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Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

**Fostering Autonomy in Teaching and Learning English:
Focus on Lower Secondary Learners**

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Zásady pro vypracování

Diplomantka se ve své práci bude zabývat problematikou rozvoje autonomie žáků v hodinách anglického jazyka na základní škole. V teoretické části nejprve s oporou o odbornou literaturu definuje koncept autonomie žáka, obecně i specificky ve výuce anglického jazyka, a představí vybraný model autonomie. Dále v synchronním a diachronním pohledu kriticky zhodnotí potenciál různých přístupů, metod a technik ve výuce anglického jazyka pro rozvoj autonomního učení žáka základní školy. Při výběru vhodných strategií a technik pro rozvoj žákovské autonomie zohlední příslušnou věkovou skupinu žáků a obecné i oborové cíle základního vzdělávání.

V rámci praktické části práce diplomantka realizuje vlastní empirické šetření formou akčního výzkumu. Jeho cílem bude zvýšit míru autonomie žáků vybrané třídy ve výuce angličtiny. Po diagnostické fázi diplomantka naplánuje a implementuje pedagogickou intervenci, jejíž efekt kriticky vyhodnotí.

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ANNOTATION

This thesis explores the development of learner autonomy in English lessons at the level of the lower secondary school. The theoretical section defines learner autonomy, both generally and within the context of English language education. It further examines the key aspects such as the roles of both teachers and learners, motivation, classroom interaction patterns, and methods supporting autonomous learning. The theoretical part concludes with strategies and techniques that promote autonomy, including self- and peer assessment, learning styles, strategies, and reading techniques – skimming and scanning. In the practical section, the author carries out an empirical study through action research, aiming to increase the autonomy of students in a specific class. After a diagnostic phase, a pedagogical intervention is depicted in the way it was implemented, with a critical evaluation of its outcomes.

KEYWORDS

learner autonomy, autonomy development, English language teaching, skimming, scanning, action research

ANOTACE

Tato diplomová práce se zaměřuje na rozvoj autonomie žáků v hodinách anglického jazyka na úrovni druhého stupně základní školy. Teoretická část definuje autonomii žáka obecně a poté ji zasazuje do kontextu výuky anglického jazyka. Dále zkoumá klíčové aspekty, jako jsou role učitelů a žáků, motivace, organizační formy a metody podporující autonomní učení. Teoretická část je zakončena přehledem strategií a technik podporujících autonomii, včetně sebehodnocení a vzájemného hodnocení, učebních stylů, strategií a čtecích technik – skenování a rychlé čtení (scanning a skimming). V praktické části autorka provádí empirické šetření formou akčního výzkumu, jehož cílem je zvýšit míru autonomie žáků ve vybrané třídě. Po diagnostické fázi je popsána pedagogická intervence tak, jak byla implementována, její účinnost je dále kriticky vyhodnocena.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

autonomie žáka, rozvoj autonomie, výuka anglického jazyka, skimming, scanning, akční výzkum

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR – The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

ELP – The European Language Portfolio

ELT – English Language Teaching

FEP BE – The Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education

LA – Learner Autonomy

LLA – Language Learner Autonomy

MŠMT – The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

SDT – Self Determination Theory

SEP – The School Education Program

TL – Target Language

ZPD – The Zone of Proximal Development

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis focuses on learner autonomy and its positive impact on students' development within the context of language learning and modern education goals. Concerning the thesis title, *Fostering Autonomy in Teaching and Learning English: Focus on Lower Secondary Learners*, the paper aims to foster learner autonomy in a selected class during English lessons through action research and evaluate whether and how this autonomy has improved. Specifically, the research involves an intervention designed to foster autonomy among 8th-grade students in English lessons by employing scanning and skimming techniques with A2-level (lower) texts. The study will then analyse questionnaires, student diaries, and the teacher's diary to determine whether and how their autonomy has developed.

The paper is divided into two parts – theoretical and practical. The theoretical part begins with an exploration of current approaches to education, including constructivism, individualisation, learner-centredness, and life-long learning. The focus then shifts to the concept of learner autonomy, concerning its origin and definitions, and further discusses its importance in language teaching and learning. The following section explores how autonomy can be fostered in English language teaching, including conditions supporting autonomy, e.g. teacher and learners' roles, motivation, or patterns of classroom interaction. Then, the methods used to promote learner autonomy in English language teaching are examined. The thesis continues with a discussion on the development of autonomy, detailing strategies for stimulating autonomy in learners and the stages through which autonomy develops. The final sections focus on specific strategies and techniques for fostering autonomy in English language teaching, including giving learners the ability to make choices, assessment methods such as self-assessment and peer assessment, and how learning styles and strategies, including reading techniques like scanning and skimming, contribute to autonomy development.

In the following practical part, the research constructed on the theoretical insights gained from the first section is introduced and aims to address the research questions formulated to align with the overall goal of the thesis. Accordingly, this part is structured into several key phases, introducing the whole process of the empirical research. It begins with the section called Research, which sets the foundation for the study by discussing the research background, defining the research questions, and describing research methods and the data collection tools. It continues with the action research, which is divided into three stages, describing the work

of the researcher. The pre-intervention phase illustrates the preparation of a theoretical foundation for the following classroom observations. The second intervention phase depicts the initial action plan and its adapted version provided by the lesson descriptions. The post-intervention phase includes analysis of data collected from both questionnaires, the teacher's and the learners' diaries and the final testing. The conclusion of this section combines the outcomes in order to address the research questions.

In closing, it is crucial to mention that throughout the thesis, the term "teacher," "learner" or "researcher" is occasionally replaced by the pronouns "he/she/they" or by possessive adjectives such as "his/her" or "their," depending on the context. For the same reason, the term "students" is sometimes substituted with "learners" or "pupils".

Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that ChatGPT was applied throughout the paper to maintain academic language and enhance readability. After using this tool, the content was reviewed and edited as needed. Thus, the author of the thesis takes full responsibility for its content.

THEORETICAL PART

1 CURRENT APPROACHES TOWARDS EDUCATION

1.1 Constructivism

The didactics of foreign languages in current methodological approaches are mainly based on constructivism, the theory of knowledge and learning that explains people's transformation and organisation of reality based on their interactions with the environment, as noted by Byrnes (in Benson 2013, 38). Accordingly, Airasian and Walsh (in Little 2007, 18–19) indicate that rather than perceiving knowledge as a set of universal and passively absorbed truths, constructivism suggests that knowledge is actively constructed and relies on the prior knowledge and experiences the learner encounters. Moreover, Little (2007, 18–19) proposes that this learner-centred approach suppresses recitation to support exploration, interpretation and the learner's personal engagement in the learning process, meaning that effective learning is more than a process of memorising what has been transmitted by the teacher. Following this, active learners who structure their knowledge may be seen as the key principle of this approach.

Constructivism has had a profound influence on language learning, where specialists like George Kelly or Lev Vygotsky and their research projects have played a fundamental role. Cited by Benson (2013, 39), Kelly's personal construct theory empowers the idea that the learner's knowledge is a process of hypothesis testing and theory construction being continuously updated and refined as the individual experiences are created. In alignment with the constructivist idea, learners' personal constructs are unique, even though they are derived from shared assumptions and values, but are shaped by individual sense of experiences.

In a similar manner, Benson (2013, 41) highlights Vygotsky's concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), underlining the social side of learning as the specialist argued that the process of learning begins from the learner's existing knowledge and develops via social interaction. Consequently, with the help of more capable peers, the level of comprehension can be deepened. This asserts that constructivist education should put learning in isolation aside and rather ensure a collaborative process of learning, e.g. in a social context.

These principles of constructivist theory have a tight connection to the concept of learner autonomy, the pivotal focus of education, especially in the language learning classrooms.

Moreover, Little (2007, 19–20) demonstrates that the strong support for autonomy in the constructivist approach is rooted in the active participation of learners as it denies traditional roles and empowers the learners to take control over their learning process and reflect the processes of their learning. On top of that, Benson (2013, 39) emphasises that the learner's involvement in the process of decision-making is the way to make the whole education effective. Moreover, Wendt (Janíková 2007, 32) adds that constructivist-oriented education emphasises lessons based on the learners' existing construct of reality, helping them to organise the process of learning as responsibly and independently as possible. Additionally, self-assessment, evaluation in a social context and self-control are considered more fundamental and influential than being in the teacher's hands. Accordingly, Wang and Peverly (in Benson 2013, 42) characterised effective learners "as being cognitively and affectively active in the learning process," once more being in consistency with constructivism and autonomy in education.

The connection between autonomy in language learning and constructivism is further illustrated by David Kolb's model of experimental learning. Benson (2013, 41) describes Kolb's model as the one that posits that learning is a cyclical process integrating immediate experience with reflection, abstract conceptualisation and action. Furthermore, this model underscores the reflection on learning, while fostering the learner's new knowledge integration into the individual system of meaning and thus controlling the whole learning process. Taking this into account, experimental learning aligns with constructivism by ensuring the active participation of learners who actively construct their own knowledge through experience and reflection, developing learner autonomy (LA). Comparably, Janíková (2007) discusses the role of constructivism in the context of language learning, where it commonly serves as a synonym for LA since, in the constructivist lesson, the process of knowledge acquisition and processing is entirely learner-led, while the teacher performs in the role of a facilitator, who creates conditions for constructivist-oriented learning. Furthermore, the specialist adds (2007, 31–32) that these conditions should aim at engaging learners in real-life situations, encouraging problem-solving, and allowing the learners to discover knowledge independently. Further, LA is fostered.

In conclusion, constructivism highlights the active role of the learners in their knowledge construction, a process deeply interconnected with the concept of LA. Autonomous learning and deep understanding can be thus promoted by creating a learning environment where the learners are involved in the reflection of their experiences and independent

procedures of decision-making about their learning. Moreover, this approach is supported by the work of Kelly, Vygotsky or Kolb, which underlines the importance of learner-centeredness.

1.2 Individualisation and Learner-centredness

Autonomy in language learning is widely supported not only by constructivism but also by individualisation and learner-centredness, both terms highly related. Dominantly supported by Richards and Rogers' statement (2014, 33) highlighting that learner-centeredness emerged simultaneously as approaches emphasising individualisation in language learning and teaching, which rested on the premise that individuals learn in different ways, utilise different learning sources and pursue other goals in their language learning. These concepts now correspond with the modern LA perspective. To be more specific, Benson (2012, 30, 2013, 12) stresses that both terms, individualisation and learner-centeredness, originated in the changes in pedagogy in the 1970s and 1980s by the shift in language education, moving the focus from language and linguistics the language learning process and its learners. Following the same specialist, this transition began in the 1960s with the rise of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics. It continued till the recognition of second language acquisition as the central concept in this field.

Concerning the first term, individualisation, in the context of language learning, Little (1991, 13) describes it as a form of self-directed learning where learners take responsibility for identifying their needs and their follow-up fulfilment. Ur (2009, 233) further emphasises that individualisation is a situation in which the learners possess some degree of choice over how, when, and what they learn, leading to the reduction of the teacher's direct control and fostering LA. Accordingly, the author (2009, 235) lists specific classroom procedures supporting individualisation, such as *speed*, allowing each learner to work at their own pace, *level* providing tasks of different difficulty but still aimed at the same teaching point, *topic* offering tasks with varying topic, subject of level selection yet centring on the same language skill, and *language skill* or *teaching point* enabling the learners to deal with different language aspects e. g. grammar, listening, or reading.

Following this, individualised approaches to learning, as outlined by Richards and Rodgers (2014, 32), redefine teachers' roles and create specific patterns of interaction that gradually shift the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the learner. However, Ur (2009, 233) argues that individualisation can still be possibly integrated into conventional classroom

settings, where resources and time may be limited, thus empowering the learners and supporting their autonomy rather than abandoning this concept. Therefore, individualisation can be effectively applied in the context of the teacher-fronted lesson.

Subsequent to the above-mentioned opinions, there is a visible and strong link between individualisation and autonomy. Furthermore, these two concepts are interconnected through learner-centeredness, as stated by Benson (2013, 13). Brooks and Grundy (in Little 1991,12) further reinforce this connection by highlighting that learner-centredness elevates the significance of individualisation while emphasising that the ultimate aim of education is fostering learner autonomy. Accordingly, this paper will explore the concept of learner-centeredness and its role in bridging individualisation and autonomy.

Learner-centeredness, as depicted by Little (1991, 7), represents a significant shift in language education, described as moving away from the transmission of a fixed body of knowledge, the traditional view of teaching, toward a more dynamic approach that emphasises active knowledge production and learner autonomy. Moreover, this perspective prioritises learning methods over teaching methods and fosters autonomy and independence through a learner-centred curriculum, negotiated syllabus, and collaborative learning. Consequently, Benson (2012, 30) states that at this core, learner-centredness focuses on learners and their active engagement in the learning process rather than merely emphasising language and instruction. According to Nunan (2003, 193), a defining characteristic of a learner-centred curriculum “is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners since learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught,” making it the central aspect that sets it apart from the traditional curriculum. Benson (2012, 31-32) further highlights that learner-centred teaching is pedagogically justified as it addresses individual needs, integrates life experiences, fosters authentic communication, and promotes student responsibility for learning. Additionally, the same specialist (2012, 34) suggests that activities contributing to learner-centred teaching must achieve at least one of the following: empower students to take greater control of their learning, promote decision-making and choice possibilities, support active in-class participation in knowledge construction, develop student-to-student interaction, involve students in teaching, foster independent inquiry in and outside the school, integrate real-life knowledge into classroom activities, make learning personally meaningful, encourage reflection on teaching and learning, and prepare students for active engagement in class activities.

The part recognised the connection of autonomy, individualisation, and learner-centredness as underlining a significant transformation of language education. This should favourably lead to a more learner-centred approach. In addition, this approach can promote meaningful learning by emphasising the learners' active involvement in the learning process and thus encouraging decision-making or reflection supported by collaborative learning and real-life experiences.

1.3 Lifelong Learning

Combining individualisation and learner-centredness with autonomy provides deeper insights into modern language teaching that meet distinctive learners' needs along with their preparation for lifelong learning.

According to Blidi (2017, xxx), the concept of lifelong learning underlines a fundamental shift in education by highlighting the process of continuous development. Thus, meeting the demand for an individual's flexibility and adaptability assists learners in dealing with the problems of the modern and quickly changing world. The expert continues to stress the importance of supporting LA in language learning since it is an ongoing process that calls on students to be accountable for their own development beyond the school. Similarly, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT) (2007, 8–10) outlines lifelong learning as a framework combining three spheres of education – formal, non-formal and informal – thus fostering individuals to acquire qualifications and skills throughout their lives and in all environments. For this reason, the term “lifewide” learning was introduced, which emphasises its versatility. This integration ensures that education systems support the fulfilment of learners' diverse needs and smoother transitions between learning and employment. Blidi (2017, 6, 9–10) marks 1996 as the turning point since this year was named The European Year of Lifelong Learning by calling for educational reforms to address globalisation, technological advancements, and socio-economic demands. These reforms have changed education from traditional teacher-centred models to learner-centred approaches grounded in constructivist and socio-constructivist theories.

In the Czech Republic, one of the first programs responding to this change, as noted by the MŠMT (2007, 22) was *the National Education Development Program – White Paper*, approved by the government in 2001, which focuses on the development of the education system with an emphasis on lifelong learning and the strategy “*Education for everyone throughout life*”, aiming to ensure the availability of all levels of education and to support the development of the abilities of children, youth and adults. The need for the development

of lifelong learning as a condition for economic and social development is also contained in *the Long-Term Plan for Education* from 2005 and 2007. Currently, the notion of lifelong learning serves as the basis for the revised *Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education* (FEP BE) (2023, 6, 8). Moreover, lifelong learning became one of its goals since it aims to enable pupils to adopt learning strategies and support their motivation. At the same time, in the FEB BE (2023, 17), the concept of lifelong learning is understood as the target focus of the educational field called *Language and Language Communication*, where the student is guided to form and develop key competencies by understanding language as an important tool of lifelong learning, being a vital tool for navigating both personal and professional contexts.

On top of that, lifelong learning aligns education with the political, economic and social spheres of life. In connection with this, Blidi (2017, 7) emphasises its role in addressing the demands of the labour market by focusing on practical skills and employability and going further than purely academic goals and corresponding to flexibility in lifelong learning systems, as mentioned by the MŠMT (2007, 9). This characteristic helps adapt to new societal challenges while promoting equity and accessibility.

To summarise, these perspectives together illustrate how lifelong learning supports both individual and collective progress by bridging education and the dynamic realities of modern society. Moreover, the success of lifelong learning is ultimately linked to the promotion of LA, as it enables individuals to take responsibility for their own learning, adapt to changing surroundings and continuously develop the skills necessary for personal and professional triumph.

2 LEARNER AUTONOMY

2.1 The Origins of Autonomy in Education

Tracing the origin of the concept of autonomy in education to a single source or date is impossible due to the deep, centuries-old ties in philosophy, psychology, and sociology. However, according to Gremmo and Riley (1995, 152), the roots of autonomy in learning can be seen in the 1970s when there was an increase in interest in autonomy in learning and teaching changes under the influence of social and political changes and progress. Additionally, the specialists Gremmo and Riley (1995, 152–154) state that the number of directions and approaches that influenced the emergence and development of the concept of autonomy is

very high, and the most important factors they consider to be the growth of movements for minority and women's rights, the reaction against behaviourism as well as technological advancements and new devices facilitating independent learning, the search for alternatives in lifestyle, and the growing access to education support to the demand for foreign languages.

Among opponents of behaviourism and important experts in the field of education of this time, Gremmo and Riley (1996, 152) include Henri Holec, who emphasises the active involvement of the individual learner and perceives learning as social interaction, both playing a crucial role in LA. As Benson (2013, 9–10) underlines, at the same time, Holec took part in projects organised by the Council of Europe that contributed not only to the development of adult education but also to the incorporation of autonomy into language teaching, mainly through the *Modern Languages Project* in 1971. Subsequently, the development of autonomy in language teaching and an increased focus on the learner and their needs became common tendencies in education.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the idea of autonomy was strongly interconnected with individualisation, as both concepts emphasise addressing each learner and their unique needs. Adversely, Benson (2013, 13–14) points out that during this period, individualisation was mainly reflected in programmed learning, where students progressed at their own pace through teacher-prepared materials without taking responsibility for their own learning. Furthermore, in accord with Benson (2013, 14), this early connection between autonomy and individualisation contributed to the criticism that autonomy means learners study in isolation without interacting with teachers or peers.

A change occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s when the emphasis was placed on training students, as described by Holec (in Benson 2013, 12):

The basic methodology for learner training should be that of *discovery*; the learner should discover, with or without the help of other learners or teachers, the knowledge and the techniques which he needs as he tries to find the answers to the problems with which he is faced. By proceeding largely by trial and error he trains himself progressively.

(Holec in Benson 2013, 12)

This shift has led to several studies on autonomy, an example being Leni Dam's (1995) research on the development of autonomy in settings of Danish classrooms over several years, which aimed to identify the behaviours and strategies used by successful students and train less successful students in their use. As a result, autonomy is part of many modern teaching

approaches. Accordingly, Sinclair (2000, 5) shares her opinion on this matter, stating that autonomy has been accepted as a vital educational goal as LA is being promoted more widely nowadays. Thus, the following section deals with definitions of LA.

2.2 Definition of Learner Autonomy

In the case of LA, it is not easy to formulate this term's meaning or offer one comprehensive definition. For instance, Benson (2005, 1) states that autonomy, from a broader perspective, is about helping people gain control over their lives, both individually and collectively. Benson (2005, 1) further summarises the term in the context of education as “a capacity to take charge of, or take responsibility for, or control over one's own learning,” adding that autonomy involves abilities and attitudes that may be developed to various degrees with the help of the teacher. Following this definition, Little (1991, 4–5) concretises LA as a capacity (the capacity to step back, critically examine, make decisions, and act independently) that requires the learner to develop a specific kind of psychological relationship to the process and content of their learning.

In addition, a more general definition of LA is offered by Mareš and Mareš (2014, 82, 84), who specify the term as a process, as well as its desired product, which arises from a combination of individual development and positive influences of educational and other social environments, during which there is an increase in the self-regulation of one's own emotions and behaviour, greater independence in decision-making, gaining greater rights and accepting responsibility. The co-authors define this term in more detail through autonomous learners who are internally motivated, i.e. make decisions based on their own free will, work on a given activity because they enjoy it, and are determined to overcome obstacles in order to achieve their goals. The importance of the assumed development of learners' ability to make their own decisions also appears in Benson and Voller's beliefs (2014, 4), as they associate autonomy with the formation of an individual as the core of a democratic society. It may be crucial to mention that LA and the learner's abilities interconnected with it have been overlapping different spheres of daily life from the early stages of autonomy implementation in education, as Holec (in Little 1991, 6–7) in the report *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning* from 1981 stresses “the need to develop the individual's freedom by developing those abilities which will enable him to act more responsibly in running the affairs of the society in which he lives.” Accordingly, with these abilities, the individual is assumed to contribute

significantly to society and its favourable development, breaking down the barriers between learning and living.

Followingly, Holec (in Little 1991, 6–7) comes up with a more poignant explanation of LA in the above-mentioned report that is rooted in the general movement in adult education and self-access language learning centres, both tightly interconnected with the concept of permanent education articulated by the Council of Europe. In this writing, the specialist defines it as “the ability to take charge of one’s learning,” accordingly, he points out that this means the students have and bear responsibility for all decisions regarding all aspects of their learning, including the determination of the objectives, the definition of the concept and progressions, the selection of methods and techniques to be used, monitoring of the procedure of acquisition, and the evaluation of what has been acquired.

In contrast, Benson and Voller (2014, 1–2) particularise the word autonomy in language education through five different ways in which it can be used:

- for *situations* in which learners study entirely on their own;
- for a set of *skills* which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning;
- for an inborn *capacity* which is suppressed by institutional education;
- for the exercise of *learners’ responsibility* for their own learning;
- for the *right* of the learners to determine the direction of their own learning.

(Benson in Benson and Voller 2014, 1–2)

Furthermore, Benson (2005, 1) narrows the definition not only to autonomy *in learning*, aiming at individuals to take charge of their education inside and outside the school, but also autonomy *in language learning*, which is primarily about gaining control over *why* and *how* to learn the language.

Based on the above beliefs, LA is a multifaceted concept that includes various definitions and interpretations. Generally, it involves helping individuals take responsibility for their education. Accordingly, it can be summarised as a process as well as a result of education, which combines individual development and positive influences of the educational environment, leading to an increase in self-regulation of emotions and behaviour, greater independence in decision-making and acceptance of responsibility. As stated in Holec’s definition, which the international organisation highly appreciates, the Council of Europe, this term includes the learners’ ability to take control of their learning, which includes setting goals, choosing methods and techniques, and monitoring the acquisition of knowledge

and its evaluation. However, most students do not come to class with these abilities. Thus, the learning process should focus on their development with the teacher's help, as they are crucial for personal development and beneficial to societal growth.

2.2.1 What Autonomy in Education is Not

Holec's initial concept of LA, related to adult education and self-access language learning centres, in accordance with Benson (2013, 10–11), suggested that offering learners a wide array of second-language resources encourages self-directed learning or autonomous learning, both terms frequently used interchangeably. On the contrary, the specialist highlights that there is no proof of self-instruction learning (independent studying without relying on the teacher applied in the self-access language learning centres) being related to autonomy development, which is only an assumed result without any strong justification. Moreover, Benson (2013, 14–15) emphasises that self-instruction learning implies learning in isolation from each other as well as from their teachers, while recent studies on autonomy have shown the necessity of collaboration and interdependence in order to develop this ability. Consequently, these terms should not be used as synonyms.

In relation to the previous paragraph, a need to define the terms independence, interdependence and dependence in the view of autonomy arises. This problem is dealt with by Benson (2013, 15), who notes that several researchers have favourably applied the word "independence" as a synonym for autonomy, implying that the word "dependence" carries the opposite meaning of autonomy in this context. Furthermore, a problem with the term "independence" is that it can also be interpreted as the opposite of "interdependence," centring on cooperation with teachers and other learners towards a common goal. In contrast, Little (in Benson 2003, 292) argues that autonomy entails interdependence rather than independence, emphasising our ability to fully engage in social interactions. On top of that, Deci and Flaste (1996, 89) specify the difference between autonomy and independence:

Independence means to do for yourself, to not rely on others for personal nourishment and support. Autonomy, in contrast, means to act freely, with a sense of volition and choice. It is thus possible for a person to be independent and autonomous (i.e., to freely not rely on others), or to be independent and controlled (i.e., to feel forced not to rely on others).

(Deci and Flaste 1996, 89)

Therefore, it is crucial to distinguish between these concepts and to acknowledge that autonomy in the context of current studies encompasses interdependence. In this piece of writing, the term autonomy will be applied rather than independence, as recommended by Benson (2013, 15). Moreover, for this reason, the term autonomy is not interchangeably used as a synonym of the term independence, following Deci and Flaste's (1996, 89) clarification that independence means self-reliance without support, while autonomy involves acting freely with a sense of choice.

Nevertheless, there are several assumptions leading to the misinterpretation of the word autonomy. In accordance, Little (1991, 3–4) defines five possible misconceptions. The first and most pervasive one, already outlined in the first paragraph of this chapter, is that autonomy is a synonymous term for self-instruction, meaning that all it takes is the student's decision to learn without the teacher. However, this learning is not limited to learning without the teacher, as many students may not attain a high level of autonomy by choosing self-instruction. On the other hand, Benson (2013, 14) further admits that autonomous learning is still used in reference to learning without the teacher's presence, especially outside the classroom.

This is highly connected to the second assumption listed by Little (1991, 3) of the so-called organisational fallacy, stating that LA requires the teachers to lose all initiative and control, which is rooted in the belief that the teachers are redundant, and their interference can undermine any autonomy the students have managed to achieve. Another misunderstanding concerning classroom learning mentioned by Little (1991, 3) is that autonomy is another teaching method imposed by teachers on students. Nevertheless, students are unlikely to become autonomous without the teacher's active encouragement. A fourth misperception noted by Little (1991, 3–4) is that autonomy can be an easily described behaviour, yet it can show up in a lot of different ways influenced by age or level of learning progress, not only behaviour, as described in the previous part of the thesis. Little's (1991, 4) last misconception, closely related to the fourth one, states that it is believed to be true that students attain autonomy as a steady and permanent condition. In fact, learners may exhibit a great degree of autonomy in one area but not in another. Therefore, autonomy cannot always be guaranteed.

As explained, the concept of LA can be misunderstood due to several misconceptions, emphasising the complexity of autonomy and the dynamic interplay between self-instruction learning without a teacher and a collaborative environment supported by the teacher

and provided by autonomous learning. On the other hand, as added by Little (1991, 5), these misconceptions can be dispelled if the fact that the freedoms surrounding autonomy are always conditional, limited and never total is acknowledged.

2.3 Learner Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning

As previously noted in Chapter 2.1, the development of the concept of autonomy has been, among others, tightly linked to the demand for foreign languages. Regarding this fact, the paper shifts its focus to LA in language learning, also known as language learner autonomy (LLA).

In the formal educational background, according to Benson (2013, 115), autonomy projects learning beyond the curriculum, creating more authentic communication. Little, Dam and Legenhausen (2017, 1) agree that the language classroom supporting LA must include authentic communication, involving the learners from the first in the communicative use of the target language (TL) as it helps to fulfil the present goal of foreign language teaching and learning, communicative proficiency. Accordingly, Little (2007, 23) mentions that the essential part of LLA is that the TL is not only being used as the medium of task performance but also as the metacognition and metalinguistic reflection, denoting its application for reflection of what learners have learnt and how they have learnt it.

In contrast to the above-mentioned Little, Dam and Legenhausen's opinion, Holec (in Little, Dam and Legenhausen 2017, 5) claims that language teaching has two distinct goals. The first one is to assist learners in achieving their linguistic and communicative objectives, while the second one aims to foster autonomy and its ability development in pupils' learning. Additionally, Little (2007, 15) argues that despite the differences between these two aims, they are intertwined and thus mutually supportive of one another in the background of the LLA. On the other hand, Tassinari (2012, 24) specifies that the aim of language learning advising LA is to support processes of language learning and thus help learners develop their competencies for LA, fostering skills for lifelong learning. In conclusion, the current approach to language teaching aims to develop both linguistic proficiency and LA, with a focus on supporting language learning processes and supporting lifelong learning.

Following these statements, it is crucial to highlight that language lessons fostering LA can be a great benefit for learners on the way to achieving the overall aim of language learning, communicative language competencies (Council of Europe 2020) aiming at learners' ability to produce and adapt foreign language effectively and adequately engage in real-life communication across a variety of contexts. Consequently, to help the learners succeed, Little

(2007, 23) has developed three interacting principles, learner involvement, learner reflection and TL use, that govern foreign language teaching and support the development of LA.

For the first principle, learner involvement, Little (2007, 23) emphasises the active participation of learners in their own language learning process as teachers should encourage students to take responsibility for setting learning goals, choosing activities and materials, managing classroom interactions, and evaluating outcomes. This involvement is a continuous process, requiring teachers to gradually relinquish control as learners become more capable of managing their own learning. The second principle of learner reflection is already included in the principle of learner involvement. As Little (2007, 23–24) has described, it is impossible to plan the learning without thinking about it beforehand. Therefore, it involves so-called reflective intervention, the key feature of the teaching-learning process, reflecting on the learning process and its content. This reflection begins as a dialogue between teachers and students or within learner groups and gradually develops into the ability for self-reflection in the target language. The last principle noted by Little (2007, 25) is TL use, which stresses that TL should serve as the means of communication for all classroom activities, including organisation and reflection. Thus, teachers play a key role in supporting this process, especially during the initial stages. Scrivener (2005, 21) similarly comments that teachers assist in developing effective learning strategies alongside knowledge of TL. The integration of LA with language proficiency is thus further encouraged, as this connection guarantees the active engagement of students in the language.

These principles stress the concept of LLA, emphasising authentic communication in the classroom to achieve communicative proficiency as it involves using TL not only for task performance but also for thinking about one's own language learning processes and analysing the language used. Hence, language teaching aims to help learners achieve linguistic and communicative objectives while fostering autonomy in their learning, with these goals being mutually supportive.

