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Studentka se bude ve své bakalářské práci zabývat rozvojem dovednosti poslechu sáporozuměním váanglickém jazyce, a to záphledu výuky dospělých. Váteoretické části práce nejprve zasadí problematiku do širšího kontextu, tedy do konceptu komunikativní kompetence. Dále bude diskutovat jednotlivé aspekty této receptivní dovednosti (tzv. intensive vs. extensive listening; listening micro-skills), zejména různé techniky kontroly porozumění slyšenému textu. Následně studentka shrne principy plánování učební aktivity zaměřené na rozvoj poslechu sáporozuměním a uvede specifika cizojazyčné výuky u dospělých. Vápraktické části práce realizuje studentka akční výzkum zaměřený na zefektivnění rozvoje této dovednosti ve skupině dospělých.

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Souhrn

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá zdokonalováním poslechu dospělých ve výuce anglického jazyka. Teoretická část se skládá ze čtyř kapitol. První kapitola nastiňuje současné metody a přístupy a jejich vliv na výuku anglického jazyka. Současně v nich specifikuje roli poslechu. Dále zmiňuje důležitost rozvoje komunikativní kompetence u dospělých v procesu výuky a možnost stanovení své jazykové úrovně podle Společného evropského referenčního rámce pro jazyky. Druhá kapitola definuje pojem poslechu, jaké procesy v něm probíhají a jaké sluchové dovednosti se mohou studenti aktivně naučit používat. Třetí kapitola se zabývá problémy, které anglický jazyk obnáší a se kterými se musí studenti vypořádat nejen při poslechových cvičeních. Dále uvádí kritéria důležitá pro výběr poslechových cvičení. Kapitola čtvrtá popisuje stádia poslechu, která by měla všechna poslechová cvičení obsahovat, a která jsou důležitá pro zapojení všech čtyřech řečových dovedností.

Praktická část se zabývá akčním výzkumem, který byl proveden ve skupině dospělých za účelem zlepšení jejich sluchových dovedností a odbourávání jejich nejistot při poslechových cvičeních.

Klíčová slova:

poslech v anglickém jazyce, stádia poslechových cvičení, akční výzkum

Abstract

This bachelor thesis is aimed at developing listening skills in adult learners. The theoretical part is divided into four chapters. The first chapter introduces some of the methods and approaches that influenced teaching English as a foreign language and the role of listening in them. The chapter further deals with the term of communicative competence and its importance in language teaching and learning. It discusses the characteristics of adult learners and their opportunity to assess themselves on the global scale of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The second chapter specifies what listening means and its processes. It also introduces listener's skills. The third chapter deals with the problems which listeners have to face when learning to listen and specifies some of the criteria necessary for choosing listening activities. The fourth chapter is concerned with the stages of listening and their importance for employing all language skills.

The practical part introduces action research which has been carried in the class of adult learners in order to develop their listening skills and to build their confidence when doing listening activities.

listening, listening processes, stages of listening, action research

Key words:

listening, listening processes, stages of listening, action research

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1. INTRODUCTION

English can be called an international language because people in many parts of the world consider it to be the language for communication. However, to communicate verbally means to acquire good listening habits on which speaking can be built. Developing good listening skills became an essential part of learning which can be practised in various situations reflecting those in real life.

I have chosen 'listening' as a topic for this thesis because of my interest in what extent it can be learnt by adult students. The idea came from my teaching experience of adults and their apprehension of listening. The title 'Learning to listen' covers the processes in listening and the skills which need to be learnt in order to become a successful and confident listener.

The aim of this thesis is to outline the terminology in connection with listening. This thesis is also aimed at developing students' listening skills by keeping a sequence of listening stages constant, which could lead to building listeners' confidence while doing listening activities.

The thesis is divided into theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical part consists of four chapters. The first chapter outlines the position of listening in current approaches and how the status of listening has changed in them in recent years. The following paragraph introduces the term of communicative competence and its importance nowadays in well-established worldwide Communicative Language Teaching. Other parts of this chapter talk about the status of adult learners and their possibility to assess themselves on the global scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages to assess their level of language. The second chapter deals with the question of what listening is and offers specific definitions of it. It also specifies the processes of listening and the role of memory in these processes. Listener's skills are consequently introduced and related to the context. The fourth chapter outlines the criteria for material selection. It also introduces the ways of improving listening skills in terms of intensive and extensive listening. The last chapter of the theoretical part highlights the importance of the sequence of listening stages accompanied by feedback.

The practical part consists of only one chapter which carries the characteristics of action research, its implementation in the class of adult students and presents its findings concerning developing listening skills.

THEORETICAL PART

2. TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Teaching English as a foreign language has been influenced by many different methods and approaches of different characteristics about teaching techniques, and assumptions about language learning over the past years.

2.1 Teaching Methods

Teaching methods differ according to what they concentrate on. To illustrate the point, the Grammar Translation Method, the very first method used for teaching foreign languages in the nineteenth century, was based exclusively on reading texts and analysing them from the grammar point of view. Little attention was paid on listening and speaking. A shift from teaching grammar to communicative aspects was brought on by the Reform Movement. One of its principles stated that learners need to hear first before they see the written form and that words and sentences should be related to the context, which the Direct Method reflected. (Richards and Rodgers 2005: p.3-16, Harmer 2007: p.63)

The Direct Method morphed in Audiolingualism in America. Audiolingualism was built on the principles of behavioural psychology which specify language learning as a habit-formation through constant repetitions of current utterances. The focus was on teaching language skills in the order of listening, speaking, reading and writing. In listening activities learners practised mainly aural discrimination of basic sound patterns. (Richards and Rodgers 2005: 50-67, Harmer 2007: 63-64) One of its critics was Chomsky who argued that 'learners cannot memorize sentences by imitation and repetition. Sentences need to be generated from learner's underlying competence'. (Chomsky in Richards and Rodgers 2005: p. 65-66) Because Audiolingualism did not result in competence, the methodology needed to be changed. As a result, communicative approaches were developed.

2.2 Communicative Teaching Approaches

Communicative teaching approaches see communication as a primary function of language but differ according to theories of language and learning, and according to procedures they use to reach the goals of language teaching and learning, which is developing communicative competence.

2.2.1 The Natural Approach

The Natural Approach, introduced by Tracy Terrell, is based on the principles of naturalistic language learning in young children and is aimed at comprehension. Its emphasis is on

exposure of input than on practice, on optimizing emotional preparedness for learning, on a prolonged period of attention to what the language learners hear before they try to produce language, on a willingness to use written and other materials as a source of comprehensible input. (Richards and Rodgers 2005: p. 179)

As it was mentioned above, the Natural Approach is based on a learning theory of second language acquisition. Acquisition is an unconscious process and the natural way parallel to the first language development in children but it is stated that 'acquisition can take place only when people understand messages in the target language'. (Terrell and Krashen in Richards and Rodgers 2005: p. 180) By these messages can be understood the comprehensible input that is slightly above their current competence. This is called the input hypothesis. Input should be interesting, preferably in the form of listening or reading and the classroom atmosphere should be relaxed. (Krashen 1987: p.69-70)

However, competence in a second or a foreign language can be developed not only by acquisition but also by learning. While acquisition is an unconscious process, learning is a conscious process which develops language rules and the ability to verbalise them. Corrections of errors help develop learned rules therefore teaching is necessary for learning. (Richards and Rodgers 2005: p. 180) However, if the learners cannot understand the input of the right level, learning cannot begin. (Rost 1994: p.141-142)

The Natural Approach can be applied in a wide range of situations and can adopt activities and techniques from other methods and approaches. To illustrate the point, the procedures in the classroom can start by providing constant comprehensible input through Total Physical Response (TPR) commands from the teacher without or with minimal responses in the target language from students. TPR is a method based on teaching language through physical activity, developed by James Asher. 'Successful adult second language learning as a parallel process to child first language' (Asher in Richards and Rodgers 2005: p. 74) reflects the principles of the Natural Approach. As children respond to commands physically before speaking it is believed that adults should do the same. Listening is accompanied by physical movement, speaking and other productive skills will appear later. (Richards and Rodgers 2005: p. 73-80)

2.2.2 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching can be characterized as a new wave of teaching English in Europe because European nations came under one European Common Market and people needed to understand each other as well as to express themselves in the target language. From that reason, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach focuses on communicative proficiency rather than on mastery of structures in language teaching. Grammar is no longer the base for teaching language. M.A.K. Halliday supports this view by saying that

language is not just grammar and structures. Learning a foreign language involves acquiring the linguistic means to express different functions. The learner is not a passive recipient. He is an active participant in the classroom. Where tasks actively involve learners in using the language spontaneously, acquisition takes place easily and effectively. Learners are encouraged to gain self-confidence. Errors are tolerated in order to help learners to develop their language skills. (Halliday in Richards and Rodgers 2005: p. 159)

Current communicative teaching theory and practice are based on the characteristics that can be applied variously and differently in many ways with respect to the learners' age, their level of language, their target and their purpose for studying the language. These characteristics are key to Communicative Language Teaching:

- learners learn a language through using it to communicate
- authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities
- fluency is an important dimension of communication
- communication involves the integration of different language skills
- learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error

(Richards and Rodgers 2005: p.172)

The principles of Communicative Language Teaching have been modified in many different phases during its development but its base - presenting the language which learners are able to use for communicative purposes in various situations and settings remained the same.

2.3 Developing Communicative Competence

The aim of language teaching today is to develop communicative competence. The term 'communicative competence' was introduced by Dell Hymes in 1996 but has been expanded by other theorists. Hymes believes communicative competence is what the speaker needs to know to communicate competently. (Hedge 2000: p. 45) It is the knowledge of how to use language for specific purposes, the knowledge of language functions, the knowledge of when to use formal and informal speech, how to produce and understand different kinds of texts and

how to gain communication even though a learner has limited knowledge of the target language. Through the term communicative competence Hymes addresses Chomsky's theory of competence which deals with abstract abilities of the speaker to produce grammatically correct sentences. Hymes argues that it is necessary to incorporate communication and culture too into the language theory. (Hedge 2000: p. 45-46) Communicative competence typically consists of four or five dimensions according to different theorists. This thesis operates with these terms - linguistic, pragmatic, discourse and strategic competences. (Hedge 2000: p. 56) This terminology has been chosen with respect to Professor Richards' distinguishing between communicative and grammatical competence. He argues that 'even if grammatical competence enables learners to create grammatically correct sentences, it cannot guarantee that learners will succeed in using them in communication'. (<http://www.professorjackrichards.com>) From the stated characteristics it can be concluded that for good knowledge of language all aspects of communicative competence need to be learnt and developed.

Developing communicative competence became the goal of language teaching today. It does not mean to use the language exactly as native speakers do but to communicate competently. Activities designed for developing communicative competence engage learners to use language in social context and situations. Learners should be able to use their current knowledge to the fullest to make themselves understood, to avoid confusion in the message, to avoid using inappropriate communicative patterns and to recognize and manage communication breakdowns. Fluency and accuracy are on the same level of importance. (<http://www.professorjackrichards.com>, Richards and Rodgers 2005: p.156) Communicative competences can differ according to what learners can do in each of them. To find it out, communicative competences became the base for determining language competency levels by Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

2.4 Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): Learning, Teaching, Assessment is a guideline that describes the learner's achievements in foreign languages across Europe. It specifies what language learners have to learn in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop to act effectively. Besides these characteristics, CEFR also covers the cultural context in which languages are set. (Council of Europe 2003: p.1-9)

CEFR has defined six language competency levels (from A1 to C2 levels) that specify what learners are able to do at various levels. Learners can assess themselves from A1 to C2 levels according to their language competency. Based on the assessments of adult learners who participated in action research (part 6, appendix 1), this bachelor paper introduces the language competency of A2 and B1 levels. Following descriptors are taken from the global scale by CEFR and specify what learners can do at levels A2 and B1 in listening, speaking, reading and writing. (Council of Europe 2003: p.139)

A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

The entire table is attached in Appendix 1.

2.5 Adult Learners

Adult learners have certain specifics which need to be taken into consideration when teaching them. Adult learners are people who already have some experience with learning, and who know why they are learning and what they want to achieve. However, adult learners might be uncertain about their ability to learn a language because they have been away from school for some time. (Harmer 2007: p. 84-85) With the respect of their age, adult learners need a longer time to reflect and to do the tasks. Also their attention span is shorter and they might have difficulty in concentrating. (Wilson 2008: p.14) It is suggested to offer learners achievable activities which will reduce their fear of failure from learning. (Harmer 2007: p.84-85)

When learning to listen, the main problem of adult learners is their need to understand every word of the spoken utterance when in fact 'a total comprehension is a misconception of how normal comprehension works in the native language'. (Faerch and Kasper in Hedge 2000: p.236) Based on the statement mentioned above, adult learners need to learn that successful listening comprehension does not mean total comprehension to eliminate their

failure in listening activities. Other difficulties with listening can be a result of problems with short-term memory, anxiety, tiredness or personal indisposition. (Wilson 2008: p. 14) Adult learners are introduced in this thesis in part 2.6 and in chapter 6.

