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**Using authentic materials to foster autonomous learning  
of English at lower secondary schools**

Diploma thesis

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Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracovala samostatně  
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V Olomouci 18.4.2023

.....

*Vlastnoruční podpis*

I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently,  
using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.

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**Abstract:**

The main objective of this diploma thesis is to examine the topic of using authentic materials in the lessons of English as a second language, and whether the incorporation of such materials fosters autonomous learning in lower secondary school learners. The theoretical part depicts authentic materials, authentic learning, educational benefits and drawbacks of authentic materials, as well as autonomous learning and its integration into lesson planning. The empirical part elaborates on the lesson plan designed to foster autonomous learning by using authentic materials. This lesson plan was implemented, and the learners were monitored prior to and after the lesson. Data were collected through self-assessment questionnaires. Additionally, the teachers who conducted the lesson plan were questioned. The findings of the research are presented in this thesis.

**Keywords:**

authentic materials, autonomous learning, lower secondary learners

## Introduction

The English language has been widely used as an international communication tool and is considered the lingua franca of the modern world (Harmer, 2010, p. 1).

The necessity to learn and successfully interact and communicate in English, and thus succeed in real life scenarios, has put the educators in a difficult position of providing valuable insight into the English culture and assisting in the comprehension of the authentic language. However, in non-English speaking countries such as the Czech Republic, up-to-date authentic materials and real-life situation can be scarce, and learners, especially learners at elementary schools, may not encounter authentic situations frequently, and their English education typically relies on not so current textbooks.

One way of incorporating real life occurrences is the usage of authentic materials in the classroom. The assisted implementation of authentic materials, whether these are songs, books, articles or jokes etc., has been long-term recommended (Harmer, 2001; Scrivener, 2011; Ur, 2012). Authentic materials, taken directly from everyday life, can increase learners' motivation and personal engagement in the learning process. The usage of the authentic materials in the classroom, can not only teach the common language skills i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking or language systems with grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, moreover, it can promote learners' personal growth by practicing critical thinking or by achieving key competences necessary for a successful life (FEP, 2021).

In order to reach the learners' potential, intrinsic motivation is needed to spark the autonomous learning, which leads to lifelong learning. The benefits of autonomous learning promote independent learning, the ability to seek the information on its own, which also leads to self-discovery of the learners' learning styles and personal preferences. Undoubtedly, the learners' own participation in learning process is essential if we want to raise independent learners interested in long-term learning (Scrivener, 2011).

This diploma thesis focuses on using authentic materials to foster autonomous learning of English in lower secondary school learners. The theoretical part defines the authentic materials and autonomous learning, and discusses their advantages and disadvantages. The empirical part includes a quantitative research study that uses the lesson plan designed to foster autonomous learning by using authentic materials. The lesson plan



was conducted at three different schools by three different teachers for four unrelated groups of lower secondary learners. The learners were given questionnaires prior to the lesson to explore their attitude towards learning of English language, and after the lesson to check whether intrinsic motivation and the autonomous learning had been promoted. Lastly, the teachers' stance on the executed lessons was also questioned. The data of these self-assessment questionnaires were collected, analysed and are presented in this thesis. The main research questions of the study were defined as follows:

Q1: To what extent do learners enjoy using authentic materials in the English lessons?

Q2: How does using authentic materials in classroom promote autonomous learning?

Q3: To what extent would learners like to improve their English language skills and to work on becoming independent learners?

# THEORETICAL PART

## 1 Authentic materials

First of all, this thesis elaborates on the characteristics of authentic materials, which are the core of this thesis, and subsequently it provides readers with an insight into the definition of authentic materials and realia including some practical examples.

### 1.1 Definition of authentic materials

The main idea of using authentic sources is to provide invaluable source of real life scenarios with up-to-date natural language input and has a long historical background. It can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century to one of the first linguists Henry Sweet as he was already aware of the potential advantages of “natural, idiomatic texts over artificial methods” (in Gilmore, 2007). From the 1970s, with the rise of humanistic approaches, the issue of using authentic sources has become more popular with Communicative Language Teaching which primarily focuses on learners’ communicative competences (Babická, 2017).

According to Nunan (1989, p.84) the authentic sources/materials can be defined as “...any material that has not been specifically produced for the purposes of language teaching”. Also, Harmer’s definition (2001, p.205) that “...authentic material is language where no concessions are made to foreign speakers” is aligned with Nunan’s. The purpose of authentic materials is then to convey message and communicate meaning primarily among the native speakers of the language rather than teach the language. The authentic materials can be any kind of material which does not refer to just texts (written or spoken).

According to House (2008, p.57) authentic materials can be divided into two distinct categories: a) materials which contain language, and b) materials which stimulate language production. This characteristic de facto opens up the possibilities for using the authentic materials for language teaching. As a matter of fact, they are any materials that provide authentic exposure to the language and are being used naturally and this encompasses a wide array of sources. To illustrate, these can be songs, poems, films, web pages, podcasts, posters, flyers, restaurant menus, advertisements, jokes and so forth. Harmer (2001, pp. 282-294) suggests many ideas for authentic materials including a proper use of videos, real-world videos, or audios in the classroom setting to add the extra dimension to the learning

experience. Similarly, Thomas (2014) recommends using locally relevant authentic materials as every local context is different. Thomas mentions using a “surface culture topic” such as food, traditions, arts, places or situations. By using “deep culture topics” such as attitudes, perceptions and values, teachers can engage learners in critical thinking and cross-cultural awareness. Locally relevant authentic sources include restaurants’ menus, recipes, blogs, magazines, newspapers, tourist articles, literature, performing arts and visual arts.