2.3.1 Dynamic Model of Learner Autonomy

According to Benson's point of view (2013, 58), autonomy is a complex, multifaceted capability that varies among individuals and even for the same person in different situations or times. Supporting this view, Benson (2013, 58) quotes Little, stating that "autonomy is not a single, easily describable behaviour." However, Benson (2013, 58, 92) acknowledges that for autonomy to be researchable, it must be defined in terms of observable phenomena,

as developing a comprehensive list of the components of autonomy in language learning would likely enable us to describe an autonomous learner as someone whose learning includes some of these components, but not necessarily all of them. In connection, Palfreyman and Benson (2019, 674) mention two frameworks, EuroPAL's and Tassinari's dynamic model of LA, that made an evaluation of autonomy more focused and systematic. Following this, Tassinari's framework is dealt with since the specialist operationalises the concept of LA.

Tassinari (2012, 28), based on a critical analysis of existing definitions of autonomy by experts such as Holec, Benson, and Little, identifies its key components and their descriptions. She explains autonomy as follows:

Learner autonomy is the metacapacity, i.e. the second order capacity, of the learner to take control of their learning process to different extents and in different ways according to the learning situation. Learner autonomy is a complex construct, a construct of constructs, entailing various dimensions and components.

(Tassinari 2012, 28)

According to Tassinari (2012, 28), there are four main categories of these components. *Cognitive and metacognitive components* include cognitive and metacognitive knowledge, awareness, and beliefs. *Affective and motivational components* involve feelings, willingness, and motivation. *Action-oriented components* embrace skills, learning behaviours, decisions, and *social components* centre on learning with classmates and teachers. On top of that, the specialist (2012, 28) states that the crucial aspect of LA involves the learner's ability to initiate interaction and maintain a balance among these components in various learning contexts and situations.

Based on this, Tassinari (2012, 28–29) developed a dynamic model of LA in her dissertation. This model is built upon her definition of autonomy and includes the components in relation to learners' abilities, skills, choices, and processes of decision-making while also considering their interconnections. The model serves for self-assessment of one's autonomy. The aim of this assessment is not to measure the level of autonomy but rather to increase the learner's awareness of their own learning process and its reflection.

The components of the dynamic model (Figure 1) represent areas of competencies, skills, and actions. These are described according to Tassinari (2012, 28–29) by using verbs to emphasise their action-oriented and process-oriented nature, such as 'structuring knowledge', 'dealing with my feelings', 'motivating myself', 'planning', 'choosing materials and methods',

‘completing tasks’, ‘monitoring’, ‘evaluating’, ‘cooperating’ and ‘managing my own learning’. Following that, these components are not hierarchically arranged, except for ‘managing my own learning’, which encompasses and supervises all other components, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of the concept of LA.

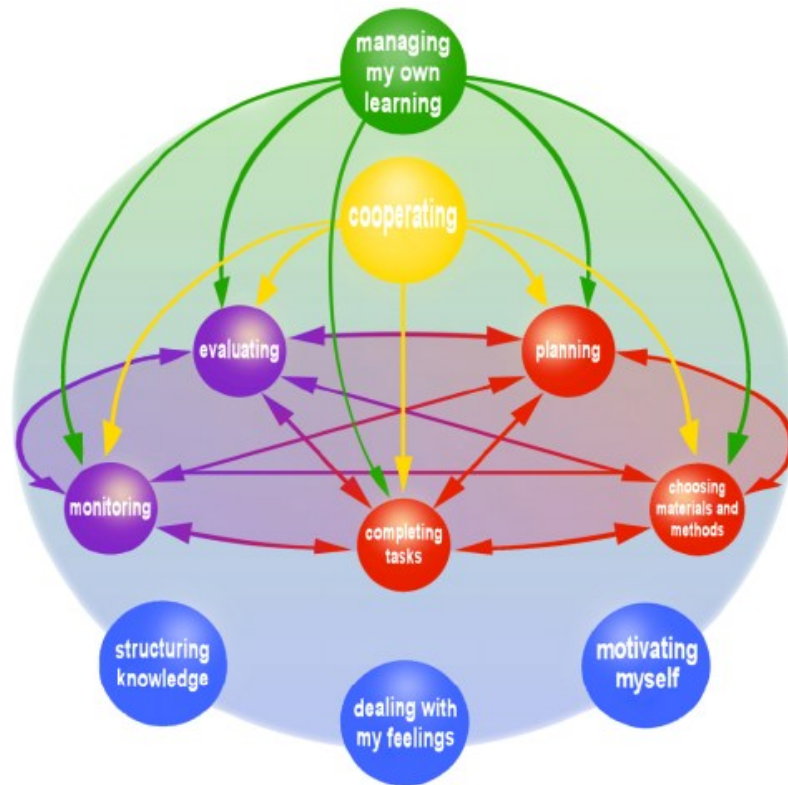


Figure 1: The dynamic model of LA (Tassinari 2012, 29)

As shown in Figure 1, every component is directly related to the others, supporting the dynamic nature of the model. Consequently, Tassinari (2012, 29) highlights that based on this characteristic of the structure, learners can start with any component and then move freely to another based on their needs without the necessity to follow a preplanned path. However, the specialist (2012, 30) defines three main dimensions of the dynamic model:

- predominantly action-oriented dimension (‘planning’, ‘choosing materials and methods’, ‘completing tasks’, ‘monitoring’, ‘evaluating’, ‘cooperating’, ‘managing my own learning’);
- a predominantly cognitive and metacognitive dimension (‘structuring knowledge’);
- a predominantly affective and motivational dimension (‘dealing with my feelings’, ‘motivating myself’);

- in addition, a social dimension ('cooperating') is integrated into each component.

(Tassinari 2012, 30)

On the other hand, Tassinari (2012, 30) states that this distinction is theoretical, as all these aspects overlap in the process of teaching and learning. Additionally, it divides the concept of LA into different competencies, skills and strategies, making the distinction helpful for empirical and pedagogic purposes.

Furthermore, Tassinari (2012, 30) explains that each component of the dynamic model has descriptors that outline specific competencies, skills, and learning behaviours, divided into general macro-descriptors (having a form of 'can-do' statements) and detailed micro-descriptors. As an example, the paper deals with the component called 'structuring knowledge' categorised by Tassinari (2012, 330) as a predominantly cognitive and metacognitive dimension. Moreover, all the components from a predominantly action-oriented dimension are included as well. After the examination, this component's checklist of 'can-do' statements (see Appendix 1) serves as a valuable source for a data collection tool for this paper's practical part.

However, in the 'structuring knowledge' component, Tassinari (2012, 30) specifies only macro-descriptions serving as general descriptions of the learner's evaluation process. Subsequently, it guides the reader to different components for further micro-descriptions through which the learner can differentiate their skills, behaviour, and attitudes and additionally assess the learning in detail (Tassinari 2012, 30). Concerning this fact, the component called 'planning' functions as an example that includes both macro-descriptors (see Appendix 2) and supplementally micro-descriptors (see Appendix 3). In total, Tassinari (2012, 30–31) provides 118 descriptors that form a comprehensive checklist for autonomous language learning. In addition, the descriptors can be adaptable to different learning contexts without referring to specific situations or languages. Examples are provided in the document, and full checklists are available online.

As already mentioned, the checklist derived from the dynamic model is valuable for this thesis because it provides specific descriptors of LA. However, it will be necessary to adapt these descriptors for the purposes of this thesis, e.g. for use in lower-secondary classes; as Tassinari (2012, 31) notes, the dynamic model was initially designed for higher education.

To conclude this chapter, Tassinari's dynamic model holds its significance as it fostered the autonomy assessment. According to Palfreyman and Benson's opinion (2019, 674),

the assessment of autonomy is the point where the integration of LA into curriculum design becomes particularly debatable. Following this viewpoint, the next part describes whether and how autonomy is integrated into Czech curricula.

2.4 Learner Autonomy and Czech Curricula

Over the course of the 1990s, LA became a primary objective in an increasing number of national curricula, as highlighted by Little (2007, 14). Additionally, Bergen (in Dam 1995, 2) supports the pursuit of this development by emphasising the need for learners to understand their learning aims and processes and engage in critical reflection, often called for by curricula and syllabuses. Similarly, Crabbe (in Blidi 2017, xxvii) notes that learners' task understanding fosters a sense of connection with their learning, boosting motivation crucial for developing autonomy. On the other hand, in cases when LA is not explicitly stated in the curriculum, Lamb (2008, 269–270) assumes that teachers must take into account ways to help the students take responsibility for their education in order to meet the needs of more modern modes of learning. Therefore, the specialist adds that autonomy should be integrated throughout the curriculum. In alignment with these statements, Czech curricula will be explored in the following paragraphs.

Considering Czech curricula, there are two key documents, *the Strategy for the Education Policy of the Czech Republic up to 2030+* and the FEP BE, published by the MŠMT, that influence the development of LA in lower-secondary education. The *Strategy for 2030+* (MŠMT 2020, 16) emphasises lifelong learning via the vitality of motivation to maximise learners' potential in a rapidly changing world, reinforced by a competence-based approach, individualisation, self-assessment, self-reflection, and the development of LA.

This is also taken into account by the latest revision of the FEP BE, the national curricular document, which aims to motivate pupils to lifelong learning. Consequently, basic education is oriented primarily to situations close to life and supported by Crabbe's opinion (in Blidi, 2017, xxvii) that the primary purpose of a curriculum is to offer various learning opportunities and facilitate their utilisation to achieve specific goals. Accordingly, the MŠMT (2023, 8–9) sets the target of fulfilling these aims:

- to enable pupils **to acquire learning strategies and motivate them for lifelong learning;**
- to encourage pupils **to engage in creative thinking, logical reasoning, and problem-solving;**
- to guide pupils towards **versatile, effective, and open communication;**

- **to develop pupils' ability to collaborate and respect their own and others' work** and achievements
- to prepare pupils **to express themselves as peculiar, free, and responsible individuals, exercising their rights and fulfilling their duties;**
- to cultivate in pupils the need **to express positive emotions in behaviour, actions, and life situations, fostering sensitivity and empathetic relationships with people, the environment, and nature;**
- to teach pupils **to actively develop and protect their physical, mental, and social health and to take responsibility for it;**
- to encourage pupils **to be tolerant and considerate of others,** their cultures, and spiritual values, teaching them **to live in harmony with others;**
- **to assist pupils in recognising and developing their abilities in line with real possibilities, applying them along with acquired knowledge and skills in making decisions about their personal and professional orientation;**
- **to help pupils navigate the digital environment and guide them towards the safe, confident, critical, and creative use of digital technologies in work, learning, leisure, and engaging with society and civic life.**

(MŠMT 2023, 8–9)

As can be seen in the English translation of these aims, provided by the author of the thesis, many aspects of the FEP BE objectives are closely linked to the support of LA. For that reason, the author highlighted them in bold.

In conclusion, the aim of the FEP BE inherently supports overall LA and personal growth by providing a flexible, student-centred approach to education. This education should emphasise the development of learning strategies, intrinsic motivation, and critical thinking. Thus, creativity, problem-solving, and effective communication of the students are encouraged, playing an essential aspect of autonomous learning. The curriculum further promotes personal responsibility and decision-making connected with personal and professional development. Furthermore, it supports the responsible and autonomous use of technology, leading the students to negotiate the digital environment confidently and critically. As a result, it can be stated that integration of autonomy throughout the curriculum prepares students for lifelong learning and adaptability in an ever-changing world, which aligns with Lamb's (2008, 269–270) perspective on the embedding of autonomy in modern education. Not explicitly stated, the facilitation of the teacher is expected as their role is integral to fulfilling these aims and fostering the development of the abilities that must be acquired, following the previously mentioned definitions of autonomy.

Accordingly, FEP BE's objectives (MŠMT 2023, 10) are interconnected with key competencies that “represent a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and values that are

essential for the personal development and societal engagement of every individual.” Thus, they should be developed to an extent that prepares learners for further education and can apply themselves positively in civil society. At the stage of basic education, the FEP BE (MŠMT 2023, 10–13) considers the following interrelated competencies as key: learning competence, problem-solving competence, communicative competence, social and personal competence, civic competence, work competence, and digital competence.

All key competencies carry a significant importance in education by impacting learners’ autonomy. Moreover, these four competencies (learning competence, problem-solving competence, social and personal competence, and digital competence) are essential as they directly influence the promotion of taking control over learning and, thus, LA. More precisely, learning competence (MŠMT 2023, 10) empowers students to develop autonomous learning strategies and to further acquire and apply knowledge. Critical thinking is directly enhanced by problem-solving competence (MŠMT 2023, 11) by facilitating decision-making and overcoming possible challenges. Relationship development and autonomous cooperation depend on the support of self-awareness, emotional control, and effective communication skills, all being fostered by social and personal competence (MŠMT 2023, 12). Finally, digital competence (MŠMT 2023, 13) contribute to autonomous learning in today’s digital environment by equipping students with the skills needed to use technology responsibly. Together, these competencies provide students with fundamental skills crucial for active engagement and ownership of their learning, successfully fostering LA.

On the other hand, it is essential to add, as the FEP BE presents (MŠMT 2023, 10), that all key competencies are interconnected and do not exist in isolation; they intertwine across disciplines and can only be developed through the comprehensive educational process, cultivating a sense of responsibility and capability in their own learning and personal development. Accordingly, based on the objectives and principles established by the MŠMT (2023, 5, 160) in the FEP for the various stages of education, each school will create its own School Education Program (SEP), a curricular document at the school level. This creates two levels of curricular documents in the Czech education system: national and school, defining the legislative and content framework of education.

3 FOSTERING AUTONOMY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

3.1 Conditions for Fostering Learner Autonomy in ELT

The different educational styles of teachers, according to Průcha (1997, 355), most influence the active involvement of learners in the lesson and the overall language learning process. These styles are dealt with by Kopřiva et al. (2008, 9); following their beliefs, the one that most develops the LA is the democratic style, which recognises the idea of relational equality between teacher and learner and their cooperation, thus supporting freedom and the possibility of choice. This partnership is necessary so that learners become competent and responsible people who are able to deal with contemporary problems, which corresponds to the previous definitions of autonomy and the need for lifelong learning.

In the English language teaching (ELT) classroom supporting LA, the shift in focus from teacher-directed teaching to a learner-centred learning environment occurs, as stated by Dam (1995, 4, 7). Moreover, as emphasised by the specialist, this move from teaching to learning involves making “what to learn” and “how to learn” central concerns for both teachers and learners. Additionally, it involves choosing learning activities and materials that engage learners in their own language-learning process, promoting the development of communicative competence in their TL. Considering these statements, the next part focuses on the conditions needed for fostering LA in ELT.

3.1.1 Teacher’s Roles

As follows from the previous section, the teacher’s role depends on the relationship between the teacher and the learners and the power the participants possess in the classroom. In ELT fostering the LA, Palfreyman and Benson (2019, 12) note that the role of the teacher is to enable the learner to take charge of their performance and decision-making when learning a second language and to do so with a decreasing amount of help. This is done with thoughtful and responsive support. Furthermore, Dam (1995, 5) states that in autonomous classrooms, a huge shift in the teacher’s role occurs as the teacher becomes more concerned with learning than teaching. Following that, the teacher is an active participator in the language learning process who promotes new activities and solidly encourages learners and their ideas. Moreover, the specialist highlights that the teacher must observe and analyse learning for later evaluation with learners, plan working techniques and strategies to assess progress and be a consultant

in addition to being a co-learner in the language learning process. Consequently, teachers play a crucial role in the mediation of ideas for language acquisition, as Benson (2013, 185) has described.

According to Voller (in Benson 2013, 185), there are only three main roles that teachers can act and need to be trained for in autonomous learning: *a resource* (the teacher is seen as a source of knowledge and expertise), *a counsellor* (emphasising one-on-one interaction), and *a facilitator* (where the teacher provides support for learning). Furthermore, Voller (in Benson 2013, 185) summarises teachers' qualities and functions connected with these three roles into technical and psycho-social support:

The key features of technical support are:

- helping learners to plan and carry out their independent language learning by means of needs analysis (both learning and language needs), objective setting (both short- and long-term), work planning, selecting materials, and organising interactions;
- helping learners to evaluate themselves (assessing initial proficiency, monitoring progress, and peer- and self-assessment);
- helping learners to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to implement the above (by raising their awareness of language and learning, by providing learner training to help them to identify learning styles and appropriate learning strategies).

The key features of psycho-social support are:

- the personal qualities of the facilitator (being caring, supportive, patient, tolerant, empathic, open, non-judgemental);
- a capacity for motivating learners (encouraging commitment, dispersing uncertainty, helping learners to overcome obstacles, being prepared to enter into a dialogue with learners, avoiding manipulating, objectifying or interfering with, in other words controlling, them);
- an ability to raise learners' awareness (to 'decondition' them from preconceptions about learner and teacher roles, to help them perceive the utility of, or necessity for, autonomous learning).

(Voller in Benson 2013, 186–187)

These roles require a teacher to possess a broad range of technological and psycho-social support skills, highlighting the effective help learners plan, evaluate and acquire necessary skills. Still, the teacher must also provide empathetic and motivational support to the learners.

On the other hand, following the data from Reeve's research (2006, 234), the students benefit and develop their autonomy the most when the teacher acts as *a facilitator* who structures the learning environment in a way that involves their inner motivation. Harmer (2007, 108)

describes the role of the facilitator in detail by stating that a term is used to characterise a specific type of teacher who is more of a resource than a knowledge transmitter, who uses group and pair work to promote LA and who is democratic rather than authoritarian. Accordingly, a facilitator is nothing like a lecturer, who, according to Harmer (2007, 265), delivers content to students in one-way communication, where the focus is on transmitting knowledge rather than interactive learning activities.

In conclusion, teachers in ELT classrooms can, as facilitators, create a learner-centred environment that allows students to take control of their own learning. Moreover, these conditions support the development of essential language and life skills for learners to become confident, motivated, and autonomous language users.

3.1.2 Learners' Roles

As Little (1991, 7) notes, when the responsibility for learning from the teacher to learners is transferred, it naturally leads to changes in the organisation of education and shifts the power dynamics between the teacher and learners. With this, the role of the learners changes as they become actively involved in their language-learning process.

In order to understand the phrase, autonomous learners are actively engaged in the language learning process; Little, Dam and Legenhausen (2017, 71) define autonomous language learners as learners who use TL to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning. On the other hand, Dickinson (1992, 1–2) articulates a more detailed definition of effective autonomous learners and the decisions they have to make about their learning. According to the specialist, they can recognise the learning objective being pursued by the teacher. They know what to learn and how to formulate their own learning objectives. Moreover, they are able to select and implement appropriate learning strategies, monitor their use of strategies (change them if necessary), and monitor the effectiveness of their learning. A similar viewpoint is shared by Dam (1995, 4), who discloses that in autonomous learning surroundings, the learners' ideas about language learning, competencies and insights play an essential part in the language learning process. On top of that, in this learning environment, the learners become aware not only of learning aims, evaluation of their learning, or potentially helping resources and activities but also of the teacher's role or social and emotional influences, as the author emphasised. Even though all definitions do not specify the learners' roles, they can be derived from them as follows: *an organiser, a monitor, an evaluator or a feedback provider*.

Furthermore, Little, Dam, and Legenhausen (2017, 2) give specific characteristics of three interdependent roles for learners in the classroom that foster autonomy. They are *communicators* who gradually develop their communicative skills in the TL by continuously using it. Then, the learners become *experimenters* with language as they gradually develop an explicit analytical knowledge of the TL system and a cultural and social awareness that shapes language use. Lastly, they happen to be *intentional learners*, gradually evolving an explicit awareness of affective and metacognitive aspects of language learning. Moreover, the co-authors highlight that the selection of learning activities must align with the learner's skill level and proficiency in these three roles.

The roles of learners may be summarised as being comparable or even overlapping with those of the teacher, demonstrating the tight connection between the participants in the classroom and autonomy development. Supporting this claim, Janíková cites Tandlichová (2007, 47), who suggests that in autonomous classrooms, the teacher's and learners' roles are interchangeable or even the same, depending on the readiness of the students to take over the role of the teacher and the correct timing of this moment.

3.1.3 Motivation

As already defined, autonomy is the ability to take control over one's language learning process. Following that, Mynard and Shelton-Strong (2022, 2) mention the need for a certain level of learner motivation when exercising autonomy. Accordingly, this part deals with the role of motivation in the language classroom fostering LA.

Motivation is described by Ushioda (1996, 2) as "a set of processes for sustaining learner involvement in learning." Furthermore, Williams and Burden (1997, 120) define the term motivation from a constructivist perspective as "a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals)." Moreover, in connection with motivation, Dörnyei (2001, 11) mentions Self-Determination Theory (SDT), initiated by Deci and Ryan, which suggests two main types of motivation – *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*. The specialists further characterise *intrinsic motivation* as the one driven by the satisfaction of one's curiosity by doing the activity itself, while *extrinsic motivation* is about performing a behaviour for external rewards, such as good grades, or to avoid punishment. Principally, intrinsic motivation is self-determined, whilst extrinsic is controlled, as stated by Dörnyei (2001, 11).

Concerning motivation in the field of autonomy, Reeve (2022b, 33) points out that supporting autonomy invigorates the learner's energy and focus, which then manifest as intrinsic motivation, intrinsic goals, self-endorsed values, and autonomously driven extrinsic motivation, e.g. internalisation. With the knowledge that autonomy supports intrinsic motivation, Reeve (2022a, 19) cites Ryan and Deci, who depicted this term in detail:

Intrinsic motivation is a desire to seek out novelty and challenge, to explore, to investigate, to learn, to take an interest in activities and to stretch and extend one's skills and capacities. For intrinsic motivation to be maintained or enhanced, certain types of experiences are required – namely, satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness.

(Ryan and Deci in Reeve 2022a, 19)

Additionally, Ushioda (1996, 41) shares her opinion on this topic by stating that intrinsic motivation is valued as a desired outcome of education since it fosters the idea that learning is intrinsically motivating and spontaneous learning behaviour. Thus, learning that is intrinsically motivated typically involves learning skills by doing while gaining experience in the natural setting of application. On the other hand, Ushioda (1996, 40) does not speak only about intrinsic motivation, providing the basis for autonomous learning as this way motivated learners develop a psychological relation to their learning, but links autonomy to self-motivation. By assisting in taking control over the affective dimension of the learning experience, Ushioda (1996, 39) views self-motivation as actively performing a functional role in fostering autonomous learning. Similarly, besides highlighting the power of intrinsic motivation, Deci and Flaste (1996, 30) connect autonomous learning with a sense of personal autonomy, seen as learners' impression of choosing their own behaviour rather than being imposed by some external influence.

However, intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role; Deci and Ryan (in Little, Dam and Legenhausen 2017, 73–74) emphasise that if learners are solely driven by intrinsic motivation, they may focus only on their interests and neglect other areas. This problem can be reduced by the curriculum application and assessments to ensure comprehensive learning. Thus, the specialists describe the current pedagogical challenge for teachers to effectively blend external and intrinsic motivation.

To conclude, motivation carries a crucial influence in promoting LA in language teaching, consisting of extrinsic motivation, which is driven by outside incentives, and intrinsic

motivation, which is rooted in curiosity. In order to guarantee learning across many fields of interest, it is essential to find a balance between these two types of motivation.

3.1.4 Patterns of Classroom Interactions

Following Ushioda's statement (in Little, Dam and Legenhausen 2017, 74), going beyond the learner to embrace the interaction between the learner and social learning setting is an effective way to enhance the learner's motivation in autonomy development. Another reason why interaction with classmates plays a fundamental part in the autonomous classroom is described by Little, Dam and Legenhausen (2017, 47) as the specialists note, "knowledge in foreign language learning is 'socially constructed' and 'dialogic' in its nature," highlighting the importance of authentic communications for gaining the knowledge and experience via social interaction. As already mentioned in Chapter 1.1, Benson (2013, 41) highlights that this assumption was made by Vygotsky and his idea of the ZPD, where under the guidance of more experienced speakers, learners internalise meanings from linguistic interactions, transforming external directive speech into their self-directive inner speech. Accordingly, the collaboration rooted in the interaction between classmates is a critical factor in fostering autonomy. Vágnerová (2000, 209, 251) further highlights that lower secondary school students (who are the focus of this thesis) are in the early stage of adolescence, meaning that around the age of 11, significant physical and psychological changes begin to occur. Correspondingly, as the specialist states, this stage marks a turning point in the students' relationships since they start to reject the subordinate roles meaning that the teacher's authority is no longer automatically accepted as a norm unless the teacher can attract the student's attention. As a result, classmates play a crucial role in the whole learning process.

Regarding the patterns of classroom interactions, Harmer (2007, 161–165) enlists the main ones, such as *whole-class teaching*, *students on their own*, *pair work*, and *group work*. The first pattern mentioned by Harmer (2007, 161–162), whole-class teaching, goes entirely against the principles of LA as the learners are pushed to do the same tasks simultaneously at the same pace. Thus, the students do not take responsibility for their learning process since the teaching is based on the knowledge transition from the teacher acting like a lecturer.

Considering students working on their own, Harmer (2007, 164) points out the support of individualisation since the learners do exercises¹ on their own and make decisions about the tasks to complete. Moreover, as the learners take charge of their learning,

¹ In the context of this paper, the word 'exercise' is used interchangeably with 'handout' or 'task'.

the specialist admits to the development of LA, skills of self-reliance promotion, or investigating the dependency on the teacher. However, this interaction pattern views learning in an autonomous classroom as an exclusively individual experience, in contrast with the first paragraph of this chapter, saying that autonomous learning is rooted in interaction, underlined by the fact that the “individual-cognitive dimension of learning contributes to but also feeds on the social-interactive dimension,” as mentioned by Little, Dam and Legenhausen (2017, 45).

Then, Harmer (2007, 165) characterises pair work, which increases the amount of speaking time each student gets while finishing the tasks due to the independent interaction without the necessary guidance from the teacher, promoting LA. The last pattern, group work, also provokes greater involvement, the speaking time of each group member, and promotes LA by allowing learners to decide in the group without being told what to do by the teacher, as described by Harmer (2007, 165–166). Additionally, it offers a greater chance of different opinions and ideas than pairwork. In connection to group work, Ur (1996, 232) emphasises not only the promotion of learners’ responsibility and independence but also the contribution to motivation and cooperation, generally to a positive classroom environment.

In relation to pair and group work, Dam (1995, 43) underlines the importance of the teacher who chooses criteria for group/pair formation (e.g. Choose partners you like, you can learn from, you never work with, ...) but not who to work with. Moreover, Little, Dam and Legenhausen (2017, 45) stress the importance of a whole-class session at the end of the lesson to reinforce that besides being individuals with dissimilar interests and group responsibilities, they are part of one learning class with shared learning goals embedded in the curriculum. However, these two patterns encourage LA in which students may be able to help, motivate each other, and discover things or research things for themselves, and the teacher should not prefer only them. All the mentioned patterns need to be involved to fulfil the needs of all students. Accordingly, the pattern must be chosen after considering the activity.

3.2 Fostering Autonomy and ELT Methods

Autonomy has become a key part of modern teaching methods in ELT. As Little (1991, 7) notes, autonomy is supported by methods that emphasise the role of learners as active agents in their own learning, being the essential difference between modern and traditional methods. Among the traditional methods, which are characterised by the dominant role of the teacher in the teaching process, Richards and Rogers (2014, 6–7, 11–13, 44–54, 58–70) list the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Situational Language Teaching

or the Audio-Lingual Method. Although these methods differ significantly from each other, the common feature is the lack of opportunities to develop LA since the main emphasis is placed on foreign language mastery, while the development of the learners' personality and their ability to learn autonomously is not promoted. Thus, the learners have no choice in what or how to learn.

Following Richards and Rogers (2014, 32–33, 73, 289), the change occurred in the 1970s and 1980s with the emergence of learner-centred approaches to teaching and the advent of the method called the Silent Way, when the individual's responsibility for learning began to emerge. This involves a new role of the teacher, who should be silent as much as possible, thus creating a space for learners' production, thanks to which they will actively learn and discover knowledge. To support independence from the teacher, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013, 69) specify the need for learners' self-correction of errors; accordingly, the learners must learn to listen and evaluate their work based on their inner criteria. Even though the learners are encouraged to explore the language, they are not engaged in choosing how to approach learning, as highlighted by Richards and Rogers (2014, 332).

Another method that uses elements of autonomy is Community Language Learning. In general, according to Richards and Rogers (2014, 303), it is based on the interaction between students responsible for their learning. Consequently, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013, 85) define the role of the teacher as one who intervenes only in necessary situations, such as dealing with learners' feelings or fears in learning the language to further it.

Elements of LA are highly included in the Communicative Language Teaching that stresses the need for students to learn to communicate in TL. Consequently, its main aim is rooted in helping the learners develop communicative competence, as articulated by Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013, 115). On top of that, Richards and Rogers (2014, 97–98, 101) demonstrate the fulfilment of this aim achieved primarily due to the fact that the teacher plays the role of a facilitator, who emphasises the balance of activities that develop fluency and accuracy and uses authentic materials.

Other methods of fostering autonomy include Task-Based Language Teaching or Cooperative Learning. In connection with Task-Based Language Teaching, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013, 149–150) underline the importance of individual or group work based on solving problems, usually from real, everyday life. Correspondingly, it sets opportunities for the development of autonomy supported by language acquisition through task completion.

Concerning Cooperative Learning, the meaning, according to Kasíková (2010, 27), lies in the application of social relations for higher learning efficiency and goal fulfilment. Thus, the success of the group depends on individuals and vice versa. Then, the learners not only gain cooperative skills but are encouraged to take control of their learning.

As indicated, autonomy plays an important role in modern methods, where there is a change in relational conditions - where the learners become the centre of control of their teaching – thereby shifting the focus from the teaching to the learning. On the other hand, Richards and Rogers (2014, 339) admit that these methods can be beneficial for students, and it is essential for the teacher to consider the cultural environment and learners' history before selecting the method.

4 AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Stimulating Autonomy in ELT Learners

As Janíková (2005, 29) suggests, methods, procedures, and concepts applied to foster autonomy in ELT are not different from those applicable to other subjects. On the other hand, Scharle and Szabó (2000, 5) admit that each learner may possess a varying degree of autonomy, meaning that each student needs a different period of time to control learning. Accordingly, several empirical studies were conducted on the possibilities of stimulating the pupil's ability to learn autonomously in ELT.

