

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH HOMEWORK IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS IN THE BASIC SCHOOL

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Annotation. The article deals with the issue of homework in general and the role of English homework in particular. Homework being a part of teaching/learning process at school plays a number of roles that are attributed to the nature and the reasons of homework assignment and the reasons are such as reinforcing material, introducing to new material, increasing skills, applying the learned in new situations, helping to improve time management skills and domestic communication. Homework helps to improve not only academic skills but it also develops learners' personality, character features as well as social skills. The article suggests the theoretical review of the concept of homework, the role and reason of assigning the latter. It also suggests the results of the research that was performed applying two approaches of investigation: quantitative (survey with a questionnaire and statistic analysis methods) and qualitative (interview and content analysis methods). The survey that was carried out among basic school pupils revealed the fact that the pupils indicated the two types of reasons they have for doing English homework: academic reasons and social reasons. Moreover, it was concluded that basic school pupils do not argue the importance of the role of homework in the English learning process; however, they accept the fact that there are various obstacles that minimize the success of and benefit of home activities and these obstacles are of three types: academic, obstacles of management and psychological obstacles. The interview performed among basic school teachers of English allowed to state that the role the homework in the English teaching process is of great importance and there is a number of reasons for assigning it according their professional experience. The category of the reasons of allotting English homework contains the following subcategories: homework style, i.e. analysis of topic and practical nature of tasks, reasons why homework is given, i.e. using of, looking for supplementary measures, consolidation of previous topics and class work is not completed, and significance of homework, i.e. promotion of self-sufficiency and particularities of the lesson.

Key words: homework, the role and reasons of homework, learning obstacles, teaching and learning processes.

Introduction

Homework is an inseparable activity in the teaching-learning process. It is understood as an assignment that pupils are required to complete at home; it is also defined as tasks assigned to pupils by school teachers that are meant to be carried out during non-school hours (Cooper, 1989). The authors of theoretical sources point out a number of benefits of homework: improvements in factual knowledge, understanding concept, attitudes to learning, study skills, self-discipline, and problem solving skills. Moreover, homework improves academic achievement for any level of school pupils and what is more significant in homework is the fact that it develops study habits and makes learners autonomous in learning and in language learning as well. Additionally, homework helps pupils develop their good character and study habits, such as goal setting, following directions, organizing materials, planning ahead, and budgeting time, as well as strategies for dealing with mistakes, difficulties, and distractions.

However, nowadays schooling is not possible to imagine without homework as an activity in teaching-learning process. It is one of the most frequ-

ently useable tasks. Homework is useful for both teachers and, especially, for pupils. Homework tasks are an effective form of English studying as well. The basic objectives of assigning homework to pupils are the same as schooling in general: to increase the knowledge and improve the abilities and skills of the pupils.

The subject of the paper is homework tasks in English teaching-learning process at school.

The problem question is what role the homework plays in the English teaching-learning process according to basic school teachers and pupils.

The aim of the research is to reveal the roles of homework attributed to this activity by teachers and pupils in the basic school.

The methods applied in the research:

- the theory source analysis;
- the survey with a questionnaire and the method of the statistic analysis;
- the semi-structured interview and the content analysis method.

The participants of the research: 77 pupils of three different basic schools took part in the survey; six basic school teachers participated in the interview.

THE THEORETICAL REVIEW OF HOMEWORK AND THE ROLE IT PLAYS IN SCHOOLING

Looking back into the history of implementation of homework in the teaching-learning process it becomes obvious that the role of this activity is not simple as it is rather multi-functional. For over 100 years US educators have debated the importance of homework and the amount of homework pupils should be assigned. In the early 1900s, many school districts banned homework, especially at the elementary level, in an effort to discourage rote learning. Still in the 1950s, the cold war and Russia's launch of the Sputnik satellite led to increased homework loads. In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, homework assignments again declined, but fears about the country's economic competitiveness created pressure on educators to assign more homework; nevertheless, during the 1980s and 1990s the majority of the public supported homework. Today, however, there is increasing disagreement about the value of homework and how much homework to assign (Centre for Public Education, 2007; Brewster & Fager, 2000; Ratnesar, 1999).

Homework has been defined simply as tasks assigned to pupils by school teachers that are meant to be carried out during non-school hours (Cooper, 1989). But definitions of homework become more complicated when variations in the types of assignments given are considered: difficulty level; skill or subject area; completion deadline (short or long-term); degree of individualization; social context (completed independently or with other pupils); mandatory or voluntary; and if it will be submitted for grading.). Furthermore, teachers assign homework for many different reasons, although researchers have noted that most assignments usually serve multiple purposes. Common reasons for assigning homework include:

- (a) **Reinforcing material** that has already been presented in class (National Education Association, 2008; Centre for Public Education, 2007; Pytel, 2007; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2005; Brewster & Fager, 2000; Paulu, 1998).
- (b) **Determining** if pupils understand the lesson and have mastered the required skills (National Education Association, 2008).
- (c) **Increasing** pupils' skill proficiency (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2005).
- (d) **Introducing** pupils to new material the tea-

cher will present in the future (Centre for Public Education, 2007; Pytel, 2007; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2005).