Nonetheless, the authenticity of the natural language can sometimes be questioned. As Harmer (2001, p.205) points out there can be some instances where the language can be both authentic and inauthentic, such as parent-to-baby talk or a playwright’s interpretation of spontaneous speech. Both of these can be altered in style or construction so they do not provide the real dialogs learners can encounter in everyday communication. Therefore, the author’s personal perspective should also be taken into consideration as the authentic material or text may convey the author’s personal view, the language context or the socioeconomic background of such material. Also according to Brown (2001), the author's personal cultural view, language context, and social community may influence the way in which they convey information in their writing. Therefore, when analysing and interpreting authentic materials, it is important to take into account the author's background and personal experiences to fully understand their intended meaning.

## 1.2 Definition of realia

The definition and connotation of authentic materials and realia can sometimes merge. Merriam Webster’s dictionary defines the realia as “objects or activities used to relate classroom teaching to real life especially of people studied.” In agreement with this definition Nagaraj (2005, p.193) states that realia are “actual objects and items which are brought into a classroom as examples or as aids to be talked or written about and used in teaching.” Therefore, realia are the real objects that demonstrate the real thing. Realia, the same as authentic materials, expose learners to the real discourse of target language and stimulate the learners’ motivation and facilitate learning. For instance, a restaurant menu complies with the definition of authentic materials as well as realia.

Realia provide the visual guidance to capture the learners’ attention and spark the learners’ imagination. They can also serve as a useful teaching aid for varied learning styles, especially for visual and kinaesthetic types of learners. To illustrate, realia can be used for

presenting the vocabulary to help to build new association with the words, or as props for dialogs and role play. Harmer (2001, p.140) mentions that intrinsically interesting objects can make learning more enjoyable, however, the size or the quantity of the objects can impose limitations to the classroom usage.

To sum up, both authentic materials and realia are sources not designed for classroom use. Moreover, realia are the real objects which can sometimes become difficult to obtain and manipulate with due to their weight, size etc., whereas authentic materials are easier to access and obtain as they mainly relate to texts, videos recordings and such.

### 1.3 Authentic learning

Authentic learning is learning that prepares learners for real-world experiences by exposing them into real life occurrences and situations. It provides a motivational challenge which puts initiative more on the learners, hence it nurtures their problem solving and critical thinking skills. Authentic learning is implemented by authentic exposure in target language and by recreating the natural environment that helps learners to acquire the language.

#### 1.3.1 Authentic exposure

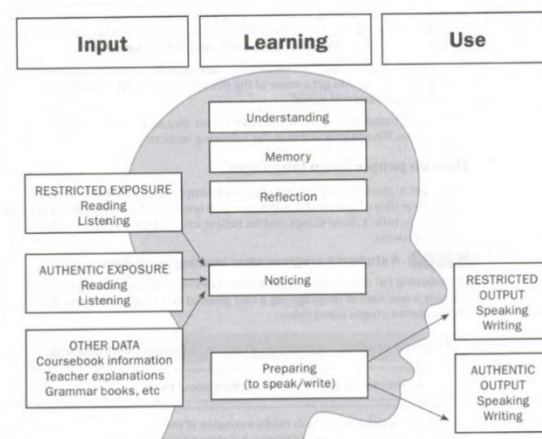
Although the definition of authentic materials clearly state that they are not designed for language teaching, they are widely recommended by the professionals in the field (Scrivener, 2011; Ur, 2012). Many studies prove the positive effects on the learners' education such as increasing learners' motivation and self-satisfaction by using "real" language as was pointed out by Akbari & Razavi (2005). Also Hyland (2003, p. 94) states that "without the use of authentic materials while exposing learners to EFL situations, it is difficult to anticipate how the learner will perform in the real situations." Learners will acquire grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation etc. of the target language in the school environment but still might have unrealistic views on real-life situations. Exposing learners to real-world issues and problems helps them to connect to what they are learning (Hyland, 2003, p.93). Also, Scrivener (2005, p.364) claims "The language learning arises from learners having a reason to communicate authentically in English to achieve a specific goal."

Research has shown that the use of authentic materials can have a positive impact on learners' language proficiency. For example, a study conducted by Peacock and Ho (2003) found that learners who were exposed to authentic materials showed a greater improvement

in their language skills than those who were not. Similarly, a study by Leaver and Willis (2004) found that the use of authentic materials can enhance learners' motivation and engagement in the learning process.

Scrivener's theory of learning (2005, p.112) confirms that in order to succeed in the learning of the foreign language, the learners need to be exposed in the restricted, as well as the authentic language and the process can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The process of learning (Scrivener, 2005, p.112)



The restricted exposure refers to the institutional education where learning is limited to content of the coursebooks and curriculum. On the contrary, the authentic exposure is the limitless resource of the material from the real world which provides complete immersion into the language. Scrivener (2005, p.113) specified the authentic exposure to the following:

- a) reading magazines, books, articles, product labels, etc.
- b) listening to the small talk and listening to the recordings, radios, etc.
- c) watching English films or television channels
- d) living in a place where the language is used
- e) hearing incidental language used in class
- f) reading pieces of language on notices, posters, etc. around the classroom

Thus, Scrivener is convinced that authentic exposure can be facilitated in the classroom setting. As learners engage with authentic materials, they encounter language as it is used in real-life contexts, which includes the use of idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, and cultural references. This exposure to authentic language use can help learners to develop their language skills in a more natural and holistic way (Peacock & Ho, 2003).