The model of gradual development of autonomous learning on a general level and at the same time for ELT is offered by Scharle and Szabó (2000, 7), who talk about four building blocks being fundamental for responsibility and autonomy development:

- 1) motivation and self-confidence;
- 2) monitoring and evaluation;
- 3) learning strategies;
- 4) cooperation and group cohesion.

(Scharle and Szabó 2000, 6–7)

These blocks are connected to learners' responsible attitudes; however, acquiring the ability to autonomous learning is not a one-time and short-term issue but a long-term process in which several interventions by the teacher take place. On top of that, Scharle and Szabó (2000, 8) mention the teacher's attitude, requiring a *willingness to take learners as partners*

in achieving common goals, consistency in control, and a willingness to delegate tasks and decisions.

Similarly, Cotterall (2000, 111–112) presents a model of five language course principles contributing to the transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the learners:

- 1) the course reflects learners' goals in its language, tasks, and strategies;
- 2) course tasks are explicitly linked to a simplified model of the language-learning process;
- 3) course tasks either replicate real-world communicative tasks or provide a rehearsal for such tasks;
- 4) the course incorporates discussion and practice with strategies known to facilitate task performance;
- 5) the course promotes reflection on learning.

(Cotterall 2000, 111–112)

As it follows from the models mentioned above, Scharle and Szabó's building blocks overlap with Cotterall's principles since motivation is mirrored in the first and second principles, and evaluation/reflection of the learning process is mentioned in the fifth principle. Nevertheless, both models emphasise the importance of learning strategies and their practice. In contrast, Scharle and Szabó underline the importance of cooperation or self-confidence.

4.2 Stages of Autonomy Development

The benefits of autonomy in ELT have been mentioned throughout the research paper. Consequently, Little (1991, 8) summarises the main benefits of LA and why it should be developed. The first mentioned by the specialist is focused and purposeful learning being more effective both immediately and in the long term, which has a deep connection with the second, the integration of education and living, as the barrier between these two is removed by improving the learner's responsibility for the learning. Strengthening the last benefit, summarised as transferable autonomy, is essential since, without the barrier mentioned above, learners can apply autonomy to other aspects of life and thus contribute more to the democratic society they are living in. The development of autonomy, therefore, highly enhances life-long learning, one of the main aims of the FEP BE.

In autonomous learning, both the teacher and the learners share responsibility for the learning process. This implies that learners' accountability and attitude towards learning are the key factors for the success of language acquisition. Following that, developing a learner's autonomy is a gradual process that takes time. However, LA can be beneficial; Leni Dam (1995, 6) points

out that there is no simple recipe for the implementation of autonomy into ELT. Accordingly, various recommendations have been given by professionals in this field of interest.

For example, Scharle and Szabó (2000, 9) determine three phases of the process of developing a learner's autonomy: *raising awareness*, *changing attitudes*, and *transferring roles*, overlapping the four building blocks listed in 3.1 *Stimulating Autonomy for ELT Learners*. The starting stage, *raising awareness*, according to the specialists, serves for the presentation of new viewpoints and experiences to the learners. Generally, during this phase, the teachers should bring the learner to discoveries to encourage their inner learning process and bring it to the conscious one. Thus, the teacher structures and controls activities as the lower level of learners' responsibility is assumed. The same authors (2000, 9) describe the second phase, called *changing attitudes*, as a slow process rooted in the practice of new roles, habits and skills. Furthermore, the activities are repeated at this stage as they offer more room for learners' initiative, creating a supporting environment. The last and most demanding phase for the teacher, as mentioned by Scharle and Szabó (2000, 9), is *transferring roles*, as it requires a change in classroom management by giving the learners a more significant amount of freedom in tasks accomplished or activity structures.

Similarly, Nunan (2003, 195–203) prepares a nine-step program of autonomy implementation in the classroom, moving the learner from dependency on the teacher to autonomy. As the specialist points out, these steps overlap and can be introduced simultaneously or in different order.

Step one is to *make instruction goals clear to learners*. This relatively rare step, as stated by Nunan (2003, 196–197), should help with the active involvement of learners in the process of achieving the aims. Accordingly, this provides the basis for learners to be involved in choosing their own goals and content while positively supporting and accepting responsibility for their learning.

Step two *allows learners to create their own goals and content*. In connection to this, Nunan is rather brief at this stage but cites Parkinson and O'Sullivan (2003, 197–198), who give an example of learners taking part in a series of so-called action meetings, creating an opportunity to contribute to the course and its design.

Encouraging learners to use their second language outside the classroom is the third step, which is centred on the activation of the language outside the classroom. As Nunan describes

(2003, 198), the teacher must elicit and recommend the possible ways for learners' English improvement outside the class.

Since the learners already have a voice in deciding *what* to learn, during step four, *raising awareness of the learning process*, they receive a voice in *how* to learn. With this step, Nunan (2003, 199) suggests implementing strategy training into the lesson. The specialist further recommends "raising awareness of the strategies underlying classroom tasks" for all teachers.

In the fifth step, the teacher *helps the learners to identify their own preferred styles and strategies*. Nunan highlights the importance of this stage (2003, 200), as the learners' preferences often significantly differ from the content and methodology they usually encounter in the class. Accordingly, substantial changes in the teaching methods and the overall content are needed, together with the implementation of activities addressing various types of learners.

The following sixth step is interested in *encouraging learner choice* since Nunan (2003, 200–201) considers the engagement of the learners in the decision-making process to be crucial. Consequently, the specialist offers several options for learners to decide about at the beginning, such as the order of the activities for individual/whole-class work or choosing the task they want to complete. Thus, Nunan's aim of this stage (2003, 201) is "to make learners sensitised to the notion of making choices". Later, after getting used to the possibility of choice, the learners who are ready for the higher level can choose language skills to work on.

In the next seventh step, Nunan (2003, 201–202) *allows learners to generate their own tasks* by providing them with opportunities for modification of learning tasks. Understandably, this is the primary step in teaching the learners to prepare their own materials and tasks, as special material design skills are unnecessary.

At the eighth step, *the learners should be encouraged to become teachers*. According to Assinder, as referenced by Nunan (2003, 202), this demanding task can be highly beneficial and calls for greater responsibility, increasing motivation, self-esteem and accuracy. Therefore, the role swap can start with a group of learners teaching the rest of the classroom. Moreover, the success of each group should be measured by the classmates who provide feedback and test their new knowledge, stating what has been learned.

For the last ninth step of this program, encouraging the learners to become researchers, Nunan (2003, 203) presents an example of research held in the United States by Heath, who gave

the roles of ethnographers collecting field notes and interpreting language patterns to educationally disadvantaged children. This approach led to significant improvement as all the learners moved from 'Basic' to 'regular' English classes.

The integration of autonomy in ELT lessons is a complex and demanding task. In alignment with Little's (1991) advocacy for its development, two interconnected models were presented, highlighting the importance of meaningful learning improved by blending learning and everyday life. Autonomy fostered in this way extends beyond school as it supports learner's active engagement in the learning process.

5 STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES FOSTERING AUTONOMY IN ELT

5.1 Learners Receiving the Possibility to Choose

If LA is to be fostered, every student must have the right to choose, which, of course, entails responsibility for the given decision. This connection is seen as a key theme of autonomy, as already mentioned by the specialists throughout the paper (e.g. Benson 2005; Little 1991; Mareš and Mareš 2014; Tassinari 2012, or Scharle and Szabó 2000). Correspondingly, Dörnyei (2001, 104) states that the learners' choice "is the essence of responsibility as it permits learners to see that they are in charge of the learning experience," following this, the process of decision-making must start with learners choosing between the given option, then modifying and changing the tasks, and finally selecting goals on their own. Learners, being aware of their influence and the effort they put into their learning progress, will gradually take responsibility for their learning, as described by Scharle and Szabó (2010, 3). Based on Nunan's article *Nine Steps to Learner Autonomy* (2003), a list of learners' possible choices was made to be used in observations. It includes components such as learners can choose exercises to do, interaction patterns and the place to work, strategies, and materials.

5.2 Assessment

In the process of fostering autonomy in ELT, assessment or synonymously used term evaluation has an important role, as it follows from the previous descriptions from Voller in Benson (2013) and Dam (1995). Furthermore, its importance was mentioned in Scharle and Szabó's building blocks (2000) or in Tassinari's model (2012), which serves for the self-evaluation of one's own autonomy with the aim of increasing the awareness of one's own learning process and its

reflection. Moreover, Slavík (1999, 139) is more specific regarding autonomous assessment, which involves not only the self-assessment of learners but also peer assessment, thanks to which pupils gradually learn to assess their own work but also that of their classmates or the teacher. These two types of assessment are beneficial since they support LA, the direct involvement and engagement of learners and, thus, their motivation, as depicted by Andrade and Valcheva (in Brown and Abeywickrama 2018, 314). Accordingly, the following two parts will deal with self- and peer assessments.

5.2.1 Self-Assessment

Concerning the definition of self-assessment, Kratochvílová (2011, 22) articulates this term in detail, translated by the paper's author as:

“The assessment entrusted to the pupil, through which the pupil evaluates his/her performance in relation to the set goal. The pupil compares his/her knowledge, skills and attitudes at a certain stage of his/her education with the desired state to be able to effectively influence his/her further learning and development.”

(Kratochvílová 2011, 22)

Self-assessment can effectively influence not only future learning and development but also, according to Williams and Burden (1997, 37), it helps the learners to perceive their learning as personal and relevant, and thus, it positively supports their willingness to take control over it. Similarly, Harmer (2007, 142) adds that if learners take part in their evaluation, there is a great increase in their understanding of the feedback. Regarding these facts, Kratochvílová (2011, 78) stresses the importance of the teacher who must not assume that learners can manage self-assessment on their own. However, the teacher must ensure learners have suitable in-class conditions, time, and tools and pass on information about the importance of self-assessment and its implementation in the classroom to parents. For that purpose, there are several tools and techniques for self-assessment implementation.

For instance, Brown and Abeywickrama (2018, 313, 317, 324–325) used a teacher-student conference, usually a one-on-one session periodically scheduled, during which students discuss their progress and challenges, identify weaknesses and set goals and areas for future improvement. Accordingly, the teacher's questions must be formative to provide guidance and support tailored to each learner's needs.

Other options offered by Brown and Abeywickrama (2018, 315–316, 320) are score rating sheets with rating scales, where the learners rate their performance on the continuum

from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), Then, the specialists underline self-assessment questionnaires in which learners answer questions to reflect on their learning process and outcomes or checklists for learners to mark their achieved level or items they are able to do.

The portfolio is recognised by Brown and Abeywickrama (2018, 321) as a very popular and productive form of assessment. In agreement with this, Dörnyei (2001, 133) considers portfolios to be appropriate for the purpose of continuous assessment for the reason that they organise sets of learners' work collected over time to illustrate their progress. Furthermore, the author states that portfolios foster LA as they offer a degree of control in deciding what to include and further help the learners assess their improvement based on the feedback provided.

On top of that, Brown and Abeywickrama (2018, 321) enlist the materials included in the portfolio, such as essays, reports, projects, outlines for presentations, diaries, reflections, tests, homework, notes, self- and peer assessments, etc.

Concerning learners' assessment of their foreign language competencies, for these purposes, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) was developed by the Language Policy Programme of the Council of Europe (2024). The ELP generally aims to:

- to help learners give shape and coherence to their experience of learning and using languages other than their first language
- to motivate learners by acknowledging their efforts to extend and diversify their language skills at all levels
- to provide a record of the linguistic and cultural skills they have acquired (to be consulted, for example, when they are moving to a higher learning level or seeking employment at home or abroad)

(Council of Europe 2024)

As the Council of Europe (2024) further notes, the ELP is established on *the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) since the learners assess themselves in connection to the CEFR's six levels of proficiency summarising all language skills – listening, spoken interaction, spoken production, reading and writing – in the *self-assessment grid* which provides a description for each level of knowledge with the help of “I can” descriptors. Furthermore, the ELP is divided into three sections: *the Language Passport*, recording the learners' language skills and experiences with different cultures; *the Language Biography*, which supports goal setting and reflection on the learning process; and *the Dossier*,

where learners collect their achievements and samples of their work. Together, these components foster LA, intercultural awareness and plurilingualism.

The last tool mentioned in this paper is the learner's diary, tightly connected to the portfolios as they can be kept in them. Moreover, Little, Dam and Legenhausen (2017, 2) assume that diary writing is the basic principle supporting learners' responsibility for learning and, thus, LA development. Followingly, Dam (1995, 40) defines a diary as:

“a book where activities undertaken during a lesson are recorded and new words or expressions used during the activities are written down. It is also where learners make a note of homework, decided by themselves or by the teacher, and where they write individual, group or whole-class comments on the day's work.”

(Dam 1995, 40)

Harmer (2007, 400–401) emphasises the benefit of diary keeping as it provides the learners with opportunities to practice writing skills and to express their feelings freely but also from the perspective of autonomy to think about *how* and *what* they are learning. Furtherly they should have free will in deciding what to write or put in the diary. Accordingly, the learners must know if their diary is private or to be read by the teacher. If the second option is chosen, based on Little, Dam and Legenhausen's opinion (2017, 3), the teacher must collect the diaries on a regular basis and comment on them in TL. Accordingly, the diaries should be written in TL as far as possible. Concerning the learners' assessment by diary entry, Chuk (2004, 4) defines the basic parts the learners should consider during the reflection. They should summarise what they have learnt in the session, comment on whether and how the lesson was effective, identify the area for self-improvement and plan actions that should follow.

In conclusion, self-evaluation is an essential component of LA's development as it gives students the ability to specify and define their learning process and advancement. However, it further benefits the teacher, who can keep monitoring each learner's work and progress, leading to a better understanding of how individuals learn.

5.2.2 Peer-Assessment

Peer assessment, based on learners' cooperation, is one of the aspects that fall within learner-centred education. Harmer (2007, 150) assumes this evaluation is extremely beneficial feedback as receiving a comment from a peer can provoke deeper thinking in learners. Similarly, Brown and Abeywickrama (2018, 314) share their opinion on peer assessment by highlighting its great

potential for students since they learn how to offer useful feedback to others in an affirming manner. Moreover, Dickinson (1992, 35–36) interconnects peer and self-feedback by noting that the application of criteria to evaluate others with the follow-up justification should help the learners understand how to apply the criteria to themselves. Consequently, peer assessment not only fosters cognitive engagement but also creates a steady base for effective evaluation of their own work.

Building on Dörnyei's belief (2001, 133), the peer assessment can be integrated into the lesson after the teacher's thoughtful consideration. This is in agreement with Dickinson (1992, 35), who emphasises that this procedure is risky, meaning that the teacher must be aware of suitable class dynamics for its application. Harmer (2007, 83, 150) allows that teenage students can be highly vulnerable to the negative judgements of their peers; on the other hand, he admits that at this age, students consider peer approval extremely necessary. To make sure that the peer evaluation is meaningful and focused on the task, Harmer recommends the teacher to present unfinished sentences such as *My Immediate reactions to your work are..., I like the part..., I am not sure about..., The errors I have noticed..., etc.*

Tools for peer assessment overlap with the ones listed for the process of self-evaluation, such as check-lists or rating sheets, meaning that they are equally helpful for fostering LA since, as stated by Brown and Abeywickrama (2018, 314), they free the student from dependency on the teacher, help them to control the learning process and practice communication life skills.

5.3 Learning Styles

The concept of autonomous learning is closely related to the learning styles defined by Janíková (2007, 63) as individual preferences for a certain type of receiving, processing and reusing of new information. Accordingly, they are often described from many points of view, which in combination describe the learner type. However, Richards and Rogers (2014, 339) note that while the concept of learning styles highlights classroom diversity, research has not proven that certain styles are more effective than others, as the specialists further cite Griffiths (2012) and Cassidy (2004). Griffiths (in Richards and Rogers 2014, 339) further suggests success depends on learners choosing styles suited to their needs. Learning styles also reflect cultural differences shaped by prior education, requiring teachers to consider cultural contexts when selecting methods and approaches. Followingly, Janíková (2007, 62) divides learning styles based on several aspects:

- sensory references (visual, kinaesthetic, auditory or tactile types)

- personal aspects (extroverts and introverts)
- levels of generalisation (analytical and global types)
- biologically determined differences

(Janíková 2007, 62)

It follows that there are a number of typologies of learning styles, meaning that the teacher usually stands in front of the demanding task of recognising the individual differences of each student. This identification, relying on Harmer's opinion (2007, 92), can be done through observations and questionnaires e.g. the one for identification of the preferred sensory system, known as The Lead VAK Test (Appendix 4), prepared by Revell and Norman (in Harmer 2007, 92), later used in the practical part. The acronym VAK, described by Sreenihdi and Chinyl (2017, 18), stands for Visual (learning by seeing), Auditory (learning by hearing) and kinaesthetic (learning by doing). However, the test indicates the preferred learning style. Janíková (2007, 63) notes that the learner's assignment to a certain learning style is not absolute since the preference can change over time.

On top of that, Sreenihdi and Chinyl (2017, 19) deeply examine the VAK learning styles, suggesting that visual learners write things down, copy notes from the board, use highlighters, like sitting in front of the board, write keywords, make lists, watch videos, use flashcards/mind maps, creates mental pictures of auditory information. For auditory learners, the same specialists (2017, 20) assume recording class notes to be heard later, using audiotapes, anticipation in discussions and group activities, reading out loud, asking questions, whispering information or putting new data into rhythmic patterns or repeating facts with closed eyes. Concerning kinaesthetic learners, the same co-authors (2017, 20–21) emphasise model creation, principles demonstrations, simulations, hands-on activities, and finding a comfortable position/place for learning.

By identifying learners' styles, teachers recognise the individual differences among learners to meet personal learning needs. This identification benefits both learners and teachers, demonstrates potential and improves effectiveness and engagement by creating a supportive environment and personalised learning materials.

5.4 Learning Strategies

Another factor that has been seen by many specialists (e.g. Dam 1995; Scrivener 2005; Tassinari 2012; Dickinson 1992; Scharle and Szabó 2000 or Nunan 2003) as crucial

for fostering learner autonomy is showing the learners how to learn, meaning that learners need to be trained in a variety of learning strategies. To support the importance of training learning styles in autonomous classrooms, Benson cites Cohen's definition of learning strategies (2013, 96), describing them as "learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner," highlighting the learner's possibility to choose. The reasons to support the learners' training in learning strategies are not only rooted in the enhancement of learners' independence from the teacher, as described by Dickinson (1992, 13) but also in Harmer's opinion (2007, 394), the key is in compensation for classroom time limits as learning strategies boost learner's chances for successful language acquisition and learning. Moreover, Scharle and Szabó (2000, 8) stress the importance of learning strategies development as they support the learner's responsibility for improving language competence.

Many classifications of learning styles exist; for this thesis, the one made by Oxford is introduced. Oxford (1990, 17) gives a detailed taxonomy of language-learning strategies by dividing them into two main groups – direct and indirect. The specialist's taxonomy further branches as follows:

Direct Strategies:

- I. Memory**
 - a. Creating mental linkages
 - b. Applying images and sounds
 - c. Reviewing action
- II. Cognitive**
 - a. Practising
 - b. Receiving and sending messages strategies
 - c. Analysing and reasoning
 - d. Creating structure for input and output
- III. Compensation**
 - a. Guessing intelligently
 - b. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing

Indirect Strategies:

- I. Metacognitive Strategies**
 - a. Centring your learning
 - b. Arranging and planning your learning
 - c. Evaluating your learning
- II. Affective**
 - a. Lowering your anxiety
 - b. Encouraging yourself
 - c. Taking your emotional temperature

III. Social

- a. Asking questions
- b. Cooperating with others
- c. Empathising with others

(Modified from Oxford 1990, 17)

The direct strategies include memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. As Oxford explains (1990, 58–59), memory strategies are used to store, remember and transfer new information more effectively for language production or comprehension, such as putting new words that have been read or heard in groups by their relation. According to the same specialist (1990, 69–72), cognitive strategies help students manipulate the TL correctly and authentically. For example, these strategies include drills practising the language. The last set of direct strategies listed by Oxford (1990, 90–93) are compensation strategies applied by more advanced learners to compensate for their knowledge limitations in the TL. Consequently, the learners are able to use general background knowledge or text structure clues to guess the meanings of unknown words.

The second group, indirect strategies, contains metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Following Oxford's opinion (1990, 136–138), metacognitive strategies enhance the learners' coordination of the learning process by giving them control over their learning, fostering the organisation, the process of goal setting, and planning their learning effectively. Accordingly, without these strategies, language learning cannot be successful as they are used in situations when the student can overview already known material and decide what to pay attention to. Then, in the clarification of affective strategies, Oxford (1990, 140–144) points out that they enable the students to control their emotions, attitudes, motivations and values, influencing language learning since the students may use laughter or meditation to relax or to write about their feelings in the diary. The last set of strategies defined by Oxford (1990, 144) are social strategies, highly applied in language classes as language is a form of social behaviour – communication among people. In consequence, these strategies offer situations for learners to practise the language to upgrade their language skills actively. For example, one of the basic social interactions is asking questions for understanding or facts.

For the purposes of this work, the students will work with strategies from both groups, direct and indirect, from the abovementioned Oxford's taxonomy (1990). However, they will be specially introduced to three cognitive strategies – taking notes, summarising, and highlighting – listed as part of the section called *Creating Structure for Input and Output* since, as Oxford

(1990, 47) states, these “strategies are ways to create structure, which is necessary for both comprehension and production in the new language.” These strategies are suitable for reading comprehension since Orford (1990, 47) suggests that taking notes involves recording key ideas or points using methods like raw notes, lists, outlines, or semantic maps for better organisation, summarising serves for writing abstracts of longer passages and highlighting such as underlining or colour-coding helps to focus on important information on the text.

Moreover, Oxford (1990, 46) mentions skimming and scanning as cognitive strategies applied for receiving and sending messages, especially for getting the idea quickly. Following the specialist’s opinion, getting the idea quickly involves skimming for main ideas or scanning for details to understand new language, often aided by rapid preview questions. However, in this paper, skimming and scanning will be analysed in detail as reading techniques in the following section.

The aim of this sub-chapter was to point out the importance of learning strategies in ELT in connection to fostering LA since they not only enhance learners’ independence but also maximise potential success in language learning. By incorporating the learning strategies, teachers effectively foster LA, empowering the learners to take responsibility for their language learning.

5.5 Reading Techniques

Following Harmer’s opinion (2007, 283), students must engage in two types of reading – extensive (for pleasure and general language improvement) and intensive (usually takes place in the classroom with the teacher) if they are to profit the most from their reading. Concerning the background of the lower-secondary school, by the end of it, the learners’ overall reading comprehension should be at an A2 level (FEP BE 2023, 17), meaning that at this stage, the learners based on the CEFR written by the Council of Europe (2001, 69):

“Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high-frequency everyday or job-related language. Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.”

(Council of Europe 2001, 69)

This is further taken into account by the FEP BE (2023, 28) in expected outcomes, stating that after the ninth grade, the learner should be able to read enough English to search for the required information in simple, everyday, authentic materials. Moreover, the learner

must comprehend short and simple texts and search for the required information. At a minimum level (ibid.), reading comprehension is then about understanding words and simple sentences related to the acquired thematic areas (especially if visual support is available).

Harmer (2007, 288) further deals with reading, stating that it sequences in class to enable the learners to practise specific reading techniques, supporting in-class reading, such as *skimming/reading for general understanding* ('gist') or *scanning/reading for specific information*. These two techniques contributed to the learners' overall reading comprehension as they are specified by the Council of Europe (2020, 53) in *reading for orientation*, also known as search reading, involving two forms: firstly, reading a text at speed (= skimming), and secondly, looking through a text for a specific piece of information (= scanning). Reading for orientation (Council of Europe 2001, 70) is described at the A2 level as that learner:

Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables. Can locate specific information in lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the 'Yellow Pages' to find a service or tradesman). Can understand everyday signs and notices: in public places, such as streets, restaurants, and railway stations; in workplaces, such as directions, instructions, and hazard warnings.

(Council of Europe 2001, 70)

Following this specification of reading for orientation at the A2 level, the learners cannot be expected to use these techniques with the same proficiency as more advanced ones. On the other hand, they should be introduced to and practice these techniques at the basic level to be able to scan the text to locate specific information in various contexts (lists, advertisements, timetables, menus, etc.) and skim the signs and notices to get the general meaning quickly. In general, A2 learners are expected to use these techniques to navigate and comprehend daily and practical materials with simple and predictable information. Furthermore, activities and material preparation should depend on the teacher's recognition of the class and the learner's abilities and knowledge of the language.

Practising skimming and scanning at this level helps learners become more autonomous in their daily activities. Moreover, the utility of these techniques reinforces basic comprehension and information retrieval. Considering this, the following parts of the paper describe scanning and skimming in detail.

5.5.1 Scanning

The term scanning is defined by Nuttall (1996, 48) as a process of “glancing rapidly through a text either to search for a specific piece of information or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for a given purpose.” Furthermore, the same specialist (1996, 49) adds that scanning tasks should be presented orally to ensure the rapidity of the process. In connection with this statement, Brown and Abeywickrama (2018, 218) list possible materials for practising scanning on time, such as short articles, essays, chapters of the book, tables and charts depicting research findings, menus or application forms. Accordingly, in these materials, the learners search for dates, names, places, a setting for a story, division of the chapter, results of reports, cost of an item or specified data filled in an application. Nuttall (1996, 49) provides a similar list of tasks reinforcing the quick retrieval of specific information, such as:

- Look at a particular page to find a specific piece of information.
- Count the occurrences of a word on a page.
- Use the index to find the page number where a particular topic is mentioned.
- Each group member takes one or two pages of the same newspaper and locates pages for various headlines displayed by the teacher.
- Use the text to answer quiz questions asked.

(Modified from Nuttall 1996, 49)

Butte College (n.d.) shares steps ensuring the effective application of the technique. For scanning as a follow-up activity after skimming, they suggest these summarising steps:

1. Select keywords/phrases to identify what to search for.
2. Focus on one keyword/phrase at a time and scan the text several times if needed.
3. Quickly move your eyes down the text until you find the keyword/phrase.
4. When you spot the keyword/phrase, read the surrounding text carefully.

(modified from Butte College n.d.)

Furthermore, another possible procedure listed by Butte College (n.d.) is using scanning to answer questions. This is the possible outline to apply:

1. Read the given questions carefully and indicate the keywords in them.
2. Scan to answer one question at a time.
3. Once you find the keyword, use the surrounding text to understand its relevance.

4. Re-read the question to confirm the correctness of the answer.

(modified from Butte College n.d.)

5.5.2 Skimming

Nuttall (1996, 49) explains the word skimming as a process of “glancing rapidly through a text to determine its gist”; on the other hand, its purpose is “to decide whether a research paper is relevant to our own work (not just to determine its field, which we can find out by scanning) or to keep ourselves superficially informed about matters that are not of great importance to us.” On top of that, Brown and Abeywickrama (2018, 222) consider skimming to be a strategy that helps the readers to predict. To achieve this, the coauthors register tasks where the learners skim the text to determine the main idea, understand why the author wrote the text, identify its genre/type, evaluate its difficulty, predict possible information or knowledge provided or determine its usefulness. Correspondingly, the responses on skimming tasks should be written or oral, serving as the baseline for the following detailed readings or in-class discussions.

Similarly, Nuttall (1996, 50) creates a list of skimming tasks focusing on rapid and general comprehension as well. For instance, skim the text(s) and choose the title that fits it the best, identify which topics from the list are covered in it, determine the figures illustrating the story, supply new texts about the same topic, and categorise them into groups.

According to Butte College (n.d.), there are several steps to follow when applying skimming in text reading. The steps of the process can be summarised as follows:

1. To grasp the main idea, read the table of contents or an overview of the chapter.
2. Briefly glance at the main heading and titles of chapters, charts or tables.
3. Read the introductory paragraph fully, then only the first and the last sentences of the following paragraphs.
4. Read the sentences with words in bold or italics.
5. Read the full sentence if something seems to be important. However, resist the temptation to read unnecessary details.
6. Read the summarisation of chapters.

(modified from Butte College n.d.)

These reading techniques were selected as they effectively improve learners’ ability to understand and process text, supporting their interaction with the world around them practically and meaningfully. In alignment with Nuttall’s opinion (1996, 48), they support

learners' reading flexibility as they narrow the text into parts – ones that ignore, skim to get the gist or examine closely. Moreover, as depicted by Harmer (2007, 288), these techniques are easily combined since the activity can start with a topic identification followed by scanning for specific information or reading for specific information that can precede the identification of the text.

Learners are able to promote their reading speed and develop their critical thinking skills and autonomy by incorporating and practising scanning and skimming in English lessons. As a result, applying these techniques encourages students to grow personally by supporting them in exploring the texts on their own, efficiently managing their learning time, and gaining confidence in their ability to comprehend and process information without any assistance.

6 CONCLUSION OF THEORETICAL PART

The theoretical part of the paper has comprehensively explored learner autonomy and its vital role in modern education, especially in the background of language teaching, particularly in English lessons. For this purpose, the thesis examines the approaches widely applied in contemporary education, including constructivism, individualism, and lifelong learning, and then their connection with autonomy is underlined. This examination has emphasised the crucial shift in education moving to learner-centred learning. Furthermore, these approaches require active and independent learners who can manage their learning process due to the acquired skills, making them adaptable in life outside the classroom.

The concept of learner autonomy, rooted in the progressive approaches toward education, was detailly defined and distinguished from the common misconceptions. At the heart of this exploration, the term learner autonomy is not merely recognised as a multifaced concept of autonomous learning but a dynamic process as well as a result of education that involves learners taking increasing responsibility for their learning journey. Consequently, it is not a process completely demanding an absent role of the teacher, but rather the turning point leading towards self-regulation, decision-making, and reflection. For instance, this perception of learner autonomy in language learning is essential in allowing the learners to be engaged with learning materials and further helping them make informed decisions about their education.