This chapter outlined the major shift from the grammar based to communicative based principles when teaching a foreign language in which listening plays an important role. It also underlined the importance of developing communicative competence when teaching and learning a foreign language, and its position in that every learner can see his/her own progress of learning by using CEFR descriptors when learning a foreign language.

3. LISTENING

People listen because they want to know something. It can be either for pleasure, empathy, assessment or criticism. This chapter specifies how the term 'listening' is characterized by some of the linguists, what listening provides, and which skills are employed when talking about listening as a receptive skill.

3.1 What is Listening?

Listening is a receptive skill. 'Considerable language activation is not visible'. (Harmer 2007: p. 270-274)

Listening is an invisible mental process described by listener's metaphors and indirect analogies. (Rost 2002: p.1)

Listening is receiving what the speakers say. (Rost 2002: p.1-2)

Listening is constructing and representing meaning. (Rost 2002: p.1-2)

Listening is negotiating meaning with the speakers and responding to them. (Rost 2002: p.2)

Listening represents creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy. (Rost 2002: p.1-2)

Listening is a base for speaking. (Rost 2002: p.1-2)

Listening is a primary source of language experience in language acquisition. It can be called 'comprehensible input'. (Krashen 1987: p.69) Comprehensible input is the language which is slightly above student's current level of use but learners are still able to understand it. It can

be either the teacher's talk, listening activities or language which students hear outside of class. (Krashen 1987: p.69-70)

Listening is associated with processes of bottom-up and top-down models.

3.2 Bottom-up and Top-down Processes in Listening

Bottom-up and top-down processes carry important but different roles in listening and many theorists mention the importance of the processes of comprehension when learning to listen. In bottom-up processing listeners build up structures from the recognizing phonetic sounds to identification of phonemes, then they identify the morphological structures, words, phrases, clauses, sentences and intonation patterns. Finally, listeners try to decode what the speakers meant by what they said. Bottom-up processes are known as text based because listeners have to rely on a combination of sounds, words and grammar in the message to comprehend the meaning. (Brown 1990: p.10-12, Hedge 2000: p.230, Harmer 2007: p. 270) When practising the bottom-up processing skills, students are able to discriminate between the minimal pairs. The bottom-up processes are as follows:

retaining input while it is being processed, recognizing word divisions, recognizing key words in utterances, recognizing key transitions in a discourse, using knowledge of word order patterns to identify constituents in utterances, recognizing grammatical relations between key elements in sentences, recognizing the function of word stress in sentences, recognizing the function of intonation in sentences
(Richards in Hedge 2000, p. 255)

The final characteristic of the bottom-up process can be to describe the listeners as 'successful decoders of the spoken text in a linear, data driven process'. (Nunan in Richards and Renandya 2005: p. 235)

In top-down processing listeners use their prior knowledge of the topic, situation or context to interpret what was said and to make predictions what will be said. Listeners use formal and content schemata to infer the meaning. (Hedge 2000, p.233) While formal schemata include the knowledge of some speech event structures such as introduction or telephoning, content schemata include either general knowledge of the world or topic knowledge. Therefore top-down processes are known as listener based and include listening for gist, predicting, drawing inferences or summarizing which can also be called micro skills (see part 3.4). (Wilson 2008: p. 10, Hedge 2000, p.232) According to Richards top-down processes include:

using key words to construct the schema of a discourse, constructing plans and schema from elements of a discourse, inferring the role of the participants in a situation, inferring the topic of a discourse, inferring the outcome of an event, inferring the cause or effect of an event, inferring unstated details of a situation, inferring the sequence of a series of events, inferring

comparisons, distinguishing between literal and figurative meanings, distinguishing between facts and opinions (Richards in Hedge 2000, p.256)

It can be added that in the top-down processes of listening listeners actively use their prior knowledge to construct the meaning. (Nunan in Richards and Renandya 2005: p. 235)

It is a commonly held view that listening is an interaction between these two processes that are mutually dependent and interconnected. It can be either an individual detail that helps listeners understand the whole listening extract, or it can be the listener's overview that helps him find out the detail. (Harmer 2007: p. 270, Wilson 2008: p.15, Hedge 2000: p. 234) One more important factor that is in close connection with these processes of listening and has a crucial role is memory.

3.2.1 Memory

Memory consists of three parts. The echoic memory stores and organises sounds into meaningful units according to the listener's knowledge of the language. The echoic memory is very short and the listener has not enough time to analyse all arriving information at once. In the short-term memory listeners check and compare new words with those they already know and have stored in the long-term memory. Once the meaning is gained, exact words are forgotten. The new information is transferred from the short-term memory into a long term memory for later use. Listeners start to use some of the stored expressions automatically. This process is known as an aural process and is essential for listening comprehension. (Underwood 1989: p. 2-4, Hedge 2000: p.231-235) However, human's memory is limited therefore the degree of comprehension can vary from listener to listener

3.3 Listener's Skills in Relation to Context

Some listeners can concentrate better than others with respect to their age or to their predispositions to listen or learn. Listeners are actively engaged in listening process and employ a number of skills to gain the meaning from the message. These skills can be specified as: predictive skills, extracting specific information, getting the general picture, extracting detailed information, recognizing function and discourse patterns, and deducing meaning from the context. (Harmer 1991: p.183-234) Concerning predictive skills, successful listeners predict what they are going to hear. When listeners extract specific information, they search for a certain fact and disregard unimportant information. On the contrary, when they listen for gist, listeners shape an overview of the message without concentrating on details. By extracting detailed information listeners find out the exact meaning, speaker's attitude or

feelings about the situation. When listeners recognize function and discourse patterns, they understand how the text is constructed. Deducing meaning from the context helps listeners develop the ability of guessing the meaning of unknown words in listening extract. (Anderson and Lynch 1988: p.11)

From the characteristics above is apparent that listeners want to find out what speakers mean when they use particular words. However, the knowledge of separate words might not be sufficient for learners' understanding therefore listeners need to connect these words to the context.

Context enables listeners to put the information they have heard in use. To do this, listeners use micro skills such as listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening in detail and inferential listening. (Wilson 2008: p.10) Students use these skills every day in their own language often without noticing. They reconstruct the meaning from the context of the task. It is not important for students to understand all the details of the utterance for finding out what the speaker meant. However, if learners have insufficient context due to their lack of background knowledge or speaker's knowledge or intentions, comprehension gets more difficult. (Garrod in Underwood 1989: p.3) Rich contexts for listening should be used because they activate listener's knowledge necessary for later interpretation. (Brown 1990: p.10-12) Similarly, it can be added that listeners have some expectations of what the speakers are about to say which help them understand the message better. (Anderson and Lynch 1988: p.140) It can be concluded that context has an important role in connection to listening because it helps listeners understand the meaning better.

This chapter has introduced not only different definitions of listening but also the role of listeners. When learning to listen, listeners must be active in searching for the meaning not passive. They use certain skills as well as bottom-up and top-down processes and context to activate their own background and linguistic knowledge in order to understand the spoken discourse.

4. LISTENING TO ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Foreign learners are not used to everyday English being spoken naturally. Spoken English includes not only sounds, stress and intonation, syntax and vocabulary, pauses and filters but also formal and informal language. All of these features which influence students who are learning to listen are introduced in this chapter.

4.1 Common Problems in Listening to English

Listening to English is not easy. It has been revealed that there are some common problems learners have to deal with when listening to English. One of them is in speech sounds and patterns. There is a big difference between the written and spoken discourse in English. English contains a lot of silent letters or sounds which do not exist in the learner's mother tongue. Another difficulty for listeners is the different accents. Many learners are used to their own accent or the accent of their teacher and they do not understand the accent of other nations. Also intonation, pitch, tone, volume and stress pattern cause some problems for learners. The speakers stress the main information carrying syllables, the rest is unstressed and spoken quite fast so both parts of the sentence take the same time. Most students believe that it is the speed of speech that is the most difficult part of the listening. Another problem is in a language and syntax. It can be students' insufficient vocabulary or pronunciation of the words. It is normally for the speaker to choose vocabulary, not for the listener. Learners might have learnt the word but they failed to recognise it because their own pronunciation and the pronunciation in listening varies. Misunderstanding is caused by analysing the words separately not in the context. Listeners may find it difficult to follow the spoken discourse because it is frequently not well organized. Speakers often use ungrammatical sentences, false starts, repetitions, hesitations, discourse markers or redundancy. One more difficulty is caused by environment noise or disturbance which results in a gap in a message. Therefore listeners often need to reconstruct what they did not hear with some predictions. (Brown 1990: p.43-103), Harmer (2007: p.38-42), Underwood (1989: p.16-20)

When learning to listen, students have to deal with all of these features typical for English. Unfortunately, these features cause a lack of confidence in the listener because listeners often expect themselves to understand every word of listening extracts. To build more confidence in listening, students should be advised and encouraged to listen to more natural informal colloquial English in authentic texts in order to deal successfully with authentic speech in reality and because it is more natural. (Harmer 2007: p. 273, Hedge 2000: p. 253) The teacher can help listeners to feel more confident by exposing them to English as much as possible through various kinds of listening material.

4.2 Practising Listening Through Various Materials

Students need to hear different accents and varieties of English because they are likely to communicate with people of different nationalities who use English as a tool for

communication. Students should try to understand all possible varieties of voices to be able to communicate with a wide range of people. (Anderson and Lynch 1988: p.63-68) This can be done in the language classroom or on the student's own.

4.2.1 Material for intensive and extensive listening

Listening done in the classroom is often called intensive. It is less relaxed and supplied by the teacher. Intensive listening can be for general understanding or comprehension or for language items. It is typically recorded on cassettes or CDs. Such recorded material allows students to listen to various voices of various speakers in various situations such as announcements, telephoning or radio broadcasting, which can be their advantage. Disadvantages can be seen in the speed of the speech from the recording which the students cannot adjust. (Harmer 2007: p.304-306)

Recorded material can be divided into authentic or non-authentic. Authentic material is normal not simplified natural language used by native or competent speakers. It is a language full of aspects (mentioned in part 4.1) that listeners find difficult therefore, it is usually judged as being too demanding for listeners. Natural spontaneous conversation can be very demanding for learners but there are ways to make them easier to understand. (Hedge 2000: p.244-247) Authentic texts should have a well-designed task which would help students understand them and which would motivate them. On the contrary, non-authentic material is well structured and spoken aloud but natural rhythm and intonation is usually missing therefore students might get false expectations about ordinary spoken language. However, students should experience as many kinds of material as possible to practise listening skills. (Underwood 1989: p.98-100)

Practising listening skills can be done on the student's own. Such listening is called extensive and encourages students to listen to what they like. Material for extensive listening provides an ideal source of real live English speech such as radio broadcasts or TV programmes. However, such material of 'real English' is considered by students very difficult. It is best to advise them not to worry if they do not understand everything because they do not need to but 'they still will take in a lot of language even if they are not aware of it yet'. (Quinn in Harmer 2007: p.303) Students can and should combine both extensive and intensive listening according to their needs. By combining them, they have the opportunity to listen to various voices, not just their teacher's, and gain valuable language input.

4.2.2 Live Presentations

Besides the characteristics described above, learner's listening skills can be improved by seeing live presentations. Listeners can react to the speaker's speech and speakers can adjust their speech according to the listener's needs, typically the teacher and the students. (Brown 1990: p.112-143) However, it can be argued that 'if the speed of speech is slowed down too much, it will lose its natural rhythm and intonation and students might get confused'. (Underwood 1989: p. 95-96)

4.2.2.1 Paralinguistic Features

The biggest advantage of live presentations is that listeners can rely on paralinguistic features to gain the meaning of the utterance. Paralinguistic features are divided into two categories – vocal paralinguistic features and physical paralinguistic features. Concentrating on the physical paralinguistic features which are always related to the body language or body talk can help listeners understand the parts of the utterance better. (Harmer 2007: p.44) Concentrating on the paralinguistic vocal features of speech which listeners can hear on the radio, telephone or the tape recorder and which clarify the content of what the speaker says allows the listener to experience the features which are used similarly across languages. (Brown 1990: p.112-137) For instance anger, nervousness, excitement or emphasis have very similar forms of expression in many languages.

It can be concluded that these forms of expressions can be vital for students when learning to listen because they can recognize how the speaker feels before they understand what was being said.

4.3 Criteria for Material Selection

When preparing material for listening activities, all mentioned characteristics should be taken into account plus content and the language level of students, the length of the text and the duration of recording.

4.3.1 The Length and the Duration of Listening

Length of the text and the duration of the recordings are important for material selection. Concerning the length is limited so the length of listening should be between four and a half to six minutes long. (Wallace in Anderson and Lynch 1988: p. 85) Some advocates say that the longer the speech is the better the chance for listeners is to catch the meaning. While others believe one minute is sufficient, especially for beginners, (Wilson 2008: p. 23) others

suggest two minutes for students of higher level. (Scrivener 1998: p.146-152) Concerning duration of recording, it is difficult to decide how many times to replay the recordings as well. The teacher may alternately decide to play it two or three times (Harmer 2007: p.305) with regard to students' needs. The teacher may alternately decide to play it once more as 'in real life discourse is rarely replayed and that it is necessary for students to get as much information as possible from a single hearing'. (Ur 1996: p.108) Nevertheless, in face-to-face conversation students often have a chance to ask for clarification or repetition so they can hear the speech more times although modified.