(e) **Applying** previously learned skills to new situations or other areas of interest (Centre for Public Education, 2007; Shellard & Turner, 2004; Hancock, 2001).

(f) **Providing** opportunities for pupils to identify and learn to use resources, such as the library, internet, reference books and other community resources (National Education Association, 2008; Brewster & Fager, 2000; Milbourne & Haury, 1999; Paulu, 1998).

(g) **Allowing** pupils to use their unique talents and abilities to produce individualized and creative work products (Horowitz, 2005; Corno, 2000; Nuzum, 1998; Doyle & Barber, 1990).

(h) **Helping** pupils improve their time management and organizational skills and develop perseverance, responsibility, self-confidence, and self-discipline (Hetherington, 2005; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Hancock, 2001; Brewster & Fager, 2000; Corno, 2000; Wood, 2000; Epstein, 1983).

(i) **Improving** communication between parents and their children on the importance of schoolwork and learning (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001).

(j) **Fulfilling** school or district mandates, such as requirements for a specified amount of daily or weekly homework (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001).

Analysing common reasons for assigning homework which were given in theoretical sources the presumption could be made that homework is a very important part of studying, because there are too many reasons why pupils have to do homework.

Regarding these facts, it is surprising how little attention is paid to the topic of homework in teacher education, said Cooper (1991). Most teachers in the United States report that in education courses they discussed homework in relation to specific subjects, but received little training in how to devise good assignments, how to decide how much homework to give, and how to involve parents. Moreover, homework often causes a great deal of conflict among teachers, pupils, and parents. Indeed, many doctors and family counsellors indicate that problems with homework are a frequent source of concern when children experience medical problems.

In keeping with Cooper (1991), teachers should never use homework as punishment. Using it in this way communicates to pupils that schoolwork is bo-

ring and aversive. It is quite understandable that high school teachers can view the home as an extension of the classroom. Homework that involves practice and review of lessons previously taught and simple introductions to material prior to its coverage in class is desirable. Assignments that require pupils to integrate skills or differing parts of the curriculum should also be common. Regardless of pupils' ages, the formal role of parents in homework should be minimal.

Talking about parents, it should be said that they vary in interest, knowledge, teaching skills, and time available. Clearly, parents of young children should be more involved. In particular, they need opportunities to express how much they value school achievement. Besides helping their children to practice of reading, spelling, and math skills, parents can express their interest by having contracts with their children about study times, offering rewards for completed assignments, or merely by signing homework before it is returned to school.

In keeping with Cooper (1989), he also advises that teachers individualize few assignments within classes. Developing individualized homework demands considerable teacher time and has few benefits. Teachers who teach the same course to several classes that are progressing at different rates might consider giving the same assignments to the top pupils in the lowest class and the lowest-performing pupils in the highest class.

Finally, most homework assignments should not be graded. Teachers should not view homework as an opportunity to test. Almost all pupils should complete assignments successfully; thus, teachers should not differentiate much among performance levels. Having pupils do homework out of fear of negative consequences turns a situation ideal for building intrinsic motivation ('I must enjoy this; I'm doing it and the teacher isn't standing over me') into one that implies that the teacher believes pupils need rewards or punishment in order to complete assignments. Teachers should collect homework, check it for completeness, and give intermittent instructional feedback. This procedure shows that the teacher takes homework seriously and that it is purposeful. The major purpose should be to identify individual pupils' learning problems.

According to Darn (1997), he agreed that homework seems to be an accepted part of teachers' and pupils' routines, and there is a little mentioned of it in ELT literature. He said, that the role of homework is hardly mentioned in the majority of general ELT te-

xts or training courses, suggesting that there is little question as to its value even if the resulting workload is time-consuming. However, there is clearly room for discussion of homework policies and practices particularly now that technology has made so many more resources available to learners outside the classroom.

Darn (1997), gives us 8 reasons why homework is worth giving by teachers and worth doing by pupils:

1) Homework is expected by pupils, teachers, parents and institutions.

2) Homework reinforces and helps learners to retain information taught in the classroom as well as increasing their general understanding of the language.

3) Homework develops study habits and independent learning. It also encourages learners to acquire resources such as dictionaries and grammar reference books. Research shows that homework also benefits factual knowledge, self-discipline, attitudes to learning and problem-solving skills.

4) Homework offers opportunities for extensive activities in the receptive skills which there may not be time for in the classroom. It may also be an integral part of ongoing learning such as project work and the use of a graded reader.

5) Homework provides continuity between lessons. It may be used to consolidate class work, but also for preparation for the next lesson.

6) Homework may be used to shift repetitive, mechanical, time-consuming tasks out of the classroom.

7) Homework bridges the gap between school and home. Pupils, teachers and parents can monitor progress. The institution can involve parents in the learning process.

8) Homework can be a useful assessment tool, as part of continual or portfolio assessment.