According to Gilmore (2007, p.98) the concept of authenticity of language learning is related to "...the language produced by the native speakers for native speakers in a particular language community, the language produced by a real speaker/writer for a real audience, conveying a real message; the qualities bestowed on a text by the receiver, in that it is not seen as something inherent in a text itself, but is imparted by the reader/listener; the interaction between students and teachers and personal process of engagement; the types of task chosen, the social situation of the classroom, assessment, culture and the ability to behave and think like a target language group in order to be recognized and validated by them." With special regard to the latter, the cultural aspect of the authenticity of the usage of the target language, plays an important role in providing insight and understanding the target language. After all, the expansion of English and using English language as a global communication tool has brought many varieties of English (Kachru, 1985) and diversification of the forms, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation or conventions of use presents a challenge of language teaching to many educators (Gilmore, 2007, p.103).

Authentic exposure focuses on real-world scenarios, problems, and situations to help learners develop relevant knowledge and skills thus it is a valuable learning incentive and provides learners with the opportunity to develop their language skills in a way that is meaningful, relevant, and engaging.

### 1.3.2 Language acquisition

The authentic exposure of the target language is essential in the language acquisition. Language acquisition, in contrast to language learning, is the natural process of acquiring the language and can be compared to acquiring a mother tongue, which results in native like proficiency. As confirmed by Nunan & Richards, 2015, in general, learners who engage in out-of-class learning behaviour show higher levels of English proficiency.

The protagonist of the language acquisition, T.D. Terrell, proclaimed there is a major difference between language learning and language acquisition. According to Terrell (1977, p.327) "Learning is conscious process of studying and intellectually understanding the grammar of second language. Acquisition, on the other hand, refers to the unconscious absorption of general principles of grammar through real experiences of communication using second language." Language learning is then the process of learning the target language by the specifically prepared and designed materials and coursebooks, which is typically done at school settings, and it is referred to as the restricted input of the language.

Whereas the language acquisition, ideally done in the natural environment of the target language, is the process of acquiring the target language in real life situations and occurrences by communication with the native speakers.

Language acquisition comes hand in hand with authentic exposure and authentic learning. Authentic exposure refers to the experience of being immersed in a real-world context or situation where the language being learned is used naturally and authentically. Authentic exposure can provide learners with the input they need to develop their language skills, as it exposes them to a range of language forms, structures, and functions that are not typically found in classroom-based instruction (Zhang, 2009).

The theory of second language acquisition was closely described by S. Krashen (1982). According to Krashen the language acquisition takes place when the five learning hypotheses are met. Among these belong acquisition learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the affective filter hypothesis. To briefly summarize the theory, it places the emphasis on the learners' motivation and self-determination. The mistake correction is suppressed, and the primary goal is to keep learners' anxiety low by providing a welcoming class atmosphere and lowering affective barriers. Lessons aims are individually considered and adjusted to the learners' level of English. Additionally, the language input should be comprehensible yet challenging, in order to advance learners' language abilities to the next level.

The key to a successful language acquisition relies on the teacher's careful planning of the lesson and appropriate task selection. As Gilmore (2007, p.107) has stated that the success of the using authentic materials in the classroom depends on the appropriateness of the tasks and effectiveness of the teacher's mediation of the materials to the learners. When using authentic materials in the classroom the teacher must construct the tasks with a specific goal in mind and distinguish among various lesson aims. The use of authentic materials where focus is more on the meaning than on the form is pivotal for authentic learning therefore language acquisition rather than language learning is being attained. However, Gilmore (2007, p.110) argues that more empirical research should be performed to conclude the relation between authentic or modified input and language acquisition. The proper way of altering the authentic language needs to be further studied.

Primarily, activities with authentic sources help learners to acquire language through real-world examples, leading to a more inductive learning experience. Inductive learning

encourages learners to discover language patterns and structures through examples and context, learners actively participate in the learning process and develop their own understanding of its rules and structures (Ellis, 2003). According to Ellis inductive learning can be more engaging and effective than traditional teaching methods and learners are more likely to remember and apply the rules in new situations.

Nevertheless, language acquisition is the preferred intention of the education process and the most expedient tool to reaching learning goals. When learners acquire a language, they are able to use it for a variety of purposes, such as academic, social, and professional contexts. This can open up new opportunities for learners and help them achieve their personal and professional goals (Brown, 2001). Moreover, language acquisition is a dynamic process that involves ongoing learning and development. Learners need to continue to use the language in order to maintain and improve their language proficiency (Krashen, 1985). By focusing on language acquisition, learners can develop their communicative competence and become more confident and proficient in using the language.