4.3.2 Visual Support

Another important feature when preparing listening material is a visual support. The role of visual support is to focus listeners' attention on what they are going to hear. Such support can help learners activate their prior knowledge, which can lead to successful listening. (Anderson and Lynch 1988, p. 56-60)

4.3.3 Content

Content should correspond to the language level of students in term of complexity and formality. (Wilson 2008: p. 28-29) It should be concerned with density, discourse structures and speech acts and should keep the factor of interest. It is important to mention that each listening activity should have its purpose. The purpose of listening is essential and can influence the success of listeners' enormously.

4.3.4 The Purpose of Listening

One listening can have several purposes which can differ according to what kind of information listeners search for. Listeners should experience as many listening purposes as possible in the English language classroom. The purpose should be similar to ones in real life. Listening purposes can be divided according to characteristics of delivery into participatory or non-participatory listening¹. While participatory listening involves interaction between two or more people, non-participatory listening is a situation in which listeners have no opportunity to participate in conversation. For the listening activities done in the action research (see part 6.8) these purposes are used: listening to confirm expectations, listening to extract specific information, listening for communicative tasks, listening for

¹ These are also referred to as reciprocal or non-reciprocal listening respectively.

general understanding, listening to recognize function and listening to deduce meaning. (Hedge 2000: p. 243-244, Harmer 1991: p.183-234) Purposes can range from listening for gist to listening in detail or from listening for specific information to inferential listening. (Wilson 2008: p. 10) As we can see, the purposes of listening and the listener's skills are more or less the same.

This chapter dealt with uncertainties that listeners have to face when listening to English. It also introduced important features for preparing material for listening activities and the ways how listening can be practised. The next chapter specifies the sequence of listening and its importance for inferring the meaning of the message.

5. STAGES OF LISTENING

Current listening work follows the pattern of three stages (pre-listening, while listening and post-listening) necessary for developing learner's listening skills. The pre-listening stage leads to a desire to listen, the while-listening stage introduces something interesting for listening and the purpose of it, and the post-listening stage has its own purpose to keep learner's attention and interest. (Underwood 1989: p.30, Hedge 2000: p. 247, Wilson 2008: p. 60)

5.1 Pre-listening

Pre-listening activities serve as an introduction to the while-listening stage and prepare students' minds for the topic. Pre-listening activities depend on factors such as the interest and the ability of students, the time, and the nature of the content of listening. The pre-listening activities can consist of general questions about the topic, key vocabulary, short discussions about the topic or pictures connected with the listening tasks. (Hedge 2000: p.249, Underwood 1989: p. 31, Wilson 2008: p. 63-68) Listeners can make predictions concerning the topic or they can activate their prior knowledge to make sense of what they will hear. They can discuss and compare their opinions and ideas with their colleagues, which reflects how people react in real life. This process of preparation is known as 'bringing to the forefront' (Underwood 1989: p.31), which means that 'students will need their known lexis and syntax for matching with what they hear in their store knowledge'. (Underwood 1989: p.31) If listeners have some expectations beforehand, they will feel more confident in listening.

5.2 While-listening

Each activity of listening needs to have a purpose. The purpose of the while-listening stage can be seen in helping students to develop their listening skills. This can be done by helping them get the gist of the content or by confirming their expectations. (Hedge 2000: p. 252, Wilson 2008: p. 82-83) While-listening activities should guide the listener through the text but not test his grammar. There should not be too many sentences to be put in the correct order according to what is heard. It has been suggested that particularly multiple choice questions or true/false answers are not suitable for this stage because listeners need some time to reflect to them. (Underwood 1989: p. 45-49) Learners can follow the information, reflect to what was said, fill in the chart, tick multiple-choice items, match pictures with the texts or make notes. These responses are recognition responses while productive responses are those of note taking, writing or correcting errors. (Wilson 2008: p. 83-85) While-listening activities should be chosen carefully and should interest and motivate the students to do the listening tasks.

5.3 Post-listening

The post-listening activities follow the while-listening stage. The purpose of these activities is to check the accuracy of students' listening. Students can check their answers either with the teacher or with their colleagues in class. The post-listening stage can reflect why students failed to understand some parts of listening on one side, but on the other side, post-listening can expand on the topic. The typical examples of post-listening activities are open questions or multiple choice questions based on the spoken text from listening. (Underwood 1989: p.74-78, Wilson 2008: p. 96-111, Hedge 2000: p. 252) Post-listening activities are not based only on listening skills but also employ reading, writing and speaking skills.

5.4 Feedback

Immediate feedback is an inseparable part of the listening stages. Such feedback is necessary for students because it allows them to see to what extent they succeeded or did not succeed and why. (Underwood 1989: p. 73) For this purpose, listening should be re-spoken or replayed after all students have finished the listening tasks. Students need a commentary on their weak or not understood points in order to improve their knowledge of language.

It can be concluded that when learning to listen, the sequence of listening activities is very important and can influence the degree of comprehensiveness on listener's side very much. Therefore listening activities should always consist of three stages to make listening achievable and more understandable for listeners.

PRACTICAL PART

6. ACTION RESEARCH

The action research carried out for the needs of this bachelor thesis has been done in an English class of adult learners. Its aim was to improve learners' listening skills and strategies while doing listening activities, to change their attitudes towards listening and to help them build more confidence while listening.

6.1 Action Research and Its Stages

Action research can be defined as a change of a teaching or learning system. Its aim is to clarify and resolve problems which occurred in regular classrooms when teaching and learning. It is usually conducted by an individual teacher or a group of teachers to improve either teaching or learning or both. The action research consists of several stages that recur in cycles which include the stages of planning, action, observation and reflection which expand according to experience into exploring, planning, collecting data, analyzing, intervening, observing, reflection. (Richards and Farrell 2005: p.174-175) It is apparent that the terminology of individual stages of conducting action research varies.

This action research consists of five stages - problem identification, hypothesis, intervention plan, implementation and evaluation. Problem identification (see part 6.5) reframes and specifies the problem which will be examined in more detail. Hypothesis (see part 6.6) introduces the procedures that will be used for collecting information about the existing problem. Intervention plan (see part 6.7) creates an action plan in order to change classroom practice. Implementation (see part 6.8) tries out the action plan and observes its effect. Evaluation (see part 6.9) presents the findings and results of action research. (Nunan 2001: p.19, Wallace 2000: p.16)

6.2 The Tools for Data Collecting

Non-observational and observational methods for data collecting have been used in this action research (Burns 1999: p.79, Ellis 2005: p.41-42) The non-observational method was the distribution of questionnaires to students. The observational approaches were keeping lesson reports after each listening activity, students were also supplied with transcripts, and have had short discussions with the teacher. Questionnaires were used to gain the initial data concerning the listening experience of students and final data to illuminate problems arising from listening as well as to see the result of the research. Transcripts of listening materials

have helped students to identify their weaknesses as well as to clarify their uncertainties after listening and to give students necessary feedback (see part 5.4). Short discussions between the students and the teacher have played the same role as the transcripts but have also commented on students' achievement. Both of them have served as feedback for the learners and the teacher. The last tool for data collecting was the observations kept on each activity by the teacher in order to find which questions troubled the students most and on the other hand, which ones did not. All the data has been analysed and consequently discussed among students and the teacher in order to clarify the cause of students' weak listening skills.

6.3 Setting

The English evening courses have been taking place in Sebranice since 2001. These courses last ninety minutes each and students attend them every week for nine months. The English classes are late in the evening (6.30-8.00 pm.), after a whole day of work when students' tiredness and lower concentration are apparent (see part 2.5). According to the students' requirements and needs specified in the questionnaires, these courses are aimed at general English with attention to developing their communicative competence (see part 2.3). There are nine students in the course, who participated in the action research, all of them adults whose level of English as well as their age varies greatly. Concerning their level of English, according to CEFR descriptors (see part 2.4), three students have assessed themselves at level A2 and six students at level B1. Concerning their age, there is a gap of twenty years between the youngest and the oldest student. Concerning their former studies of English, two students had studied English at school, one student attended English courses at work and six students started learning English in the course. All of these findings have been taken from the questionnaires. (Appendix 2)

6.4 Students' Experience with Listening in Real Life

In the questionnaires students were asked to specify their personal experience with regards to listening to English. All of the nine respondents experienced listening to English either in English speaking countries or at home by listening to the radio or by watching television. All of them found watching English programmes on television more understandable and easier mainly due to visual support. On the contrary, when listening to the radio, all the students agreed on having more difficulties in understanding the utterance and figuring out the meaning. All of the respondents overheard a conversation between English speaking people, or listened to the announcements at the airport for their departures or arrivals while

travelling. Five of the nine students experienced telephoning in English but they characterized it as very difficult especially when talking to native speakers. Not that difficult but still difficult the students characterized telephoning in English with other nationalities. As they could not see the speaker, they could not rely on any of the paralinguistic features (see part 4.2.2.1).

6.5 Problem Identification

Based on the questionnaires and observations of students' work during the teaching period in Sebranice, listening has been classified by the students as the most difficult part in learning. The students found activities chosen for practising listening skills too difficult even though they corresponded to situations in real life. The students commented that the extracts were too long and that they did not have enough time to identify the structures or the words that the speaker used. Three respondents out of nine agreed on having great difficulty in understanding native speakers, six respondents agreed on having some difficulty in understanding native speakers. They also complained about the speed of spoken English. Six respondents out of nine admitted they stopped listening when they did not know some words. Concerning individual stages of listening, all respondents agreed that while-listening (see part 5.2) is more difficult for them than other stages. Activities following while-listening were mainly based on comprehension check of ten questions. The students found that amount of questions too demanding to follow. They did not have enough time to catch all the answers at once as they had to write the answers, which caused them to miss some parts of the listening. Recordings were typically played twice but the students found this repetition insufficient. All nine respondents agreed that understanding everything of listening is important for them.

It can be concluded that the students have difficulty in listening mainly because they have to employ more than one language skill at the same time and because they want to understand everything. The length, the duration, the speed and the language used in the extract make them feel less confident. The amount of comprehension questions of while-listening was too demanding to meet their expectations.

6.6 Hypothesis

The students would improve their listening skills and feel more confident if the input was divided into shorter parts each of them accompanied with a few questions. They would have more time to sort the message out and probably catch the meaning better. They would feel

more confident if the duration was adjusted according to their needs. They will have to learn that total comprehension is not needed for improving listening.

6.7 Intervention Plan

Listening extracts are taken from the course books of *New Headway Pre-Intermediate, English in 20 minutes a Day* and *New International Express* because these course books fulfil the criteria for material selection (see part 4.3) as well as the students' level of English. All activities follow the principle of three stages of listening (see chapter five). Based on the observation of the class, pre-listening stages do not have to be modified, which reflected the students' motivation, interest, achievement and confidence while doing them. Similarly, post-listening stages do not have to be changed from similar reasons. According to students' needs, while-listening is modified in the following way. Students listen for gist the first time, the second time the whole listening extract is divided into several parts of appropriate length (see part 4.3.1). Each part has its own purpose (see part 3.3.4) and is played as many times as the students need. The students discuss and compare their answers amongst themselves immediately after listening and immediate feedback is provided by the teacher. Once the parts are compared, completed and checked, the recording is played once more but as a whole. The students keep their interest and feel more confident. The students ask further questions concerning the listening passage to gain more confidence for the following tasks. They become active listeners in addition to practising other language skills.

6.7.1 Intervention For Particular Listening Activities (LA1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10)

The students go through twelve listening activities (LA 1-12). Activities LA 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 are adjusted according to students' needs specified in problem identification in part 6.5. Activities LA 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 12 follow suggested ideas from the course books therefore are not mentioned in parts (6.7.1 and 6.9) These activities (LA 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 12) are attached in Appendix 3, 4, 5.

Each listening activity consist of three stages. All pre-listening stages are accompanied by visuals in form of pictures, photos or maps. Their aim is to tune students into the topic. Students use top-down processes (see part 3.2) and participate in discussions. While-listening stages provide the input by the teacher, the student or the CD player. Students listen for gist the first time, then the input is divided into shorter parts of the same length. Students are allowed to ask for replaying according to their needs. Each part of while-listening has its own purpose for which the students listen. Students practise mainly the top-down processes,

however, LA 4 is aimed at practising both (see part 3.2). The students are supposed to mark how many times they hear the words *room, roof, solution, van, and drive/driving* in the text of LA 4. Comprehension questions accompanied by writing longer answers are reduced or changed into ticking multiple-choice questions as in LA 6. Concerning LA 9, it is based on reading about a film star and is divided into two lessons. The first lesson students read, the second lesson they listen to an interview to find the differences between the written and the spoken form. In LA 10 while-listening is divided into four parts of similar length. Each part is played twice and has its purpose in the form of questions. Students check the answers amongst themselves and summarize the main points. They can compare the father's and the daughter's versions in order to find the differences in their opinions. The post-listening stages in LA 1-12 invite students to discuss the topic in more details, the students give their opinions or discuss their ideas by working in pairs, or acting out role-plays.