There are a lot of reasons why pupils have to do their homework. Darn (1997), gave us 8, the most important reasons why pupils should do homework tasks. Of course not all of those reasons suitable for all pupils. Every student is different and it depends on student's personality if they do their homework or not. It could be said that homework is expected by pupils, teachers and parents, but not every parent can help their children to do homework. It is a very important thing to build the bridge between the school and home, but not to burn it; to give pupils not too much and not too little homework.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH ON THE ROLES PLAYED BY HOMEWORK IN THE ENGLISH TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS IN THE BASIC SCHOOL

The first step in the research aimed to find out the basic school pupils' attitude to the role of homework in their English learning process. The method of survey was performed in a basic school and 77 pupils of that school took part in it. The pupils represented 5th-10th forms, 54 per cent of respondents were girls and 45 per cent of pupils were boys. The survey participants were given a questionnaire (specially compiled for the case) with the questions about the issue of homework: (1) What are

the reasons of doing English homework? (2) What obstacles diminishing the benefit of home assignments do you face while doing English homework? Each question stood for a separate problem aspect and was detailed by statements the individual degree of agreement the research participants had to indicate by signing one of five suggested ways: 5 for absolutely agree, 4 for agree, 3 for doubt, 2 for disagree, 1 for absolutely disagree. The survey data was processed applying the method of statistic analysis.

The basic school pupils gave the answers to the question about the reasons they have for doing English homework. And their answers were possible to be divided into two groups: (1) academic reasons and (2) social reasons (see Figures 1 and 2).

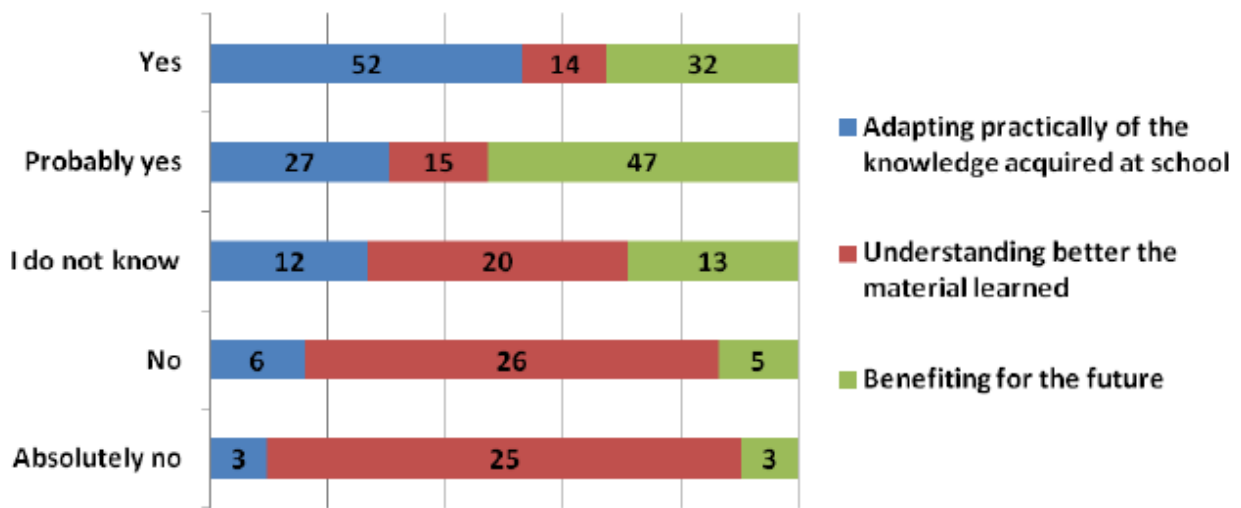


Fig. 1. The academic reasons of doing English homework expressed by school pupils (%).

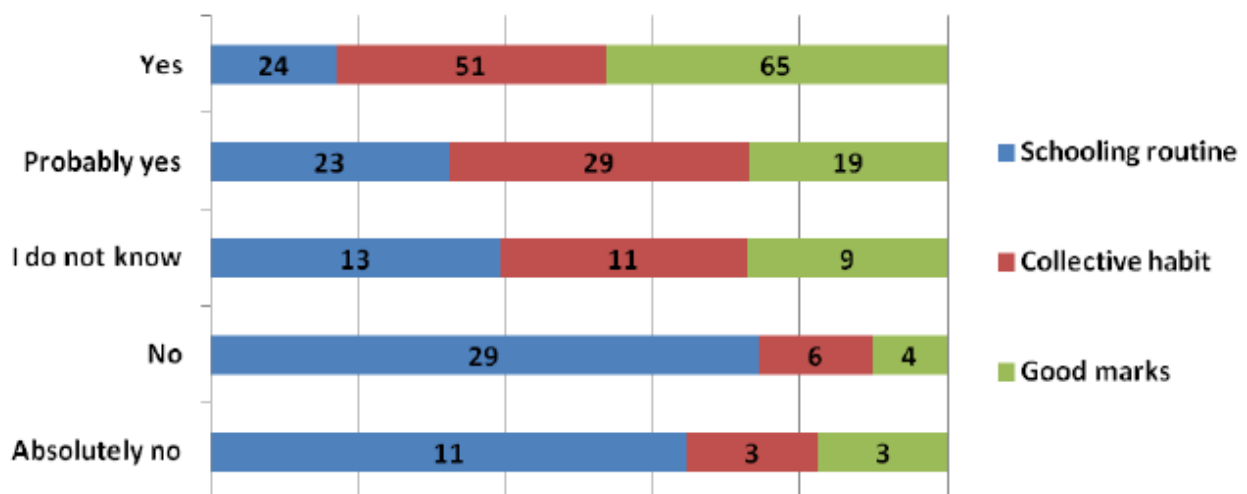


Fig. 2. The social reasons of doing English homework expressed by basic school pupils (%).