## 2 Educational benefits and drawbacks of authentic materials

The use of authentic materials not only prepares the learners for everyday life situations, it moreover offers access to more varied and up-to date vocabulary, cultural insight and such. Furthermore, it engages and nurtures learners' motivation for lifelong learning. Nonetheless, some limitations such as language complexity or lack of linguistic support, the extra effort to comprehend the language may pose a challenge to some learners. A comprehensible summary of the benefits of using authentic materials is provided by Thomas (2014, pp. 15-16) and is presented as follows:

- a) they expose learners to language that serves a useful purpose
- b) provide refreshing change from the textbook
- c) focus more closely on learners' interests and needs
- d) provide information about a variety of topics
- e) increase learners' motivation
- f) connect the classroom with the outside world

Subsequently, Thomas sums up the challenges and drawbacks that using authentic materials brings:

- a) the cultural content may seem too unfamiliar
- b) the content may become obsolete too quickly
- c) the language may be too difficult
- d) the vocabulary may be too specialized
- e) the grammar structures may be too complex
- f) the preparation may require too much time.

Both benefits and drawbacks of choice of authentic materials, level of English, developing critical thinking skills, and time consumption accompanied by the use of authentic materials will be considered and elaborated on the following chapters.

### 2.1 Choice of the authentic materials

Many learners lack sufficient or varied types of authentic exposure outside of the classroom (Cameron, 2001) and the authentic input must be provided to learners in the

classroom where the learners of foreign languages often face the problem of acquiring the language from the outdated coursebooks with unengaging content. The selection of the most suitable and appropriate content of the authentic materials depends on the detailed analysis of the learners' needs and interests and some other factors such as learners' age or socioeconomic background should be taken into consideration. Also, Tomlinson (2012) agrees that when choosing authentic materials, it is important to consider a number of factors, including the learners' needs, interests, and language level. The teacher must be conscientiously observant to properly diagnose the class, i.e., individual learner's needs and interests. According to Scrivener (2005, pp.70-77) the needs analysis should consist of various writing and speaking tasks, observation and getting feedback from the learners. Especially getting feedback information from the learners can constructively help with the felicitous choice of in-class authentic materials. Beside the learners' needs and interests other factors such as topic, targeted language skills should be complied with.

In addition, for Febrina (2017) the teachers are in particular responsible for the proper selection and execution of the authentic materials, after all, it is up to the teachers to consider the learners' interest, ability and cultural background. She further claims that using authentic materials brings many benefits such as improving literacy, communicative competences, multicultural awareness, motivation to use the real language, however, it can also pose some challenges i.e., complex and difficult language. Authentic materials can be challenging for learners, particularly those who are not yet proficient in the target language, so it is important to select materials that are appropriate for their level and that provide appropriate scaffolding and support (Nation & Macalister, 2010).

The diversity of authentic materials provides a wide range of sources. Mishan (2005) allocated three basic aspects in selecting authentic materials – linguistic, cultural and conceptual. Using authentic texts should facilitate language learning, should be manageable by both teachers and learners yet provide challenging input, should enable learners' comprehension of the society where it is spoken, and should bring interests and motivation to the learners. Most importantly, the authentic materials should engage the learners by providing interesting and relevant information. Scrivener (2005, p.109) points out that well-designed engaging lesson plans that motivate learners are key factors for language learning. Accordingly Brown and Lee (2015) state that the use of authentic materials can lead to more effective language acquisition by creating a more engaging and relevant learning experience for learners. For instance, Král (2018) used video games as a tool for language acquisition.

The study proved that using video games removes typical obstacles in learning languages such as low motivation, low confidence and anxiety, and it promotes effective language acquisition.

## 2.2 Level of English

With the use of authentic language comes the use of the challenging vocabulary and grammar structures. "Authentic materials can be difficult for learners to comprehend due to the complexity of the language used and the lack of linguistic scaffolding provided" (Kasper & Shaffer, 2018, p. 292). Although complex content can demotivate some learners, the demanding tasks can as a matter of fact promote language acquisition and spark the learners' motivation (Scrivener, 2005, p.107). In compliance with Scrivener, Krashen's Input hypothesis also confirms the need for the slightly challenging input as the slightly higher level of English, yet comprehensible input, facilitates the language acquisition. Chao (2013) adds that Input theory increases the teaching effectiveness and promotes the language acquisition, additionally, he recommends variety of teaching methods and multimedia tools to stimulate the learners' motivation.

The variety of authentic exposure in real life situations requires a combination of language skills and the learners should be prepared for these encounters. In order to successfully navigate in real-world situations, language learners must possess a diverse set of skills that enable them to effectively communicate with others in a variety of contexts. As noted by Kramsch and Sullivan (1996, p.4), "The ability to communicate appropriately in a wide range of social and cultural settings is a fundamental aspect of communicative competence." This means that language learners must not only be proficient in the grammatical and syntactical aspects of the language, but they must also possess cultural knowledge and an understanding of the context in which they are communicating. They must be able to adapt their language use to suit different situations, and they must be prepared for the various encounters they may face in real-life situations.

In natural communication, native speakers tend to use spontaneous spoken language, colloquial vocabulary, incomplete sentence, or ungrammatical structures which can pose a challenge to learners. As has been observed by Brown (2001, p.44), "The use of incomplete sentences, unconventional syntax, idiomatic expressions, and pragmatic presuppositions are characteristic of everyday conversation and can be difficult for the learner to comprehend."

Additionally, a background knowledge of the society in which the language is being used is typically requisite for successful communication. The earlier mentioned Krashen's Natural order hypothesis (1982) claims that language acquisition tends to be arranged from low difficulty to the highest, however, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired earlier and some later, not necessarily in predictable order. The typical grammar sequencing available in coursebooks does not always correspond with natural language acquisition, as described by Krashen's Natural order hypothesis. Moreover, the differences of individual learner's level, needs and interest vary, thus the language acquisition can be difficult to facilitate.

