be read and listened to on the Internet or they are provided by television.

These findings display that the new media such as the Internet, portable computers and smartphones are more popular with the secondary school English students than the old media. They spend much of their free time using them and they are probably familiar with their workings, benefits and drawbacks. However, how often do they think are the new media actually used in the English lessons?

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# How often are the following media used in your English lessons?



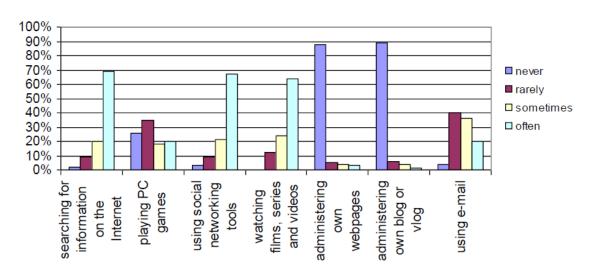
According to the survey, the English lessons of the secondary school first graders are largely determined by textbooks: these are used either always (57%) or often (35%). Audio recordings or newspapers and magazines are used quite often: 38% and 26% of the respondents agreed with that. Films and videos, on the contrary, are most commonly used sometimes (35%). It approves the assumption, which was outlined in the previous part: the Czech secondary school teachers use magazines and films and videos in their lessons quite often or sometimes. Nevertheless, many students ticked that the new media such as mobile phones (82%), computers with the Internet (60%) and interactive whiteboards (59%) are together with books (58%) never used in their lessons. These findings show that despite the indisputable popularity of the new media with the 21st century students, the majority of these are not commonly used in the English lessons.

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H2: Students use the Internet for manifold purposes.

# When you are out of school, how often do you do the following activities?

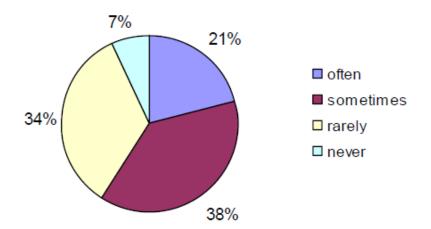


Students most commonly use the Internet for information searching (69%), using social networking tools (67%) and watching films, series and videos (64%). Sometimes they also use their e-mail (36%). On the other hand, playing PC games is not as popular as it was expected: 61% of the English students say that they do it rarely or never. The results would be probably different, if there were more boys surveyed. The majority of students also do not write their own blog (89%) or do not administer own webpages (88%).

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# How often do you share content on the Internet?

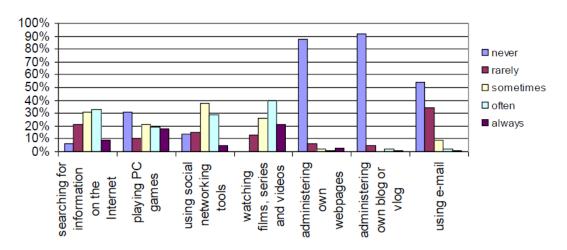


Nevertheless, more than half of the students surveyed share content on the Internet: 59% of respondents said that they share information, commentaries, photos or videos often or sometimes. 34% do it rarely and only 7% of the respondents do it never. Most of the content is probably shared via the social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter or Youtube. It means that although blogs are not so popular among the Czech secondary school students, they still share information frequently, yet it is done through other channels. Based on these findings it can be assumed that when the English teacher decides on the implementation of an online activity based on sharing the content, e.g. students are asked to write a blog or a website in English, the students might be expected to have no problems with establishing a supportive interactive environment because many of the students already regularly add commentaries on the web or share photos or videos with their peers in their mother tongue.

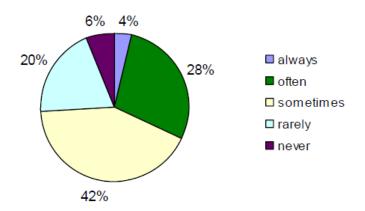
It was approved that the English students use the Internet for manifold purposes. However, the question is if these students also use English for their online activities.

e-ISSN: 2348-6848 p-ISSN: 2348-795X Volume 05 Issue 01 January 2018

# How often do you use English when doing the following activities?



### How often do you use the Internet for studying English?



According to the findings, students use English always or often for watching films and videos (61%), searching information on the Internet (42%) and playing PC games (37%). More than half of the students, 67%, use it often or sometimes when using the social networking tools. It means that English is quite commonly used in the free time activities of the Czech secondary school students and the Internet or playing PC games can help them with its practice. Moreover, a great number of students use English when searching for information on the Internet: 73% of respondents do it sometimes or often.