Concerning English language teaching, fostering autonomy is strongly tied to suitable learning conditions, such as redefining the roles of the teachers and learners and encouraging intrinsic

motivation and interactive classrooms. Therefore, teachers should not be seen as the only source of knowledge but rather as facilitators who support learners in the procedure of gaining control of their learning. Regarding this, learners are encouraged to carry broader responsibility for their education by making choices, setting goals, and engaging actively with the language in accordance with their individual preferences.

On top of that, it is important to highlight that the development of learner autonomy is gradual and progressive, which supports the learners in their transition from their complete dependency on the teacher to their independence or at least their partial independence. Following that, the autonomy development discussed in this paper emphasises that fostering autonomy is not about immediate mastery but about nurturing a learner's ability to increasingly take responsibility for their educational experience over a period of time. Correspondingly, it means that all students possess a different degree of autonomy.

This section of the thesis further details key strategies encouraging autonomy in the English classroom by establishing an environment where learners get direct learning assistance. At the same time, by building confidence and motivation to learn new things, this setting should guide students to become more self-assured. These strategies include acknowledging students' varied learning styles, letting them make decisions about learning and applying peer and self-assessments. Two reading techniques that might improve language learners' autonomy, scanning and skimming, were covered. With the help of these techniques, learners can increase their autonomy mainly by managing and processing new information, enhancing their reading comprehension, and efficiently and practically navigating a variety of texts.

To conclude, this theoretical foundation presented in the first part of the paper provides insight into fostering learner autonomy in English language teaching and learning. Autonomy is not an isolated trait but rather a set of interconnected skills, abilities, and attitudes that can be developed in learners by providing them with suitable learning conditions rooted in applying proper tools, opportunities, and support to assist them in preparation for lifelong learning. This fundamental background will serve as the framework for the empirical research depicted in the following practical part of the thesis, where these theoretical principles will be applied in action research.

PRACTICAL PART

7 RESEARCH

In the practical part of the thesis, the graduate student will conduct action research with the aim of fostering LA in a selected class during English lessons. In alignment, the aim of the research is to determine whether and how autonomy has improved the given class.

This process will begin with a diagnostic phase grounded in the investigation of learners' degrees of autonomy done with the help of a questionnaire. Based on the findings from the questionnaire, prior observations, and the author's experience with the class, an action plan will be designed to foster LA. This action plan will be implemented over a pre-stated period, focusing on improving LA through the application of reading techniques such as scanning and skimming in English lessons in an 8th-grade classroom. These techniques will be integrated into activities using A2 (lower) level texts aligned with the thematic curriculum.

After the implementation of a pedagogical intervention, its effectiveness will be critically assessed. The intervention will draw on the theoretical framework provided by Nunan's *Nine Steps to Learner Autonomy* (2003) and Scharle and Szabó's (2000) three-phase model for fostering LA, ensuring a structured and research-based approach to promoting autonomous learning skills.

In summary, the practical part of this thesis focuses on using action research to foster LA in English lessons by combining diagnostic tools, such as observations and questionnaires, ensuring a comprehensive approach to LA development. This research problem will be solved systematically and explained in detail in the following phases to track the work of the researcher precisely.

7.1 Research Background

The research was conducted during English lessons at a small private elementary school in a town in the Pardubice region. At this school, pupils begin learning English from the first grade. The textbook titled *Project* conducted by Tom Hutchinson is used in lower secondary school English lessons. The researcher visited the institution as part of a practical teacher training program, which took place from February 2024 to December 2024.

The school follows a 9-year elementary education system, divided into two stages: a primary and lower secondary, where the primary stage encompasses the first five grades, while the lower secondary stage is from the sixth to the ninth grade. While it may appear similar to other Czech schools, it stands out not only because it is private or its emphasis on early English language instruction but because the school maintains small class sizes, meaning that there is a maximum of 16 pupils in each class, in order to ensure an individualised education.

The institution fosters a strong sense of family-like community, believing in the potential of every child that should be discovered and gradually developed. The pupils are further encouraged to recognise their own needs and work towards constructively achieving them. A family-like atmosphere is actively cultivated through events that bring together students, parents, and staff and close relationships within the school. Teachers know all students by name and are familiar with their socio-cultural backgrounds, while pupils interact across different grade levels.

The school's curriculum is based on its SEP, titled *Life is Movement* (translated by the author from Czech title "*Život je pohyb*"), which offers a wide range of extracurricular activities such as excursions and trips. Additionally, the school management prioritises the holistic development of both students and teachers. Educators regularly participate in training sessions, webinars, and workshops to enhance their professional skills.

All lower secondary school students were involved in the first phase of the research intervention (pre-intervention phase). However, from the second phase onward, the focus narrowed only to the 8th grade, where the researcher cooperated closely with the class teacher, who has the role of an educational advisor as well as an English and Czech teacher and, throughout the clinical training, the role of the researcher's mentor. The specification of the class can be its layout as the students sit individually.

The 8th-grade class was selected for the study based on discussions with the mentor and the researcher's previous experience, deeming it a suitable class for the survey. During the initial phase of the practical training, the researcher taught the majority of English lessons in this class, allowing both the students and the researcher to become familiar with each other. At the same time, these students are preparing for their secondary school entrance exams in the following year, where they can benefit from applying the scanning and skimming techniques.

Furthermore, the class was considered appropriate for research based on the researcher's reflective diary entry. This entry marked the origin of the study's focus on reading development through skimming and scanning techniques as well. On April 18, 2024, the researcher noted:

“During the English lesson in 7th grade (added note: the selected class for the research, the next school year, when they became 8th graders), most students struggled with the reading task. The activity took the entire lesson even though it was planned for 15 minutes. The pupils got lost in the text, making it impossible for them to find the required information. They do not enjoy reading.”

(from the researcher's private reflective diary)

This reflection highlighted the need to foster the reading comprehension of these students, making the class a fitting choice for the study. On top of that, the topic of LA had already emerged earlier in the reflective diary.

On April 11, 2024, the researcher noted:

“Most students have problems working autonomously. They perform better in groups or pairs, but this varies between classes. Rather than attempting to find solutions or think about a task themselves, they rely on me (the teacher) to provide all the answers. Many students do not know how to begin the task without my guidance.”

(from the researcher's private reflective diary)

This entry further reinforced the importance of developing reading comprehension and autonomous learning skills, shaping the direction of the research.

The research topic is further supported by the OECD's 2022 PISA study (Programme for International Student Assessment) findings. As described by the European Commission (2024) in *the Education and Training Monitor 2024*, Czech students' reading performance has remained stable as “the underachievement rate in reading among the Czech 15-year-olds is at the same level as it was in 2012 and at 21.3% it is now among the lowest in the EU – although still above the EU-level target of 15%.” According to the abovementioned Monitor (2024), one in five Czech learners aged 15 does not meet the basic proficiency level in reading. These findings emphasise the need for interventions to improve reading comprehension.

Consequently, the paper's topic is relevant and up-to-date since LA, and the reading techniques reflect the objectives of modern learning. The objectives underline the need for LA, flexibility and the ability to work with various information efficiently. These concepts should be integrated

into language teaching to equip the learners for success in academics and everyday life, possessing the ability to process and interact with the surrounding environment.

7.2 Research Questions

Regarding the theoretical part of this thesis, where the experts highlight the importance of LA in language education. The emphasis is placed on fostering LA to enable students to take responsibility for their learning, develop autonomous learning strategies, and become more self-regulated learners. Moreover, as theory indicates, reading techniques, scanning and skimming can contribute to the development of autonomy by encouraging learners to engage with texts in a strategic and self-directed manner.

Taking the topic of the research question into account, Švaříček and Šed'ová (2007, 69) emphasise that the overall aim of the work set the basis for the formulation of its core, the research questions. Accordingly, that must be clearly formulated to guide the study and ensure that the researcher can answer them at the end of the investigation. Properly structured research questions not only define the scope of the study but also provide a framework for data collection and analysis.

Concerning these statements, the overall thesis aim is to foster LA among 8th-grade students in English lessons through action research by implementing scanning and skimming techniques with A2-level (lower) texts and subsequently analysing questionnaires, student diaries, and reflections to determine whether and how their autonomy has improved. Following that, research questions have been established:

Has learner autonomy improved among 8th-grade students as a result of using scanning and skimming techniques with A2-level (lower) texts?

How has learner autonomy improved among 8th-grade students as a result of using scanning and skimming techniques with A2-level (lower) texts?

The purpose of these research questions is to evaluate the effectiveness and the specific impact of the applied reading techniques on fostering LA. As captured in the research questions above, the first one concentrates on assessing whether LA has improved. In contrast, the second one explores the specific ways in which autonomy has developed. The overall evaluation of the intervention will possibly be provided by combining collected data from questionnaires with insights from student diaries and the teacher's reflections.

7.3 Research Methods and Tools

To enhance the credibility of the findings and support the accuracy and overall trustworthiness of the research, the triangulation strategy will be employed since more than one method will be applied. Broadly speaking, triangulation is a process based on examining a problem from different perspectives, as defined by Denscombe (2010, 346). To provide a more comprehensive picture of the reality investigated, this may include a variety of methods, a range of data sources, or even other researchers. Furthermore, Hendl (2012, 161) stresses the importance of choosing the appropriate research methodology since only the proper methods can gather the needed data type. The specialist emphasises that the chosen research methods must align with the research problem and the paper's objectives. Therefore, as previously anticipated, action research serves as the main method in this thesis, complemented by observations, questionnaires, learners' and teacher's diaries, and the final reflection to gather comprehensive data. Additionally, different informants are involved, such as the researcher as an observer or a teacher and the learners, which, according to Denscombe (2010, 347), fulfils the need for informant triangulation.

As the first research tool, the observation sheet will be used to understand whether and how LA is being supported or developed in English lessons in the given lower secondary school. This tool was chosen based on Švaříček and Šed'ová's (2007, 143) belief that the observation aims to capture and describe the events of a given situation precisely and in detail. For this purpose, *direct observation* was employed in this study, following Gavora's (2000, 78) guidelines. This form of observation requires the observer to attend all classes without disrupting their normal flow. As a result, the observer sits in a corner of the classroom, allowing for a clear view of the class and enabling one to see all students working. Simultaneously, *unstructured observation* can be discussed as Švaříček and Šed'ová (2007, 145) comment on this type of observation that obtains a detailed description of behaviour that has not been precisely defined in advance. Furthermore, it allows openness to unexpected situations since the analysis of notes supports the formulation of new topics. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, 397) state, unstructured observation is exploratory and flexible, focusing on observing a situation without predefined hypotheses as it should be generated by analysing the observed data before forming explanations for the phenomena. In summary, observation is employed to document the interactions and behaviours of the observed subjects as they occur.

To further improve LA through the application of scanning and skimming, the action plan will be prepared after the observations and the new knowledge that emerged from their analysis. As Denscombe (2010, 125–126) emphasises, action research is usually associated with small-scale projects centring on practical, real-world issues improving outcomes through active involvement. This approach highlights its practical, change-oriented nature. On top of that, Cohen et al. (2007, 304–305) further suggest that action research can proceed in different ways, but one common approach divides it into two stages: a diagnostic stage, where problems are analysed and hypotheses developed, and a therapeutic stage, where hypotheses are tested through intervention or experimentation. On the other hand, Lewin (in Cohen et al., 2007, 304–305) further selects this process into four stages – planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These stages will be employed in the framework, where the pre-intervention phase provides a baseline. Then, the intervention phase includes skill building, and the post-intervention phase offers the study's outcomes. This means that the action research begins with the data gathering procedure rooted in the current situation, followed by developing an action plan, which may be modified as necessary and ends with data interpretation. The intervention stage involves ongoing monitoring and evaluation, which informs a revised plan and new procedures for further action. Denscombe (2010, 126, 128) also notes that a typical application of action research is in professional self-development, where it helps practitioners systematically improve their practices through reflection and data collection. Moreover, the features of action research – its practical nature, focus on change, cyclical process, and active participation of students – make it a flexible and effective strategy for improving educational practices.

The action research will be supported by the teacher and students' reflective diaries, which will keep information about the intervention procedure and the student's learning. Both diaries will be analysed with the help of open coding, which is specified by (2012, 247) as a qualitative data analysis method where researchers identify themes in textual data by assigning codes to key concepts. This process begins with low-level, specific codes that are gradually grouped into more abstract categories, aiming to uncover patterns and relationships within the data and further understand their implications.

As already indicated, action research will begin and end with a questionnaire. According to Gavora's interpretation (2000, 99), this tool is widely used for collecting data due to its ability to gather a large volume of information within a short time. Moreover, Cohen et al. (2007, 317) add that a questionnaire is a practical and efficient instrument for many reasons since it can provide structured, often numerical data that is easy to analyse and can be administered

without the researcher's presence. For the purpose of this thesis, questionnaires based on Tassinari's autonomy model with closed questions will be used. The same experts consider questionnaires with predefined responses to be particularly beneficial as they allow comparisons. Compared to open-ended surveys, the complementation of this form of questioning is quicker and allows statistical analysis. Gavora (2000, 98, 100, 102) adds remarks on closed questions, considering them to be straightforward to answer since the respondents select specific positions on scales. The specialist further explains that these questions guarantee clarity of responses and reduce potential misinterpretation, being an essential fact for keeping the results reliable. This type of questionnaire allows the researchers to determine the frequencies of each response to be further captured in percentages. Thus, the findings can be easily presented visually in charts.

The research methodology selected for this empirical study ensures valuable analysis as triangulation will be applied to reinforce the credibility of the findings and provide essential insights. Supported by the practical improvements of the action research done during the application, this further enhances the researcher's educational practices.

8 ACTION RESEARCH

As previously anticipated, action research serves as the main method in this thesis. Based mainly on Lewin's four key phases (in Cohen et al., 2007, 304–305), including planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These phases will serve as the fundamental structure of the research process, beginning with pre-intervention observations to establish a baseline, followed by a skill-building intervention and concluding with post-intervention analysis.

Even though the researcher acknowledges the benefits of the cyclical nature of action research, making it an effective approach for enhancing both reading techniques and LA, only one cycle will be conducted as time management was taken into account.

8.1 Pre-intervention Phase

The first pre-intervention phase of the action research focused on identifying the research problem, establishing a theoretical framework, and collecting preliminary data through classroom observations. The process began with an extensive review of relevant literature in February 2023 to set the theoretical foundation for the following classroom observations conducted in May 2024, spanning a total of 10 hours. Most of the information obtained in this section has already been clarified in previous sections, such as the Research Background

section. The rest of the information gathered during the preliminary research can be found in this section.

The pre-intervention research targeted all lower-secondary students (meaning the students from the 6th to the 9th grade) with an English proficiency level of A1-A2, according to the CEFR. To collect needed data, observations were planned to assess whether and how LA was being supported and developed in English lessons.

For data collection through observations, a list of 14 descriptors was developed, rooted in Tassinari's model of autonomy (see Appendix 5). In alignment with Tassinari's belief, these descriptors were categorised into four dimensions: action-oriented, cognitive and metacognitive, affective and motivational, and social. While each descriptor is assigned to the dimension where it predominantly belongs, their influential interrelations are also acknowledged, as shown in Appendix 5. However, these connections are more complex than they can be fully captured in the graphical representation.

The graphic representation in Appendix 5 shows that descriptors highlighted in red – 2) *Learners set their learning goals based on their needs*, 3) *Learners are: a) involved in the process of goal setting, b) encouraged to plan their learning*, 4) *The choices and decision-making opportunities are offered via choosing: a) Exercise, b) Interaction pattern, c) Strategies, d) Materials, e) Place to work*, 7) *Reflection is incorporated where the learners assess their learning: a) Self-assessment is incorporated b) Peer-assessment is incorporated*, and 10) *Student-led activities are involved as they decide on: a) Aim, b) Content, c) Strategies, d) Materials, e) Interaction pattern* – predominantly fall within the action-oriented dimension, while descriptors in blue – 1) *New knowledge relates to existing knowledge/personal knowledge*, 12) *By integrating discussions or problem-solving activities, the teacher encourages learners' critical thinking*, and 13) *An inductive approach to teaching grammar is incorporated in the lesson* – belong to the cognitive and metacognitive dimension. The affective and motivational dimension includes descriptors in green – 5) *The teacher supports learners' motivation for a) Learning in the classroom, b) Learning outside the classroom*, 6) *The learners' feelings connected to the learning process are dealt with*, and 11) *The learning environment is supportive and encourages risk-taking (positive reinforcement, safe learning space)*, whereas the social dimension mainly comprises descriptor in yellow – 14) *Variety of interaction patterns: a) Individual work is involved, b) Pair work is involved, c) Group work is involved*, though it also appears in others already mentioned

such as 4b), 7b) or 12). In addition, descriptors 8) *The teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a lecturer*, and 9) *Teacher-led activities are involved as she decides on a) Aim, b) Content, c) Strategies, d) Materials, e) Interaction patterns*, marked in grey, underline the role of the teacher in relation to autonomous learning development. This list of descriptors was designed to allow the researcher a comprehensive insight into the issue while effectively meeting the objective of observation.

An observation sheet was designed to document activity descriptions and systematically record the process of all observed lessons. During the observation, descriptors from the list were assigned to each activity to reduce the subsequent influence of time or the researcher's distorted perception of the activity description. An example of a completed observation sheet from one lesson is provided in Appendix 6.

Before the observations, the tool was piloted on a recorded English lesson. During this process, the sheet's effectiveness and the researcher's ability to complete the sheet in real time were confirmed. Furthermore, it demonstrated the importance of knowing the list of descriptors for accurate data collection.

After observations, the frequency of each descriptor's occurrence was counted and then visually represented in a chart (see Appendix 7). This chart illustrates how often an individual descriptor appeared across the 10 observed English lessons. Consequently, this presentation provides well-arranged insight into the support of LA development.

Following the chart summarising the results from observations, the descriptors can be categorised into groups based on their frequency of occurrence in the lessons. The number in bold marks the descriptor, while the one in the brackets always means the individual occurrence in the 10 observed lessons.

Descriptors with occurrences of 15 or more are considered to be highly frequent and well-established in the lessons. These include: **6)** The learners' feelings connected to the learning process are dealt with (20), **8)** Teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a lecturer (30), **9)** Teacher-led activities: **a)** Aim (24), **b)** Content (23), **c)** Strategies (20), **d)** Materials (23), **e)** Interaction patterns (23), **11)** The learning environment is supportive and encourages risk-taking (22) and **14)** Variety of interaction patterns: **a)** Individual work is involved (15).

Moderate descriptors, which show inconsistent or non-dominant occurrences (6–14), encompass: **1)** New knowledge relates to existing knowledge/personal knowledge (11),

4) The choices and decision-making opportunities are offered via choosing: **c)** Strategies (6), **d)** Materials (6), **e)** Place to work (7), **5)** The teacher supports learners' motivation for: **a)** Learning in the classroom (11), **10)** Student-led activities are involved as they decide on: **c)** Strategies (6), **12)** By integrating discussions or problem-solving activities, the teacher encourages learners' critical thinking (7), **14)** Variety of interaction patterns: **c)** Group work is involved (9).

Descriptors with low frequency (1–5 occurrences) appear rarely, suggesting that they are not a prominent and strong feature of the lessons. These comprise: **2)** Learners set their learning goals based on their needs (2), **3)** Learners are: **a)** Involved in the process of goal setting (5), **b)** Encouraged to plan their learning (3), **4)** The choices and decision-making opportunities are offered via choosing: **a)** Exercise (5), **b)** Interaction pattern (1), **5)** The teacher supports learners' motivation for: **b)** Learning outside the classroom (2), **7)** Reflection is incorporated where the learners assess their learning: **a)** Self-assessment (2), **b)** Peer-assessment (4), **10)** Student-led activities: **a)** Aim (2), **b)** Content (5), **d)** Materials (3), **e)** Interaction patterns (3), and **14)** Variety of interaction patterns: **b)** Pair work is involved (5).

Moreover, one descriptor, **13)** An inductive approach to teaching grammar is incorporated in the lesson (0), was fully absent, as no grammar explanation was included in the observed lesson, only its revision.

Before the interpretation of these data, it is important to acknowledge that every descriptor occurred at least once during the 10 lessons except for the number 13), which is centred on the inductive teaching approach. On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge that external factors, such as the end of the school year, might have influenced the lesson activities. For instance, projects and school trips may have reduced the opportunities for students to engage in self-assessment or decision-making. Future research could extend observations across different times of the academic year to gain a more balanced understanding of LA development.

The results show a significant predominance of teacher-directed activities (descriptor **9)**), which limits the involvement of students in decision-making or planning processes. Descriptors **2)**, **3)**, and **10)** describe that the student's active participation is significantly lower. In contrast, significant support is seen in the role of the teacher as a facilitator (descriptor **8)**), being the highest recorded descriptor with 30 occurrences. Thus, it can be stated that the teacher focuses on guiding rather than direct instruction. This aligns well with LA principles.

Additionally, there is great support for addressing pupils' emotions **6**) with 20 cases, which creates a positive environment for learning. However, self-assessment (2) and peer assessment (4) in descriptor **7**) are less frequent, indicating less emphasis on reflective practices. Overall, the chart (Appendix 7) emphasises the need for greater involvement of pupils in active decision-making and planning for the development of autonomy.

Based on the analysis, autonomy was found to be fostered in some areas but also significantly limited in others. The aim of the observations was to find out whether and how LA is supported and developed in the English lessons. The findings directly address the research question by showing that autonomy is developed primarily through emotional and motivational support from the teacher, while other factors, such as self-assessment or peer-assessment, student decision-making or diverse interactions, were involved to some extent as well. Although the teacher often acted as a facilitator, she still had a dominant role in deciding on aims, content and materials, limiting LA in planning their own learning.

To be more precise, emotional and motivational support was one of the key elements that contributed to the development of LA. The teacher focused on students' motivation and emotional well-being (20 cases for emotions, 11 for motivation), thereby creating a safe environment for learning (in total recorded in 22 cases). This environment can support the long-term development of LA as students feel more confident and more willing to take responsibility for their own learning.

Concerning the process of reflection, it was not frequent enough. Only 6 cases of reflective strategies were identified (2 cases of self-assessment and 4 cases of peer assessment), indicating that the integration of reflection is not strong enough to support LA fully. Reflection plays a vital role in the learning process as it allows students to understand their own learning needs better, assess their progress and effectively plan next steps.

Moreover, the teacher's role as a facilitator was found in 30 cases, but her dominance still persisted in making decisions about the teaching content, aims, strategies, interaction patterns and materials (each more than 20 cases). This means that although the teacher supported students in their learning, LA was limited since the learner's involvement in decision-making about the learning process was low. Limited choice of learning objectives and content prevents students from developing the skills needed to manage their own learning.

Autonomy was further fostered by applying a variety of interaction patterns. Diverse interactions encouraged collaboration among students, but the predominant individual work

limited opportunities for autonomous decision-making. The individual work was recorded in 15 cases, while pair work occurred in 5 cases and group work in 9 cases. To promote autonomy, it is important that students have more opportunities to collaborate, share their opinions and learn to make decisions within group dynamics.

Overall, the results of the observations showed that although LA was partially supported, more emphasis still needs to be placed on the involvement of students in decision-making and on the development of their ability to plan and reflect on their own learning. The planned interventions aimed at creating an environment in which students can take more responsibility for their educational process and thus develop their autonomy more effectively.

The results influence the preparation of the action plan, which is described in the following section. Based on these findings, it was clear that LA could be further developed through greater involvement in decision-making, the use of reflective and metacognitive strategies, and the gradual transfer of responsibility for the learning process to the students themselves. Accordingly, the action plan focuses on encouraging active student participation in decision-making. This is promoted by increasing opportunities to influence learning and set their goals, helping develop their autonomy and responsibility for their learning. Then, reflective and metacognitive strategies (learner diary, peer assessment) were involved more to allow students to understand their progress better and adapt their learning. Furthermore, activities linked to practical language situations were applied as much as possible, such as working with authentic materials, helping students see meaning in learning and applying their skills outside of school. Thus, the gradual transfer of responsibility for learning to students was supported, where the emphasis was placed on supporting autonomy, where students set their own goals, plan their progress and evaluate their results. However, the individual students' abilities were considered, and the plan was adapted based on the classroom possibilities.

Based on the gathered data, the intervention class was selected, the research focus and its aim were narrowed, and an action plan was designed to foster LA effectively, as already depicted by the aim specification in the introduction of the thesis.

8.2 Intervention Phase

The outcomes from the previous part of the thesis, which centred on the pre-intervention, were acknowledged and interconnected with the theoretical background when formulating the action plan. Accordingly, the plan incorporates Scharle and Szabó's (2000) three phases of developing a learner's autonomy, Nunan's (2003) nine-step program of autonomy implementation

in the classroom, tailoring the order of the steps to correspond to the Scharle and Szabó's concept, Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of language-learning strategies and a list of 14 descriptors based Tassinari's model of autonomy (see Appendix 5). The initial action plan is attached in Appendix 8, alongside the references to the main theoretical sources applied.

The intervention phase of the research was conducted from September to December 2024, with an original duration of 13 weeks. However, due to organisational factors, such as school holidays and missed lessons, the schedule was adjusted to 11 weeks, with one lesson held per week. In total, 11 lessons focused on fostering LA through reading techniques were implemented.

As previously outlined, the research was carried out in the 8th grade with a maximum number of 15 pupils in the class. The reading materials were tailored to the students' A2/A1 language proficiency level according to the CEFR and created with the help of ChatGPT. Each text was generated on the basis of a specific topic, language level, age of pupils and required scope; sometimes, the target vocabulary was provided. All the tasks followed the basic rules, such as left-aligned text divided into paragraphs and written in a font without serifs to be favourable for students with dyslexia. Subsequently, tasks aimed at the development of both reading skills and pupils' autonomy were added to these texts. Each text generated by ChatGPT was critically examined by the researcher to ensure it met the classroom and intervention needs.

The only condition set by the mentor for the implementation of the research was compliance with the school's thematic plan. The teaching was therefore organised to match the prescribed topics, which included past tense, definite and indefinite articles, conjunctions (and, but, while, because, if), prepositions and giving directions, conversations as well as themes such as natural disasters, Halloween, the United Kingdom, and London. While these topics were considered during the planning stage, not all of them appeared in the intervention, as they were implemented in other English lessons.

The intervention was designed in accordance with the requirements of the SEP in the area of reading comprehension, where the aim is for the pupil to possess abilities helping "to capture the main idea of the text of the appropriate scope, be able to find answers to questions in the text and identify main and specific information when engaging with the material" (translation provided by the researcher, the reference cannot be exploited, keeping the anonymity of the school).

8.2.1 The Initial Action Plan

The initial version of the action plan (Appendix 8) was originally designed for 13 weeks and divided into three main phases. The first phase (3 weeks) focused on introducing the intervention to the learners, identifying learning styles and demonstrating reading techniques. Pupils were expected to complete a pre-intervention questionnaire, work with model texts and reflect on the effectiveness of various strategies. The second phase (3 weeks) supported LA. They were supposed to set their own goals and explore opportunities to use English outside of school. They should further verify the effectiveness of the strategies with a questionnaire and reflect on their progress. The third phase (5 weeks) aimed to promote the active involvement of pupils. First, they should have created their own materials, then tried out the role of a teacher for two weeks, and for another two weeks, the role of researchers was prepared for them. The last two weeks were supposed to be dedicated to testing, reflecting mainly by completing the post-intervention questionnaire and evaluating the entire process.

However, the original plan could not be followed due to time constraints, and the researcher's lesson reflections indicated the need for adjustments following the learner's needs. As a result, the action plan was flexibly adapted to meet the learners' needs better and provide adequate support for the development of autonomy.

The first significant plan adaptation happened after the first lesson, as each lesson that focused on developing LA through reading techniques was concluded with a reflection in the learners' diary. The learners always had to reflect on what they learned and the effectiveness of the lesson and plan concrete steps to improve their learning. Initially, it was planned to keep the diary only in English, but after the first lesson, this condition was re-evaluated. Pupils were given the option of choosing between Czech and English to enable deeper reflection on the content and the learning process. For this reason, reflective questions or sentence starters were presented in both languages.

Following the discussion of the overall intervention framework and the adaptations made, the subsequent sections will detail each lesson as the plan had to be modified, highlighting specific activities, goals, and changes based on classroom needs and reflections that were noted throughout the lessons by the researcher in the teacher's diary. This approach was selected not only to support effectively the development of reading literacy but also to foster LA in the learning process.

8.2.2 The Adapted Action Plan

As already depicted, the original action plan had to be adapted based on external conditions and classroom realities. This section serves to present the modified schedule with the help of a description of the individual hours. Several data collection tools (questionnaires, students' and teacher's diaries) will be referred to. However, these tools will be analysed in the section entitled Post-intervention Phase. Due to the large range of individual lesson plans, only one example will be included in the appendix.

8.2.2.1 Week 1

Due to scheduling adjustments, the intervention started later than originally planned, with the first lesson (Week 1) taking place on October 2. In this session, falling in the first phase, *Raising Awareness* and addressing step 1: *Making instruction goals clear to learners*, the learners were introduced to the program's objectives and guided toward understanding how reading techniques, scanning and skimming, could enhance their reading skills and foster LA. This lesson further focused on assessing students' initial stage of LA. Thus, by the end of the lesson, the learners had a clearer understanding of how these techniques could improve their reading skills and autonomy in learning. This lesson plan is provided as the planning example in Appendix 9, including both the initial action and lesson plan.

The lesson began with a teacher-led introduction outlining the intervention and its aims. The students were explained how to improve their reading comprehension through the techniques and study more autonomously by setting goals, monitoring progress, and making choices about their learning. On top of that, the emphasis was placed on the long-term benefits of LA, centring on lifelong learning.

To activate students' thinking, the concept of LA was introduced through a brainstorming session and guided discussion. The teacher wrote "Learner Autonomy" on the board and prompted students with the following questions: *How do you understand this term? What comes to mind when you hear this phrase? Have you ever decided what you wanted to learn at school? Do you think it is important to make your own decisions when learning? Why or why not? Can you give an example of something you learned on your own, without a teacher? How did you learn it?* Students discussed these questions in small groups (three people in the group) before sharing their opinions with the class, allowing them to reflect on their own learning.

After briefly explaining scanning and skimming, the students were asked to share any possible experiences with these techniques and consider their usefulness and practical benefits. However, no previous experience was acknowledged among them.