According to the pupils' opinion presented in Figure 1, the academic reasons of doing English homework are the following: (a) adapting practically the knowledge acquired at school, (b) understanding better the material learned and (c) benefiting for the future. The survey results show that school pupils do English homework because it creates them the situation where they can reinforce the material that has been presented in the class or because homework helps to determine if they understand the lesson and have mastered the required skills. The adaptation of the material learned at school in practice is the most popular reason: 79 per cent agreed with the statement, 12 per cent expressed doubt and 9 per cent expressed disagreement. The role of English homework as an instrument for determining the pupils' skills acquired at school was given opposite assessments: 29 per cent of the pupils agree, 20 per cent doubt and even 51 per cent disagree with the idea that English homework could determine their level of linguistic mastery. The next role of English homework identified by school pupils was that of benefiting for the future, i.e. it is related not to the current schooling moment but to learning for life: to the possibility to increase pupils' proficiency, to introduction of new material in the future or application of previously learned skills to new situations or other areas of interest. The pupils answers (77 per cent agree, 13 doubt and 8 disagree) proved the fact that the research participants more often relate the home assignments to the future or linguistic proficiency in general than to the present situation or current schooling moment (see Figure 1).

The reasons for doing homework that could be attributed to the second group were more of social or school routine character. The pupils identified such social factors that made English homework worth doing: (a) it is a part of school routine, (b) a collectively acknowledged and accepted habit, (c) it leads to good marks (see Figure 2).

The survey results show that the strongest reason for doing English homework is the fact that it is socially acknowledged as a collective habit (my classmates do and I do, I do not want to be different): 80 per cent agree, 11 per cent doubt and 9 per cent disagree. Doing homework leads to a possibility of getting good marks at school and by that the social status of an individual in the group becomes

higher and stronger. That was proved by the pupils' assessments of the statement about doing English homework because of good marks: 84 per cent agree, 9 per cent doubt and 7 per cent disagree. The argumentation of the reason of doing homework because it is an obligatory activity in schooling and should be viewed as a part of schooling routine was rather weakly supported by the pupils: 47 per cent agree, 13 doubt and 40 disagree (see Figure 2).

According to the survey results presented above, it could be concluded that basic school pupils do not argue the importance of the role of homework in English learning process. However, they accept the fact that there are various obstacles that minimize the success of and benefit of home activities and these obstacles are of three types: (a) academic obstacles, (b) obstacles of management and (3) psychological obstacles (see Figures 3, 4 and 5).

As the figures in Figure 3 show, the group of academic obstacles were identified of three types: (1) problems related to academic issues, (2) problems related to procedural reasons and (3) problems related to task instruction understanding. The first two types of academic difficulties were rated equally by the boys and girls (12,5 per cent and 11 per cent of research participants named these obstacles as most difficult). While the problem related to poor understanding of home task instructions was rated radically differently by the boys (20 per cent) and girls (4 per cent). That might lead to the conclusion that girls are more attentive during the lesson time when the home assignments are allotted (see Figure 3).

The management obstacles in doing English homework were identified of the three types as well: (1) overloading of pupils with home tasks, (2) lack of English knowledge and (3) lack of facilities necessary for the performance of the task. The results show that the greatest difficulty of this group is too huge amount of homework (8,5 per cent), then comes lack of English knowledge (6 per cent) and lack of facilities (4 per cent). It should be mentioned that the first type of obstacles was differently rated by the boys (11 per cent) and the girls (6 per cent) and that fact could lead to the conclusion that male pupils are not ready to spend required time for homework as females do. The facilities or their lack was rated more or less equally by the boys (5 per cent) and girls (3 per cent) (see Figure 4).