As Unver (2017) has reported, challenging authentic materials can be successfully used even for low-level learners supposing that learners are systematically prepared for learning activities and are properly guided. The teacher's support and guidance is necessary for learners to fully comprehend the language and concepts presented. On top of improving the language skills, the self-confidence of learners grows as a result of avoiding the failure. Also, Goh (2000) suggests that the appropriate learning strategy is essential for low-level learners as their positive attitude towards learning needs to be encouraged. The highly qualified and experienced teacher becomes requisite when it comes to facilitating authentic language exposure.

### 2.3 Critical thinking skills

The use of authentic materials not only enhances the lessons with an enthusiastic approach towards learning but also engages with language in real-world contexts and promotes critical thinking skills such as decision making or problem-solving as claimed by Brown (2001). The learning of the language skills and systems, by implementing authentic materials, is closely accompanied by the natural developing of the cognitive thinking skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making thus acquiring key competences essential for leading a successful life. As stated by Kasper & Shaffer (2018, p. 292), "Authentic materials provide opportunities for learners to practice and develop skills necessary for understanding and producing language in real-life situations."

Curriculums include the key competences that learners are expected to develop during the whole process of learning. In FEP (2021), among the major language skills, are stated also key competencies substantial for lifelong learning or contemporary knowledge of the

society. These competencies are learning competency, problem-solving competency, communication competency, social and personal competency, civic competency and digital competency. When using the authentic materials in the classroom and administering the tasks properly, these competences are easily met within the language lessons as part of acquiring the target language. Also, Scrivener (2005, p.19) has stated that “ability to use the language seems to be more of a skill, you learn by trying to do it.”

The endless array of uses the authentic materials provide an excellent source for practicing the skills and developing the key competences. Using authentic materials can encourage learners to critically think and develop their creative abilities. Study by Kasper and Shaffer (2018) confirms that the use of authentic materials in the classroom increased learners' critical thinking and engagement with the material. Thomas (2014) also claims that the authentic materials not only help learners to stay connected to reality, they also help learners to develop critical thinking skills by solving real-world tasks and staying relevant to the local authentic materials that engage learners to comment and express opinions on local traditions, attitudes, perceptions or values. Another study by Liaw and colleagues (2008) confirms that learners who were exposed to authentic materials show significant improvement in their critical thinking skills compared to those who were not. Convincingly, research has shown that the use of authentic materials in education can have a positive impact on critical learning skills among learners.

#### 2.4 Time consuming preparation

Choosing suitable authentic materials, designing activities and worksheets, setting learning objectives, including critical thinking skills and key competences into lesson planning, the laborious lesson preparation poses a challenge and puts a strain on many teachers. Kasper & Shaffer (2018, p. 292) note "Authentic materials may require more time and effort to work with than other language learning materials, as learners may need to spend additional time decoding the language and meaning." Despite the elaborate research, and decision making of choosing the proper authentic materials, it is still popular among them. The teachers' attitude towards using authentic materials in the classroom were closely studied by Akbari & Razavi (2005) and their study has concluded that teachers do prefer using authentic materials when teaching, mainly because it motivates the learners by exposing them

to the real language. Nevertheless, the teachers also showed an interest in additional training in using authentic materials as there is a lack of those.

Also Brown and Lee (2015) admit that using authentic materials can be time-consuming for teachers to prepare, as they often require careful selection and adaptation to meet the needs of the learners. This process can be particularly challenging for teachers who are not familiar with the language or culture of the authentic materials they are using. However, despite the challenges, authentic materials provide learners with exposure to real-life situations and contexts, which can improve their language skills and cultural understanding. Additionally, using authentic materials can make learning more enjoyable and relevant for learners, increasing their motivation and engagement.

Careful lesson planning is thus inevitable, and the expert diagnosis and analysis of the learners' needs and interests is requisite. Sinclair et al. (2000, p.96) agree with this, claiming that teacher's own preparation is crucial and should be addressed as teacher-learning is "inevitably a career-long, largely self-directed enterprise." However, the experienced teacher can reuse or recycle the same authentic materials for various purposes and various language skills, levels of difficulties, or objectives. Brown and Lee (2015) point out that teachers typically have a vast supply of authentic materials that can be adapted to various purposes to accommodate different skills, objectives or levels of difficulty. Likewise, Ehrman and Oxford (1995) recommend asking learners to bring their own authentic materials to the classroom as this also contributes to intensifying learners' motivation and engagement thus achieving learning objectives.

This illustrates that the teacher's positive attitude towards teaching along with welcoming class atmosphere are essential, hence, the teacher's personality and experience play an important role in successful execution of the well planned lesson plan.

### 3 Autonomous learning

The ability to effectively communicate in a foreign language is part of the continual learning process and is based on learners' own participation and motivation. The autonomous learning concept presupposes the learners' own responsibility in seeking the knowledge and requires continuous work to become an independent learner.

#### 3.1 Learner autonomy

The learning of foreign languages often requires learners to be able to seek information valuable for international travel, international communication or for upgrading their job position and such. Providing the adults with lifelong learning can secure them with a better quality of life and better opportunities (Benson, 2007, p.22). Similarly, Janíková (2007, p.3) has observed that the autonomy is necessary for the process of language learning. Undoubtedly, autonomy is not only essential for language learning but also for any learning in general.