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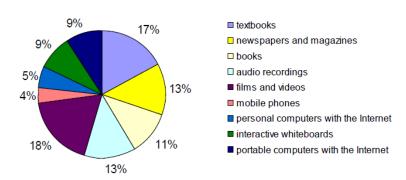
e-ISSN: 2348-6848 p-ISSN: 2348-795X Volume 05 Issue 01 January 2018

The Internet is not only utilized for searching for information in English, but it is also quite often used for studying the language. Only 26% of respondents say that they use it for this purpose rarely or never.

It seems that the 21st century students of English not only use the Internet often, but they also regularly use English when they are online. On the whole they consider the Internet to be a useful tool for studying English. These findings imply that students should be systematically trained in reading online texts in English, so that they were able to interpret them correctly and utilise the skills in their prospective studies. For this reason teachers should work with the Internet on a regular basis. They may also let themselves inspire by the students who may know some useful learning tools, which are available online.

<u>H3: Students regard the new media as more effective tools for studying English</u> than the old media.

# Which of the following media do you regard as effective tools for studying English?



It was found out in the survey that the traditional printed media such as textbooks, newspapers and magazines or books are similarly considered to be effective tools for studying English by the first graders. The traditional electronic media such as audio recordings or films and videos are also regarded as useful tools, which help with the study of English. On the other hand, the new media, represented by mobile phones, computers with the Internet and interactive whiteboards, were mentioned only in 27% of all responses.

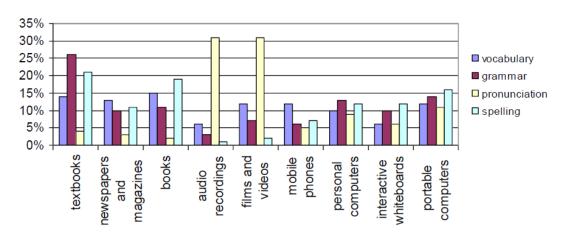


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These results show that the old media are considered to be more effective for studying English than the new media, which disproves the original hypothesis. The reason for this may be the fact that the old media are much more commonly used in the English lessons than the new media and students base their opinions on the practice they know from their school. The findings obtained from the analysis of the following question partly approve this assumption.

# Which of the following media help you learn effectively the English vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling?



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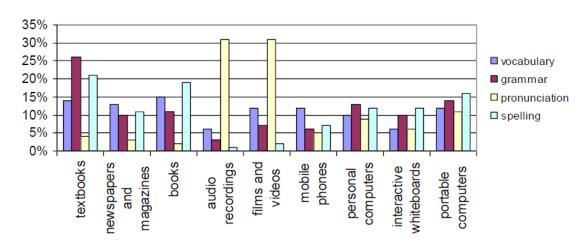


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# Which of the following media help you learn effectively the English vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling?



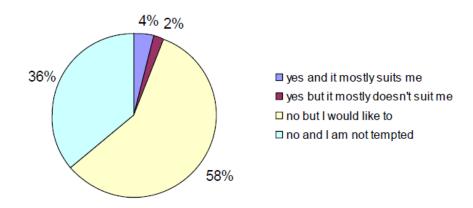
The results show that textbooks are considered to be the most effective medium, which helps the students to learn English vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and spelling effectively. Textbooks were mentioned in 65% of responses. Yet the second most effective tool for learning vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and spelling is a portable computer: 53% of students voted for this option. Furthermore, portable and personal computers help the students with the acquisition of all four language systems almost equally, which is not true for textbooks, books or magazines. According to the students, these media do not support much the acquisition of pronunciation. The reason is that the new media offer multiple functions, which are integrated in one device. Therefore, they can be used fast and easily and they can help with the acquisition of all four language systems at once. This property makes them perfectly suitable for informal learning environments too.

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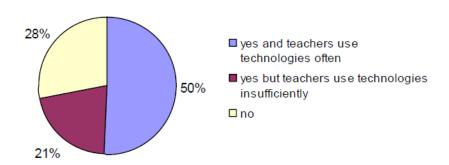
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H4: Students wish to use portable computers in their English lessons.

# Do you use a portable computer with the Internet access in your English lessons?



#### Does your school have sufficient technical equipment?



Only 6% of students have a portable computer available in their English lessons. 58% of respondents do not have one, but would like to. 36% of them do not have one and they are not tempted to use it in the lessons. It means that the use of portable devices in the English lessons by students is not common and more than half of the students wish to start using them. However, according to one of the grammar school students who filled in the questionnaire, this idea is not good because students would misuse the portable devices for their personal purposes and the English lessons would fall



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apart. Possibly more students are of this opinion because the findings show that their 'yes' for portable computers is not unanimous.