6.8 Implementation

The following table is based on Underwood's suggestions and specifies basic characteristics of activities chosen for listening in the classroom. (Underwood 1989: p.109) It needs to be taken into consideration that it is the while-listening stage which is characterised.

Table 6.8.1: Listening Activities (LA 1-6)

Number of listening, date	L1 11.3.2010	L2 18.3.2010	L3 25.3.2010	L4 1.4.2010	L5 8.4.2010	L6 15.4.2010
Class/CEFR level	adults Sebranice A2-B1	adults Sebranice A2-B1	adults Sebranice A2-B1	adults Sebranice A2-B1	adults Sebranice A2-B1	adults Sebranice A2-B1
Source	Reward Pre-intermediate Resource Pack, 1994	New International express, 2000, U11, T 11.5, T 11.6, T11.7, T11.8, p.111	English in 20 min a day, lesson 4, stage 5, track 6, p.200	English in 20 min a day, lesson 3, stage 4, track 5, p.149	New Headway pre-intermediate, 2007 U3, T 3.16, p.29	New Headway pre-intermediate, 2007 U3, T 3.7, p.24
Type of listening	Intensive, comprehension participatory	Intensive comprehension Non-participatory	Intensive comprehension Non-participatory	Intensive comprehension perception Non-participatory	Intensive Non-participatory	Intensive Non-participatory

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6
Purpose	exchange information	For communicative task	To extract specific information	To extract specific information To recognize function	To extract specific information	To extract specific information
Length	1,30 min	0,30 min each	2,05 min	1,30 min	1,00 min	1,20 min
Content	Features of a town	Socializing	Advice on flying	Buying a car	Time expressions	Partners in crime
Purpose of the task	Following directions, filling in details on the map, asking and saying where places are	Responding politely, thanking, apologizing, asking permissions	Receiving information, choosing the right thing	Connecting people and things	Saying the dates in different ways	Choosing the right answer according to listening
Quality of production	Depended on the teacher and the students	Good, different voices, accents	Good but too monotonous	Good, different voices, accents	Good, three kinds of conversations	Good, one voice with typical British accent
Suitability	Good to use when learning prepositions of places	Good for revising when practising small talks	Good for extracting information	Good for matching and connecting information	Good for practising the dates and numbers for everyday English	Best done with connections of past simple and continuous structures
Language focus	Explaining the way, directions	Social responses	Describing feelings before the flight, friend's talk	Descriptions of cars that people want to buy	Saying the dates in the right way	Listening to the news
Processes micro skills	Top-down Listening for specific information, for gist	Top-down Listening for specific information, for gist	Top-down Listening for specific information, for gist	Top-down bottom up Listening for specific information, for gist	Top-down Listening for specific information, for gist	Top-down Listening for specific information, for gist

Table 6.8.2: Listening Activities (LA 7-12)

Number of listening, date	L7 22.4.2010	L8 13.5.2010	L9 20.5.2010	L10 27.5.2010	L11 3.6.2010	L12 10.6.2010
Class/CEF level	adults Sebrance A2-B1	adults Sebrance A2-B1	adults Sebrance A2-B1	adults Sebrance A2-B1	adults Sebrance A2-B1	adults Sebrance A2-B1
Source	New Headway pre-intermediate, 2007,U4, T4.1, T4.2, p.77	Ur,P., Teaching listening comprehension , p.110-111, Fig 25c	New Headway pre-intermediate, 2007,U7, T7.8, p.58	New Headway pre-intermediate, 2007,U8, T8.4, T8.5, p.65	New Headway pre-intermediate, 2007,U6, T6.1, p.46	New Headway pre-intermediate, 2007,U5,T5.6, p.41
Type of listening purpose	Intensive Non-participatory extract specific information confirm expectations	Intensive Non-participatory for specific information deducing meaning	Intensive Non-participatory Extracting details, confirm expectations	Intensive Non-participatory for specific information confirm expectations	Intensive comprehension, perception Non-participatory for specific information	Intensive Non-participatory Enjoyment for specific information
Length	1,25 min	3,30 min	1,20 min	2,00min each	2,15 min	4,10 min
Content	Shopping	Changes in the Zoo	Celebrities in the news	Leaving home	Favourite things	A song
Purpose of the task	To write down the necessary information	To extract specific information	To find the differences between the written article and an interview	To compare father's and daughter's opinion on living alone	To identify adjectives in the utterance and description of things	Choosing the best words
Quality of production	Good, different voices	Depends on the teacher	Good, authentic interview	Good, two different voices	Good, authentic interview	Good, but music sometimes infers
Suitability	Good with connection of countable and uncountable nouns	Better with intermediate or advanced students	Better done after reading the article	Good when talking about feelings	Good when talking about favourites, comparatives	Good for pre-intermediate
Language focus	Being able to understand and write items for shopping	Solving situations according to instructions	Being able to compare written information with the spoken Engl.	To compare two different opinions	Being able to describe things	Giving advice

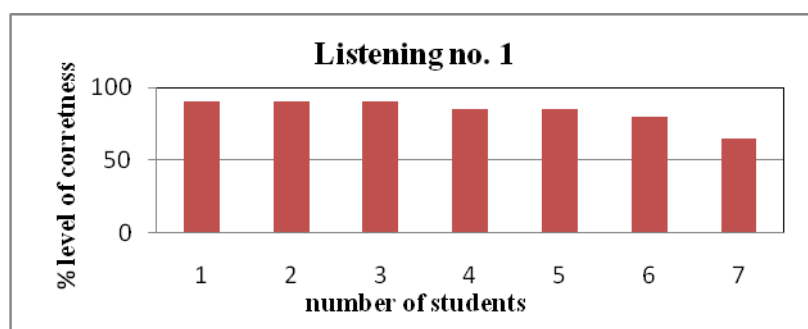
	L7	L8	L9	L10	L11	L12
Processes	Top-down	Top-down	Top-down	Top-down	Top-down bottom-up	Top-down
Micro skills	Listening for specific information, for gist	Listening for specific information, for gist	Listening for specific, for gist	Listening for specific information, for gist	Listening for specific information, for gist	Listening for specific information, for gist

From the tables above is evident that students experienced twelve varied listening activities. The tables show what the while-listening stages were about and what criteria the students had to meet. All activities were done in the classroom therefore intensive listening was prominent. The students practised mainly listening for gist and for specific information and the top-down processes dominated.

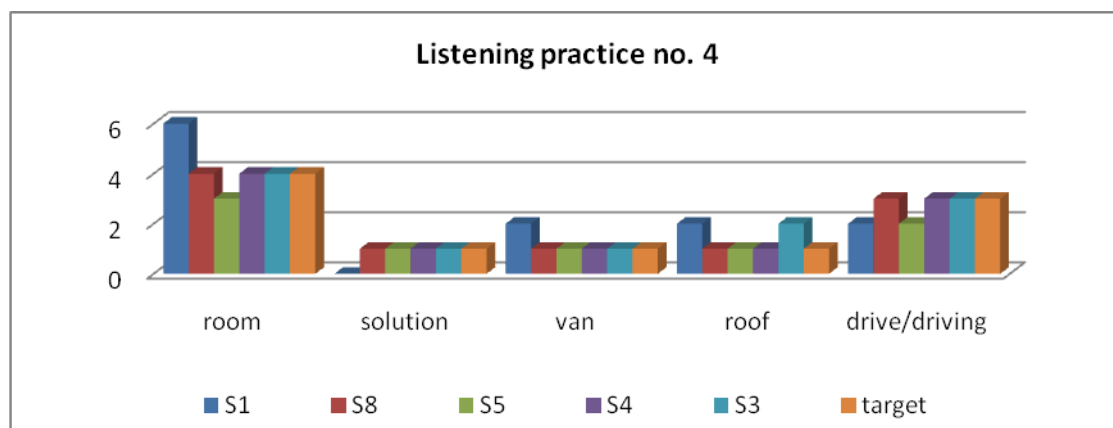
6.9 Evaluation of Listening Activities (LA1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10)

Seven adults participated in LA 1. Concerning the input, it was provided by the teacher and the student. The students asked for the speed of utterance to be adjusted when they needed by asking for repeating or slowing it down, which gave the students some confidence in doing the task. Four students found it quite difficult to follow the initial instructions at once (based on observation of the class). They did not understand the word 'roundabout' and also had problems with its pronunciation. This could be caused by the lack in their linguistic competence. Some of the students tried to guess its meaning from the context. This activity interconnected listening with writing, reading and speaking. All language skills were employed and could be improved. The students became active participants as they would in real life.

The students were asked to evaluate themselves according to their achievement in the task. Three students evaluated themselves at 90 %, two students at 85% , one by 80% and one at 65%. The following graph shows students' self-evaluation in percentages.



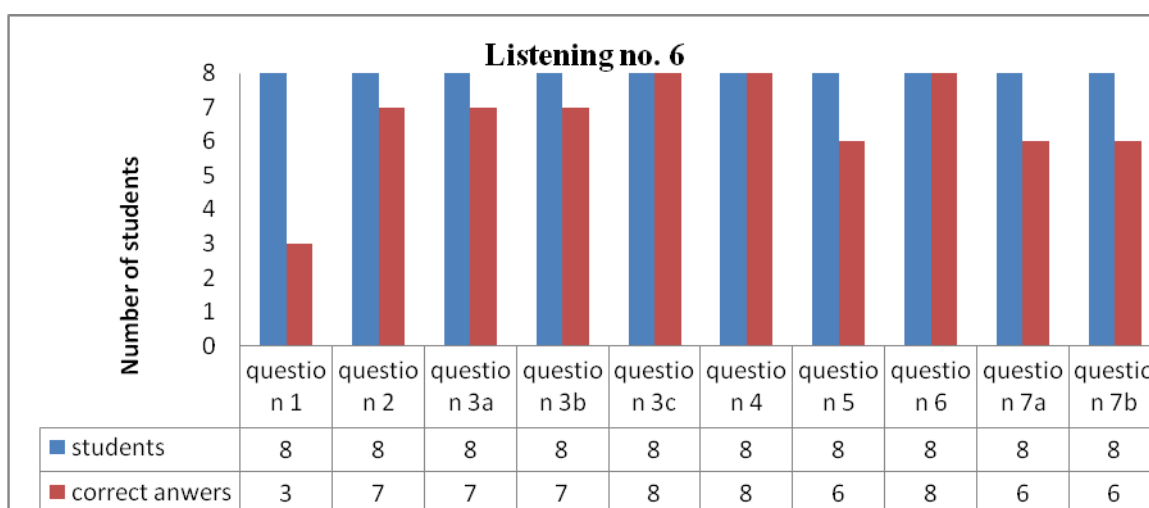
Five adults participated in LA 4. The input was provided by CD player. The students matched the people and the cars while listening. It proved that visuals helped students a great deal in reaching the goal of LA 4. The students deemed this activity to be one of the easiest. This activity practised not only top-down processes but also bottom-up. The students were supposed to mark how many times they heard the words *room*, *roof*, *solution*, *van*, and *drive/driving* in the text. The word 'room' appeared in the text four times. However, one of the students heard it six times, another only three times, three students were correct. The word 'roof' appeared in the text once, but two students heard it twice, three students were correct. The word 'solution' appeared once in the extract but one student did not hear it at all, two students were correct and one student heard it three times. The word 'van' appeared in the extract once but three students heard it twice, one student was correct and one student did not hear it at all. The words 'drive/driving' appeared in the text three times but one student heard it once only, two students twice and two students were correct. The following graph shows the students' achievements in the activity.



Most of the students had no difficulty in finding the words in the spoken discourse because they concentrated only on them. However, they added that some of the words they heard for the first time were harder to realize in the spoken discourse. The students' achievement was influenced by the difference between their own pronunciation and the speaker's so even though they knew the word, they did not succeed in its recognition.

Eight adults participated in LA 6. The input was provided by CD player. The students either distinguished between the words with similar pronunciation or chose the right answer according to what they heard by ticking multiple choice questions. The results showed that the students had the biggest problem with the pronunciation of numbers '33' and '43' in question 1. The reason for it is that the Czech language does not have the sound of /th/ and the students

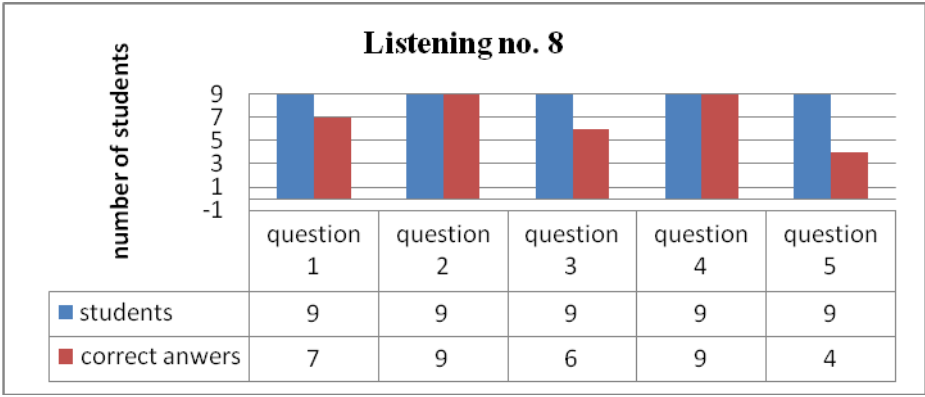
changed it for the closest sound they knew. As students' pronunciation differed from the one they heard, they mistook it. Five students out of eight had it wrong. In question 3 one of the students changed the word "Austria" for "Australia". Again it could be for the same reason, or the student did not concentrate enough on it. The other students had the answer right. The last question 7a,b, showed that six of the students were satisfied with ticking the answer that they did not pay any attention on finding the difference between the spoken discourse and written form because they were not asked to. The following graph shows the students' achievement in activity number 6. The red line specifies how many students had the right answer. The blue line represents the number of participating students in the task. All the questions are attached in Appendix 4.