In order to get insight into the present stage of LA and the knowledge of the reading techniques, the students then filled out a pre-intervention questionnaire (see Appendix 20). The outcomes served as a reference point for measuring learner's progress.

The lesson concluded with a diary reflection, reinforcing the importance of self-assessment as a key component of LA. Students were provided with sentence starters to guide their reflections: *My expectations from the programme are...*, *The aim of the programme is...*, *Today, I have learned about...*, *I feel that this lesson was...*, *In today's lesson, we discussed...*

The final discussion supported students in reflecting on the lesson by answering the following questions: *What is the most important thing you learned today? How do you feel about this programme? What do you expect from it?* This reflection ensured students' understanding of the intervention's aim. Then, they further commented on the pre-intervention questionnaire.

The learners' progress will be documented through diary reflections, allowing them to develop greater autonomy and confidence in their reading. After the first lesson, an adaptation permitted the students to choose the language for their reflections.

8.2.2.2 Week 2

The second lesson took place in the week of October 7th to 11th. Due to the modifications of the original plan, steps 4 and 5 were swapped to prioritise the identification of learners' preferred learning styles, as the outcomes had to be considered in the rest of the intervention. Accordingly, this lesson aimed at assisting pupils to identify their preferred learning style on the basis of the Lead VAK Test (see Appendix 4). The session activities further supported a more profound understanding of the learning styles and reflected on how this knowledge could enhance reading comprehension in English.

The lesson started with brainstorming, during which the students answered the questions: *How do you learn the best?* and *How do you learn something new?* This activity aimed to activate their thinking about their learning preferences and prepare them for the main topic of the lesson.

Subsequently, the students worked with the handout *Friends Study for the Big Test* (see Appendix 10), where VAK learning styles were illustrated through characters. After reading

the text, they answered questions designed to recognise each character's learning style and checked their answers in pairs. This fostered a mutual exchange of ideas and encouraged active collaboration.

In the next lesson phase, the students completed the Lead VAK test, with the researcher providing prompts for visualisation. After completing the test, they were grouped to participate in the discussion according to their results (seven visual learners, four auditory learners, and two kinaesthetic learners). In the discussion, they identified strategies usually applied in their learning and evaluated whether the results of the VAK test aligned with their perception. On top of that, they considered the effectiveness of strategies they had employed before. This activity helped the pupils to gain insight into their natural learning preferences to optimise their learning.

At the end of the lesson, the students worked on reflection in a diary reflection, by completing the following sentence starters (this time provided both in Czech and English versions to enhance comprehension): *Today, I learned that my preferred learning style is..., Knowing my learning style helps me because..., I will use this information to improve my reading by..., and Next time, I will try to...*

The lesson ended with a short discussion in which the students reflected on how they could apply their learning styles more effectively in reading and other areas of learning. The reflection concluded that during reading activities, it is appropriate for visual learners to underline keywords or convert the main ideas of the text into mind maps, and overall, a clear segmenting of texts into clear, structured sections is also helpful. Auditory students can enhance comprehension by reading aloud (whispering) and engaging in post-reading discussions to reinforce sorting the information. The kinaesthetic learners may find taking notes while reading most effective and incorporate movement (e.g., standing or walking while reading). This reflection helped them consolidate new knowledge and actively work with learning styles in the following lessons.

8.2.2.3 Week 3

The aim of the third week (14/10 – 18/10) was to raise awareness of the learning process and deepen their understanding of reading techniques, specifically skimming and scanning, corresponding to step 4, according to Nunan: *Raising Awareness of the Learning Process*. The week focused on the explanation and the practical demonstration of these techniques in reading, emphasising their relevance in improving text comprehension.

The lesson started with a brainstorming session, where the students reflected on the questions: *Do you like reading?* and *Have you ever had to read a long text in a short time?* The questions stated served to engage the learners in thinking about the challenges of reading quickly.

A presentation of both techniques followed, followed by an introduction to the topic, as the teacher provided the explanation, highlighting that skimming is used to read the text and find the main idea quickly. On the other hand, scanning involves searching for specific information (e.g., numbers, dates or names, without reading the entire text). Furthermore, the possibility of combining both techniques for efficient reading was discussed. Then, the pupils were encouraged to discuss real-life scenarios where these techniques might be helpful. In connection with this, they mentioned browsing newspapers, reading online articles, or seeking specific data. This discussion centred on the application of the techniques beyond the classroom setting.

Additionally, the students received a handout, *Reading Techniques – skimming and scanning* (see Appendix 11), with definitions and steps leading the application of the techniques to read independently. After learners' questions connected to skimming and scanning, they worked in groups on a task where they had to order the steps of applying both techniques logically. This collaborative task aimed to reinforce their understanding of the procedural steps involved in both skimming and scanning. The valuable learning strategies (summarising, highlighting, and note-taking) that were easily applied to the reading techniques were discussed.

The lesson continued with learners' active application of the techniques and strategies. The pupils chose one version, A1 or A2, of the text titled *A World Traveler's Experiences* (connected to the theme of natural disasters). Both versions were intentionally designed to challenge the students, illustrating that understanding the main ideas of a text does not necessarily require comprehending every word. For example, the handout with A2 text is provided in Appendix 11. Pupils were supposed to try the practical use of skimming and scanning according to predetermined steps. After completing the task, they compared their answers in pairs and discussed how they applied the techniques and their usefulness in finding information in the text. The results were then discussed with the whole class.

Due to lack of time, students were asked to complete a brief diary reflection using at least three of the following sentence starters: *Today, I learned about...*, *The lesson was effective because...*, *I used skimming and scanning when...*, *Today, I used these learning strategies...*, *In the connection to skimming and scanning, I need to improve...*, and *Next time, I will focus*

on... This reflection helped the pupils to realise how they had applied the given techniques in the lesson.

At the end of the session, it became apparent that most students had not struggled with the challenging vocabulary in both texts. However, they encountered difficulties applying the reading techniques, as many ended up reading the entire text. As a result, more time was spent on reading than initially planned.

8.2.2.4 Week 4

Building on findings from the previous lesson, where students did not apply the reading techniques, the plan was modified. During the 4th week (21/10 – 25/10), the researcher decided to return to the text used in the previous lesson (see Appendix 11) and, in collaboration with the pupils, systematically apply the individual steps of skimming and scanning. The aim of this lesson was to practice and repeat both techniques more thoroughly, enabling the pupils to start using them correctly and effectively.

The lesson began with a review of the techniques, during which the students wrote on the board any piece of information they could recall about each technique. This activity allowed the pupils to express their understanding and helped to clarify the basic definitions of both techniques. This introductory phase was followed by a detailed explanation of the techniques using the handout from the prior lesson. To support better understanding, the application steps were condensed for ease of memorisation. A Czech version of this shortened form was provided as well.

The steps were coded as follows:

Skimming: 1. Title, 2. Pictures, tables, charts, 3. The first paragraph, followed by the first and last sentences in the following paragraphs, 4. Words in bold or italics, and 5. Ignoring the details

Scanning: 1. Choose keywords, 2. Find keywords in the text, 3. Read the surrounding text, and 4. Re-read the question. Do you have the answer?

Subsequently, the step-by-step reading of the text from the previous lesson began. First, the students applied the steps for skimming - each step was performed independently with the help of the teacher, who managed the entire process of applying the techniques. After the skimming was completed, the scanning steps were applied. By repeating the steps

and reading the text together, the students had the opportunity to practice these skills in practice and better understand how to use them correctly for effective reading.

Following the reading task, there was a discussion where the students compared their answers and shared the information they had extracted from the text. This process helped the pupils to consolidate the correct use of both techniques and showed them how they could make their work with the text more efficient. Although lack of time prevented a full diary reflection at the end of the lesson, students were encouraged to take notes and reflect on how they could apply these techniques in their future reading tasks.

8.2.2.5 Week 5

Due to the holidays, Week 5 was rescheduled to the week of 4–8 November, becoming the first week of the second phase, *Changing Attitudes*. The lesson's main goal was to foster learners' involvement in the learning process by encouraging them to set their own goals (Nunan's 2nd step). This approach was intended to enhance their autonomy and motivation to improve their reading comprehension through targeted techniques.

The lesson began with a student-led review of skimming and scanning together with their individual steps redefined in the previous lesson. Subsequently, we explored the importance of aims in learning.

Another part of the lesson was devoted to the formulation of individual educational goals. Each student was tasked with creating their own SMART goal, i.e. a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound goal related to improving reading comprehension through skimming and scanning techniques. To simplify the entire goal-setting process, a guiding question was provided for each SMART criterion:

- 1) What do you want to improve in your reading with the help of scanning and skimming?
- 2) How will you know you've improved? Write the percentage you want to reach by December 5.
- 3) How can you achieve it?
- 4) Why do you think skimming and scanning are important for you?
- 5) When will you reach this goal?
 - By December 5. (*Pre-set deadline*)

By answering all the questions, each student created a concrete and individualised goal, with the testing date of December 5 as the only parameter. After completing the task, some students shared their goals with the class, creating space for mutual inspiration and motivation.

In the next phase, the pupils chose one of the prepared texts about London (A2 level version in Appendix 12). They were instructed to choose two exercises related to the text; however, most students opted to complete all three. They then exchanged their completed worksheets with a classmate for peer assessment, after which we reviewed the exercises collectively. This activity was designed to promote autonomy, reinforce previously acquired reading techniques, and encourage self-regulated learning.

At the end of the lesson, the students engaged in written reflection on their progress, responding to the following prompts in their diaries: *What do you find most useful about today's lesson?*, *How did you work with skimming and scanning today?*, *How do you feel about stating your own aim?*, *Did you manage to work on your aim fulfilment today? How?*, and *Write down your result (the percentage) of the reading activity.*

Students then assessed whether they had already met their goal or if further practice was required. In this way, their awareness of the learning process was strengthened, enabling them to actively participate in planning their progress. At the end of the lesson, the learners' diaries were collected to read the previous reflections and set goals, reflect on them, and provide individual feedback. Examples of the learner's goal with the commentary can be seen in Appendix 13.

8.2.2.6 Week 6

In the sixth week of the intervention (11/10 – 15/11), the emphasis was placed on fostering pupils' ability to make independent decisions connected to the learning process, rooted in Nunan's sixth step: *Encourage learner choice*. The lesson aimed to empower students by allowing them to select materials suited to their individual needs.

Originally, students were expected to independently source authentic English materials (e.g., online articles and brochures) and apply skimming and scanning techniques. However, due to the necessity of consolidating their understanding of article usage, the activity was modified. Instead, a real-life article summarising grammatical rules was introduced (see Appendix 14). Consistent with previous sessions, students had full autonomy over their learning process, deciding whether to work individually or in pairs, selecting their preferred text difficulty, and choosing their workspace within the classroom.

Following the reading task, students self-assessed their work as we discussed the answers, then shared results in a class discussion, where they reflected on the techniques employed. This

self-evaluation process encouraged greater accountability and deepened their awareness of effective reading techniques.

In the next phase, students reviewed teacher feedback on previous reflections in their diaries. They were given time to think about the comments, consider their implications, and articulate their thoughts to discuss later. To reinforce the importance of critical reflection, they were reminded that vague or superficial responses (e.g., “I do not know”) were insufficient (see Appendix 13).

To conclude, students responded to targeted reflection prompts designed to track progress and refine their strategic approach: *How did you work on reaching your goal today?*, *What do you need to work on?*, *What is your result from the reading activity?*, and *What strategies or techniques (like skimming, scanning, highlighting) did you use during the lesson, and how did they help you reach your goal?*

8.2.2.7 Week 7

In the seventh week (18/11 – 21/11) of the intervention, the pupils’ negative attitude towards reading activities became widely evident, which significantly affected the lesson dynamics as a larger part was devoted to the discussion of the given topic. Therefore, the objective extended beyond reinforcing reading techniques; it aimed to foster intrinsic motivation and illustrate the practical value of skimming and scanning in daily life. Thus, this session aligned with Nunan’s third step: *Encouraging the Use of English Outside the Classroom* in order to support the students in perceiving English not only as an academic subject but as a component of their daily lives.

The lesson commenced with a brief discussion during which the students shared their feelings about the reading activities. This was followed by a debate on the real-world applicability of skimming and scanning techniques, inquiring the students to reflect whether—and in what contexts—they had employed these techniques. Their examples of applications included working on a school project, looking for a specific part of a recipe, or reading the composition of products in the supermarket.

The subsequent reading task was based on a text, *A Day at the English Club* (see Appendix 15), strategically selected to encourage pupils to examine their own approach to language acquisition. After the discussion of results in pairs and the evaluation of the assigned tasks, the lesson transitioned into a discussion, guided by these prompts: *Do you learn English outside*

the school? How?, Would you like to start learning English outside the class? Why?, and Do you use English outside the school?. Accordingly, this part of the lesson focused on the importance of English in everyday life. Pupils discussed where and how they can meet English outside of school - for example, by watching movies, listening to music, talking to friends, communicating on social networks or travelling. This activity helped connect school teaching with real experiences and motivated pupils to take a more active approach to learning.

At the end of the lesson, the students answered the following questions, reflecting on their progress and the strategies and techniques they had applied: *How did you work on reaching your goal today? What is your result from the reading activity?, What strategies or techniques (like skimming, scanning, highlighting) did you use, and how did they help you?, How did working with a partner or in pairs help you during the lesson?, and Do you feel you made progress today? Why or why not?*

8.2.2.8 Weeks 8 and 9

Weeks 8 and 9 (25 November - 6 December) were dedicated to Nunan's 7th (*Allow Learners to Generate Their Own Tasks*) and 8th (*Encourage Learners to Become Teachers*) steps. These two weeks marked the final phase of the research—Transferring Roles—where students assumed greater agency over the learning process. Concerning the time constraints and the cognitive demands on learners, step 9, *Encourage Learners to Become Researchers*, was omitted from the intervention. The main goal of this phase was to empower students with a greater degree of control over the teaching process and let them actively participate in the creation of materials and teaching.

The first lesson commenced with a discussion: *Do you create your own study tasks or materials?, Have you ever designed tasks based on a text?, and What tasks can be associated with scanning (specific information) and skimming (main idea) techniques?* This discussion encouraged students to reflect on their role as active participants in the learning process and explore approaches to task creation.

Due to the high absence in the lesson, the students were divided into only two groups of four. Both groups were assigned the same task of choosing a topic in alignment with the thematic plan, defining the objective of the task, creating the task itself together with its instructions and evaluation, and thus preparing a short lesson for their classmates. To facilitate this process, students were provided with a structured handout outlining the assignment in points and questions for creating goals (see Appendix 16). After the task preparation, they submitted

their tasks via email, specifying the required number of copies for classroom use (see Appendix 17).

In the following lesson, students gained full control over the classroom, leading their peers in the complementation of the activities they had prepared. Each group taught a short lesson, presenting their task and overseeing their classmates' work by reinforcing reading techniques and providing a practical experience with the instructions. In this lesson, the teacher did not interfere with the learners' teaching, acting only as an observer while documenting insights for reflection. The intervention was limited to redirecting the lesson if necessary.

After completing the tasks, the students gave feedback to the creators of the task - they evaluated their comprehensibility, difficulty and effectiveness (see Appendix 18). A whole-class discussion ensued, in which students reflected on their experience as teachers, sharing insights on the challenges and rewards of facilitating their peers' learning.

At the end of the second lesson, the students reflected on the following questions in their diaries: *How did you feel when you made a task and taught your classmates? What was good, and what can be better?, How did your group work together? Was it good teamwork?, What feedback did you get from your classmates? Was it helpful?, What would you change in your task or teaching? Why?, and Did you reach your own goal when you did your classmates' task?, How did it help your skimming or scanning?*

According to this timeline, the final testing had to be postponed to the following week (12th of December). On top of this, the final reflection was rescheduled after Christmas to accommodate the school's Christmas celebration.

8.2.2.9 Week 10

The tenth week (9/12 – 13/12) was dedicated to the final testing, summarising the entire intervention process and fostering reflection on the pupils' progress. The primary objective was not merely to assess the knowledge and skills acquired over the preceding weeks but also to support pupils in self-evaluation and awareness of their own progress in the field of reading techniques.

The class started with testing (see Appendix 19), in which the students were given the possibility to select their preferred text level before applying the skimming and scanning techniques they had practised throughout the intervention, while emphasis was placed on their autonomous selection and correct use of strategies. A time period of 15 minutes was

set for completing the test. Most of them completed it within the first 10 minutes; pupils with dyslexia were given the entire allotted time. The test material was intentionally shortened based on feedback from the previous lesson, allowing for greater cooperation between students and the teacher and ensuring time for post-assessment reflection.

Following the test, the students commented on how they felt. Some mentioned difficulties in summarising the text, leading to a discussion about further developing this skill. Subsequently, the students filled out a post-intervention questionnaire (see Appendix 22), focused on changes in their autonomy and ability to apply scanning and skimming techniques. These responses, together with those from the pre-intervention questionnaire, will later be analysed in the post-intervention phase to assess the broader impact of the intervention on LA.

Instead of the usual diary entry, a student-driven discussion was introduced, as many of the students did not want to write. During this time, students shared their knowledge and experiences from previous weeks. They talked about what they learned, how their approach to reading changed, and what techniques helped them the most to reflect on their progress. The answers were varied: “It didn’t do anything for me.”, “I often missed classes, so maybe I didn’t progress as much as I could have.”, “It helped me, I’m definitely more confident in reading.”, “I liked it; I learned a lot of new methods.” or “It was good; I learned new words.”

As the discussion evolved, the dynamic shifted – students began directing questions toward the teacher, asking, “How did you feel with us?”, “How are you doing writing your diploma?”, and “Was this project challenging for you? How much?” In response, the teacher re-explained the reason behind selecting their class for the intervention. Pupils were reminded to bring in their diaries for a final reflection session after the Christmas break.

8.2.2.10 Week 11

The eleventh and final week (6 – 10 January) was devoted to deeply reflecting the entire intervention process. This concluding phase allowed students to assess their test results and further examine their overall progress in connection to their reading skills and autonomy. Thus, the goal was not only to conclude the intervention but also to support the pupils in transferring acquired techniques and strategies to study further.

The session commenced with a collaborative discussion evaluating the final test, where students were encouraged to identify their successes and improvement areas. To structure their reflections, three key questions were projected onto the board: *What are you proud of in your*

test?, Is there anything you would do differently next time?, and How did skimming and scanning techniques help you during the test? The students were given a moment to contemplate their responses before sharing their answers voluntarily in the discussion.

The session transitioned into small-group discussions, with students working in groups of three to explore the following questions: *How confident do you feel using skimming and scanning on your own now?, What will help you keep improving your reading skills?, and How can you practice skimming and scanning independently in the future?*

Regarding this, the students not only consolidated their learning but also articulated concrete ways in which they could apply these techniques beyond the classroom. The students' options included researching project topics, choosing a new book, or working with a dictionary. This further underscored the practicality of these techniques across disciplines in real-life surroundings.

Consequently, the students then revisited their diaries, systematically reviewing their past entries to trace their development. This retrospective analysis resulted in responses to three critical reflection prompts: *What did you learn about yourself as a learner during this intervention?, How have your reading skills improved during this intervention?, and What role does autonomy play in your learning, and how have you become more autonomous?* This allowed pupils to see their own progress and better understand the importance of LA.

At the end of the session, the learners' diaries were collected for final feedback, ensuring that each student's work was acknowledged.

8.3 Post-intervention Phase

The final phase of this action research focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention and its impact on the targeted issue. Conducted with eighth-grade students, this stage began after the final reflection (in January 2025) and involves a thorough analysis of data collected through pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, learner diaries, and the teacher's log.

This phase aims to determine the extent to which the intervention fostered LA and improved reading techniques, providing a foundation for further pedagogical adjustments. In accordance with this, the changes in LA and reading will be assessed, and the effective and challenging aspects of the intervention will be identified together with insights for possible future interventions.

8.3.1 Questionnaires

Both pre- and post-intervention questionnaires focused on key aspects of autonomy and knowledge/application of reading techniques, designed in alignment with the dimensions according to Tassinari's model, correspondingly based on the list of descriptors (Appendix 5) that were observed in the lessons. In these questionnaires, the respondents provide answers by marking a point on the given scale.

Both questionnaires were piloted with a different 8th grade, where it was found that they effectively captured the required type of information, showing various LA levels of individual learners. The outcomes further revealed the fact that learners with a higher level of language proficiency and deeper knowledge of English mostly experienced or possessed an alignment with the abilities reflected in the described statements and vice versa. On the other hand, it must be taken into account that these questionnaires illustrate the learners' subjective viewpoints to complement the researcher's perspective. Consequently, their responses may be influenced by self-assessment and self-perception.

8.3.1.1 Pre-intervention Questionnaire

The pre-intervention questionnaire (see Appendix 20) was designed to assess students' current stage of autonomy, specifically to map their abilities and knowledge of reading techniques at the beginning of the intervention. To achieve this, 13 questions were prepared, which the students, in the first week of intervention, responded to with the help of a 5-point scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always), securing a compromise between sufficient detail and user-friendliness. This structure ensured that the questionnaire remained easy to understand and process for both pupils and the researcher. A total of 11 questionnaires were completed and included in the research, as all were filled out fully, and no other reasons for their exclusion were recognised.

The responses revealed varying degrees of autonomy among the students, reflecting differences in their individual learning approaches, their engagement with the English language, and their ability to apply reading techniques effectively. On the other hand, the overall result of this questionnaire, as illustrated in the table (see Appendix 21), must be interpreted.

The responses suggest that the learners heavily rely on their teacher to guide their learning rather than being autonomous. One of the key findings is that only two students regularly use English outside the classroom, while the majority engage with the language only sometimes

(question 1), suggesting that English learning is interconnected with the school settings and, accordingly, is not perceived beyond the classroom surroundings.

Furthermore, a low level of students' self-regulation is depicted in the 2nd and the 3rd questions. This fact illustrates that nine out of eleven students rarely or never plan their own learning. Subsequently, eight students never or rarely set their learning goals. Without these two abilities, the students may struggle to take responsibility for the learning process.

In terms of decision-making, the results (question 4) reveal limited opportunities for students to make choices. Most students have little choice in selecting their place to study, with 4 students never having this option and 3 rarely. Some students (4 often, 4 sometimes) can choose their learning materials. Most commonly, the learners can choose the interaction pattern (3 students always, 4 often and 4 sometimes), suggesting that some autonomy is present, but it is not fully integrated. However, more than half of the respondents reported that they occasionally have the freedom to choose exercises (5 students rarely, 2 sometimes). This lack of such opportunities may contribute to students' passive approach to learning as a more flexible approach to learning could potentially enhance students' sense of responsibility and engagement.

With reference to the teacher-student collaboration in goal setting (question 5), the responses are quite spread out, as 4 students feel they never or rarely participate in this process. This may indicate that goal setting is primarily teacher-led. On the other hand, the same number of students suggested the complete opposite, and the rest voted for sometimes.

Despite this low level of autonomy, students generally feel supported and motivated (questions 6 and 7) in their learning process. Five students reported often feeling supported when learning new things in English class, and another five always felt supported. Similarly, five students stated that their teacher always motivates them, and four feel this motivation often. These findings highlight that the students benefit from a positive and encouraging classroom environment.

Concerning self-evaluation (question 8), the data shows that seven students rarely or never assess their own work, and peer evaluation (question 9) is also inconsistent, with most students stating that classmates only sometimes evaluate their work. The lack of regular reflection suggests that students primarily depend on the teacher's feedback.

The remaining questions focused on scanning and skimming, revealing a general lack of awareness and application of these techniques, essential for effective reading comprehension. The responses in question 10 indicate a mixed engagement with reading; however, it is not a regular habit. Only two students reported always reading in English, three often, and four sometimes, while two rarely or never read in English. This suggests that reading is not a common practice for most students.

Followingly, the awareness of techniques for effective reading (question 11) is limited as eight students had little to no knowledge of effective reading techniques (never or rarely), illustrating that learners may rely on slow, word-for-word reading rather than employing structured methods to navigate texts.

The last two questions show that the ability to identify specific information quickly (scanning) is also inconsistent, with four students often using it but five rarely or never using it. Similarly, only two students often use skimming to find the main idea of a text, while four do so sometimes, and five rarely or never use this strategy.

Concerning the beginning of the intervention, LA in learning English was at an early stage. They do not actively use English outside the classroom, set learning goals, or engage moderately in moderate peer evaluation, with little self-evaluation. While teacher support and motivation are strong, students have limited experience in taking responsibility for their own learning. To promote greater autonomy, it is essential to introduce activities that encourage planning, goal-setting, decision making and self-evaluation. Additionally, their mixed reading habits and lack of knowledge of key reading techniques may hinder their reading comprehension. However, it must be acknowledged that individual factors, such as the absence of the students, could influence the questionnaire results.

These results illustrate similar outcomes to observations. Both emphasise the classroom where the students relied heavily on the teacher's support and lacked consistent involvement in decision-making, goal-setting, and self-evaluation by supporting the need for autonomous learning through the application of reflective practices and the gradual transfer of responsibility for learning to students. This created a clear baseline for the intervention, which aimed to gradually increase their control over the learning process.

8.3.1.2 Post-intervention Questionnaire

The post-intervention questionnaire (see Appendix 22) was completed in the tenth week of the intervention to assess changes in learners' autonomy and their skills. Unlike the pre-intervention questionnaire, which focused on mapping initial abilities, this version targeted concrete progress together with subjective self-evaluation.

To ensure clarity and minimise misinterpretation, a simplified 3-point scale (no, partly, yes) was used, allowing the straightforward analysis of change. Students completed a total of 10 questionnaires; however, only nine were included in the research, as one lacked answers and was therefore deemed irrelevant.

The questionnaire primarily used "can" statements to capture subjective perceptions of the improvement. In total, the list consisted of 14 structured statements concerning the intervention, with one additional statement perceiving the achievement of learning goals before receiving their test results. This provided insight into their self-assessment skills and overall perception of progress. Before summarising the results, it must be acknowledged that the outcomes may have been influenced by students' absences during the intervention, as well as on the day the questionnaire was completed.

The overall results from this reveal improvements in LA (see Appendix 23). One of the key indicators of LA is the extent to which students engage with the language beyond the classroom. While some progress was observed, the change remained relatively limited as 2 students felt they now used English outside of school more frequently, 2 reported a partial increase, and 5 saw no change in their habits. These results suggest that while the intervention helped some learners extend their use of English beyond the school setting, a significant number still struggle to integrate the language into their daily lives, possibly being influenced by external factors or lack of motivation.

The notable improvements can be particularly seen in goal-setting and self-regulation. Concerning this, before the intervention, most students rarely or never planned their own learning. However, in the post-intervention phase, 4 students reported being able to do so, while 2 felt partly confident and only 3 stated they still could not (statement 2). On the other hand, goal-setting (statement 3) saw an even greater improvement: 5 students confirmed they could now set their own learning goals, while 2 felt partially confident, and only 2 remained unable to do so. These results indicate that a large portion of the students became more self-directed, being a key factor in fostering autonomous learning.

However, decision-making in learning (statement 4) remains an area for further improvement as when asked, the responses were more divided as follows: 3 students felt confident, 4 felt only partly confident, and 2 still lacked confidence in making these choices independently. This outcome suggests that despite gaining awareness of the learning processes, structured support from the teacher may still be required to assist in developing skills needed for receiving full control over the learning environment.

Another area where autonomy remains limited is the creation of exercises for reading practice (statement 5) since 6 students reported they still could not create their own exercises. Following this, although they became more aware of reading techniques, they have not yet developed the confidence to independently generate practice activities. The reason may be rooted in the adaptation of the action research lowering the chances for students to prepare their own tasks.

Encouragingly, students gained confidence in evaluating both their own and their peers' work, which was a key area of weakness before the intervention. Regarding statement number 14, 6 students felt partly confident in assessing their classmates' work. The same number of students reported in statement 13 the ability to evaluate their own performance. This shift suggests an increased sense of self-awareness and critical reflection.

The second half of the questionnaire focused on students' understanding and application of skimming and scanning. The results of statements 6 and 7 highlight the considerable improvement in these areas as 6 students fully understood how skimming helps them find the main idea of a text, while 2 felt partly confident, and only 1 lacked understanding. Similarly, 6 students fully understood how scanning helps them locate specific information, with 2 reporting partial understanding and only 1 struggling with the concept.

The significant contrast to the pre-intervention stage, where the majority of students either had no knowledge of these techniques or only used them sporadically is represented in statements 8 and 9. Furthermore, students' ability to articulate these concepts improved as 4 students stated they could confidently explain skimming and scanning. Another 4 felt partly capable, indicating that most students now have at least a working understanding of these essential reading techniques.

The following crucial improvement is in reading confidence. Before the intervention, only 2 learners reported frequent reading in English. After the intervention, 6 students stated they now felt partly more confident reading in English, showing a positive shift in skill and attitude.

The questionnaire further assessed students' motivation and metacognitive awareness (statements 11 and 12). Concerning the outcomes, 4 students reported feeling motivated to continue improving their reading, while 1 was only partly motivated, and at the same time, 4 still lacked motivation. Regarding the reflection, 4 students could now reflect on their learning in a diary, 2 partially and 3 without this ability. However, a growing ability to monitor and assess their progress independently can be suggested.

Lastly, students were asked whether they believed they had achieved their own pre-set reading goals before receiving their final test results: 3 students felt confident they had reached their goal, 3 believed they had partially succeeded, and the same number of learners felt they had not met their expectations. This final self-assessment provides insight into their ability to evaluate their own progress.

To conclude, the outcomes of the post-intervention questionnaires indicate a clear development in LA and reading techniques. Progress is shown in goal-setting, self-reflection, peer assessment, and awareness of reading techniques. Decision-making and the ability to create learning activities independently remain areas for further development.

Moreover, the students feel more confident in their reading abilities and in assessing their own work, which are the key factors of autonomy. The intervention successfully enhanced their understanding of reading techniques, but fostering language use and self-directed learning practices outside of school continues to be a challenge.

8.3.2 Final Testing

The final test (Appendix 19) took place in the tenth week of the intervention, with nine completed tests included in the evaluation as the rest of the class was absent. Before the final testing session, each student set a personal aim to work on in week 5. The table in Appendix 25 presents these self-set goals in percentage, final test results, and information on whether the student achieved the individual pre-set target. An example of the filled-in test is attached in Appendix 24.