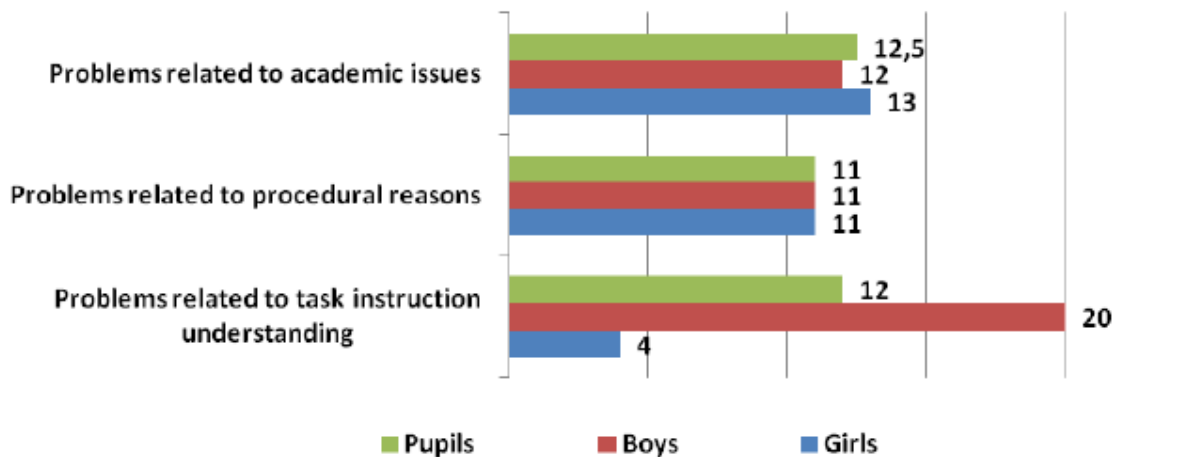


Fig. 3. The academic obstacles diminishing the benefit of English homework expressed by basic school pupils (%).

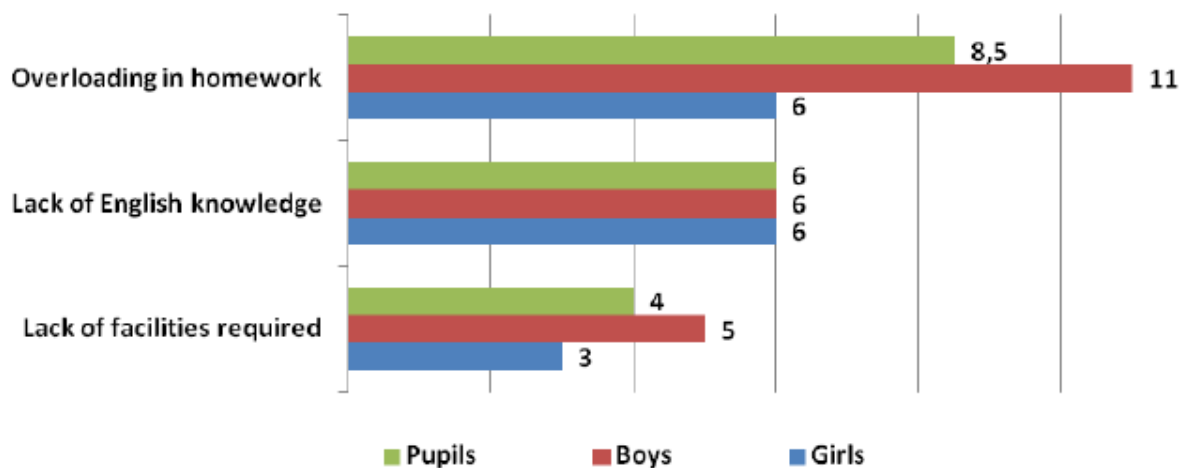


Fig. 4. The obstacles of management diminishing the benefit of English homework expressed by basic school pupils (%).

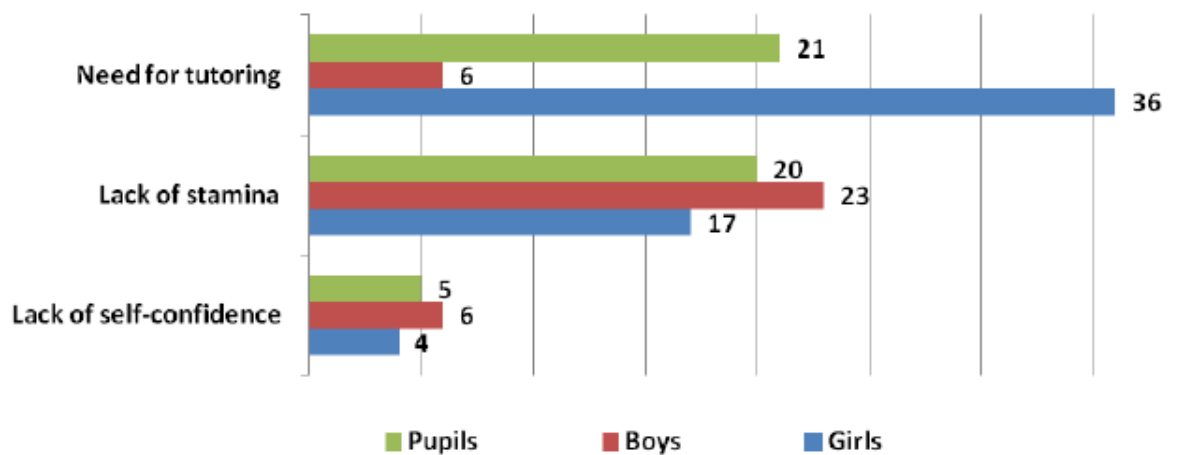


Fig. 5. The psychological obstacles diminishing the benefit of English homework expressed by basic school pupils (%).