This type of exercise provided practising both bottom-up and top-down processes in one listening activity. From the findings it can be concluded that if the students' prior knowledge is limited and they cannot guess from the context, the tasks get more difficult for them. Similarly, if the speaker's pronunciation of the words differ significantly from student's own, the students are unable to distinguish between the text they hear and see, proving the text to be unhelpful.

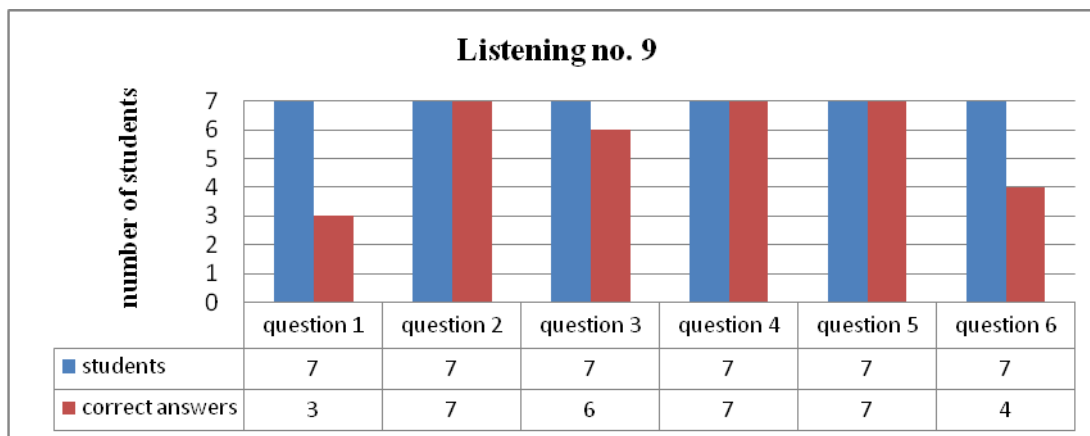
Nine students participated in LA 8. The input was provided by the teacher. The students looked for the differences between graphic and spoken representation. The extract was divided into five parts, each of those had its own question to provide a purpose and was read twice or three times according to the students' requirements. On the question 'Why are the giraffes going to be moved?' seven students answered correctly. They did not use the exact words but they were able to paraphrase. For example: 'Not big' or 'It's not big'. Two students heard only *big*, which was not enough because it had an opposite meaning. On the question

'Which animals do children like?' all the students agreed on elephants, which was correct. On the question 'What happened to one of the lions?' six students found the right word – 'died', the three students did not catch the word in the context. On the question 'Are the llamas afraid of tigers or not?' all the students agreed that llamas were, which was the correct answer. On the last question 'What does the Zoo want to do with the fox?' only four students wrote the correct answer. They either specified that it was going to be moved or sold. Both options were right. The students' results depended either on their expectations or predictions related to the context. The following graph demonstrates the students' achievement in activity number 8. The red line specifies how many students had the right answer. The blue line represents the number of participating students in the task.

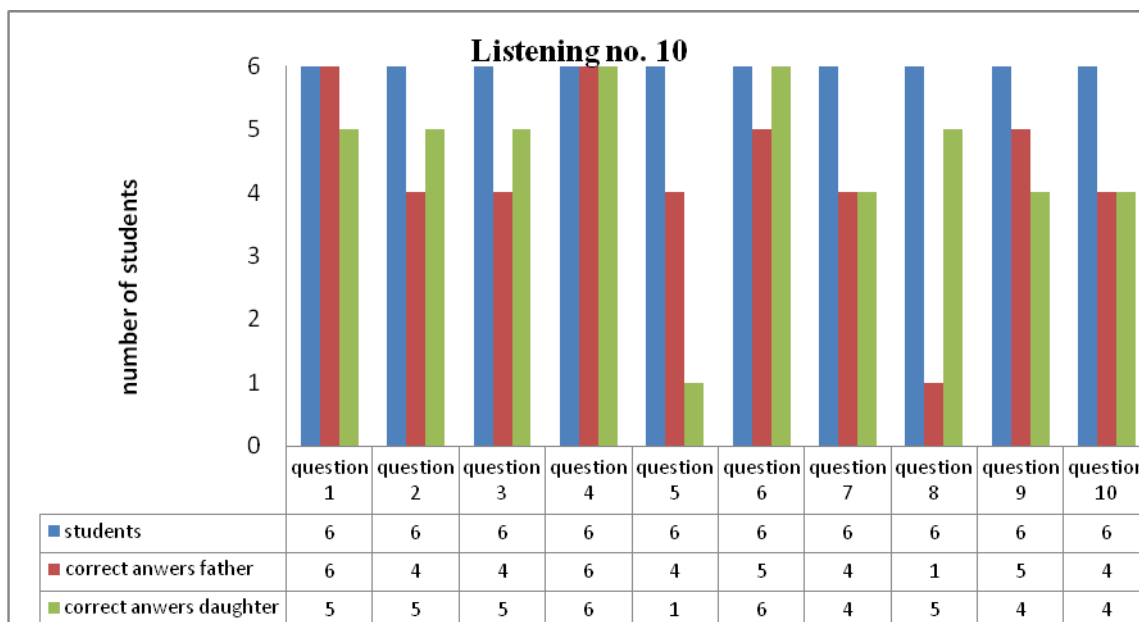


Chunking the input enabled students to process the right amount of information and their memory did not get overloaded (see the part 3.2.1). As they had some clues of what the extract was going to be like from the very first reading, they were more confident in doing the task. It was proven that such a sequence of while-listening helped students understand and to better catch the meaning of the separate parts.

Seven students participated in LA 9. The input was provided by CD player but was based on reading in advance. This helped students activate their prior knowledge and confirm their expectations from listening afterwards. When listening for gist, the students identified the differences between the interview and the article quite easily, however, when listening for detail, they were not able to specify the differences further. The graph below shows students' achievement in the task. The red line specifies how many students had the right answer. The blue line represents the number of participating students in the task.



Six students participated in listening activity 10. The input was provided by CD player and the listening was divided into four parts of similar length. The students checked the answers among one another and summarized the main points in pairs. As a result they got two answers for one question. The following graph reflects students' achievement and compares their answers about the father and daughter. The blue line shows how many students did the task, the red line shows how many students had the correct answer for father, the green one for daughter.



From the graph it is evident that question 5 and 8 caused students the most trouble. Question 5 asked: *'Who is she living with?'* and question 8 asked: *'Why does she have to earn extra money?'* The students needed to write longer answers while listening therefore dividing the input into shorter parts helped them get some time to think of what they just heard. They did not have to process too much information at once and could concentrate better.

6.10 Evaluation of the Whole Action Research

Concerning the sequence of all listening activities, each stage of the listening extract was always done for some purposes not only for keeping listeners' attention and interest. The students practised different skills (see tables 6.8.1 and 6.8.2).

In pre-listening, students practised mainly predictive skills (see part 3.3) and became active participants. The students employed other language skills such as speaking by leading short discussions on the topic or by reading in order to confirm their expectation afterwards. They needed to employ their communicative competence in order to communicate effectively. They used their linguistic knowledge to pronounce the words properly or pragmatic competence to use appropriate grammatical forms. The students needed strategic competence to ask to repeat things.

In while-listening, the students confirmed their expectations from pre-listening. The students experienced non-participatory listening. They used their micro skills such as extracting specific information or getting general picture. At the same time they practised listening and writing. All aspects of communicative competence were employed there. They needed to use strategic competence in order to ask to hear the message again. They used linguistic competence to pronounce the words properly and pragmatic competence to see the relationship between the form and function. They also needed discourse competence to deal with the authentic texts.

In post-listening, the students integrated other skills such as reading or speaking. The students participated in communicative tasks by referring to information presented earlier in the text or by giving their opinion on the topic. They compared their ideas among each other in the class and responded to each other by asking for clarification or further explanation. The students became active participants as in real life. Such practising led to developing all aspects of communicative competence.

Concerning feedback, the students were given all important information about each listening activities by the teacher or by other students to see to what extent they were successful. The students also commented on their work so the teacher knew about their achievements. The transcripts were not used in the class but were given as reading material for homework.

Concerning the input, its length and duration, it has been already evaluated in part 6.8. One more thing to be mentioned is that when the input was provided by the teacher or students, some students guessed from paralinguistic features of the speaker to infer the meaning more easily .

Concerning listening processes, in all activities and stages mainly top-down processing dominated, however, in activities (LA 4, 6) both processes were involved. Where the students had sufficient prior knowledge, they guessed from the context. However, when students' prior knowledge was limited, the task got more difficult for them. Similarly, if the speaker's pronunciation of the words differed significantly from students' own, the students were not able to distinguish between the words they heard and the words they saw.

Concerning students' productive skills, the students who participated in this action research are able to express and understand each other quite well. Some of them are more fluent in their production than others. As they know each other quite well, they do not hesitate to say what is on their minds, which is a great advantage for them as it is not a common feature for adult students (see part 2.5). Concerning students' listening skills, five students stated in the questionnaire that they improved it only a little bit, four of them did not see any change. All of them agreed that they feel a bit more confident when the input is provided by the teacher or students and when it is divided into short parts. Concerning students' micro skills (see part 3.3) most of them were practised in turns, each activity employed them, which can be found in the tables above (see tables 6.8.1 and 6.8.2).

In terms of course books of *New Headway Pre-Intermediate* and *New International Express* from which most of the listening activities were chosen, they represented the easiest way of reaching various authentic listening extracts of appropriate levels for the teacher. In comparison the course book *English in 20 minutes a Day* offered well structured recording materials but it was the intention of practising listening skills to make the students experience as many different listening extracts as possible. Nevertheless, the students insisted it was still difficult for them to cope with either authentic or non-authentic material.

All the findings mentioned above come from the teacher's observation of the class, questionnaires (see appendix 2), discussions and lesson reports (see appendix 2) done during the teaching period in Sebranice.

7. CONCLUSION

This thesis has dealt with the issue of listening against background Communicative Language Teaching. Its aim was to find out if it is possible to develop adults' listening skills and to build more confidence by changing their negative attitudes towards listening.

This thesis has used different methods and sources to outline the term 'listening'. It drew on literary sources available in libraries or on the Internet, however, some of the titles were hardly accessible. Information and data gained from literary sources have been analysed and compared in order to introduce listening in accordance with Communicative Language Teaching, which is a current approach widely recognized for teaching English in the world.

Learning a language, it means to learn four language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening belongs to the group of receptive skills therefore it is hard to see to what extent it has been improved in adult learners during the action research. However, certain changes in the adults' behaviour, when listening, were apparent. The students became active listeners. They used some micro skills in all listening activities, especially for gist and for the detail. They learnt that understanding everything is not necessary for inferring the meaning, which I consider to be their personal victory and an achievement of the action research.

Listening activities enabled students to improve not only listening skills but also all areas of their communicative competence. The students' practice in all stages involved pragmatic competence, linguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Therefore it can be concluded that even if attention was paid mostly to developing listening skills, all areas of communicative competence were improved, which is the goal of teaching English nowadays.

To sum up whether the listening skills of adult learners were improved and to what extent is hard to say because the process of 'what is going on in one's mind' is not observable. However, it is possible to show students ways to develop their listening skills as well as what kind of skills and processes to use. And this is what I think has been reached in the group of adult students. Once they acquire the listening skills, they will become more confident when listening and their expectations of understanding English better will be fulfilled.

As far as my opinion is concerned, I suggest to all learners to listen to English from all possible sources and if you do not understand spoken English at once, do not be discouraged because developing listening skills is a long running track that needs to be practised regularly.

8. RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá zdokonalováním dovedností poslechu dospělých ve výuce anglického jazyka. Cílem práce je tuto reciproční sluchovou dovednost zdokonalit prostřednictvím vhodně rozčleněných při poslechových cvičení.

V této práci jsou použity metody analýzy s popisnými prvky a metody akčního výzkumu. Teze této bakalářské práce se opírají a čerpají z veřejně dostupné literatury Univerzitní knihovny a Britského centra v Pardubicích a jsou doplněny informacemi získanými z internetových zdrojů. Nicméně, některé tituly byly těžko dostupné.