The first reference of autonomous learning can be found as early as in the 1970s and Henri Holec is considered one of the first protagonist of this idea. Although, at the beginnings, autonomous learning was referring mainly to adult learning and the need to provide the access to lifelong learning of the adults. Nevertheless, the definitions of learner autonomy, mainly consider the idea of lifelong learning together with personalized styles of learning as a core concept of autonomy. For instance, Ramos (2016, p.184) has proclaimed: "The idea is to make students life-long learners, ready to face the challenges of modern life and to continue learning beyond formal education." Also, Najeeb (2013, p. 1239) shares the opinion "... autonomous learning extends beyond a school context, it is a life-long process of constantly developing awareness."

In contrast to a dependency on a traditional source of the knowledge coming from the teacher in the classroom setting, the shift towards learner autonomy has many benefits. Learners take their own action in decision making regarding the learning style and preferences, learning timetable and most importantly the topic that seems to be the most relevant and attractive to them. The learners' independency shifts the teacher-centred education to student-oriented approach. Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007) claim that student-centred learning can enhance students' engagement, motivation, and critical thinking skills. They

suggest that teachers should design learning experiences that allow students to actively participate in the learning process and make meaningful connections between new information and their prior knowledge and experiences. The learners assume the role of the tutor and gain greater control over their own education. The learner is no longer only the passive recipient of education but becomes the active participant who can regulate what and how he learns.

As has been confirmed by Little (1991, p.4), "Autonomous learners take responsibility for their own learning, making their own decisions about learning style, timetable and the topics to be studied." In agreement with this claim Hardy-Gould (2013) has stated that: "Autonomous, dynamic students have the potential to learn far more than passive, reactive learners. Self-reliant students can address their own individual needs and make ongoing progress." By giving learners greater autonomy, teachers can help encourage learners' active participation and critical thinking skills development. Learners can engage with the material in a way that is meaningful to them, and can express themselves creatively through their own opinions and interpretations of the material. By selecting materials that interest learners, they can take ownership of their learning and develop their language skills in a way that is relevant to their own lives (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000).

Research has shown that the use of authentic materials in language learning can increase learner autonomy. The use of authentic materials can help learners to develop their learning strategies and become more self-directed in their learning process. For example, a study by Lee and VanPatten (2003) has found that learners who used authentic materials were more likely to take control of their own learning and use a variety of language learning strategies. Another study by Bygate and Samuda (2005) has proven that using authentic materials in task-based language learning leads to greater learner autonomy and a greater sense of ownership over the learning process.

To sum up, the use of authentic materials in language learning can promote learner autonomy by providing learners with the tools they need to take control of their own learning. Authentic materials allow learners to explore the language in context, choose materials that are interesting and relevant to them, and practice their language skills in real-life situations. The learners' autonomy can lead to increased motivation and engagement, as learners feel more invested in their learning process.



### 3.2 Intrinsic motivation

Whether learners become actively involved in the learning process depends on self-determination and fulfilling their needs. The self-determination theory was first described by Deci and Ryan in 1985 and suggests that people become self-determined through the need for personal growth and by autonomous motivation which focuses on internal sources of motivation. According to self-determination theory, which is a framework for understanding human motivation, internal motivation is facilitated when individuals feel autonomous, competent, and related to others (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The learner's active participation is a coveted attribute and reflects the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning process thus facilitates achieving the learning goals.

Referring to Deci & Ryan (1985) self-determination plays an important role in the concept of intrinsic motivation for the reason that it centres around a person's basic psychological needs and is closely related to personal growth and well-being. Autonomy refers to the sense of control over one's actions and goals, while competence refers to the feeling of being capable and effective in one's pursuits. Relatedness refers to the experience of feeling connected to and cared for by others. Self-determination can be promoted by supporting autonomy, competence and relatedness of the subject from environment and relationship, it should moreover be accompanied by maintaining goal-oriented behaviour.

Autonomous learning as well as authentic learning is tightly linked to internal i.e., intrinsic motivation. Learner's motivation can be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic depending on the inner or outside factors affecting the learner's learning need. Whereas extrinsic motivation comes from the need to please the learner's surroundings i.e., the ambition of reaching better school results or the vision of receiving the reward. On the other hand, the intrinsic motivation comes from the inner needs of the learner, from the learner's own conviction of the need of learning. According to Levesque et al. (2010) intrinsic motivation behaviour relies on personal interest and enjoyment and together with self-determined forms of extrinsic motivation facilitate positive outcomes of the individual.

Whether learner's motivation is being facilitated also depends on location, goals and learner's attitude towards using authentic materials (Gilmore, 2007, p.107). An example being a second language acquisition for learners living in the country of the target language and learners of foreign languages obtaining a language in their native country by non-native speakers. The desire to integrate into a native speaking community can immensely increase

motivation and learning enthusiasm. Notably, intrinsic motivation can also be enhanced in the classroom settings by proper methodology or inclusion of authentic materials into the syllabi. By differentiating various aims with focus on different learning skills e.g., receptive or productive, teachers are able to relevantly navigate learners throughout the learning process and sustain their motivation (Harmer, 2001, pp.51-55).