As the table shows the final test result, it can be seen that the majority of students met their goal, as 6 out of 9 successfully met or even exceeded their self-targeted goal. The significant over-achievement can be seen, as Student 1, who initially aimed for just 10%, ended up scoring 100%, demonstrating a substantial underestimation of their ability. Two students (Student 2, Student 4, and Student 6) did not reach their intended scores, with Student 4 achieving less

than half of their target. On the other hand, Student 6 narrowly missed their goal, falling short by 10 percentage points, meaning one mistake.

Even though most students demonstrated an increased awareness of their learning process by setting realistic goals, their answers to the last question from the post-intervention questionnaire (I fulfilled my aim by reaching the pre-stated percentage or more in the last reading.) show that only three students correctly predicted their success. At the same time, three underestimated their performance, and three overestimated their abilities, illustrating the gap between self-perception and actual performance. Accordingly, this problem could be solved by further emphasis on metacognitive strategies.

8.3.3 Teacher's Diary

During the intervention, the teacher's diary was kept in English and in an electronic version. The notes were taken by the researcher regularly every week during the lesson, right after it, or occasionally to capture adding remarks on the needed plan adaptations. The aim of this diary was to reflect the lessons taught during the intervention in order to monitor the changes and progress of LA in the given class. All citations of notes in this part were chosen since they illustrate the given problem the most vividly and are taken from the teacher's diary.

The data analysis process started by reading the diary multiple times to get more familiar with the text. Following the identification of repetitive themes, the procedure of open coding the diary started; the given note was always highlighted, and the code was added in the brackets (see Appendix 26). Once the list of codes was created, the patterns and relations between them were identified to group them into broader categories. Accordingly, the table summarising the 6 categories and their codes was constructed (see Appendix 27).

The first category, Student Perception of Autonomy and Reading, shows initial misconceptions and low motivation, stressing the need to reshape attitudes. The codes in *Challenges in Implementing Techniques* highlight difficulties with independent learning, requiring structured guidance. *Teacher Support* plays a key role in scaffolding autonomy through adjustments, repetition, and encouragement. In *Signs of Progress in Learner Autonomy*, codes indicate growing self-reflection, strategy use, and confidence, though *Reflection* reveals mixed opinions on impact. The last category, *Remaining Challenges*, suggests some students still struggle with autonomy, requiring ongoing support.

The teacher's diary reveals a gradual shift toward LA, though it was met with initial resistance and challenges. Early on, students had a limited understanding of autonomy, believing it to be automatic rather than a learned process (Week 1: *"Autonomy seen as automatic"*). Many also expressed resistance to reading, seeing it as unnecessary (Week 1: *"Some are bored by reading, do not like it (since it is not needed)"*). Low motivation was evident in early brainstorming activities, where students were mostly hesitant to discuss their learning habits (Week 2: *"From the beginning of the lesson, the students are quiet (expressing their negative attitude towards reading)"*, *"No not want to talk, only three share the way they learn"*).

Throughout the intervention, students struggled to apply skimming and scanning techniques independently (Week 3: *"Students read the whole text, do not apply the techniques or the steps"*, *"The possibility of step-by-step guide reading"*). Diary writing was also a challenge, as students felt overwhelmed and required a Czech version for better understanding (Week 1: *"Students find it hard as they have never done it before and seem to be overwhelmed -> the Czech version is promised for the following weeks"*).

The teacher played a crucial role in fostering LA—adjusting materials, reinforcing strategies, and encouraging reflection. Techniques were revised weekly (Week 4: *"Step-by-step reading of the whole text -> Most students managed to read the text this way and completed the task"*), and structured guidance was provided through board work and repeated explanations (Week 5: *"Students revised the techniques and their steps, they wrote them on the board to be followed during the reading"*). Teacher feedback on diary entries led to more detailed student reflections (Week 6: *"Some students write more detailed answers (?Influenced by the diary commentary?)"*), showing progress in self-awareness.

By Weeks 6-7, students began independently using reading techniques and even applied them outside class (Week 6: *"Most of the students used the techniques (they told me by raising their hands 12/13"*, Week 7: *"5 students comment on the RL usage and the way they have applied it IRL (working on a school project, looking for a specific part of a recipe, or reading the composition of products in the supermarket)"*). Peer teaching further encouraged autonomy, as students prepared materials and led lessons (Week 8-9: *"Students create own tasks and teaching material"*, *"Peer-led instruction with feedback"*). By Week 10, some students reported increased confidence in their reading skills (Week 10: *"It helped me, I'm definitely more confident in reading."*, *"I liked it, I learned a lot of new methods."* or *"It was good, I learned new words."*), while others remained sceptical about its impact (Week 10: *"It didn't*

do anything for me.”, “*I often missed classes, so maybe I didn’t progress as much as I could have.*”).

However, progress was uneven—some students remained dependent on the teacher, struggled to internalise techniques, and had difficulty planning their learning (Week 11: “*One student: did not use*”, “*Few students able to state personal strategies for future improvement by using it in different texts, different subjects or languages (in projects, reading diary, history lesson)*”).

Taking the previous insight into account, autonomy is not automatic, as it requires consistent support. While some students gained confidence and applied techniques independently, others still needed guidance, emphasising the importance of a teacher. Despite initial resistance and challenges, the intervention showed that with structured guidance, motivation, and reflective opportunities, students can gradually develop LA in their learning.

8.3.4 Learners’ Diaries

After analysing the teacher’s diary, learners’ diaries were examined to understand their reflections on autonomy and reading techniques. Students documented their thoughts in their preferred language, providing insights into their learning process.

Several challenges emerged, including inconsistent entries due to absences and difficulties with reflection, which students found challenging since keeping a learning diary was a new experience. Accordingly, some struggled with structuring detailed and relevant responses. The students’ reflections were not scheduled for weeks 4, 8, and 10. Moreover, according to the diaries, no one reflected in the fifth week, even though they were requested to. The format of prompts also played a role, with students finding direct questions more effective than sentence starters. Furthermore, to make the whole process quicker, the students used dates to track the diary, not having to rewrite the questions. The citations used in this part are in the original students’ version; some were translated from Czech, and some written in English were minorly adjusted for clarity (e.g. the word order and spelling).

The analysis began with multiple readings, followed by open coding to identify recurring themes (see example in Appendix 28). These codes were then grouped into five categories (see Appendix 29).

The *Expectations and Motivation* category reflects a mixed starting point among students; while some aimed to improve their English and learn new techniques, others had no clear expectations. *Lesson Perception* shows varied engagement, with some students finding lessons

useful while others found them boring, suggesting a need for more personalised approaches. The *Learning Process* category highlights students' use of skimming and scanning, group or pair work, and preferred learning styles, then feedback and the need for improvement suggest gaps in their learning and emerging self-awareness. *Self-perception and Perceived Progress* emphasise challenges with comprehension and reading, with some students noting no improvement, pointing to the need for ongoing support. On the other hand, this part also acknowledged that some students felt improvement and gained confidence while others did not, revealing differing levels of self-efficacy. Finally, *Autonomous Learning* shows that some students remained dependent on the teacher with no significant change in autonomy, indicating that fostering independent learning requires more structured guidance and time.

To be more specific, the learners' diaries reveal that the students initially approached the intervention with mixed expectations. Some aimed to improve their English skills and reading abilities, expressing a desire for progress (Week 1: "*My expectation—better English,*" "*I want to be great in reading and also I want to get my English better*"). Others hoped to learn new reading techniques but did not articulate specific goals (Week 1: "*Now to better read main information in text*"). However, some students lacked clear expectations altogether (Week 1: "*My expectations are normal,*" "*The aim of the intervention – idk,*" "*I do not know*"). Over time, some students began to recognise improvements in their skills, particularly in reading (Week 11: "*My English skills but especially reading skills improved very much, I feel more confident with reading in English*"), suggesting that despite initial uncertainty, the intervention had a positive impact on certain learners.

Students' perceptions of the lessons varied. Some found them engaging and beneficial, particularly when new techniques were introduced (Week 1: "*I feel that the lesson was great and I enjoyed it,*" "*I think it was great to learn new things and also to learn what is our best side,*" Week 3: "*The lesson was effective because we learned new techniques and strategies,*" "*I do not need to read the whole text*"). Others felt that the lessons were boring or ineffective (Week 1: "*The lesson was a little boring,*" Week 3: "*The lesson wasn't effective because it was slow*"). These differing perspectives suggest that while some students appreciated structured learning activities, others struggled with engagement, possibly due to the challenge of adapting to new techniques.

The introduction of skimming and scanning was met with mixed reactions and resistance. Initially, some students did not see their relevance or found them unnecessary (Week 2: "*I do*

not use them,” *“They are not useful because I want to know English at least somehow”*). However, in later weeks, some students reported applying these techniques and found them helpful (Week 6: *“I used scanning, and it helped me,” “I used skimming and scanning and highlighted the main information”*). Despite this, not all students embraced the techniques, with some continuing to express disinterest (Week 6: *“I do not use today and skimming and scanning”*). The differing responses indicate that while strategy instruction benefited some students, others either struggled to see its value or preferred reading whole texts.

Group work also produced varied responses. Some students found working in pairs or groups helpful, as it allowed them to share ideas and gain confidence in their responses (Week 7: *“Very good :D (more work in pairs),” “I learned new things and see them from a different perspective”*). However, some preferred to work alone (Week 7: *“I do not have partner.”*) others were frustrated by uncooperative peers and found the group unproductive (Week 7: *“Not so much helpful,”* Week 9: *“Some people in my group didn’t work”*). These responses suggest that while peer interaction can be a valuable tool for learning, it requires careful structuring to ensure equal participation and engagement.

Despite exposure to techniques and opportunities for practice, many students continued to struggle with comprehension. Early in the intervention, several expressed difficulty understanding texts (Week 1: *“I do not know,” “It is hard”*). As the weeks progressed, some continued to find reading challenging, reporting minimal improvement (Week 11: *“It does not help me,” “My autonomy does not work,” “I don’t think I improved my skills”*). Others acknowledged some progress but noted that reading remained a difficult skill (Week 6: *“It can be better”*). These comments suggest that while some students benefited from the intervention, others required additional support and practice to experience noticeable improvement in their comprehension skills.

Perceived progress and self-perception evolved throughout the intervention. Some students reported feeling an improvement in their reading abilities (Week 7: *“I think I work really good and my goal is finished,” “It is easier to work with the text”*). Confidence in English also increased for some, with students gradually feeling more comfortable with reading and speaking (Week 11: *“I read a little better,” “My aim at last text wasn’t at 100%, but I am fine with it because I understand all things”*). However, these gains were not universal, as some students remained doubtful about their progress. These findings suggest

that while the intervention had a positive impact on some students' self-perception, others did not perceive significant improvements.

Autonomy in learning remained a key challenge. Although some students expressed a degree of autonomy (Week 11: *"I am autonomous in learning, but I ask the teacher when I need help"*), others felt that their autonomy had not developed (Week 11: *"My autonomy does not work," "I don't think I improved my skills," "No benefits I was autonomous even before that"*). These reflections suggest that while the intervention encouraged some students to take more responsibility for their learning, many continued to rely on teacher guidance. Moreover, it seems that students perceive autonomy as the ability to take care of themselves outside the school (e.g. preparing a breakfast) rather than as something connected to learning or even comprehended as the ability to take control over the learning process. The findings indicate that fostering learner autonomy requires sustained support, structured practice, and ongoing encouragement.

Overall, the intervention led to varying levels of progress among students. While some gained confidence, improved their reading skills, and successfully adopted new techniques, others remained dependent on the teacher and struggled with comprehension. These outcomes highlight the complexity of LA, emphasising the need for structured guidance and individualised approaches to address diverse student needs.

9 CONCLUSION OF PRACTICAL PART

Initial observations highlighted students' limited involvement in decision-making and planning, difficulties in using reflective and metacognitive strategies, and reluctance to take responsibility for their learning. These findings align with the literature, which, in connection to fostering LA, has identified the need to support greater independence in decision-making, gaining greater rights and accepting responsibility to lower the dependence on teachers (Benson, 2013; Little, 1991; Mareš and Mareš, 2014). The intervention aimed to address these gaps by introducing scanning and skimming techniques to improve reading efficiency and foster LA among 8th-grade students working with A2-level (lower) texts. The post-intervention phase, assessed through questionnaires, learner diaries, final testing, and the teacher's diary, evaluated its impact.

The pre-intervention questionnaire revealed students' heavy reliance on the teacher, lack of setting personal learning goals, and unfamiliarity with scanning and skimming. Learner

diaries supported this, showing low motivation for autonomous learning and a limited understanding of the LA, making the intervention challenging as in line with Mynard and Shelton-Strong's (2022) argument a certain level of learner motivation when exercising autonomy is needed.

In contrast, the post-intervention questionnaire indicated significant improvements: five students could set personal learning goals, four were able to plan their study processes independently, and six reported increased confidence in self and peer evaluation. Little (2007) highlights that goal-setting, ability to plan and self-evaluation are key indicators of LA, and the improvements seen here confirm this framework. Additionally, six out of nine students gained a solid understanding of scanning and skimming, marking a shift toward autonomous learning. On the other hand, challenges remained in independently creating exercises.

Final test results reinforced these findings, with six out of nine students meeting or exceeding self-set reading goals, reflecting improved reading skills and self-monitoring. However, metacognitive skills remain an area for development, as some students over- or underestimate their abilities, underscoring the importance of bridging the gap between self-perception and actual performance. As Oxford (1990) points out, metacognitive strategies enhance the learners' coordination of the learning process by giving them control over their learning, and this area needs further attention.

The teacher's diary and learner diaries provided qualitative insights into students' progress. By Weeks 6-7, most students independently applied scanning and skimming, even using them outside the classroom for tasks like reading recipes. Peer teaching activities in Weeks 8-9 further encouraged ownership, with students designing and leading lessons. By the final week, many reported increased reading confidence, though some still required guidance. This finding is consistent with Ur's (2009) argument that individualisation is a situation in which the learners possess some degree of choice that reduces the teacher's direct control.

These findings answer the research questions. The first question—whether learner autonomy improved among 8th-grade students as a result of using scanning and skimming techniques with A2-level (lower) texts—must be answered affirmatively. The data confirm improvements in goal-setting, self-regulation, self and peer evaluation, and greater confidence in using reading techniques, the key components of autonomy as outlined by Benson (2005) and Little (2007). However, full autonomy is still a work in progress, and further structured support is needed, as autonomy is a developmental process (Scharle and Szabó, 2000).

The second question, concerning how learner autonomy has improved among 8th-grade students as a result of using scanning and skimming techniques with A2-level (lower) texts, reveals that students became more engaged in self-directed learning, better at setting and achieving goals and more capable of evaluating their own work and that of their peers, in line with the findings of Dam (1995) and Dickinson (1992). Their application of scanning and skimming techniques improved significantly, and some students even began using these techniques outside the classroom. However, areas such as independent decision-making and task creation remain to be developed further.

The action research faced certain limitations. The selection of texts was restricted to prevent cognitive overload, ensuring students could effectively engage with scanning and skimming techniques. This further influenced the learners' possibility to choose or interact with real-life materials. Additionally, some steps from Nunan's program (2003) overlapped, which may have positively influenced the development of LA as they were not dated only to one week. Objectivity was influenced by the researcher's dual role as a teacher, but student perspectives helped balance potential bias (Denscombe, 2010). Accordingly, reliability was affected by the small sample size, though piloting the observation sheet and questionnaires helped improve consistency. Credibility was strengthened through data triangulation from student and teacher diaries, questionnaires, and test results, which is in line with Hendl's (2012) emphasis on using multiple data sources in agreement with the overall aim. While the findings are valid for this specific sample, limitations such as student absences and negative attitudes toward reading may have impacted the results.

In conclusion, the intervention successfully fostered key aspects of learner LA, particularly in goal setting, self-evaluation, and reading techniques. While challenges remain in achieving full autonomy, structured teacher guidance, reflection, and active engagement continue to be key to sustaining these improvements. Future efforts should focus on refining metacognitive skills, enhancing motivation, and extending autonomy beyond the classroom. This aligns with Scharle and Szabó's (2000) opinion that each learner may possess a varying degree of autonomy, meaning that each student needs a different period to take control of learning.

CONCLUSION

The diploma thesis explored the concept of learner autonomy and its significant impact on language learning, specifically in English language teaching at the lower secondary level. Accordingly, the paper aimed to foster learner autonomy in a selected class during English lessons through action research and evaluate whether and how this autonomy has improved among 8th-grade students as a result of using scanning and skimming techniques with A2-level (lower) texts. The results were then analysed through questionnaires, student diaries, and the teacher's diary to assess the development of autonomy among the students. Correspondingly, the paper was divided into two parts – the theoretical and practical.

The theoretical part provided an exploration of modern educational approaches that support learner autonomy, including constructivism, individualisation, learner-centredness and their impact on the concept of lifelong learning. It further examined the origins and definitions of learner autonomy, its role in language teaching, and its presence in Czech Curricula. Additionally, the study discussed the conditions necessary for fostering autonomy, the roles of teachers and students, the importance of motivation, and effective classroom interaction patterns. Another component of this section was an overview of modern teaching methods that align with autonomy development and the stages involved in fostering autonomous learning. The theoretical framework concluded with a discussion on strategies and techniques fostering autonomy, which emphasised such as allowing students to make choices in their learning, promoting self-assessment and peer assessment, and integrating reading techniques like scanning and skimming in order to develop self-regulation and autonomous learning habits.

The practical part of this thesis implemented the theoretical insights into real classroom practice. By employing action research, the study followed the progression of students' autonomy development through a structured intervention. The research findings indicated that students who engaged in scanning and skimming activities exhibited increased confidence in their learning abilities, improved the process of goal-setting and self-regulation, were more capable of self and peer evaluation, and gained greater confidence in using reading techniques. The data highlighted a positive shift towards self-directed learning and further underlined the different levels of autonomy among the students.

While the intervention successfully improved reading comprehension and key aspects of autonomy, the findings underscore the importance of ongoing support of metacognitive skills development, decision-making, task creation and realistic goal-setting. Accordingly, structured

teacher guidance in enhancing motivation and extending autonomy beyond the classroom is needed to ensure learners' long-term growth as the intervention laid a foundation for continued progress in the future.

As mentioned, student autonomy is essential not only for their education but also for lifelong learning and adaptation to a dynamic world. To improve student autonomy, the following steps are recommended. The first one is the active collaboration between teachers and students in planning learning goals and materials as teachers should not be the sole decision-makers but should instead encourage more reflection and self-assessment. The second point supports future studies that should focus on larger and more diverse educational samples, explore the impact of technology on learner autonomy, and investigate strategies for fostering a positive relationship with reading.

In conclusion, this thesis underscores the importance of learner autonomy in language education and provides insights into fostering autonomous learning through reading techniques. The intervention demonstrated that learning should not be solely controlled by the teacher but significantly involve student participation, increasing their responsibility for their own learning. Students became more aware of why and how they learnt and gradually took on the role of the teacher. The findings highlight that fostering autonomy in the classroom requires mutual communication and interaction between students and teachers, as well as collaboration among students themselves. By integrating autonomy-supportive techniques into English language teaching, educators can better equip students with the skills and confidence needed for lifelong learning.

RESUMÉ

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá rozvojem autonomie žáků během hodin anglického jazyka na druhém stupni základní školy. Cílem práce je prostřednictvím akčního výzkumu zvýšit úroveň autonomie žáků 8. ročníku v hodinách anglického jazyka pomocí technik scanning a skimming (skenování a rychlé čtení) při práci s texty na úrovni A2 (nižší), a následně na základě analýzy dotazníků, žákovských deníků a reflexí zjistit, zda a jak došlo ke zvýšení úrovně jejich autonomie. Práce je rozdělena do dvou hlavních částí – teoretické a praktické. V teoretické části jsou představeny klíčové pojmy, které vytváří teoretický základ pro akční výzkum, který byl proveden v rámci klinické praxe. Obě hlavní části jsou dále členěny do kapitol a podkapitol.

První kapitola teoretické části se zabývá autonomií a jejím zasazením do kontextu současných vzdělávacích paradigmat. Nejprve uvádí spojitosti mezi autonomií a konstruktivistickým pojetím výuky, které je založeno především na aktivní roli žáka ve vzdělávacím procesu. Dále dochází k propojení autonomie s individualizací a výukou zaměřenou na žáka. Toto propojení poskytuje hlubší vhled do moderní výuky jazyků, která odpovídá individuálním potřebám studentů a zároveň je připravuje na celoživotní učení, kterému je věnována další podkapitola, kde je autonomie uvedena jako předpoklad podporující celoživotní vzdělávání.

Druhá kapitola se věnuje vymezení pojmu autonomie. Tento koncept má kořeny ve filozofii, psychologii a sociologii. Ve výuce cizích jazyků se pak začal objevovat až během 70. let 20. století v důsledku sociálních a politických změn. Na základě těchto skutečností se objevuje několik definic autonomie, nicméně Holec přichází s výstižným vysvětlením termínu, který vysvětluje jako „schopnost převzít odpovědnost za své učení,“ což znamená, že studenti mají a nesou odpovědnost za všechna rozhodnutí týkající se všech aspektů jejich učení. Tato kapitola se dále zabývá vzájemně se ovlivňujícími principy autonomie (zapojení studenta, reflexe studenta a používání cílového jazyka), které tvoří základ autonomie studentů jazyka. Zde je také rozebrán model autonomie dle Tassinari. Dále je autonomie více zasazena do kontextu českého vzdělávacího systému, a to především do Rámcového vzdělávacího programu pro základní vzdělávání z roku 2023.

Třetí kapitola se zabývá podporou autonomie žáka v hodinách anglického jazyka. Mezi podmínky rozvíjející autonomii patří role učitele a žáků, vliv motivace či vhodný výběr organizačních forem. V této části jsou dále rozebrána podpora autonomie na pozadí moderních

metod výuky anglického jazyka, kde dochází ke změně vztahových podmínek mezi učitelem a žáky, čímž se pozornost přesouvá od učitele ke studentovi a jeho procesu učení.

Čtvrtá kapitola se zaměřuje na rozvoj autonomie. Nejprve jsou zde rozebrány možnosti stimulace schopnosti žáka učit se samostatně ve výuce anglického jazyka za pomoci modelu postupného rozvoje autonomního učení od Scharle and Szabó (2000) a pěti principů jazykového kurzu sestavených Cotterall (2000), které přispívají k přenosu odpovědnosti z učitele na studenty. V další části se kapitola zabývá stádií rozvoje autonomie. Zde jsou vymezeny tři fáze procesu rozvoje autonomie studenta: uvědomění si, změnu postojů a přenos rolí, dle Scharle a Szabó (2000) a devíti krokový program zavádění autonomie ve třídě, od Nunan (2003), který postupně přesouvá studenta od závislosti na učiteli k autonomii. Tato stádia rozvoje slouží jako základ pro později popisovanou intervenci.

Pátá kapitola se dále zabývá rozvojem autonomie žáků v hodinách anglického jazyka ale i mimo ně, a to za pomoci konkrétních strategií a technik. Tato část zahrnuje poskytování možnosti volby, podporování sebehodnocení žáků a jejich vzájemného hodnocení, znalost svého učebního stylu a preferencí spojených s ním nebo nácvik učebních strategií. Pro účely této práce jsou zde dále uvedeny a rozebrány techniky čtení, scanning a skimming, které žáků asistují při samostatném zkoumání textů, efektivním řízení času stráveným učením a získání sebedůvěry ve schopnost porozumět a zpracovat informace bez pomoci.

Poslední kapitolou teoretické části je její samotný závěr. Zde jsou shrnuty hlavní poznatky, o které se opírá praktická část.

Praktická část se skládá ze tří hlavních částí nazvaných v překladu „Výzkum,“ „Akční výzkum“ a „Závěr praktické části“. V první části „Výzkum,“ jak název napovídá, dochází k seznámení s výzkumem, jeho cílem, relevantností a plánem na realizaci. První podkapitola se věnuje představení školy, ve které probíhalo výzkumné šetření. Dále zde byly formulovány výzkumné otázky, které byly vytvořeny tak, aby naplňovaly celkový cíl práce. Tato část také popisuje akční výzkum jako hlavní výzkumnou metodu, která je doplněná o pozorování, dotazníky, deníky studentů a učitele a závěrečnou reflexi s účelem shromáždění komplexních dat.

Druhá kapitola praktické části „Akční výzkum,“ se skládá ze tří hlavních podkapitol – jednotlivých fází výzkumu, popisující jeho celý proces a práci výzkumnice. Předintervenční fáze se zakládala na zjišťování teoretických základů a observacích, za jejichž účelem byl sestaven seznam 14 deskriptorů, které byly během observace přiřazovány k popisům jednotlivých aktivit. Výsledky ukázaly, že autonomie studentů byla částečně podporována,

ale je třeba klást větší důraz na jejich zapojení do rozhodování, plánování a reflexe. Tyto poznatky ovlivnily výběr intervenční třídy, upřesnily výzkumné zaměření a přispěly k vytvoření akčního plánu. Intervenční fáze tedy spojuje teoretické poznatky s výsledky observací, na jejichž základě byl vytvořen plán třináctitýdenní intervence. Plán byl přizpůsoben časovým možnostem a situaci ve třídě, jeho adaptovaná verze je v této části detailně popsána týden po týdnu. V poslední, postintervenční fázi výzkumu došlo k analýze a interpretaci veškerých nasbíraných dat. Četnosti jednotlivých odpovědí na předem stanovených škálách byly z obou dotazníků representovány v tabulkách, deníky byly analyzovány pomocí otevřeného kódování. Tato část také obsahuje výsledky z finálního testování žáků.

Poslední kapitola praktické části, nazvaná „Závěr praktické části,“ shrnuje výsledky analýzy a odpovídá na výzkumné otázky. Intervence zvýšila zapojení žáků do procesu výuky, což vedlo ke zlepšení v oblasti stanovení cílů, seberegulace a sebevědomí při sebehodnocení a hodnocení vrstevníků. Data ukázala, že většina studentů aplikovala čtecí techniky samostatně, i když tvorba úkolů zůstala výzvou. Intervence úspěšně podpořila klíčové aspekty autonomie studentů, ale plná autonomie vyžaduje pokračující podporu, zaměřenou na rozvoj metakognitivních dovedností a motivaci.

Poslední částí diplomové práce je její závěr, kde je znovu připomenut cíl, zjištění vycházející z teoretické části propojená se zjištěními vzešlými z výzkumného projektu. Ačkoliv výzkum odpověděl na předem stanovené výzkumné otázky, přinesl také nové poznatky, které by mohly být podnětem k dalšímu zkoumání. Avšak je důležité zmínit, že výzkum byl proveden pouze na jedné základní škole s malým počtem žáků, proto nelze závěry práce obecně aplikovat.

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APPENDICES

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Structuring knowledge

Structuring knowledge is an area which plays a role in all autonomous learning phases and activities. That is why you will only find general descriptors here which lead to other areas. **If you find the descriptors relevant, then you can always go to the corresponding area.**

▼ Expand all

-
- ▼ I can evaluate my own language competencies.

 - ▼ I can analyse my own needs.

 - ▼ I can set myself goals.

 - ▼ I can plan a time and place for my learning.

 - ▼ I know what I need to complete a task or to achieve a goal (for example the competencies, steps of a task and language tools).

 - ▼ I can put together a learning plan.

 - ▼ I am familiar with a variety of materials and resources for language learning.

 - ▼ I can choose materials and resources.

 - ▼ I can try out new materials and resources.

 - ▼ I am familiar with a variety of language learning methods and strategies.

 - ▼ I can choose different methods and strategies.

 - ▼ I can try out new methods and strategies.

 - ▼ I can organise a time and place for my learning.

 - ▼ I can set myself a task.

 - ▼ I can structure my learning independently.

 - ▼ I can use a variety of materials and resources when learning.

- ▼ I can employ a variety of methods and strategies when learning.

- ▼ I can carry out my learning plan.

- ▼ I can analyse elements of the foreign language to detect regularities, irregularities and recurring patterns.

- ▼ I can analyse texts, conversations and other communication in the foreign language and recognise specific (cultural) aspects of the communication.

- ▼ I can recognise my strengths and weaknesses as a learner and/or reflect on these.

- ▼ I can recognise what prevents me from completing a task.

- ▼ I can reflect on materials and resources which I have used.

- ▼ I can reflect on methods and strategies which I have employed.

- ▼ I can reflect on my learning.

- ▼ I can evaluate materials and resources for language learning.

- ▼ I can evaluate language learning methods and strategies.

- ▼ I can evaluate my learning.

- ▼ I can learn with and from others (for example, other learners, teachers, learning advisors, native speakers and competent non-native speakers).

- ▼ I can decide when I want to cooperate with others (for example, with other learners, teachers, learning advisors, native speakers and competent non-native speakers) in order to structure my learning better.

- ▼ If you want to add further descriptors yourself, you can do so here.

Source: Sprachenzentrum Freie Universität Berlin. n. d. “Dynamic autonomy model with descriptors.” Accessed April 26, 2024. <https://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/en/slz/lernberatung/autonomiemodell/wissen/index.html>

Appendix 2 Tassinari's Dynamic Model of LA – The 'Planning' Component and Example of Its Macro-descriptors ('Can-Do' Statements)

Planning

Planning is a key part of autonomous learning: to recognise one's own needs, to formulate these into realistic learning objectives, and to structure these into steps and create a learning plan. To plan, one has to be flexible enough to change the learning plan if one's situation or needs should change.

▼ Expand all

- ▼ I can evaluate my own language competencies.
- ▼ I can analyse my own needs.
- ▼ I can set myself goals.
- ▼ I can plan a time and place for my learning.
- ▼ I know what I need to complete a task or to achieve a goal (for example the competencies, steps of a task and language tools).
- ▼ I can put together a learning plan.
- ▼ If you want to add further descriptors yourself, you can do so here.

For planning in terms of learning materials and methods see [choosing materials and methods](#). Do you like learning together with others? In that case, go to [cooperating](#).