Práce je rozdělena na dvě části. Obsahem teoretické části práce je seznámení se základní terminologií, která s oblastí rozvoje poslechu souvisí. Nejprve jsou zde představeny metody, na kterých byla výuka anglického jazyka postavena a jakou pozici, z hlediska důležitosti, v nich poslech sehrál. Dále jsou zde uvedeny současné přístupy výuky anglického jazyka. Jedním z nich je tzv. přirozený přístup, který se opírá o přirozené osvojení jazyka, tak jak tomu je u malých dětí. Předpokládá, že děti si osvojí jazyk podvědomě, na základě různých pokynů, na které reagují zpočátku pouze neverbálně. Všechny tyto podněty zpracovávají a ukládají do své paměti a teprve po čase začnou samy mluvit.

Dalším přístupem je komunikativní výuka jazyků, která bere komunikaci za stěžejní. Výuka jazyka je založena na komunikativním procvičování již od raného stádia učení prostřednictvím různých komunikačních aktivit. V souvislosti s tímto přístupem je zde nastíněn termín komunikativní kompetence, jehož rozvoj se stal cílem v současné výuce jazyků. S tímto pojmem také souvisí možnost studentů si určit svou jazykovou úroveň podle Společného evropského referenčního rámce pro jazyky, který každou úroveň detailně rozlišuje. Současně je zde uvedena stručná charakteristika dospělých jako studentů a jejich dispozice k výuce jazyka. Dospělí jsou zde uvedeni, neboť se podíleli na akčním výzkumu zaměřeném na zdokonalování jejich poslechových dovedností.

Druhá kapitola definuje pojem poslechu jako receptivní dovednosti sluchové. Také představuje procesy, které při něm probíhají a jaké sluchové dovednosti studenti mohou používat v rámci jeho zdokonalování. Jedná se o takové dovednosti, které studenti běžně

používají ve svém mateřském jazyce, aniž by si je uvědomovali. Posluchač se musí aktivně podílet na tom, aby pochopil smysl hovoru. Je tedy velice důležitá aktivní participace posluchače při poslechových cvičeních. V této kapitole je ještě zmíněná role paměti, která má důležitou funkci při přísunu a vstřebávání informací v procesu poslechu a je proto jeho nedílnou součástí.

Další kapitola se zabývá problémy, se kterými se musí studenti vypořádat při studiu anglického jazyka. Specifikuje problémy týkající se nejen formy, ale také funkce jazyka. Dále je zde uvedeno, jakým způsobem lze anglický jazyk procvičovat, ať už v hodině nebo individuálně. Při aktivitách zaměřených na poslech je důležitý výběr materiálu určeného pro poslech. Materiál může mít mnoho podob, ale měly by být dodrženy určité zásady při jeho výběru. Důležitost je kladena především na jeho autentičnost. Mnoho zdrojů uvádí, že pokud si student zvykne na takovýto druh materiálu, nebude mít tak velké problémy při použití anglického jazyka v reálných situacích. Poslechová cvičení by měla motivovat a měla by být zajímavá. Důležitý je jejich obsah, který by měl reflektovat úroveň posluchače. Poslechová cvičení je třeba poslouchat z nějakého důvodu. Pokud se autentický text zdá učiteli příliš složitý, může pro posluchače zvolit jednodušší úkoly, které mu usnadní pochopení textu. Dalším, velmi důležitým faktorem, je délka nahrávky, která by měla být v rozmezí jedné až dvou minut pro mírně pokročilé posluchače. Nicméně, někteří autoři zastávají názor, že čím je poslech delší, tím má posluchač větší šanci pochopit jeho smysl. Dalším aspektem je vizuální podpora, která umožňuje připravit studenta na téma poslechu. Tato vizuální podpora nemusí být pouze ve formě obrázků, studenti mohou také sledovat mluvčího, řeč jeho těla, což jim mnohdy umožní lepší porozumění. Kromě řeči těla se posluchači mohou také soustředit na tón, jakým mluvčí něco sděluje. Podle tónu je možné určit, v jakém rozpoložení se mluvčí právě nachází, aniž by posluchač rozuměl všemu, co mluvčí právě říká.

V poslední kapitole teoretické části jsou popsána stádia poslechu, která by se měla stát nedílnou součástí každého poslechového cvičení. První stádium, hovoříme zde o tzv. před poslechových cvičeních, připraví posluchače na téma, které se bude diskutovat. Prostřednictvím již zmíněného obrazového materiálu může posluchač aktivovat své současné vědomosti týkající se tématu. Dále se může pokusit vytvořit si vlastní představu o tématu a pohovořit o svých myšlenkách s ostatními studenty. Dá se říct, že základ poslechu tvoří tzv. před poslechová cvičení, která mohou mít různý účel, pro který jsou poslouchána. Tato cvičení rozvíjejí posluchačovy dovednosti tím, že jsou zaměřena na různé otázky týkající se daného poslechu. Posluchač většinou reaguje ústní nebo písemnou formou, čímž rozvíjí nejen své

receptivní dovednosti, ale i produktivní. Především je kladen důraz na to, aby se nehodnotily posluchačovy gramatické znalosti, nýbrž komunikativní. Třetí stádium poslechu tvoří tzv. poslechová cvičení, která jsou zaměřena především na posluchačovy komunikativní aspekty. Studenti si zde vyměňují názory na téma, které právě slyšeli. Mohou pracovat ve skupině nebo ve dvojicích a tvořit krátké rozhovory, čímž je opět podporován rozvoj jejich komunikační kompetence. Posledním důležitým aspektem zmíněným v této kapitole ve spojitosti se stádiu poslechu je zpětná vazba. Zpětná vazba je nesmírně cenným přínosem pro posluchače z hlediska zhodnocení jeho práce při poslechových cvičeních. Reflektuje, do jaké míry posluchač uspěl, či naopak neuspěl, a pomáhá mu v dalším rozvoji učení jazyka.

V praktické části bakalářské práce byl proveden akční výzkum ve skupině dospělých, který je zaměřen nejen na rozvoj jejich poslechových dovedností, ale také na odbourávání jejich nejistot při poslechových cvičeních, a na vybudování určité jistoty při těchto cvičeních.

V první části praktické části práce jsou vytyčeny charakteristiky pro aplikaci akčního výzkumu. Cílem akčního výzkumu je určitá změna ve výukových metodách nebo přístupech, ať už ze strany učitel nebo studentů. Akční výzkum může být prováděn jedním nebo více učiteli, kteří potřebují tuto změnu provést.

Akční výzkum se skládá z několika kroků, které na sebe navazují a ze kterých následně vyplynou určité závěry. Učitel, který akční výzkum provádí, nejprve identifikuje problém, kvůli kterému chce akční výzkum provést. Na základě akčního výzkumu, který byl proveden ve skupině dospělých v Sebranicích, byl identifikován poslech jako největší problém, se kterým se studenti při výuce anglického jazyka potýkají. Ačkoliv se studenti učí angličtinu již několik let, sami poslech hodnotí ve výuce jazyka jako nejsložitější a nejproblematictější oblast. Na základě jejich argumentů, specifikujících proč si myslí, že je poslech pro ně tak obtížný, byla stanovena hypotéza, jakým způsobem jejich poslech zlepšit.

Bylo vybráno celkem dvanáct různých poslechových cvičení z učebnic navržených pro výuku anglického jazyka. Šest z těchto cvičení bylo ponecháno v původní podobě a šest bylo upraveno. Tyto úpravy spočívaly především v rozdělení při poslechového stádia na různě dlouhé části, z nichž každá část měla svůj účel. Tím, že byl samotný poslech rozdělen na kratší části, studenti získali větší jistotu, a mohli se lépe soustředit na daný úkol. Text poslechu byl obvykle puštěn z CD přehrávače, nicméně studenti upřednostnili jeho čtenou podobu, a to buď od učitele, nebo od jiného studenta. Pokud byl text poslechu čten učitelem nebo jiným studentem, měli ostatní možnost požádat o zpomalení nebo zopakování textu.

Během poslechu studenti zapojili různé sluchové dovednosti, které jim umožnily lépe pochopit daný text. Jejich úspěšnost je vyjádřena v akčním výzkumu vyjádřena buďto graficky, anebo se studenti sami procentuelně ohodnotili.

Mnozí studenti byli přesvědčení, že v rámci zdokonalování svých poslechových dovedností, by měli rozumět každému slovu v poslechových cvičení. Z tohoto důvodu byl v akčním výzkumu kladen důraz na to, aby se od této zcela chybné představy oprostili. Byla vybrána taková cvičení, ve kterých se zaměřovali na poslech jako celek anebo naopak pouze na určitý detail v něm. Ačkoli studenti zvládli velké množství různých poslechových cvičení, jejich averzi k poslechu se stále ještě nepodařilo zcela odstranit.

Akční výzkum byl zhodnocen z pohledu úspěšnosti a přístupu studentů k jednotlivým poslechovým aktivitám. Všichni studenti se shodli na tom, že rozdělení poslechu na kratší úseky je pro ně mnohem lépe srozumitelnější, než celá délka poslouchaného textu. Dále se shodli, že pokud poslouchají učitele nebo své kolegy, rozumí textu taktéž lépe.

Poslechová cvičení byla upravena vzhledem k požadavkům a potřebám studentů. Přestože bylo jejich cílem rozvinout především poslechové dovednosti, studenti při nich zapojili a měli možnost rozvinout také komunikativní aspekty neboli komunikativní kompetenci, na kterých je v současné době výuka anglického jazyka postavena. Mluvíme zde o čtyřech dimenzích komunikativní kompetence - o kompetenci pragmatické, o jazykových schopnostech, o diskurzivní kompetenci a o strategické způsobilosti posluchače. Pragmatická kompetence například umožňuje studentům vidět jaký je vztah, popřípadě rozdíl mezi formou a funkcí jazyka. Jazykové schopnosti umožňují studentovi používat například správnou výslovnost. Diskurzivní kompetence umožňuje studentovi se vyrovnat se s autentickým textem a strategická kompetence se zaměřuje například na jeho schopnost vést dialog. Lze tedy říci, že všechny dimenze komunikativní kompetence jsou nedílnou součástí výuky jazyka. Nicméně úroveň znalostí jednotlivých dimenzí komunikativní kompetence se může s ohledem na posluchače výrazně lišit.

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo zdokonalování dovedností poslechu ve skupině dospělých. Jelikož jsou receptivní sluchové dovednosti velice těžko pozorovatelné, nedá se zcela jednoznačně určit do jaké míry byly u dospělých zlepšeny. Nicméně studenti si uvědomili, že rozumět každému slovu není nutné pro pochopení smyslu textu, což může být považováno, s ohledem na jejich předešlou představu, za první úspěšný krok rozvoje sluchových dovedností.

Během akčního výzkumu byly studentům nastíněny způsoby a postupy, jakými lze tuto dovednost sluchovou dovednost rozvíjet. Jelikož je rozvoj sluchových dovedností nejen časově náročnou, ale i velice individuální záležitostí, navrhovala bych studentům, aby poslouchali mluvenou angličtinu ze všech dostupných zdrojů pravidelně, a nenechali se odradit případným prvopočátečním neúspěchem.

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Appendix 1

Self-assessment grid

	Reception		Interaction		Production	
	Listening	Reading	Spoken Interaction	Written Interaction	Spoken Production	Written Production
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.	I can express myself with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively in an assured, personal, style.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.	I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles, which present a case with an effective logical structure, which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.
C1	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers		I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can write different kinds of texts in a style appropriate to the reader in mind.
B2	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view.
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes & ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe	I can write straightforward connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest.

	relatively slow and clear.				my reactions.	
A2	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job	I can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like „and“, „but“ and „because“.
A1	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can write a short, simple postcard, for examples sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.

Appendix 2

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Why is listening to spoken English so difficult? Please, comment.

2. When you **listen** to spoken English, please, grade from **1-10** for each of the following (1- the easiest, 10 – the most difficult) for you

- speed of utterance or discourse
- intonation
- accent
- rhythm, stress pattern
- informal language
- unknown words
- pronunciation
- not enough time for catching the meaning
- others

3. Concerning listening activities done in the class, please grade from **1-10** for each of the following (1- the easiest, 10 – the most difficult) for you

- listening for perception / e.g. distinguishing between the minimal pairs /
- listening for comprehension – following the instructions / maps, pictures /
 - filling the missing information in the text which differs from the listening extract
 - filling the missing information in the text which is the same with the listening extract
- answering questions based on the listening extract - comprehension check
- extracting specific information / e.g. things to buy /
- real-life situations /e.g. social responses/
- listening for general meaning

4. What stage of listening is most difficult for you? Pre-listening, While-listening, Post-listening – please circle.

5. What do you think **students** can do to improve their English, especially **listening**? Please, comment.

4. What do **you personally** do to improve your English, especially **listening**? Please, circle, underline or add your own ideas

- watching English films, news, documentaries,
- listening to English songs, CDs, plays, ...
- reading English books, magazines, articles, ...