The obstacles of psychological character were identified the following: (1) need for tutoring (21 per cent), (2) lack of stamina (20 per cent) and (3) lack of self-confidence (5 per cent) (see Figure 5). The problems in doing English homework related to the lack of stamina and the lack of self-confidence demonstrated rather close results suggested by the boys (23 per cent and 6 per cent) and by the girls (17 per cent and 4 per cent). While the difficulty related to the fact that homework is supposed to be performed individually and autonomously caused greatest problems for the female respondents (36 per cent) than for the boys (6 per cent) (see Figure 5). On the basis of the said above, the conclusion could be drawn that basic school pupils find psychological obstacles diminishing the benefit of English homework the most significant in comparison to academic or management aspects of the activity.

The second step in the investigation was based on qualitative research approach and helped to disclose the attitude of the English language teachers to the role of homework in the process of teaching English in the basic school. Organization and carrying out of the research was based on the method of qualitative research, i.e. a semi-structured interview. The conversation was based on the principles of free-will and anonymity. The responses of participants were encoded under different names, then

were transcribed and analysed with the help of the content analysis method: the interview data was split into meaningful units on the basis of which categories, subcategories and sub-subcategories were distinguished.

The interview for teachers consisted of the following questions: What kind of English homework do you usually give to your pupils? What are the reasons of giving a particular kind of homework? What is the role of homework in teaching basic school pupils English?

Six English teachers from basic schools participated in the interview: there were five female and one male teacher. They represented three different sized basic schools located in different types of settlements.

The *content* analysis of the answers to the interview questions revealed that homework is a significant and integral part of English teaching process and the variety of homework styles or reasons of giving it can ensure good learning results. Moreover, the analysis revealed the opinion of teachers that the role of homework is multi-natured as their school routine practice showed. During the interview the category of the role of English homework was distinguished. It shows what home activities and why teachers include them into the management of English teaching-learning process (see Table).

Table. The category of the reasons of allotting English homework

Sub-category	Sub-sub-category	Corroborating statements
Homework style	Analysis of topic	I give homework based on the current topic to all pupils. I also set additional homework so that pupils analyse the topic in more detail (Interview 3).
		Pupils have to finish the work that has been started in class or analyse it (Interview 4).
	Practical nature	The homework I set is usually of practical nature <...> (Interview 4).
		<...> during semester pupils have to do some project homework in a group or individually (Interview 1).
		Homework should include exercises of training (repetition) nature, improvement of skills, setting up of competences, creativeness etc (Interview 5).
Reasons why homework is given	Using of, looking for supplementary measures	In order to broaden the knowledge, conduct analysis, promote using information technologies and other measures for obtaining information (Interview 1).
	Consolidation of previous topics	Knowledge has to be improved; one has to go in more detail, read other sources in addition to the textbooks (Interview 2).
		Homework can continue the lesson, when necessary; it is continuation of lesson (Interview 5).
	Class work is not completed	I set homework so that pupils could consolidate their knowledge (Interview 6).
		The homework I set is usually of practical nature <...>. Pupils have to finish the work that has been started in class or analyse it (Interview 4).

Sub-category	Sub-sub-category	Corroborating statements
Significance of homework	Promotion of self-sufficiency	<...> during semester pupils have to do one project-type homework in groups or individually. During my lessons pupils can choose how quickly they can do the given tasks, and thus unfinished tasks have to be completed at home (Interview 1).
	Particularities of lesson	It depends on particularities of the subject. <...> it is impossible to learn a language without doing homework (Interview 5).

Analysis of answers received during the interview (see Table) allowed to identify the three subcategories of the category of the role of English homework and they are the following: (a) homework style, (b) reasons why homework is given and (c) significance of homework. In the **homework style** subcategory, **analysis of topic** sub-subcategory revealed that homework is set so that pupils could go deeper into and analyse the current topic: *I give homework based on the current topic to all pupils. I also set additional homework so that pupils analyse the topic in more detail (Interview 3)*. In addition, it turned out that sometimes homework is given because pupils do not manage to do all the work during class lessons: *Pupils have to finish the work that has been started in class or analyse it (Interview 4)*. In **practical nature** sub-subcategory teachers' answers to the question about the form and type of home assignments are analysed; it turned out that the teachers set homework of practical character: *The homework I set is usually of practical nature <...> (Interview 4)*. In addition, the teachers assign their pupils to do project-type tasks in groups or individually which promotes cooperation between pupils: *<...> during semester pupils have to do some project homework in a group or individually (Interview 1)*. The diversity of homework set by the teachers to their pupils is determined by the current topic or when the homework is given (at the beginning of the topic, in middle of the topic or before a test); the aim of setting homework is to generate the gain to pupils, develop their skills and competences: *Homework should include exercises of training (repetition) nature, improvement of skills, setting up of competences, creativity etc (Interview 5)*. The teachers give homework considering pupils' age; younger children are asked to write down and learn new words, learn to nicely read and translate the text which help to develop writing and reading skills, whereas senior pupils usually get exercises involving grammar and repetition: *<...> to write down and learn the words and learn reading nicely and translating the text <...> to do tasks in the exercise books and repeat the learned material <...> (Interview 6)*.