Source: Sprachenzentrum Freie Universität Berlin. n. d. "Dynamic autonomy model with descriptors." Accessed April 26, 2024. <https://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/en/slz/lernberatung/autonomiemodell/planen/index.html>

Planning

Planning is a key part of autonomous learning: to recognise one's own needs, to formulate these into realistic learning objectives, and to structure these into steps and create a learning plan. To plan, one has to be flexible enough to change the learning plan if one's situation or needs should change.

▼ Expand all

▲ I can evaluate my own language competencies.

| | I can do this | I want to learn this | This isn't important for me |
|---|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| I can evaluate my starting level | | | |
| on my own | | | |
| together with others | | | |
| with the help of checklists (for example with those of the European language portfolio) | | | |
| with a learning advisor | | | |
| with a test. | | | |

For further descriptors see [evaluating](#).



▲ I can analyse my own needs.

| | I can do this | I want to learn this | This isn't important for me |
|---|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| I can identify my needs (why I want to learn) | | | |
| on my own | | | |
| together with others | | | |
| with the help of checklists or learning tips | | | |
| with a learning advisor. | | | |
| I can prioritise my learning needs. | | | |



- ▼ I can set myself goals.
- ▼ I can plan a time and place for my learning.
- ▼ I know what I need to complete a task or to achieve a goal (for example the competencies, steps of a task and language tools).
- ▼ I can put together a learning plan.
- ▼ If you want to add further descriptors yourself, you can do so here.

For planning in terms of learning materials and methods see [choosing materials and methods](#). Do you like learning together with others? In that case, go to [cooperating](#).

Source: Sprachenzentrum Freie Universität Berlin. n. d. “Dynamic autonomy model with descriptors.” Accessed April 26, 2024. <https://www.sprachenzentrum.fu-berlin.de/en/slz/lernberatung/autonomiemodell/planen/index.html>

THE LEAD VAK TEST: READ AND IMAGINE

Follow each instruction in your mind and give yourself a mark:

0 = impossible 1 = difficult 2 = OK 3 = easy

- SEE a kangaroo
- SEE your front door
- SEE your toothbrush
- SEE a friend's face
- SEE a plate of food
- SEE a TV show ...
- WATCH the TV scene change

- HEAR a song
- HEAR rain
- HEAR a fire alarm
- HEAR a friend's voice
- HEAR your own voice
- HEAR birds singing ...
- HEAR the birdsong change to a call of alarm

- FEEL excited
- FEEL yourself swimming
- FEEL grass under your feet
- FEEL a cat* on your lap
- FEEL hot
- FEEL your fingers on a piano keyboard
- FEEL your fingers playing a few notes

When you've done the test:

- Add up your scores for each sense: SEE — HEAR — FEEL
- Does the highest score correspond with what you think your preferred lead system is? How did you fare when it came to changing the scenes slightly in the last one of each section?
- Think of ways to enhance the systems you don't find so easy.

FIGURE 5: 'The Lead VAK Test' from *In Your Hands* by J Revell and S Norman (Saffire Pre)

Appendix 5 *List of Descriptors Fostering Autonomy Development*

- 1) New knowledge relates to existing knowledge/personal knowledge.
- 2) Learners set their learning goals based on their needs.
- 3) Learners are
 - a) involved in the process of goal setting.
 - b) encouraged to plan their learning.
- 4) The choices and decision-making opportunities are offered via choosing
 - a) Exercise.
 - b) Interaction pattern.
 - c) Strategies.
 - d) Materials.
 - e) Place to work.
- 5) The teacher supports learners' motivation for
 - a) Learning in the classroom
 - b) Learning outside the classroom
- 6) The learners' feelings connected to the learning process are dealt with.
- 7) Reflection is incorporated where the learners assess their learning.
 - a) Self-assessment is incorporated.
 - b) Peer-assessment is incorporated.
- 8) The teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a lecturer.
- 9) Teacher-led activities are involved as she decides on
 - a) Aim.
 - b) Content.
 - c) Strategies.
 - d) Materials.
 - e) Interaction patterns.
- 10) Student-led activities are involved as they decide on
 - a) Aim.
 - b) Content.
 - c) Strategies.
 - d) Materials.
 - e) Interaction patterns.
- 11) The learning environment is supportive and encourages risk-taking (positive reinforcement, safe learning space).
- 12) By integrating discussions or problem-solving activities, the teacher encourages learners' critical thinking.
- 13) An inductive approach to teaching grammar is incorporated in the lesson.
- 14) Variety of interaction patterns
 - a) Individual work is involved.
 - b) Pair work is involved.
 - c) Group work is involved.

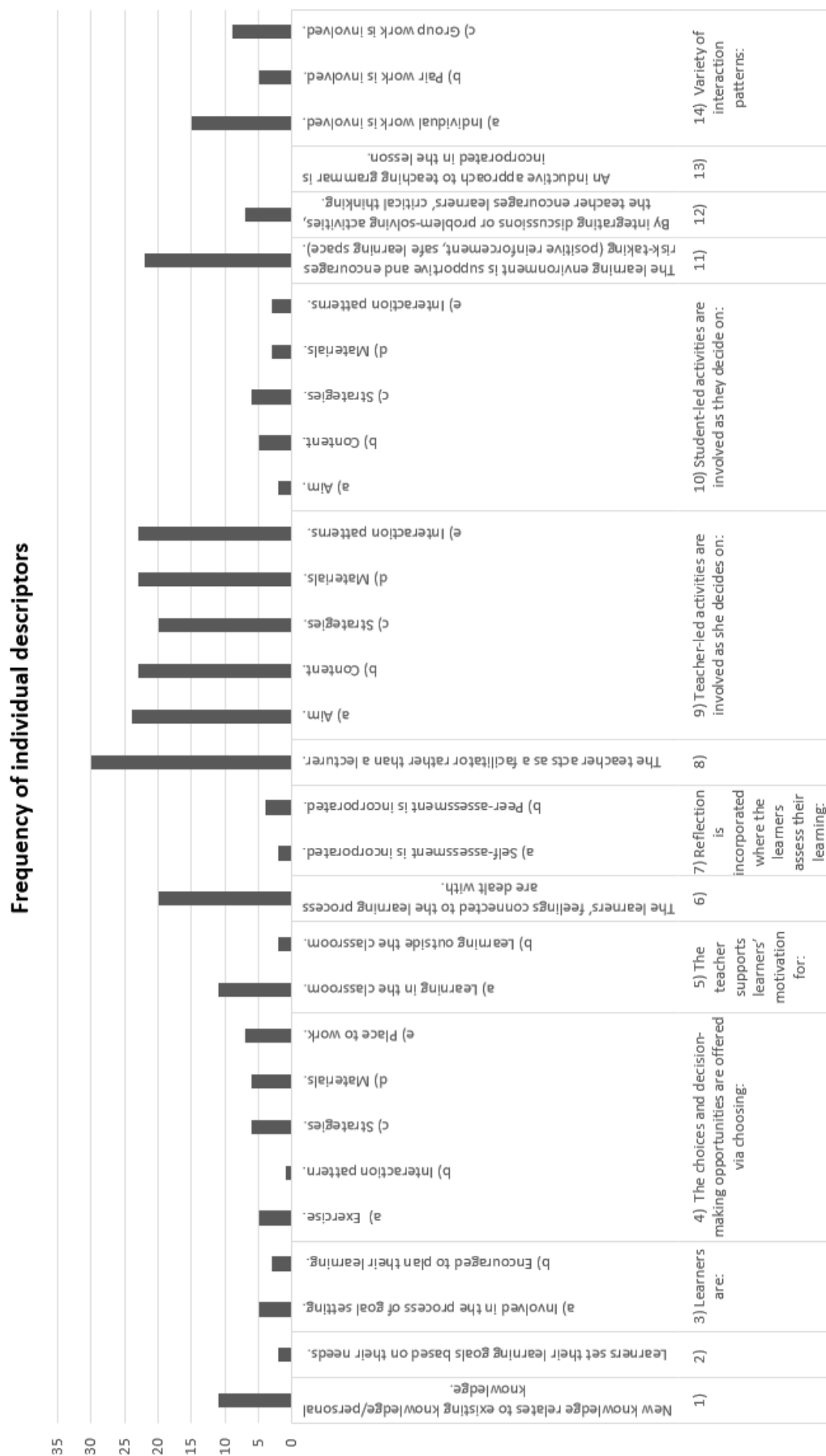
The predominant division (Tassinari, 2012)

Action-oriented dimension
Cognitive and metacognitive dimension
Affective and motivational dimension
Social dimension

Appendix 6 *The Example of Filled Observation Sheet from One Lesson*

| Activity description | Descriptors involved |
|--|---|
| <p>T asks Ss to revise all rules for the present continuous and present simple tenses, Ss voluntarily say the rules, come to the board and write them on it T asks further questions and gives examples to get all of them T then makes the overall summary The whole activity is led by T</p> | <p>8), 9)</p> |
| <p>The teacher explains the following writing exercise: create an essay (150 words) about your life. The first part must be about your daily routine, and in the second one, you will describe today (etc., what you do today from the moment you wake up to the one you go to sleep). -> Students determine how to structure and articulate their essays within the given framework. T reads criteria, suggests using the paper dictionary if needed, shows the handout, and reminds of reading instructions once again. Moreover, T highlight the importance of respecting each other, not disrupting, and staying by your place.</p> <p>S have the rest of the lesson to write the essay.</p> <p>T observes and takes notes to tell in the reflection when the essays are evaluated. (reflection is not in this lesson)</p> | <p>8), 6), 11), 2, 4c, d), 14a), 9 a, b, e), 10 c, d)</p> |
| | |

Appendix 7 *The Graphic Representation of Observation Results*



Appendix 8 *The Initial Action Plan*

| 1) Raising Awareness (Scharle and Szabó, 2000), Strategies from Oxford (1990) | | |
|--|--|---|
| Week 1 (23/09– 27/09) | 1 Make instruction goals clear to learners (Nunan, 2003) | <p>AIM: Assess LA and knowledge of reading techniques while introducing the intervention’s purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductory discussion: explain the intervention’s goal—enhancing reading skills through scanning and skimming while fostering learning autonomy. students learn the importance of these techniques (<i>metacognitive strategy</i>) - Pre-intervention questionnaire (scale-based): evaluates students’ autonomy and familiarity with scanning and skimming (<i>metacognitive strategy</i>) - Diary reflection: students record expectations, feelings, and goals (<i>metacognitive and affective strategies</i>) |
| Week 2 (30/09– 04/10) | 4 Raising Awareness of the learning process (Nunan) | <p>AIM: Increase awareness of the learning process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation and demonstration of scanning and skimming techniques on simple texts (<i>cognitive strategy</i>) - Introducing note-taking, summarising and highlighting - Exercise: pupils will try scanning and skimming on the text, focusing on keywords and finding information quickly (<i>cognitive and metacognitive strategies</i>) - Diary reflection: pupils write down the strategies used, first experiences and feelings, how they helped them and how they can use them in everyday life (<i>metacognitive and affective strategies</i>) |
| Week 3 (07/10– 11/10) | 5 Identify the learner’s preferred styles and strategies (Nunan) | <p>AIM: To help students identify learning styles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Text on learning styles (<i>cognitive strategies</i>) - Questionnaire on learning styles: pupils fill out a questionnaire aimed at identifying preferred learning styles and strategies (<i>metacognitive strategies</i>) - Discussion in pairs: students share the results of the questionnaire and discuss how to use their learning styles and strategies when reading (<i>social strategies</i>) - Diary reflection: pupils write down what they found out about their learning style and how they will use this knowledge in future lessons (<i>metacognitive strategy</i>) |

| 2) Changing Attitudes (Scharle and Szabó) | | |
|--|--|---|
| Week 4 (14/10–18/10) | 2 Allow learners to create their own goals and content (Nunan) | <p>AIM: Involve students in setting their own goals and choosing the materials for the lesson (Content is provided by the thematic plan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aim setting: pupils create their own goals for improvement in a certain area of reading (what, how, why, by when) (<i>metacognitive strategy</i>) - Text selection: students choose text to explore and decide what type of task to match the text (<i>cognitive strategy</i>) - Diary reflection: pupils write down their goals and plans, and present them to the class (<i>metacognitive and affective strategies</i>) <p>! Collect diaries to check individual aims</p> |
| Week 5 (21/10–25/10) | 3 Encourage the use of English outside the classroom (Nunan) | <p>AIM: To motivate students to learn English outside of school, to show different possibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revision of techniques: discussing where techniques can be used in real life (<i>affective strategies</i>) - Find materials: individually or in groups, students find English texts outside school (e.g. online articles, brochures) and apply scanning and skimming techniques (<i>cognitive strategies</i>) - Sharing materials: pupils present the materials they have found and discuss the strategies used (<i>social strategies</i>) - Diary reflection: pupils evaluate their skills in techniques and their influence on the understanding of texts and plan their use outside school (<i>metacognitive strategy</i>) |
| Week 6 (28/10–1/11) | 6 Encourage learner choice (Nunan) | <p>AIM: To support pupils in decision-making Step according to Nunan: encourage learner choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choice of activities: students can choose from different activities for a given text according to their preferences and decide whether to work alone, in pairs or in groups (<i>metacognitive strategy</i>) - Presentation and feedback: presentation of results and feedback from classmates (if they worked in a group) (<i>social strategy</i>) - Diary reflection: pupils evaluate what they did, how they succeeded and what they need to work on (<i>metacognitive strategy</i>) |

| 3) Transferring Roles (Scharle and Szabó) | | |
|--|--|--|
| Week 7 (4/11–8/11) | 7 Allow learners to generate their own tasks (Nunan) | <p>AIM: To support pupils in creating their own tasks and materials for scanning/skimming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion: What tasks and materials do you create? What tasks can be associated with scanning and skimming techniques? (<i>social strategy</i>) - Creating tasks: students in groups create their own tasks and activities based on the selected text for another group to provide feedback (<i>social strategy</i>) - Diary reflection: pupils reflect on their feelings about creating and completing tasks, what they did well and what they can work on (<i>metacognitive and affective strategies</i>) |
| Week 8 and 9 (11/11–22/11) | 8 Encourage learners to become teachers (Nunan) | <p>Aim: To support pupils in becoming teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of a lesson: pupils are divided into three groups, and each prepares a lesson (with a clear goal) on a topic according to the thematic plan using the text (<i>cognitive and social strategies</i>) - Teaching the lesson: each group will lead a short lesson, and the other students will complete the tasks that the group has prepared (<i>social strategy</i>) - Feedback and reflection: classmates provide feedback, and students reflect on the experience in diaries (<i>metacognitive and affective strategies</i>) |
| Week 10 and 11 (25/11–6/12) | 9 Encourage learners to become researchers (Nunan) | <p>Aim: To support pupils in becoming researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to research: an explanation of how to conduct text-based research, find information, and present it to the class (<i>cognitive strategy</i>) - Independent research: in groups, students choose a topic and conduct short research using scanning and skimming techniques (<i>cognitive and social strategies</i>) - Presentation and reflection: teams will present research results to the class, get feedback and reflect on the experience in a diary (<i>social, metacognitive and affective strategies</i>) |
| Week 12 (9/12–13/12) | Revision and Testing | <p>AIM: Revision and practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflecting on progress: discussing what pupils have learned during the intervention (<i>metacognitive strategy</i>) - Revision of techniques: overview and testing of scanning and skimming (<i>cognitive strategy</i>) - Application in practice: pupils choose texts and use both techniques again with an emphasis on |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | | <p>their own selection, task completion and reflection (<i>cognitive strategy</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diary reflection: evaluation of improvement of skills and autonomy, effectiveness of scanning and skimming techniques (<i>metacognitive and affective strategies</i>) |
| <p>Week 13 (16/12– 20/12)</p> | <p>Final Reflection</p> | <p>AIM: Evaluation of the intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-intervention questionnaire (scale-based): self-assessment of changes in autonomy and ability to use scanning and skimming (<i>metacognitive strategy</i>) - Discussion: sharing experiences and progress based on the test results, reflecting on the future use of techniques learned (<i>affective strategy</i>) - Comparison of original goals (Week 4) with achieved results, exchange of opinions with classmates (<i>metacognitive strategy</i>) - Final diary reflection: summary of acquired skills, strategies and autonomy, reflection on their future use (<i>metacognitive and affective strategies</i>) <p>! Collection of diaries: evaluation of achieved aims, progress and final motivation.</p> |

Appendix 9 *The Example of Planning: Week 1*

Raising Awareness (Scharle and Szabó)

Week 1 (23. 9. - 27.9.)

I Make instruction goals clear to learners (Nunan, 2003)

AIM: Assess LA and knowledge of reading techniques while introducing the intervention's purpose.

- Introductory discussion: explain the intervention's goal—enhancing reading skills through scanning and skimming while fostering learning autonomy. students learn the importance of these techniques (*metacognitive strategy*)
- **Pre-intervention questionnaire** (scale-based): evaluates students' autonomy and familiarity with scanning and skimming (*metacognitive strategy*)
- Diary reflection: students record expectations, feelings, and goals (*metacognitive and affective strategies*)

LESSON PLAN

Class: 8th

Date: 2.10.

Time: 45 min

Level: A2/A1+

Overall aim:

In this lesson, we will focus on identifying and understanding students' current level of learner autonomy and familiarity with the reading techniques of scanning and skimming. We will discuss the goals of the intervention, complete a self-assessment questionnaire to evaluate learners' knowledge and use of these techniques and reflect on the expectations and objectives for the intervention. By the end of the lesson, the learners should have a clearer understanding of how these techniques can enhance their reading skills and autonomy in learning.

| Activity | Material and aids | Time needed | Interaction patterns | Objectives | Link(s) to SEP |
|--|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Introduction -a programme that will last 10 weeks -to become better readers using techniques called scanning and skimming -to learn how to study more independently by setting your own goals, reflecting on your progress, and choosing how you want to work The intervention aims to increase the level of learners' autonomy in English language classes through effective | - | 5 min | T-Ss | To introduce the program. | In the following lessons: Vystihne hlavní myšlenky čteného textu přiměřeného rozsahu; V textu nalezne odpovědi na |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--------|---------|---|--|
| reading techniques such as scanning and skimming. Brainstorming + Discussion Learner Autonomy Ability (making choices about my learning, planning, evaluating, monitoring, reflecting, working with classmates, setting the goal of learning, self-motivation) How do you understand this word? What do you imagine behind this word? → Useful for all subjects and lifelong learning In groups, discuss your questions and then share your ideas. Be ready to react to your classmates' answers. Have you ever decided what you wanted to learn at school? Do you think it is important to make your own decisions when learning? Why or why not? Can you give an example of something you learned on your own, without a teacher? How did you learn it? → The intervention aims to increase the level of learners' autonomy in English language classes in the 8th grade in 10 weeks through effective reading techniques – scanning and skimming. | Blackboard, handout with the questions | 10 min | T-S, Ss | To understand and discuss the term learner autonomy | otázky: při práci s textem nalezne podstatnou informaci a specifickou informaci; |
| Reading techniques: Scanning: Looking for specific information quickly (name, date, place) | Blackboard | 10 min | T-Ss | To present the techniques | |

Friends Study for the Big Test

Friends, Anna, Ben, and Cindy, were studying for a big test. Each had their own way of getting ready.

“I love using colours to help me remember things,” said Anna, pulling out her highlighters. She was busy making notes and drawing little pictures next to important words. “When I write things down and see them, it just sticks in my mind!”

Ben laughed. “That would never work for me! I need to listen.” He had his phone ready to record himself reading his notes. “I’ll listen to this while I walk to school tomorrow. It’s like the words come alive when I hear them. Music helps, too!”

Cindy was already on her feet, pacing the room. “I can’t sit still and read or listen for too long,” she said. “I need to do something!” She started building a small model for their science project. “If I use my hands, I understand the ideas better.”

They looked at each other and smiled. “It’s funny how we all learn differently,” said Ben. “But that’s why we make a great study team!” said Anna. Cindy nodded. “Exactly! And it’s cool that we can help each other.”

As they kept studying, they realised that their different styles made them stronger together. They finished their study session feeling confident and ready for the test.

Answer the following questions:

What is the main idea of the text?

How does Anna study for the test?

How is Ben learning?

How does Cindy prefer to study?

How do the friends feel about learning in different ways?

Read about the learning styles and match each person FROM THE STORY with his/her learning style.

VAK Learning styles (Harmer, 2007)

| Visual | Auditory | Kinaesthetic |
|---|--|---|
| Visual learners understand and remember things better when they see pictures, diagrams, or written notes. They like to use colours, charts, and videos. | Auditory learners remember things better when they hear them. They like to listen to explanations and discussions and read aloud. | Kinaesthetic learners learn best by doing things. They prefer hands-on activities and moving around while learning. |
| Typical strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write notes • use highlighters • watch videos or look at pictures. • make lists and draw diagrams | Typical strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen to recordings of lessons • read notes out loud • join group discussions and listen to others | Typical strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create models • do experiments • use gestures or move around while studying • Try activities that involve building or acting things out |

Let's test Yourself! Follow the instructions I SAY in your mind and give yourself a mark:

0 = impossible 1 = difficult 2 = OK 3 = easy

SEE

- 1) ___
- 2) ___
- 3) ___
- 4) ___
- 5) ___
- 6) ___
- 7) ___

HEAR

- 1) ___
- 2) ___
- 3) ___
- 4) ___
- 5) ___
- 6) ___
- 7) ___

FEEL

- 1) ___
- 2) ___
- 3) ___
- 4) ___
- 5) ___
- 6) ___
- 7) ___

Reading Techniques – skimming and scanning

Aim: After this handout, you will know the difference between scanning and skimming correctly. You will understand how and when to use these reading techniques and begin using them to improve your reading in English. You will also learn some learning strategies to help you become a better reader.

SKIMMING is reading quickly to understand the main, general idea of a text without reading all the details.

How to Skim:

1. **Look at the title** of the text to understand the topic.
2. **Check the pictures, charts, and tables** to understand the topic more.
3. **Read the first paragraph, then the first and last sentences** of each paragraph.
4. **In the sentence, look for bold or italic words** – these are often important.
5. **Ignore details** – focus on what is important.

SCANNING is reading quickly to find specific information, like **names, dates, or facts**.

How to Scan:

1. **Choose a keyword** you want to find (a name, date, or specific word), usually from the question you must answer.
2. **Move your eyes down the text quickly** to find that keyword in the text.
3. **Once you find the keyword, read the surrounding text** to get the answer.
4. **Re-read the question** to check that your answer is correct.

(modified from Butte College n.d.)

! The techniques can be used together in any order.

LEARNING STRATEGIES for skimming and scanning (Modified from Oxford, 1990)

1. **Summarizing:** Write a short summary of the main idea after skimming.
2. **Note-taking:** While skimming or scanning, write down keywords or phrases to organise and remember the information. You can create mind maps.
3. **Highlighting:** Mark important words or sections as you skim or scan to find them later.

Read the steps that can be used for text reading for both reading techniques and put them into a meaningful order.

Skimming:

| |
|--|
| Look at the title of the text to understand the topic. |
| In the sentence, look for bold or italic words – these are often important. |
| Ignore details – focus on what is important. |
| Check the pictures, charts, and tables to understand the topic more. |
| Read the first paragraph, then the first and last sentences of each paragraph. |

Scanning:

| |
|--|
| Choose a keyword you want to find (a name, date, or specific word), usually from the question you must answer. |
| Once you find the keyword, read the surrounding text to get the answer. |
| Re-read the question to check that your answer is correct. |
| Move your eyes down the text quickly to find that keyword in the text. |

A2 A World Traveler's Experiences

I recently met a fascinating world traveller named Mark. He has visited many countries and experienced various natural disasters. As he shared his incredible stories, I learned not only about the disasters he faced but also valuable safety tips that can help anyone during these frightening events.

Mark began his adventure in Japan, where he felt a strong earthquake. He described how the ground shook for what felt like a long time. "I was in a café when it happened. The cups rattled on the tables, and everyone quickly ducked under the tables. After the shaking stopped, people helped each other and checked for any injuries. The best advice is to stay calm and find a safe spot, like under a sturdy table," he explained.

Next, he told me about a tornado he encountered while travelling in Tornado Alley in the United States. Mark was camping with friends when he saw dark clouds swirling in the sky. "We heard the loud noise and saw the funnel shape. We quickly ran to a nearby building and stayed inside until it was safe. Always listen to weather reports and go to a safe place if you see a tornado," he advised.

Mark also shared his experience with a tsunami in Indonesia. After an earthquake, he felt a strong wave approaching the beach. "I remember running to higher ground with locals. It was terrifying! If you feel an earthquake near the coast, move quickly to higher ground. Do not wait!" he cautioned.

He then recalled a flood he witnessed in Bangladesh. Heavy rains caused the rivers to overflow, and water filled the streets. "I helped families move to safer places. It's essential to have an emergency kit ready with food and water," Mark said.

In the mountains of Switzerland, Mark faced an avalanche while skiing. "It started with a loud roar, and snow rushed down the mountain. I knew to stay calm and move to the side to avoid the snow. Always check weather conditions before skiing in snowy areas," he suggested.

Lastly, he shared a story about a volcanic eruption he witnessed in Hawaii. The ground shook, and ash filled the sky. "We had to evacuate quickly! If you are near a volcano, know your evacuation routes," he reminded me.

Listening to Mark's incredible experiences taught me not only about the dangers of natural disasters but also how to stay safe. His stories highlighted the importance of being prepared and knowing what to do during each type of disaster. I realised that while natural disasters can be frightening, having the right knowledge and staying calm can make a significant difference in keeping safe. Mark's tales inspire me to learn more about our world and its powerful forces.

NOTE: ALWAYS HIGHLIGHT/UNDERLINE WHAT TO DO IN THE TASK INSTRUCTIONS

TASK 1: SKIM the text quickly. Highlight the key phrases that show the main idea. Write a short summary (3-4 sentences) of the text and its main idea.

TASK 2: SCAN the text to find specific details about each disaster (type, location, and safety tips). Highlight these details in the text. Create a note-taking table with three columns: Disaster Type, Location, and Safety Tip. Fill in the chart with the information you find in the text.

Appendix 12 Handout for Week 5

A2

London is the capital city of England and the United Kingdom. It is a big, vibrant city with a lot to offer. London is home to around 9 million people. Many people from around the world live here, making it a diverse and exciting place.

The River Thames runs through the city. This river is important and has many famous bridges, such as *Tower Bridge*. One of the best-known landmarks is the *Tower of London*, a historic castle over 900 years old that is famous for housing the Crown Jewels. Tourists come from all over the world to see this remarkable site.

Another well-known monument is the *London Eye*, a giant Ferris wheel on the South Bank of the River Thames. When you ride the *London Eye*, you can enjoy a view of the whole city, which is quite an experience. Very close by are the *Houses of Parliament* and *Big Ben*. Although many call the tower "Big Ben," this name actually refers to the bell inside the *Elizabeth Tower*, which is known for its iconic sound.

In the centre of London, there is *Buckingham Palace*, the official residence of the King when he is in London. If the *Royal Standard* flag is flying, it means the King is at home; otherwise, the *Union Jack* is displayed. Visitors enjoy watching the Changing of the Guard ceremony here.

London is also famous for its parks. *Hyde Park* is one of the most popular, and it connects to *Kensington Gardens* through the *Serpentine Lake*. Here, people can walk, have a picnic, or rent a boat on the lake.

In short, London is a city with a rich history and many interesting places to visit. It is a city that welcomes everyone with open arms.

- 1) **Skim the article and choose the best title.** (1 point)
 - a) The History of London's Bridges
 - b) Famous Places to Visit in London
 - c) Life in England's Countryside

- 2) **After skimming the text, write a short summary of the text (2 sentences).** (2 points)

- 3) **Read the questions, identify the keywords, scan the text, highlight the keywords and answer the questions.** (1 point for an answer)
 - a) How many people live in London?
 - b) Which river runs through London?
 - c) Name a famous bridge in London mentioned in the text.
 - d) How old is the Tower of London?
 - e) What can visitors see at the Tower of London?
 - f) Where is the London Eye located?
 - g) What happens at Buckingham Palace that visitors enjoy watching?

Appendix 13 *Examples of Students' Pre-stated Aims*

Example 1

Aim:

- 1) **What do you want to improve in your reading with the help of scanning and skimming?** (Co chceš zlepšit ve svém čtení s pomocí technik skimming a scanning?)
- 2) **How will you know you've improved? Write the percentage you want to reach by December 5.** (Jak zjistíš, že ses zlepšil? Napiš procento, kterého chceš dosáhnout do 5. prosince.)
- 3) **How can you achieve it?** (Jak toho můžeš dosáhnout?)
- 4) **Why do you think skimming and scanning are important for you?** (Proč si myslíš, že jsou techniky skimming a scanning pro tebe důležité?)
- 5) **When will you reach this goal?** (Kdy dosáhneš tohoto cíle?)

1. I want to understand it more.

2. I will know it by a test. I wanna reach like 70%

3. By training the methods.

4. So i understand the text more.

5. I wanna reach this goal by 5. december.

[redacted], thank you so much for your detailed reflections. Keep going, I believe you can reach your aim! I'm glad that you understand the importance of these methods.

Example 2

6. 11.

1. I especially will to improve my concentration on ~~my~~ main idea of the text and read the questions carefully.

2. I will be glad when I do my score on 10%

3. I will learn the techniques of skimming and scanning and decide which technique is better for me to use

4. Because it will help us to find main idea of the text and we don't need to read the whole text and take the important informations

5. I will reach this goal on December 5.

Comment: I luckily have 100% but on A1 level so I need to work more because this is not still enough. My English is so bad and my English skills too.

[redacted], thank you so much for your detailed notes and reflections! You did a great job!
I'm sure that you can score more than 10%, look at the last reading about London. 😊

Appendix 14 Handout for Week 6

A2 How to Use Articles in English: *The* and Zero Article

In English, deciding when to use *the* or no article (zero article) depends on whether something is unique or general. *The* is used for specific things, while *zero article* is for more general cases, such as names of countries or people. This guide explains the basic rules and gives examples to help you understand.

When to Use *The*

1. Countries with Specific Names

In English, when a country has words like “kingdom,” “republic,” “states,” or a compound name, we use *the*.