- using English at work, on holidays, while travelling,

- communicating with foreign friends

5. How much do you think your English (**listening skills**) has improved since you started learning it?

Please, circle **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

and tick - little improvement

- some improvement

- a lot of improvement

Thank you for your co-operation

Lesson report – while listening

Date

Number of students

Number of questions

Correct questions

Troubles

Observations

Date

Number of students

Pre-listening

Troubles

Post-listening

Troubles

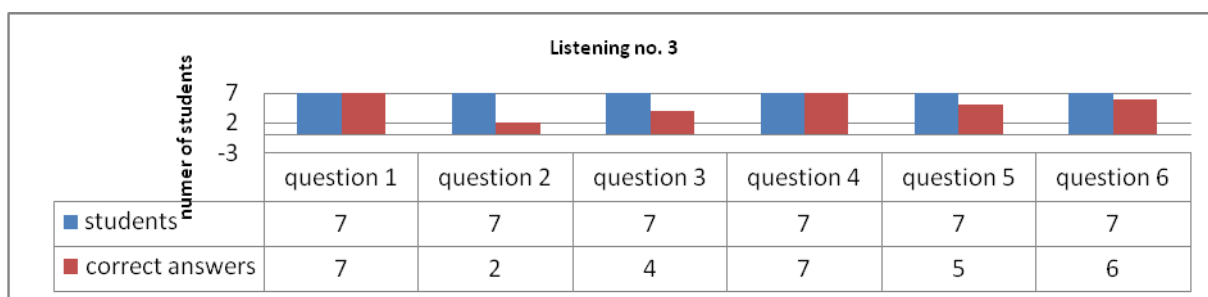
Appendix 3

Listening activities LA 1-12

LA 1. The students received a map each in order to complete it. They had to follow the spoken description according to its graphic representation. While the teacher was reading a short introduction, students needed to write the names of the buildings to have the map complete. After that, they were given pieces of paper with information about other buildings. Each student read aloud his/her piece to other students in order to write the names of the buildings on the map. When all the buildings had their names, the students compared their maps to see if they have them identical or not.

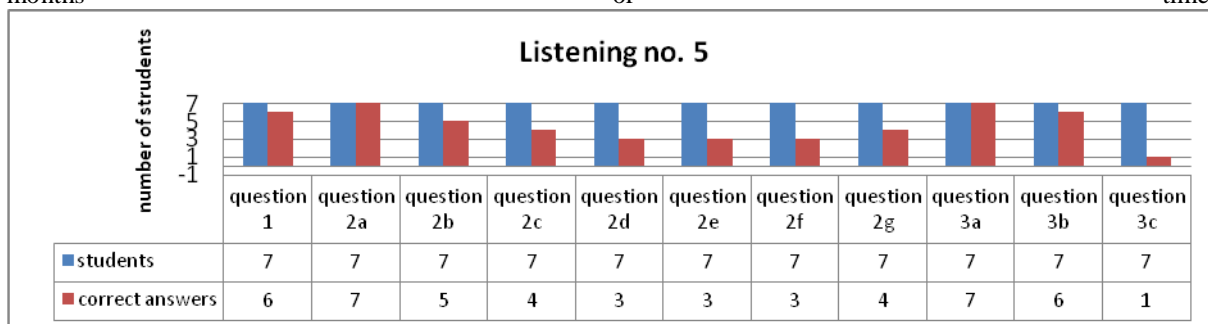
LA 2. Students listen to the social comments at the party. Then they ticked the most appropriate answer according to their knowledge. Consequently they heard the right answer.

LA 3. Students listened to two friends. One was giving advice on travelling by plane. Students ticked what things he suggest to take on board. Pictures: clothes, cockpit, food, drinks, books, check-in desk, shops



LA 4. Students matched the pictures according to listening. Then they searched for some words in the text.

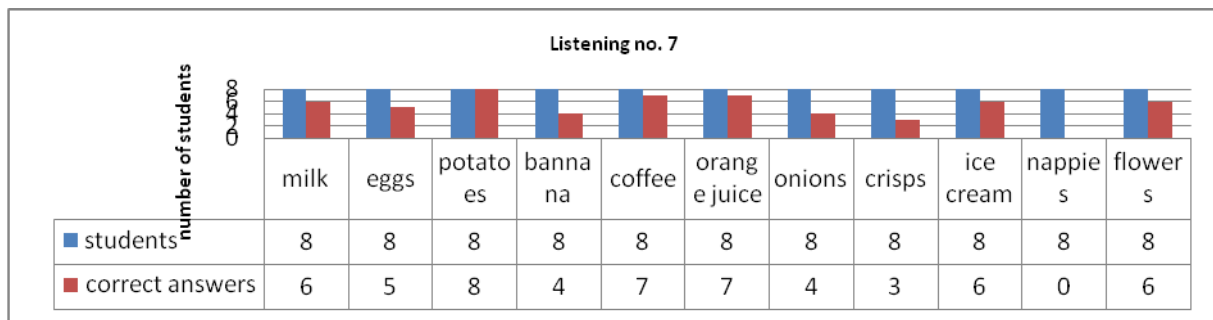
LA 5. Students listened to three kinds of conversation. From each of them they extracted either dates of days or months or time.



LA 6. Students circled the answer according to what they heard, they did not write anything long. In the last question the students were supposed to find the difference between the written and spoken part without being warn beforehand. The students ticked appropriate answer from these options.

1. How old is he? 13, 23, 33, 43, 53
2. How many years was he working as a driver? 6, 16, 26, 36, 46
3. Where did he steal? Germany, France, Australia, Austria, Denmark, Poland
4. Was he living with his father, grandfather, mother, grandmother, sister?
5. Was Mireille 13, 33, 43, 53, 63, 73 years old?
6. Did the ambulance, the people, the police, the friends arrive?
7. Did Mireille go to his room, take paintings from the floor, cut paintings into pieces, sell paintings, throw paintings into the river?

LA 7. Students listened to the dialog between two people about things which needed to be bought. They had to write the names down.



LA 8. This activity seemed to be similar to LA 1, but the level was a bit higher. Students obtained a map with animals of the Zoo. This map differed from the listening. In the pre-listening, the students looked at the map and discussed which animals they think should be moved to different places and why. Key vocabulary was written on the board. While the teacher was reading, the students were listening and placing animals into different enclosures. P. Ur (1984: p.110-111).

LA 9. This activity was based on reading about movie stars and was divided into two lessons. The students read the first paragraph of the article in the class, the rest they got for homework. The main points were summarized and refreshed in the next lesson. There were three differences mentioned in the interview than in the article (the matter of roses, the carpet, and Davina's finger nail). All seven students identified them but they were not able to specify them further. For example, they heard yellow roses, white roses, red roses but were not able to make sense of it. The students were asked additional questions about the listening passage.

LA 10. The task was aimed at answering ten questions from father's and daughter's point of view. Questions:

1. How old is Evie, when did she moved to London?
2. Is she enjoying living there? What does she think of London?
3. Why did she move there?
4. Where is she living?
5. Who is she living with?
6. What does her boyfriend do? What is his name?
7. What does she do at the weekend?
8. Why does she have to earn extra money?
9. How often does she phone home?
10. What does she say to her parents?

LA 11. Students listened to a boy talking about his favourite things and ticked them in the picture. Then they ticked an adjective which specified each of the boy's favourite things. Two of them were not needed.

Things: Arsenal, Al Pacino, soul music, book, food

Adjectives: sad, brilliant, spicy, fantastic, beautiful, talented, shocking, funny, excited, delicious, amazing

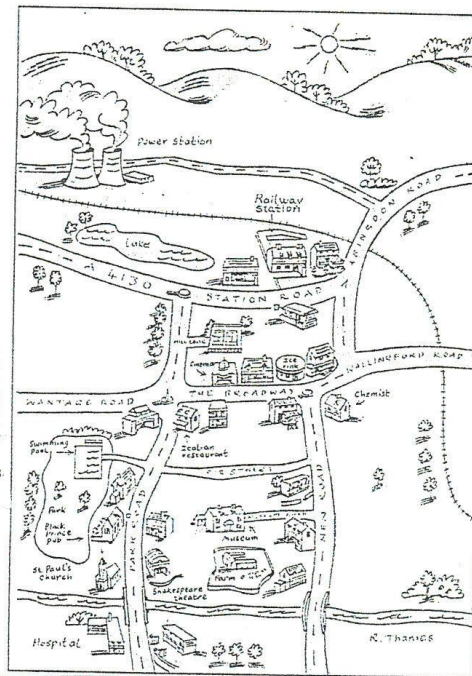
LA 12. Students listened to the song and completed it by choosing the right word (out of two).

Appendix 3

Listening activities

LA 1. The students received a map each in order to complete it. They had to follow the spoken description according to its graphic representation. While the teacher was reading a short introduction, students needed to write the names of the buildings to have the map complete. After that, they were given pieces of paper with information about other buildings. Each student read aloud his/her piece to other students in order to write the names of the buildings on the map. When all the buildings had their names, the students compared their maps to see if they have them identical or not.

You are coming into the town along Park Road. Go past the hospital on the left and cross over the River Thames. The next building on the right is the Shakespeare theatre. Opposite the theatre is St Paul's church and next to that is the Black Prince pub. There's a park behind the pub and in the park there's a swimming pool. Go to the end of Park Road and at the crossroads on the corner of Park Road and The Broadway, there's an Italian restaurant. Turn right into The Broadway; the first building on the left is a cinema. Go to the end of the Broadway; the ice rink is on the left, just before the roundabout. At the roundabout, turn right. The chemist's is on the corner of New Road and Wallingford Road. Go along New Road and take the second turning on the right. Go to the end and the museum is in front of you. Between the museum and the River Thames, there's a farm.



Simon Kay and the Lake School of English, 1994. Published by Heinemann English Language Teaching.

LA 2. Students listen to the social comments at the party. Then they ticked the most appropriate answer according to their knowledge. Consequently they heard the right answer.

11.5

- 1 I'm sorry. I didn't catch your name.
- 2 How about a drink?
- 3 You're from Spain, aren't you?
- 4 Sorry I'm late.
- 5 Can I get you something to eat?
- 6 We've got a lot of problems at the moment.
- 7 Thanks very much for your help.
- 8 Have a good weekend.

11.6

- 1 I'm sorry. I didn't catch your name.
It's Simon. Simon Grant.
- 2 How about a drink?
Not at the moment, thanks.
- 3 You're from Spain, aren't you?
Yes, that's right.
- 4 Sorry I'm late.
Don't worry.
- 5 Can I get you something to eat?
Thank you. That would be very nice.
- 6 We've got a lot of problems at the moment.
Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.
- 7 Thanks very much for your help.
Not at all.
- 8 Have a good weekend.
Thanks. The same to you.

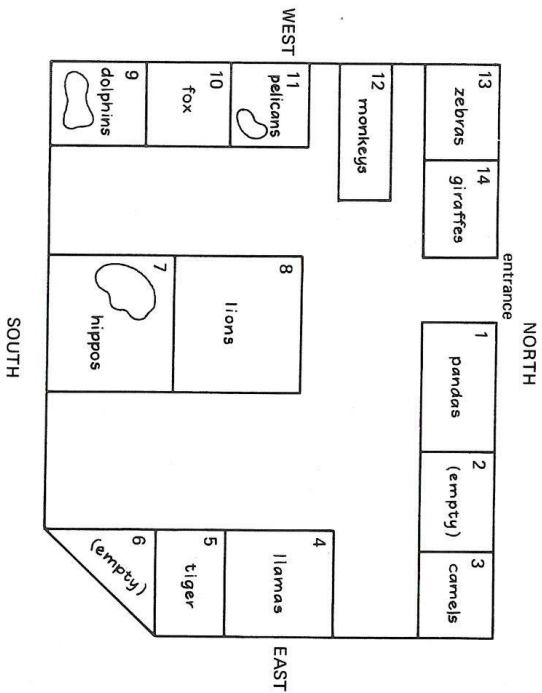
11.7

- 1 May I use your phone?
- 2 Have a good holiday.
- 3 Could I ask you something?
- 4 I'm sorry, I've got the wrong number.
- 5 Thanks for the lovely flowers.
- 6 Someone stole my car last night.
- 7 Do you mind if I join you?
- 8 I'm getting married tomorrow.

11.8

- 1 May I use your phone?
Yes, of course.
- 2 Have a good holiday.
Thanks. You, too.
- 3 Could I ask you something?
Yes, go ahead.
- 4 I'm sorry, I've got the wrong number.
Don't worry.
- 5 Thanks for the lovely flowers.
Don't mention it.
- 6 Someone stole my car last night.
I'm sorry to hear that.
- 7 Do you mind if I join you?
Not at all.
- 8 I'm getting married tomorrow.
Congratulations.

5 Listening for comprehension



zebras, pelicans, dolphins, hippos, lions, tiger, camels, pandas, giraffes, monkeys, fox, llamas

Fig. 25c

- A: The empty cage is between the pandas and the camels.
- B: That's right.
- A: There are three more cages you haven't told me about.
- B: Oh yes, well, the big cage near the camels has llamas in it. And behind them is a smaller cage with a tiger. The very smallest cage in the corner is empty at the moment.