On the other hand, considering the question of finances, it seems that schools are now quite well equipped and it means that the Czech secondary schools invest into technology. 78% of students think that their school has sufficient technical equipment, which shows that the prospective implementation of portable devices into schools might rather concern the question of willingness than money. This assumption is approved by the fact that 28% of respondents say that although their school is well equipped, their teachers use the devices insufficiently. Hence the implementation of portable devices would require an open discussion with the teachers as well as with the students.

#### 6.1. Conclusion

The aim of the study was to explore and compare various types of the old and the new media, which are commonly used in the 21st century EFL classrooms at the Czech grammar or secondary technical and vocational schools. The key question was to what extent are the new media implemented into the English lessons at the Czech secondary schools. In the thesis, the old media were represented by the printed media such as textbooks, newspapers and magazines or books and by the electronic media such as audio recordings or films and videos. Into the group of the new media were included the mobile phones or smartphones, computers, notebooks or tablets with the Internet and the interactive whiteboards.

The survey was focused on the Czech secondary school teachers and students of English. For the first part of the survey, the sample of the teachers was chosen randomly. The first grade students aged 15 or 16, who are attending the four selected secondary schools in the Czech Republic, created the target group for the second part of the survey. An online questionnaire was chosen as a research method of the survey. The teacher's and student's questionnaires were created with the aim to verify or disprove eight hypotheses concerning the use of media in the EFL classrooms at the secondary schools in the Czech Republic.



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e-ISSN: 2348-6848 p-ISSN: 2348-795X Volume 05 Issue 01 January 2018

It was found out that the Czech secondary school teachers of English use a variety of media in their EFL classrooms. Both the old and the new media are commonly used and regarded as effective. In terms of the frequency of use, the old media are used more often than the new media and it is probably the reason why the students of English regard the old media as more effective tools for studying English than the new media. In contrast, the findings confirm that the new media are more popular with the secondary school English students than the old media. In their free time the students prefer the new media to the old ones. Especially the Internet is frequently used by the 21st century secondary school students of English. The findings show that they regularly use English when they are online and they also consider the Internet to be a useful tool for studying English. Yet the new media are regularly used outside of the classroom by the 21st century English teachers too. They often use a computer or the Internet for the lesson preparation. The English teachers also think that the new media contribute to the changes in their teaching style.

Additionally, it was proved that when the new media are used in the EFL classrooms, they are utilised for manifold purposes and they are suitable for developing all language skills and language systems. Furthermore, the English teachers regard them as a useful tool for teaching cultural studies and for the motivation of students. The new media are believed to have a positive impact on students' learning of English as well. For these reasons some English teachers already use an interactive textbook in their EFL classrooms and quite many of them would like to use it in the future. Nonetheless, the use of portable devices in the English lessons by students is not common in the Czech EFL classrooms. Besides, it was found out that there is a number of students who do not wish to use these devices in their English lessons.

It can be concluded that the English teachers at the Czech secondary schools reflect on the fact that the new media are almost omnipresent in the 21st century modern society and that they can largely determine the needs and interests of their 21st century students. For this reason many of them use the new media in their EFL classrooms regularly. On the other hand, not many



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e-ISSN: 2348-6848 p-ISSN: 2348-795X Volume 05 Issue 01 January 2018

teachers feel free of the obstacles when using the new media. There are often personal as well as institutional barriers, which have to be overcome when the teachers decide on the implementation of the new media into their lessons. More initiatives and programmes should be directed at the promotion of the implementation of the new media into schools and also at the training of the teachers in using them effectively.

Because of the fact that the influence of the new media on the learning outcomes of the students was not concerned in the survey, a subsequent research concerning the following question could be conducted: Do the students of English, who are placed in the classrooms in which the new media are used regularly perform better than the students, who attend the classrooms in which only the old media are used? Alternatively, since the findings show that the English teachers prefer using the new media for the motivation of the students and for the presentation, practice or the practical application of the content, the ways in which the new media may be used for testing and assessment could be explored. Moreover, as the thesis was predominantly targeted on the use of new media for learning English in formal environments, i.e. at the Czech secondary schools, a research could be oriented towards the use of new media for learning English in informal environments. Lastly, the prerequisites for the use of the new media at the grammar schools could be compared with those existing at the secondary technical and vocational schools.



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e-ISSN: 2348-6848 p-ISSN: 2348-795X Volume 05 Issue 01 January 2018

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