The sub-subcategory of **using of, looking for supplementary measures** of the subcategory **reasons why homework is given** leads to the conclusion that homework is given to pupils considering the modern and continuously developing world. It is obvious that pupils like homework which requires using additional sources (especially computers). Today pupils tend to improve very quickly, they are curious and usually ordinary homework is not interesting for them; thus, even the English language teachers give homework which requires doing some kind of research: *In order to broaden the knowledge, conduct analysis, promote using information technologies and other measures for obtaining information (Interview 1)*.

The answers of the interviewees suggested in the sub-subcategory of **consolidation of previous topics** show that the material which is presented in the textbooks is not a sufficient source of knowledge for pupils who want to graduate school having considerable amount of good knowledge. It is therefore necessary to use additional sources, but not limit oneself solely to the material of a lesson, a textbook and an exercise book: *Knowledge has to be improved; one has to go in more detail, read other sources in addition to the textbooks (Interview 2)*. Pupils who regularly and systematically do homework better understand and learn the topic presented during the lesson, because when doing homework they continue the work namely, analyse or go deeper into the new topic: *Homework can continue the lesson, when necessary; it is continuation of lesson (Interview 5)*. One of the reasons why homework is given to pupils is the consolidation of knowledge: *I set homework so that pupils could consolidate their knowledge (Interview 6)*. The analysis of the sub-subcategory of **class work is not completed** also shows one of the reasons why pupils are given tasks which due to their practical nature and necessity for additional sources cannot be done during the lesson: *The homework I set is usually of practical nature <...>. Pupils have to finish the work that has been started in class or analyse it (Interview 4)*.

The subcategory of *significance of homework* is divided into two sub-subcategories. In the sub-subcategory of *promotion of self-sufficiency* teachers encourage their pupils to be self-sufficient, give them a possibility to decide in what speed they can work during the lesson informing them that any unfinished tasks will be carried out at home: <...> *during semester pupils have to do one project-type homework in groups or individually. During my lessons pupils can choose how quickly they can do the given tasks, and thus unfinished tasks have to be completed at home (Interview 1).* The sub-subcategory of *particularities of lesson* describes what kind and what amount of homework will be set; for instance, there will never be difficult and long mathematical equations during music lessons, and pupils will never be asked to learn a poem by heart during mathematics lesson; homework is set considering the character of lesson, and the given tasks differ in the field of humanities and natural sciences: *It depends on particularities of the subject. <...> it is impossible to learn a language without doing homework (Interview 5).*

CONCLUSIONS

1. The theoretical sources on homework activities in general and their roles in the English teaching-learning process at school in particular allowed drawing the following conclusions:
 - 1.1. Homework can be defined as a tasks assigned to learners by their teachers to be completed outside the classroom; the main activities the homework is tightly related to the schoolwork that is performed at school and the piecework that is done at home; however, homework should consolidate class work, it should not replicate it.
 - 1.2. The roles of homework correspond to the reasons of assigning it and they could be the following: (a) reinforcing material that has already been presented in class; (b) determining if pupils understand the lesson and have mastered the required skills; (c) increasing pupils' skill proficiency; (d) introducing pupils to new material the teacher will present in the future; (e) applying previously learned skills to new situations or other areas of interest; (f) providing opportunities for pupils to identify and learn to use resources, such as the library, internet, reference books and other community resources; (g) allowing pupils to use their unique talents and abilities to produ-

ce individualized and creative work products; (h) helping pupils improve their time management and organizational skills and develop perseverance, responsibility, self-confidence, and self-discipline; (i) improving communication between parents and their children on the importance of schoolwork and learning; (j) fulfilling school or district mandates, such as requirements for a specified amount of daily or weekly homework.

1.3. The reasons of doing homework could be defined such as: (a) this type of activity is expected by pupils, teachers, parents and institutions; (b) it reinforces and helps learners to retain information taught in the classroom as well as increasing their general understanding of the language; (c) homework develops study habits and independent learning; it also encourages learners to acquire resources such as dictionaries and grammar reference books, it also benefits factual knowledge, self-discipline, attitudes to learning and problem-solving skills; (d) homework offers opportunities for extensive activities in the receptive skills which there may not be time for in the classroom; (e) it provides continuity between lessons and it may be used to consolidate class work, but also for preparation for the next lesson; (f) homework may be used to shift repetitive, mechanical, time-consuming tasks out of the classroom; (g) it bridges the gap between school and home as pupils, teachers and parents can monitor progress; (h) it can be a useful assessment tool, as part of continual or portfolio assessment.

2. The analysis of the results gained during the quantitative and qualitative researches allowed drawing the following conclusions on the issue of roles of homework in the English teaching-learning process in the Basic School.

2.1. The basic school pupils indicated the two types of reasons they have for doing English homework: (1) academic reasons and (2) social reasons:

- the academic group of reasons of doing English homework are the following: (a) adapting practically the knowledge acquired at school, (b) understanding better the material learned and (c) benefiting for the future;

- the social group of reasons that made English homework worth doing are: (a) it is a part of school routine, (b) a collectively acknowledged and accepted habit, (c) it leads to good marks.