A variation of this zoo exercise, for more advanced learners, is to give a recorded passage describing changes in the zoo layout. The students might use the filled-in sketch shown in Fig. 25c as a basis for corrections; or, if you want to make it really challenging, and if the class has not already done the exercise described above, they can be given one or two blank sketches like Fig. 25b, and told to fill in either the final arrangement, or both the final and the original using only the following information: they may or may not be given a list of the animals. The passage below is at intermediate to advanced level, and is based on an idea suggested by Alan Maley:

- A: Right, now today we have to decide on some changes in the

Listening and making short responses

- B: homes of the animals in our zoo. Mr Jones, please would you explain the details.
- B: Yes, well, we'll have to think hard about which animals should go into which enclosures. Firstly, we have bought two new giraffes, and the giraffes' old place next to the entrance isn't big enough any more. I suggest we move them to the other side of the entrance.
- C: So what'll happen to the pandas who are there now?
- B: They'll move next door to the empty enclosure.
- A: And next to them?
- B: We'll leave the camels there where they are, they seem to be quite happy.
- A: Well, that seems quite reasonable: do you all agree?
- C,D: Yes, fine, O.K. . . .
- A: Please go on, Mr Jones.
- B: There have been some complaints that the lions shouldn't be in the enclosure opposite the entrance - some of the children are frightened as they come in. As we've bought two new elephants, I suggest we put them into there, the children will like them.
- D: And move the lions to the enclosure behind?
- B: No, lions don't need a pool, and that enclosure's a bit too big for them - as you remember, our third lion died recently, so the two remaining ones can move into a smaller cage. We'll leave the hippos in the big enclosure with the pool, and the lions will go into the cage opposite their old one to the east, next to the tiger. What will we put into the giraffes' old enclosure?
- C: The zebras. They're pleasant animals to see near the entrance, and it only means moving them next door. Then we can put the llamas, which are next to the tiger at the moment, by the zebras. They don't really like being next to the tiger, I think they're afraid of him. The triangular cage next to the tiger can stay empty.
- A: What about the last four enclosures you haven't mentioned: the dolphins, the pelicans, the fox and the monkeys - leave them as they are?
- B: No, well you see there's a problem here too. The pelicans have the fox on one side and the monkeys on the other, and they find both animals very disturbing: the monkeys are noisy and the fox frightens them. They are unhappy, not eating properly - we'll have to do something.
- D: Perhaps we could move them to the ~~old~~ change places with the dolphins: there are pools in both enclosures.
- B: Yes, all right. But that still leaves them next to the fox. However, London Zoo want to buy the fox and have offered us a lot of money for him: I suggest we sell him and put our new deer in there instead. Deer don't disturb anyone.
- A: Well, thank you Mr Jones. Are we all agreed? Fine. The meeting is closed.

L8

Appendix 4 - Transcripts

T 3.16 LA 5

- 1 A When's Easter this year?
- B It's early, I think. Easter Sunday's on the 27th or the 28th of March.
- A Yes, you're right. Look, it's the 27th. That is early!
- 2 A Judy, can you tell me when the next meeting is?
- B Let me see. Ah, yes. It's next month. Wednesday, the 16th of June.
- A What time?
- B It starts at 2.30.
- A So Wednesday, the 16th at 2.30?
- B That's right.
- A Thanks.
- 3 A Miss Lomax, I've scheduled your flight for Tuesday, May 7th at 7.40 a.m.
- B Let me put that in my computer diary. So ... that's Tuesday the 7th of May at 6.40.
- A No 7.40 a.m., Miss Lomax.
- B Oh yeah. Thanks Sally.

STAGE 4: LESSON 3

LA 4

TRACK 5

One

We're both outdoor types and we love fresh air, so we'd love a little sports car. We could put the roof down in nice weather, and drive around the country roads. It would just need to be big enough for the two of us.

Two

Well, I don't do a lot of driving, so I don't want to buy anything too big or, well, complicated. Anyway, I would like a little hatchback. It should be easy to drive,

economical and there would have to be enough room for four people. And Rover, of course. Isn't that right, Rover?

Three

There are five of us altogether, so a people carrier would be the best solution. There would have to be quite a lot of room inside, and I think it should be comfortable on long journeys. When we go on holiday, there would have to be enough room for all our luggage.

Four

I'm a builder, and I need space for all my tools, so of course a van is the obvious vehicle for me. It would probably be fairly basic, and you could only get two people in the front, but there would be lots of room in the back.

T 4.2 N = Nick S = Sarah L 7

- N Is that everything?
- S Er, let's have a look. We've got some apples, but there aren't any bananas. And we've got some tea, but there isn't any coffee.
- N OK, bananas and coffee. What about orange juice? Is there any orange juice left?
- S Let's see. There's a little, but not much.
- N Orange juice, then. And vegetables? Have we got many vegetables?
- S Well, we've got some broccoli and a few carrots, but there aren't many onions.
- N Right, onions ...
- S Oh, and don't forget - your nephews are coming tomorrow! We need something for them.
- N OK, lots of crisps and ice cream. Anything else?
- S I don't think so. But for goodness sake, don't forget the nappies. Oh, and a big bunch of flowers for me!

STAGE 5: LESSON 4

L 3

TRACK 6

JAMIE: So, Ron, off on holiday tomorrow? You must be excited.

RON: Well, nervous really. I've never been on an aeroplane before. It's a whole new experience for me.

JAMIE: Well, I wouldn't worry about it. Flying's supposed to be one of the safest forms of travel. But let me give you a bit of advice.

RON: OK.

JAMIE: First of all, wear loose, comfortable clothing, especially if it's a long flight. Your body gets bigger in an aircraft, so you need a bit of room to expand!

RON: You're joking.

JAMIE: No, I'm quite serious. Secondly,

take a good book to read. Flying can be very boring, and the films they show on aircraft are usually rubbish.

RON: Good book. OK.

JAMIE: Arrive at the airport early and check in as soon as you get there. That way you can choose a good seat, and then have some time to relax. Ask for a seat near the front of the aircraft.

RON: Why?

JAMIE: Because it's quieter there. You're not so close to the engines. Now, before you get on the aircraft, eat a light meal. A sandwich or something. Airline food is usually pretty bad.

RON: OK.

JAMIE: During the flight itself, drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol. Your body loses water in an aircraft, so you need to replace it. Oh, and if it's possible, walk around the cabin occasionally. Stretch your legs.

RON: Great. Well, thanks a lot...

T 3.7 The thief, his mother, and \$2 billion

Stephane Breitweiser, 33, from Alsace, in France, is the greatest art thief in Europe. For over six years, while he was working as a lorry driver, he stole 239 paintings from museums in France, Austria, and Denmark. He went into the museums just as they were closing and hid the paintings under his coat. Nobody looked at him because he was wearing a security guard's uniform. Back in his apartment, where he was living with his mother, he filled his bedroom with priceless works of art. His mother, Mireille, 53, thought all the paintings were copies. One day while they were having supper, the police arrived, and they took Stephane to the police station. Mireille was so angry with her son that she went to his room, took some paintings from the walls, and cut them into small pieces. Others she took and threw into the canal. Altogether she destroyed art worth two billion dollars! Both mother and son spent many years in prison.

L 6

T 8.4 Leaving home

Ian Mitchell My daughter Evie is living in London now. She went there four months ago, and I'm really very worried about her. She says she's having a great time but I just think London's such a dangerous place for a young girl, and she's still only 18. She shouldn't live so far away from home. Her mother went with her to help her look for somewhere to live. But I didn't go. I don't like London - I don't like big cities.

Why did she have to go there? I don't understand. She says she wants to be a dancer, and she's doing a sort of course, a ballet course or something. But ballet isn't a real job, and you don't earn much money being a dancer, do you? She's a clever girl. I think she should go to university. She's living in a flat in London - with her boyfriend I think, and I don't like that at all! We've never met the boyfriend - Michael, I think his name is. He hasn't got a job and so Evie has to earn some extra money - she works at the weekends as a dancer in a theatre or club, I think. I just hope it's a nice place.

She phones home sometimes, but not a lot, and she doesn't answer. When I do manage to talk to her she just tells us that we should get a mobile so she can text us. She says we shouldn't worry. How can we not worry? We're her parents, we miss her and course we worry, sometimes I can't sleep at night. She really must come home more often.

T 8.5 Leaving home

Evie Mitchell I want to be a professional dancer. I came to London four months ago to start a course at the English National Ballet School. If you want a good dance career, you have to go to a good school and you have to start young - I'm almost 19, nearly too old! I know my parents are worried about me living in London, but it isn't dangerous. You just have to be careful, that's all. It was difficult in the beginning. I didn't know anybody, and London's such a big place. But I love it now. There's lots to do and see.

I'm living in a small flat near the ballet school with Francine, another dance student. We're good friends now. And I've also got a boyfriend! His name's Marco and he's doing the same course. He still lives with his parents, quite close to our flat. His parents are really kind, and I often spend the evenings with them. I want to take Marco home to meet my parents. But the train journey is expensive. And I haven't got much money. London's really expensive, so Francine and I have to work every weekend. We teach children's dance classes at a school nearby. It's good fun, actually!

I phone my parents three times a week. My dad always sounds so stressed out. My dad told me that he was worried about the school. I was mum and he was worried he doesn't have a job. I was for the rest of my life. I really don't want to leave home. I don't want to go to London to visit me. And I think they should get a mobile. Then I could send them text messages, and maybe they would...

LA 0

Appendix 4 - Transcripts

L9

T 7.8 P = Presenter A = Aston (Reporter)
D = Davina PA = Personal assistant

- P Our reporter Aston Thompson spoke to Davina Moody outside her hotel.
A Hey Davina! Is it true what we've all read in today's Hollywood Star?
D I just don't know how you guys can write this stuff about me!
A So it's all rubbish? You don't have six bodyguards?
D No, I don't. I've never had six bodyguards. Three usually – well maybe four sometimes.
A And the carpet! What about the carpet?
D Look. It was raining and I asked for an umbrella, not a carpet!
A But not a yellow umbrella, Davina? Is it true you hate anything yellow, especially roses?
D This is crazy. OK so I've never worn yellow dresses. I look sick in yellow stuff. But red roses, yellow roses, white roses? Like, who cares? Roses are roses. They're all the same to me.
A Shame you missed the premier of your movie.
D That's so not true. I did not miss it. I was just a bit late.
A Like three hours late! How's your poor finger nail?
D Well, it's still not good ...
A Aw! Davina. Hey, what about the movie? Have you read what the papers are saying about *The Lady Loves To*? They all ...
PA Miss Moody does not want to talk about the movie. Come on Davina. Come on Pooksie! We have a plane to catch.
D Bye, guys.

L11

T 6.1 I = Interviewer L = Leroy

- I Welcome to another edition of *Favourite Things*. Today in the studio we have cool R'n'B singer, Leroy! Welcome, Leroy. Thank you for coming to talk to us about your favourite things.
L Hi there.
I So, Leroy let's look at your list of favourites. Now, your first choice is the film star, Al Pacino. Can you tell us about him? Why do you like him so much?
L Well, every time I see Al Pacino in a movie I think he's brilliant, he's just a brilliant actor. He's so talented. You know he's been nominated six times for Oscars, –er but in fact, he's only won once and that was years ago, in 1993. I can't believe it!
I OK. And your next favourite thing is Arsenal, Arsenal Football Club. So you're a big football fan, then?
L Yeah, I am. I'm a London boy, you see and I support my local team, which is Arsenal. They are fantastic players. And always exciting to watch! I still go to a match whenever I can.
I And now your number three – ah – soul music.
L Oh yeah, I'm crazy about soul music – you know, it's the reason I wanted a career in the music business. It's beautiful music but can sometimes be very sad. It's where modern R'n'B music comes from.
I Is that right? I didn't know that. Now your number four is a food, chicken satay. I don't know that. What's it like?
L It's spicy and delicious! I just love sitting in front of the TV with a plate full of chicken satay. Mmmm!
I I must try it! And finally in your list you have *Brave New World*. I saw the film. But what's the book like?
L It's an amazing book about the future. It's – er funny, sad, and shocking. It's written by Aldous Huxley and it's my favourite book of all time.

L12

The voice within Christina Aguilera

Young girl don't cry
I'll be right here when your world starts to fall
Young girl it's alright
Your tears will dry, you'll soon be free to fly

When you're safe inside your room you tend to _____
Of a place where nothing's harder than it seems
No one ever wants or _____ to explain
Of the _____ life can bring and what it means

Chorus

*When there's no one else, look inside yourself
Like your oldest friend just trust the voice within
Then you'll find the strength that will guide your way
If you will learn to begin to trust the voice within*

Young girl don't _____
You'll never change if you just _____ away
Young girl just hold _____
Soon you're going to see a brighter _____

Chorus

Life is a _____
It can take you anywhere you _____ to go
As long as you're learning
You'll find all you'll ever _____ to know
(be strong)
You'll make it
(hold on)
You'll make it
Just don't go _____ yourself
(no one can tell you what you _____ do)
No one can _____ you, you know that I'm talking to you

Young girl don't cry
I'll be right here when your world starts to fall

dream / think
bothers / tries
pain / heartache

leave / hide
run / walk
on / tight
day / dawn

journey / train
want / choose

need / have

forsaking / losing
can / can't
hurt / stop