Yet, the responsibility of their own learning draws from intrinsic motivation and the learner's own conviction and self-determination to develop the skills essential for successfully obtaining knowledge. As has been revealed by Scrivener (2005, p.63) "...the strength of their (learners') motivation will be a factor in determining how seriously they (learners) approach the work." Intrinsic motivation and self-determination are closely related and key to developing learners' autonomy.

### 3.3 Teacher's role in autonomous learning

Unequivocally, the goal of autonomous learning is to foster the learners' independency and self-reliance. Even some scholars claim that the presence of the teacher is not required in autonomous learning (Janíková, 2007, p.38). Accordingly, Scrivener (2005, p.15) stated: "Language learners don't always need teachers." The traditional role of the teacher has shifted over the past decades and the teacher is no longer considered just the fossilized authority of formal education. The dominant role of the teacher in the traditional way of teaching has evolved and more and more commonly the teachers are becoming the mentors providing guidance and assistance in the learning process (Harmer, 2001, pp.56-67).

Nonetheless, the role of the teacher is still important and should not be undervalued and overlooked. The presence of the teacher can be desirable in some instances; however, the teacher should not hold the dominant status in the learning process but promote the guidance and assistance that will lead to interactive learner's incentives. As Ceylan (2015) notes, teacher guidance is important for employing varied learning strategies that provide learners with an awareness of taking responsibility of their own learning process. Lee and VanPatten (2003) also discuss the importance of promoting learner autonomy and argue that the goal of communicative language teaching is to develop learners who are able to use the language independently and appropriately in a variety of contexts. To achieve this goal, they suggest that teachers should provide learners with opportunities to take control of their own learning and to develop their own language learning strategies.

According to S. M. Alonazi (2017, pp.185–188) there are four roles that the teacher should take on in order to promote learner autonomy – the teacher should become a facilitator, a counsellor, a resource, and a manager and organizer. Also, Harmer’s (2001, pp.56-67) depiction of the teacher presents wide array of roles teachers must identify with. The teacher’s position in the learning process is then a complex combination of skills and abilities and directly influences the educational process. The well-qualified and experienced teacher is able to foster autonomous learning by providing the learning incentives, giving advice or feedback and sparking up the intrinsic motivation through suitable examples. Using the proper stimuli the learners can take the own initiative in their own process of learning thus fostering autonomous learning. For example, the teacher can navigate learners to apply SWOT analysis<sup>1</sup> for raising learners’ awareness for learning English. The acronym SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Humphrey and McLeod (2019) describe SWOT analysis as a structured process that involves gathering information, analysing it, and drawing conclusions to guide decision making. The authors note that SWOT analysis is used in a variety of settings and it can direct learners to the awareness of their language skills.

The teacher can also provide and organize the activities and materials in a way that promote autonomous learning and the learners’ potential is fully exploited. Specifically, Yan (2012, p.560) claimed that the role of the teacher as a manager and organizer is considered the most crucial role for stimulating autonomous learning effectively. This means that the teacher should not only provide relevant learning materials and activities but also organize them in a way that encourages students to take control of their learning and develop their autonomy.

In order to promote autonomous learning, the learners should take the role of the teacher and self-guide themselves in the learning process. Subsequently, the learners should be able to identify their learning needs and be able to formulate the learning aims as every learner’s needs and range or level of language skills vary (Scrivener, 2005, p. 69). By exploring and identifying personal needs, the learner should be able to find own effective learning strategies and thus control, organize and evaluate their own learning process. However, not all the mentioned requirements can be easily reached by the learners, and it is desirable to develop and practise these skills in the learners through the suitable learning

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<sup>1</sup> Sample of SWOT analysis template by Mind Tools is provided in Appendices

approaches or through teacher guidance. A professional teacher's application of carefully selected methods and strategies can lead learners to self-reflection and self-assessment of their own learning strengths and weaknesses (Harmer, 2001, p.336).

### 3.4 Fostering learner autonomy

Learner autonomy is a coveted attribute of the learner, and it is desirable to encourage it among all learners. As Levesque et al. (2010) report "In education, autonomy-supportive environments provide the context for greater learning outcomes such as increased classroom involvement, performance, and satisfaction." Therefore, teachers should create an environment that encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning and provide them with the necessary tools and skills on how to learn the target language on their own. Dickinson (in Ceylan, 2015 pp.86-87) states six ways how to promote greater learner independence:

1. Legitimizing independence in learning by showing that we, as teachers, approve, and by encouraging the students to be more independent
2. Convincing learners that they are capable of greater independence in learning - giving them successful experiences of independent learning
3. Giving learners opportunities to exercise their independence
4. Helping learners to develop learning strategies so that they can exercise their independence
5. Helping learners to become more aware of language as a system so that they can understand many of the learning techniques available and learn sufficient grammar to understand simple reference books
6. Sharing with learners something of what we know about language learning so that they have a greater awareness of what to expect from the language learning task and how they should react to problems that erect barriers to learning (Dickinson, 1992)

By adopting these strategies, teachers can help learners develop the skills and confidence they need to take charge of their own learning and become more autonomous learners. Lee and VanPatten (2003) also highlight the importance of promoting learner autonomy. They suggest that using authentic materials and providing learners with feedback and guidance on their language learning strategies can help to create more independent and

effective language learners. Teachers can help learners to take control of their own learning and to develop the skills they need to use the language independently and appropriately in a variety of contexts.