- **Examples:** *the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, the United States of America, the Netherlands*

2. Geographical Features: Rivers, Oceans, and Mountains

Geographical features like rivers, oceans, and mountain ranges usually need *the*. Many famous sights in London and other places around the world fall into this category.

- **Examples:** *the River Thames, the Himalayas, the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean*

3. Institutions, Families, and Organizations

When talking about institutions (such as museums, famous organisations, or well-known families), we use *the*.

- **Examples:** *the British Museum, the Kardashians, the United Nations*

4. Famous Buildings, Restaurants, and Hotels

Specific buildings and places like theatres, restaurants, and hotels usually need *the*. London has many places like this where *the* is used.

- **Examples:** *the Tower of London, the Ritz Hotel, the Natural History Museum, the Victoria Palace Theatre*

When to Use Zero Article (No Article)

1. Countries, Cities, People, and Streets

For most countries, cities, people’s names, and streets, we do not use any article. This rule is simple but important for proper nouns, especially when talking about places or people.

- **Examples:** *France, John, Oxford Street, Piccadilly Circus, Regent Street*

2. General Names, Languages, and Uncountable Nouns

For general, uncountable nouns and languages, we also use no article. This rule applies when we talk about things in a broad or non-specific way.

- **Examples:** *English, sugar, Music or History* as school subjects.

3. Years and Time

When mentioning years, there is no need for *the*. For example, in dates or years, we leave out the article.

- **Examples:** *He was born in 2005., The park was built in 1868.*

4. Unique Landmarks with Proper Names

If the place has a unique name, like some famous landmarks in London, you often use no article, even though the landmark is famous.

- **Examples:** *Big Ben, Hyde Park, Buckingham Palace, Tower Bridge*

In conclusion, understanding when to use *the* and when not to use it is key to the correct English. *The* is used for specific things like landmarks, geographical features, and institutions, such as *the River Thames* or *the United Nations*. Zero article is used with proper names, uncountable nouns, and general terms, like *Big Ben* or *sugar*. By mastering these rules, your English will sound more natural. Keep practising, and soon, using articles will feel effortless!

Task 1: Skim the Text and Summarize

Skim the text quickly to get the general idea. Highlight the parts that explain the rules for using *the* and zero article. Write a short summary of 2 sentences about the main rules for using *the* and zero article.

Task 2: Scan for Specific Examples

Look through the text and find examples of *the* and zero article from the table. Highlight these examples. Then, complete the table below with an explanation of why each article is used. (1 for an explanation)

| Example | Explanation |
|--------------------|-------------|
| The United Kingdom | |
| Big Ben | |
| The Ritz Hotel | |
| The River Thames | |
| Hyde Park | |
| Mount Everest | |
| The Himalayas | |
| The Times | |

Appendix 15 Handout for Week 7

A2: A Day at the English Club

It is a beautiful afternoon, and everybody is happy to be at the English Club meeting. They are excited to practice their English outside the classroom, talking with friends, and learning new words.

In the club room, everything is ready for the English activity. The teacher has set up different stations: one for watching English videos, another for playing word games, and a small area for chatting. Everyone knows they are going to have a fun time.

Suddenly, there is a loud sound. Somebody is knocking at the door. It is a new student who wants to join the club. The teacher welcomes the student and invites him to join the group.

During the chat session, one student looked worried. Something is wrong. They cannot think of the right words in English to explain their idea. But their friend quickly helps by suggesting some new vocabulary. "Don't worry!" they say, "You can always ask for help!"

At one point, the teacher asks, "Would you like something to drink?" Some students take a break to have some juice, while others continue practising their conversation skills.

As the meeting goes on, a few students feel a bit shy. The new one says, "I don't know anybody here." However, the teacher encourages everyone to introduce themselves, and soon, the group is chatting happily.

During the break, one student asks, "Is there anything interesting on TV?" Some people start talking about their favourite English TV shows, like *Friends* and *The Simpsons*. The conversation switches back to learning English through media, and everyone starts sharing tips on how they can practice more outside of class.

By the end of the meeting, nobody was at home except for the group at the English Club. They are all there, having fun and practising English together. Nothing happened that could stop them from speaking more English outside of class. Everyone agrees they will meet again next week.

Task 1: Skim the text quickly to understand the main idea and write down 3 bullet points that help you to create a **2-sentence summary** of the text. (4 points)

Task 2: Read the questions, state the keywords in them, and then scan the text to find the specific information needed to answer the questions (you can highlight it in the text). Each question is worth 1 point.

1. What are the different activities set up by the teacher in the club room?
2. Who is knocking at the door?
3. What is the problem one student faces during the chat session?
4. What does the text say about using English outside the classroom?
5. How do the students feel when they first meet each other?
6. What do the students agree to do at the end of the meeting?

Appendix 16 *The Example of Students' Aim (Group 1)*

Reading A1 level + instructions and scoring

Topics: natural disasters, London, UK

Aim (to create the aim, answer these questions):

1. What will your classmates do in the task (e.g., find information, write a summary)? (*Co budou vaši spolužáci dělat při plnění úkolu (např. hledat informace, napsat shrnutí)?*)

both (find information and write a summary).

2. How will your classmates be scored for this task? How many points can they earn for correct answers? (*Jak budou tvoji spolužáci hodnoceni za tento úkol? Kolik bodů mohou získat za správné odpovědi?*)

They can get max. 6 point, every single question is for one point

3. Can all of your classmates do the task? (*Mohou všichni vaši spolužáci tento úkol zvládnout?*)

Yes everybody in our class can do the task.

4. Is the task meaningful for practicing skimming or scanning? Why/why not? (*Je úkol vhodný pro procvičení techniky skimming nebo scanning? Proč/Proč ne?*)

Yes ~~our~~ our classmates will use skimming and scanning

5. How many minutes will you give for this task? (*Kolik minut dáte na splnění tohoto úkolu?*)

We will give 25 minute for this task.

Group 1



London



Read the passage below and answer the questions on the next page.

London is the capital city of England and one of the largest cities in the world. It is a very popular tourist destination because it has so many famous landmarks and attractions.

One of the most famous landmarks in London is Big Ben. This is a clock tower that is over 150 years old. It is located near the Houses of Parliament, which is where the British government meets.

Another famous attraction in London is the Tower of London. This is an old castle that was used to protect the city many years ago. Today, people can visit the Tower of London and see the Crown Jewels, which are very valuable jewels that are owned by the British monarchy.

London is also famous for its museums. The British Museum is one of the most famous museums in the world. It has a very large collection of artifacts from all over the world. Another popular museum in London is the Natural History Museum, which has many exhibits about animals and the natural world.

There are many other things to do in London as well. You can go shopping on Oxford Street, which is one of the busiest shopping streets in the world. You can also take a ride on the London Eye, which is a giant Ferris wheel that offers great views of the city.

London is a very exciting city with many things to see and do. It is a great place to visit for people who are interested in history, culture, and fun.

1. Skim the text and write down one or two sentences about the main idea of this text

2. questions :

1. What is London?
2. Which famous river is in London?
3. What is the most famous landmarks in London?
4. How old is Big Ben?
5. Why do people visit Tower of London?

Group 2

A Trip to London and Losing Everything at the Casino

Last weekend, I went to London for a short trip. I was excited to see the city and decided to visit a famous casino in the evening. I arrived at Casino Royale at 7 p.m. The casino was big, with bright lights and loud sounds from the slot machines and roulette wheels.

I had saved up £20,000 for my trip. I thought I could have some fun and try gambling. I decided to play roulette. I watched a few games first, then I put £2,000 on red. The wheel spun, and the ball landed on black. I lost.

I wasn't worried. I thought I could win back my money. But I kept losing. I bet on different numbers and colours. Every time, I lost more. Soon, I had only a little money left.

By 10 p.m., I had lost almost everything. I decided to make one last bet of £8,000 on red. The wheel spun, and the ball landed on black again. I had lost everything.

I felt really bad. I came to London excited, but now I had no money left. I left the casino at 11 p.m., feeling disappointed. The next day, I continued my trip, but I couldn't stop thinking about my losses. I learned a big lesson: gambling is risky, and I should never bet more than I can afford to lose.

1) Scanning:

How much money he had saved for the trip? 1pts

What was his last bet? 1pts

2) Skimming:

Summarise the text in 2 sentences. 2pts

The casino was small or big? 1pts

Appendix 18 *The Example of Filled Peer Feedback Sheet (from Group 2)*

Peer Feedback Sheet

Lesson Activity: Skimming and Scanning

The feedback is for: _____

the feedback is from: _____

1. Were the instructions for the task clear and easy to understand?

(Byly instrukce k úkolu jasné a snadno pochopitelné?)

Yes

No

Comments: yes, it was easy to understand. ☺

2. Was the task-relevant for practising skimming or scanning?

(Byl úkol relevantní pro procvičování skimmingu nebo scanningu?)

Yes

No

Comments: Yes, the task was relevant. ☺

3. Was the time allocated for the task appropriate?

(Byl čas vyhrazený pro úkol přiměřený?)

Yes

No

Comments: Yes, the task was appropriate ☺

4. Did the teachers offer enough support or help if you needed it?

(Nabídli vám učitelé dostatečnou podporu nebo pomoc, pokud jste ji potřebovali?)

Yes

No

Comments: Only somebody.

5. Do you think this task helped improve your skimming or scanning skills?

(Myslíte si, že vám tento úkol pomohl zlepšit vaše dovednosti v skimmingu nebo scanningu?)

Yes

No

Comments: No the task didn't help. ☹

6. What went well during the lesson or activity?

(Co šlo dobře během hodiny nebo aktivity?)

Helping from teachers

7. How could the teachers improve the task or lesson?

(Jak by učitelé mohli zlepšit úkol nebo hodinu?)

Be more serious.

8. Any comment: (Komentář:)

☺☺☺ ☺☺☺ ☺

Appendix 19 *Final Test*

A2

The United Kingdom (UK) is made up of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. These countries are located in Europe and share a common history, government, and culture. The UK is an island nation, surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, the English Channel, and the Irish Sea.

England is the largest country in the UK. It has many famous cities like London, the capital city. London is known for its historic landmarks like the Big Ben, the Tower of London, and the London Eye. It is also an important city for business, education, and culture.

Scotland is located to the north of England. It is famous for its beautiful landscapes, including mountains, lakes, and forests. The Scottish Highlands are a popular place for tourists. Edinburgh, the capital, is known for its castles and festivals, especially the Edinburgh Festival.

Wales is to the west of England. It is famous for its beautiful coastlines, mountains, and the Welsh language. The capital city of Wales is Cardiff, which is known for its sports events and music festivals.

Northern Ireland is on the island of Ireland and shares a border with the Republic of Ireland. It has a rich history, and the capital, Belfast, is known for its shipbuilding industry and vibrant culture.

The UK has a long history of being a major world power. It was once a part of the British Empire, and many people around the world speak English because of this. Today, the UK is a modern country with many cultural influences from around the world.

- 1) Skim the text quickly. Write **three points** from the text in bullet points. Use your points to write **two sentences** that summarise the **main idea** of the text. (5 points)

Points:



Summary:

- 2) **Choose the correct title: (1 point)**

- A) "Famous Landmarks in London"
- B) "The United Kingdom: A Nation of Four Countries"
- C) "The History of the British Empire"
- D) "The Culture of Scotland and Wales"

- 3) Scan the text to answer these questions and **highlight the answers in the text**. (point for each question)

- 1) What water surrounds the United Kingdom and makes it an island?
- 2) Which country in the UK has the Highlands?
- 3) Which country in the UK has a big shipbuilding industry?
- 4) What is Cardiff famous for?

Appendix 20 *The Example of Filled Pre-intervention Questionnaire*

Questionnaire on a Current Level of Autonomy and Knowledge of Reading Techniques

Name: _

Date: 2. 10.

Dotazník slouží k mé diplomové práci, veškeré informace budou použity anonymně.

| Please answer the following questions by putting a cross (X) in the squares—one square for a question. | | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|--|--|-------|--------|-----------|-------|--------|
| 1. | Do you use English outside the school? | | | X | | |
| 2. | Do you plan your own learning of English at school? | | X | | | |
| 3. | Do you set your own goals when learning English at school? | | | X | | |
| 4. | When learning English at school, can you choose any of these? | | | | | |
| | Exercises to do | | | X | | |
| | If you want to work alone or with others | | | | X | |
| | Materials to use (books, websites) | | | | X | |
| | The place where to study (at the table, on the carpet, ...) | X | | | | |
| 5. | Do you and your teacher decide together what your learning goals in English should be? | | | | | X |
| 6. | Do you feel supported when learning new things in English class? | | | | | X |
| 7. | Does your teacher motivate you to learn English? | | | | | X |
| 8. | How often do you evaluate your task or work in the lesson? | | | X | | |
| 9. | Do your classmates evaluate your work in English lessons? | | | X | | |
| 10. | Do you read in English? | | | X | | |
| 11. | Do you know the techniques of effective reading? | | | | X | |
| 12. | Can you identify specific information quickly in the text (with the help of scanning)? | | X | | | |
| 13. | Can you quickly understand the main idea of the text (with the help of skimming)? | X | | | | |

Appendix 21 *The Results of Pre-intervention Questionnaires*

| | Results of filled pre-intervention questionnaires | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|-----|--|--------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. | Do you use English outside the school? | | 1 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 2. | Do you plan your own learning of English at school? | 4 | 5 | 1 | | 1 |
| 3. | Do you set your own goals when learning English at school? | 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 4. | When learning English at school, can you choose any of these? | | | | | |
| | Exercises to do | | 5 | 2 | 4 | |
| | If you want to work alone or with others | | | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| | Materials to use (books, websites) | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | |
| | The place where to study (at the table, on the carpet, ...) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 5. | Do you and your teacher decide together what your learning goals in English should be? | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| 6. | Do you feel supported when learning new things in English class? | | | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| 7. | Does your teacher motivate you to learn English? | | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| 8. | How often do you evaluate your task or work in the lesson? | 4 | 3 | 3 | | 1 |
| 9. | Do your classmates evaluate your work in English lessons? | 1 | 4 | 5 | 1 | |
| 10. | Do you read in English? | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 11. | Do you know the techniques of effective reading? | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | |
| 12. | Can you identify specific information quickly in the text (with the help of scanning)? | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 | |
| 13. | Can you quickly understand the main idea of the text (with the help of skimming)? | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 | |

Appendix 22 *The Example of Filled Post-intervention Questionnaire*

Post-Intervention Questionnaire

Name:

Date: 12.12

Dotazník slouží k mé diplomové práci, veškeré informace budou použity anonymně.

| | Please answer the following statements by putting a cross (X) in the squares—one square for each question. After the intervention: | No | Partly | Yes |
|-----|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | I use English outside the school more now. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | I can plan my own learning of English at school. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | I can set my own goals when learning English by answering the prepared questions. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | I feel confident when making choices about my learning. (choosing materials, partners, or place to study) | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | I can create my own exercises to practice reading in English. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| 6. | I understand how skimming helps me to find the main idea of a text quickly. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | I understand how scanning helps me to find specific information in a text quickly. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | I can explain skimming. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | I can explain scanning. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | I feel more confident reading in English after these lessons. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 11. | I feel motivated to continue improving my reading. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. | I can reflect on my learning in a diary. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. | I can evaluate my own performance. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. | I feel confident in evaluating my classmates' work. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 15. | I fulfilled my aim by reaching the pre-stated percentage or more in the last reading. | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Comments:

Appendix 23 *The Results of Post-intervention Questionnaires*

| Results of filled post-intervention questionnaires | | No | Partly | Yes |
|---|---|----|--------|-----|
| After the intervention: | | | | |
| 1. | I use English outside the school more now. | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| 2. | I can plan my own learning of English at school. | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| 3. | I can set my own goals when learning English by answering the prepared questions. | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| 4. | I feel confident when making choices about my learning. (choosing materials, partners, or place to study) | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| 5. | I can create my own exercises to practice reading in English. | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| 6. | I understand how skimming helps me to find the main idea of a text quickly. | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| 7. | I understand how scanning helps me to find specific information in a text quickly. | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| 8. | I can explain skimming. | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| 9. | I can explain scanning. | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| 10. | I feel more confident reading in English after these lessons. | 3 | 6 | |
| 11. | I feel motivated to continue improving my reading. | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| 12. | I can reflect on my learning in a diary. | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| 13. | I can evaluate my own performance. | | 3 | 6 |
| 14. | I feel confident in evaluating my classmates' work. | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| 15. | I fulfilled my aim by reaching the pre-stated percentage or more in the last reading. | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Appendix 24 The Example of the Filled Test

Name: _____ Percentage from your aim: 80
aim: 80
Date: 12.12
A1

The United Kingdom (UK) has four countries: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. These countries are in Europe. **The UK is an island. It is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, the English Channel, and the Irish Sea.**

England is the biggest country. The capital of England is London. London has Big Ben, the Tower of London, and the London Eye.

Scotland is north of England. It is famous for mountains and lakes. **The Scottish Highlands** are a popular place for tourists. The capital of Scotland is Edinburgh. People visit Edinburgh for its castle and festivals.

Wales is west of England. It has beaches and mountains. **The capital of Wales is Cardiff. Cardiff is famous for sports and music.**

Northern Ireland is on the island of Ireland. The capital is Belfast. **Belfast is known for shipbuilding and its history.**

The UK has a long history. It was once part of the British Empire. Many people speak English because of this. Today, the UK is a modern country with many cultures.

- 1) Skim the text quickly. Write **three points** from the text in bullet points. Use your points to write **two sentences** that summarize the **main idea** of the text. (5 points)

Points:

- four countries ✓
- Europe ✓
- long history ✓

Summary:

UK has four countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Its text shows that UK have long history, and many culture. ✓ 5

- 2) Choose the correct title: (1 point)
- A) "Famous Landmarks in London"
 - B) "The United Kingdom: A Nation of Four Countries"
 - C) "The History of the British Empire"
 - D) "The Culture of Scotland and Wales"
- 3) Scan the text to answer these questions, **highlight the answers in the text.** (point for each question)

- 1) What water surrounds the United Kingdom and makes it an island? ~~the~~
 - 2) Which country in the UK has the Highlands? Scotland ✓
 - 3) Which country in the UK has a big shipbuilding industry? Northern Ireland ✓
 - 4) What is Cardiff famous for? Its capital of Wales yes, but it is famous for sports and music ✓ 2
- 8/10 80%

Appendix 25 *The Results of the Final Testing*

| Student's number | Aim (%) | Result (%) | Aim Achievement |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 10 | 100 | Yes |
| 2 | 100 | 70 | No |
| 3 | 60 | 60 | Yes |
| 4 | 70 | 30 | No |
| 5 | 60 | 60 | Yes |
| 6 | 90 | 80 | No |
| 7 | 70 | 90 | Yes |
| 8 | 80 | 80 | Yes |
| 9 | 80 | 80 | Yes |

Appendix 26 *The Example of Open Coding (Teacher's Diary)*

2nd of October

Week 1

- 1) Introduction - the intervention presented, its aim, the purpose of the diploma
 - ➔ Some are curious about being involved in the research
 - ➔ **Some are bored by reading, do not like it (since it is not needed)** (**Resistance to reading, Low engagement and motivation**)
- 2) Discussion
 - ➔ Student's opinion: **autonomy is something automatic** (**Limited understanding of autonomy**)
 - ➔ **My reaction to it** (**Encouraging autonomy**): it can be automatic at its highest level, when you learn the process, it is automatic for you -> imagine it as a ladder you have to climb to reach the top, on this way, you have to learn many things like learning strategies and techniques to control your learning automatically
- 3) Group discussion – **Students hesitantly answer the given questions as they are not sure about autonomy** (**Limited understanding of autonomy, Low engagement and motivation**), and most of them agree that mostly they can decide on what to learn in the English class, as well they usually learn on their own English
- 4) Pre-intervention questionnaire – only 11 students filled it in
 - Two students want me to explain how the questionnaire can be used anonymously** (**Providing guidance**) when they have to sign it – the difference between me being a researcher, who needs data and the teacher who needs to know the progress of the student, the principle of the proper research is explained as well
- 5) First diary entry – write it from the other side of your English notebook
 - Students find it hard as they have never done it before** (**Difficulties with diary writing**), and seem to be overwhelmed -> the **Czech version is promised for the following weeks** (**Adjusting materials based on student needs**)
- 6) Wrap-up – some students are worried about their abilities to take part in the intervention

10th of October

Week 2

- 1) Brainstorming – **From the beginning of the lesson, the students are quiet (expressing their negative attitude towards reading)** (**Low engagement and motivation**)
Bored do not want to talk (**Boredom**), only three share the way they learn
- 2) Reading + Typology
 - Most students can easily understand the text, can answer the questions
 - 3 students have a huge problem with English in general, **they show off their negative attitude toward reading** (**Resistance to reading**)

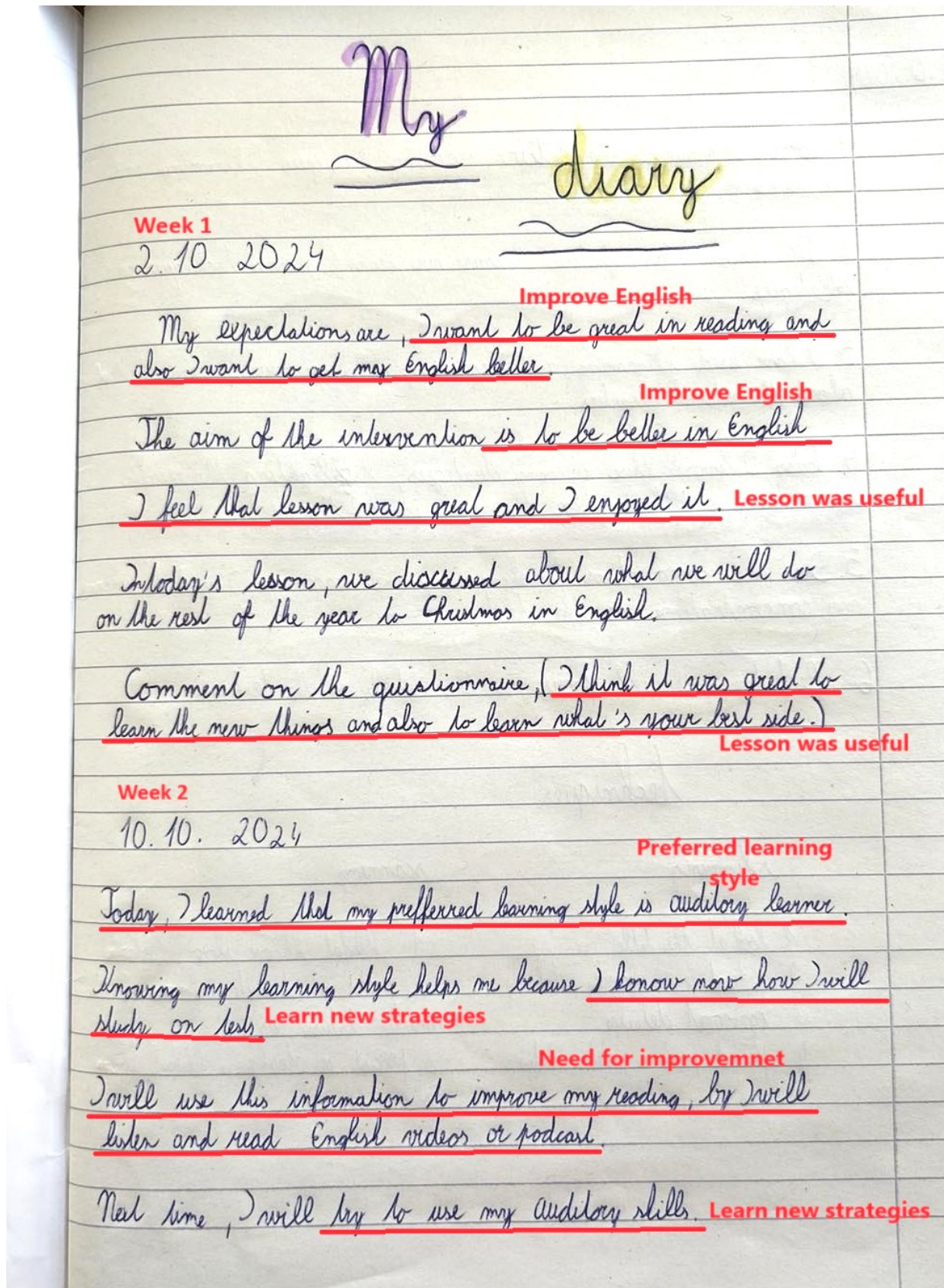
- Done in less than 15 min
- 3) VAK test
- **Czech explanation included** (**Adjusting materials based on student needs**), funny activity, students are active and curious about their learning styles and learning about themselves
 - Result: (seven visual learners, four auditory learners, and two kinaesthetic learners)
- 4) Group discussion sum up together, surprisingly, all of the students use strategies of visual and auditory style, no one likes the strategies for kinaesthetic learners
- 5) Reflection + Diary Entry
- The Czech version is praised by the learners as they can choose the language for the reflections, **some do not know how to answer** (**Difficulties with diary writing**)
 - Acknowledge the surprise, they did not know their learning style
 - **Summary of strategies for individual styles** (**Providing guidance and repetitions**)
 - Visual: highlighting, mind maps, text in paragraphs
 - Auditory: whispering, discussion after the reading
 - Kinaesthetic: taking notes or walking while reading

Appendix 27 *The List of Categories and Their Codes (Open Coding of Teacher's Diary)*

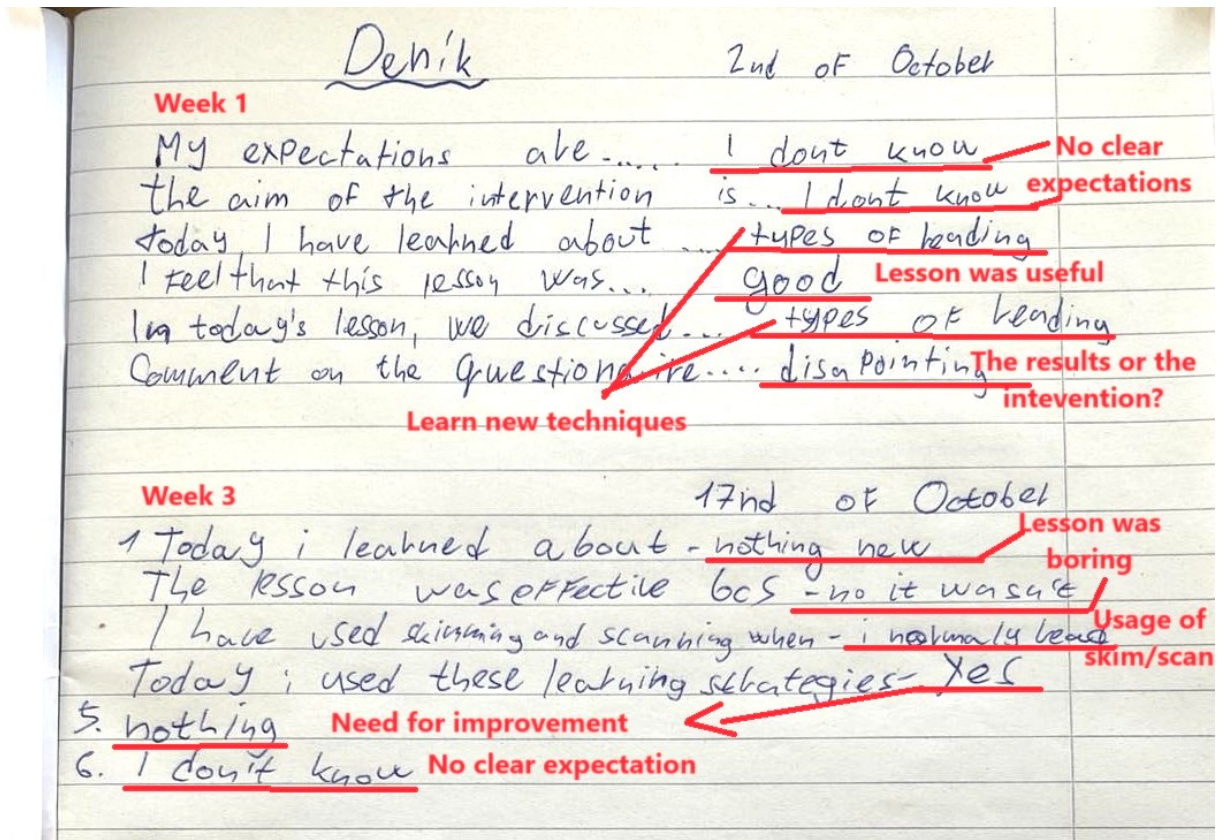
| Categories: | Codes: |
|--|---|
| Student Perception of Autonomy and Reading | Limited understanding of autonomy Resistance to reading Low engagement and motivation Boredom |
| Challenges in Implementing Techniques | Difficulties with diary writing Struggles with reading techniques Issues with independent work |
| Teacher Support | Adjusting materials based on student needs Providing guidance and repetitions Encouraging self-reflection Encouraging autonomy |
| Signs of Progress in Learner Autonomy | More detailed self-reflection Independent use of strategies Outside application Collaboration Confidence in reading |
| Reflection | Self-reflection Peer-reflection Mixed opinions on the impact Recognising future learning paths Diary reflections |
| Remaining Challenges | Not all students internalise techniques Some are dependent on the teacher Limited ability to plan future improvement |

Appendix 28 Examples of Open Coding (Learner's Diary)

Example 1



Example 2



Appendix 29 *The List of Categories and Their Codes (Open Coding of Learners' Diaries)*

| Categories | Codes |
|---|--|
| Expectations and Motivation | <p>Improve English</p> <p>Learn new techniques and strategies</p> <p>No clear expectation</p> |
| Lesson Perception | <p>Lesson was useful</p> <p>Lesson was boring</p> |
| Learning Process | <p>Usage of skimming and scanning/ learning strategies</p> <p>Work in pairs/groups</p> <p>Preferred learning style</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>Need for improvement</p> |
| Self-Perception and Perceived Progress | <p>Struggle with comprehension</p> <p>Reading is difficult</p> <p>No improvement notices</p> <p>Felt improvement in reading</p> |
| Autonomous Learning | <p>Confidence in English</p> <p>Still dependent on a teacher</p> <p>No change in autonomy</p> |