2.2. According to the survey results, it could be

concluded that basic school pupils do not argue the importance of the role of homework in English learning process; however, they accept the fact that there are various obstacles that minimize the success of and benefit of home activities and these obstacles are of three types: (1) academic, (2) obstacles of management and (3) psychological obstacles:

- the group of academic obstacles consists of three types: (a) problems related to academic issues, (b) problems related to procedural reasons and (c) problems related to task instruction understanding. The first two types of academic difficulties were rated equally by the boys and girls, while the problem related to poor understanding of home task instructions was rated radically differently by gender groups: the boys find this issue extremely problematic for them;

- the management obstacles are identified of the three types as well: (a) overloading with home tasks, (b) lack of English knowledge and (c) lack of facilities necessary for the performance of the task. The results show that the greatest difficulty of this group is too huge amount of homework; moreover, the first type of obstacles is differently rated by the gender groups as the boys feel more overloaded by home tasks;

- the psychological obstacles are identified the following: (a) need for tutoring, (b) lack of stamina and (c) lack of self-confidence. The difficulty related to the fact that homework is supposed to be performed individually and autonomously caused greatest problems for the female respondents. It could be stated that basic school pupils find psychological obstacles diminishing the benefit of English homework the most significant in comparison to academic or management aspects of the activity.

2.3. The role the homework in the English teaching process is of great importance and there is a number of reasons for assigning it according to the basic school English teachers' professional experience. The category of the reasons of allotting English homework contains the following subcategories: (1) homework style, (2) reasons why homework is given and (3) significance of homework:

- homework style that consists of the two meaning shades: (a) analysis of topic and (b) practical nature of tasks;

- reasons why homework is given falls into: (a) using of, looking for supplementary measures; (b) consolidation of previous topics and (c) class work is not completed;

- significance of homework consists of the two meaning shades: (a) promotion of self-sufficiency and (b) particularities of the lesson.

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NAMŲ DARBŲ VAIDMUO MOKANTI(S) ANGLŲ KALBOS PAGRINDINĖJE MOKYKLOJE

Straipsnis analizuoja situaciją, kai namų darbų užduotys yra skiriamos pagrindinės mokyklos mokiniams per anglų kalbos pamokas. Priežastys, kurios lemia namų darbų užduočių stilių, turinį ar formatą, yra įvairios: medžiagos įtvirtinimui, naujos medžiagos įvedimui ir pristatymui, gebėjimų ir įgūdžių formavimui bei plėtotei, įsisavintų žinių taikymui naujose situacijose, laiko vadybos ir veiklos organizavimo gebėjimų ugdymui ar asmenybinių savybių formavimui, charakterio ugdymui bei socialinių komunikacinių gebėjimų stiprinimui. Šis darbas atsako į probleminį klausimą, kokios yra priežastys lemiančios anglų kalbos namų darbų inkorporavimą į mokymo ir mokymosi procesus pagrindinėje mokykloje.

Straipsnis pateikia namų darbų reiškinio teorinę apžvalgą bei vaidmenų, kuriuos ši veikla atlieka ugdymo(si) procese. Taip pat yra pateikiama tyrimo rezultatų analizė. Tyrimo metu taikytos kokybinio ir kiekybinio tyrimo priemonės. Taikyti metodai: apklausa raštu su klausimynu ir statistinė duomenų analizė bei apklausa žodžiu, t.y. interviu, bei kontentinės analizės metodas. Tyrimo dalyvavo 77 pagrindinės mokyklos 5-10 klasių moksleiviai ir šeši pagrindinių mokyklų anglų kalbos mokytojai.

Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad pagrindinės mokyklos moksleiviai išskiria dvi grupes priežasčių, kodėl jie atlieka anglų kalbos namų darbus: akademinės priežastys ir socialiniai motyvai. Akademinės priežastys mokymosi procese buvo išskirtos šios: praktinis žinių įgytų mokykloje taikymas, geresnis išmoktos medžiagos įsisavinimas ir nauda ateičiai. Socialinių motyvų grupę sudarė šios priežastys: tai mokyklinės tvarkos dalis, visuotinai priimtas ir pripažintas įprotis bei tai būdas gauti gerus pažymius. Tyrimas parodė, kad nors moksleiviai ir pripažįsta namų darbų vaidmens svarbą jų mokymosi procese, tačiau identifikuoja tris grupes sunkumų, kurie mažina namų darbų poveikį jų mokymosi sėkmingumui: akademiniai sunkumai, mokymosi organizavimo problemos ir psichologinės problemos. Kokybinio tyrimo metu gauta informacija leido išskirti anglų kalbos namų darbų skyrimo priežasčių kategoriją pagal pedagogų profesinės veiklos patirtį. Ši kategorija susidarė iš tokių reikšminių dedamųjų kaip: namų darbų formatas (temos analizė ir praktinis taikymas), priežastys nulėmusios užduočių skyrimą (papildomos medžiagos paieška ir panaudojimas, ankstesnės temos įtvirtinimas ir klasės darbo užbaigimas) bei namų darbų veiklos svarba mokymo procese (sudaro galimybes individualaus mokymosi stiliaus ugdymuisi bei atspindi dalyko specifiką).