Similarly, Benson (2013, pp. 137-130) observes there are six different approaches to fostering autonomy and particularly authentic materials fall in the category of resource-based approach, out-of-class learning and self-instruction. The project based learning also promotes autonomous learning and is widely recommended by the professionals in the field. It is especially suitable for teenage learners who can be encouraged to bring their own authentic material to the classroom (Scrivener, 2005, p.330). Supposing that these methods and approaches, along with using of the authentic materials, are appropriately incorporated into lesson planning, they can provide an immense source of ideas for variety of teaching aims.

## 4 Lesson planning

Many ideas on how to use authentic materials in lesson planning can be found in educational books and articles (Scrivener, 2011; Ur, 2012; Harmer, 2001, *English Language Teaching*, *European Journal of English Language Teaching* etc.) and will be discussed further in this chapter. The careful and expert lesson planning consists of a combination of various elements that need to be taken into consideration. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this paper the focus will be primarily placed on the age of the learners, in this case lower secondary learners, and the fostering of autonomous learning by implementing authentic materials. Furthermore, the methodology necessary for implementing the proposed criteria will be discussed. In this instance, attaining of specific learning skills is subordinate and the main aim is practising integrated skills.

### 4.1 Lower secondary learners

The age of the learners plays an important role in designing the lesson plan. The teacher's knowledge of specifics for teaching various age groups is essential and the aims and topics should be relevant to learners' ages. Despite the fact that stereotyping of the learners in the same age category is not invited, the general classification and factors for each age group will be considered and presented.

Harmer (2001, pp. 37-40) points to three major age allocations. Among these are young children, adolescents and adults. According to Harmer young learners learn differently from adolescents or adults, and the main dissimilarities are in the way young children understand and react to the spoken word. Furthermore, they primarily learn by varied exposure, personal experience and active interaction. Topics should correspond to their personal encounters and be concise, as young children tend to have limited attention span. Subsequently, Harmer discusses the adolescent learners as individuals in the search for their identity who can often pose a challenge to the teachers. Their sometimes disruptive behaviour can conceal the need for self-esteem or peer approval and requires the teacher's professional management and control. Lastly, adult learners belong to the category with notable differences of learning styles and preferences. They typically tend to be more disciplined and highly motivated with specific goals in mind.

However, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, generalisation and stereotyping of learners should be avoided and other factors such as mental development or external experience outside of the classroom should be presupposed. Other relevant aspects such as the quantity of learners, male/female ratio, seating arrangement, class atmosphere, learners' participation or social background must be analysed and assessed (Scrivener, 2005, p.61).

Lower secondary learners fall into the category of adolescents, i.e., teenagers, whose sometimes challenging behaviour can make extra demands on educators. The adolescents typically struggle with natural age-development problems, identity issues or peer pressure. The teacher should not only provide academic but also emotional support to the learners. The teacher's approach should be supportive, well-managed and consistent as the teenagers tend to be more sensitive and vulnerable than primary school learners (Kidd, Czerniawski, 2011).

The teenage learners can be seen as low-motivated or disruptive and analysing their behaviour is the core to the understanding of this age group. To fully comprehend the adolescent mind, it is essential to obtain background psychological behaviour facts that accompany this age period. The adolescents' emotions are affected by hormonal changes, mood liability or greater levels of energy and aggressivity. The low self-esteem of the teenagers can be suppressed by showing respect and support, by enhancing positive behaviour or by sensitive choice of words when assessing and evaluating the learners to avoid humiliation (McLaury, Hecht in Clauss-Ehlers, 2010 p.620). The teacher should possess the ability to create a safe and positive learning environment where teenagers feel secure.

According to Harmer (2001, p.126-127) there are many reasons why learners misbehave and refuse to cooperate; among these are family influence (lack of discipline), low self-esteem (lack of respect from teachers or peers), previous negative learning experience, boredom (lack of engagement, inappropriate choice of activities) and external factors (tiredness or any other discomfort). Provided that the teenage learners are engaged in the learning process, they can become passionate and creative about the things that interest them (Harmer, 2001, p.39). Harmer also proposes encouraging teenage learners to discuss abstract issues to provoke learners' engagements with materials that are relevant and involving.

Additionally, Kidd and Czerniawski (2011, p.26) practically suggest the ways in which teenage population's motivation can be engaged and sustained. Among these are proper hydration and nutrition, reducing stress by playing music in the lessons, keeping learners intellectually challenged, including learners in lesson planning, incorporating

experience learning into curriculum, regular praising or practising mutual respect. By abiding with the aforementioned ideas for improving the teenage learning environment the teaching process can become a successful journey.

## 4.2 Learners intelligence

The complexity of the adolescent mind is furthermore affected by the individual personality and intelligence of each learner. The differences among learning styles were closely observed by Howard Gardner (1983) who classified the learners' learning preferences into eight distinctive categories based on the learners' cognitive processes. His theory of multiple intelligences (MI theory) has become widely acknowledged by professionals in the field and its practical implementation can be seen in many publications (Berman, 2002; Hoerr, 2000). A brief reference to variation of learner's intelligences as noted by Cuellar (in Clauss-Ehlers, 2010, pp. 644) follows:

1. Linguistic intelligence – ability to communicate and makes sense through language
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence – involves using and appreciating logical, abstract or numeric relations
3. Spatial intelligence - involves the ability to perceive, use and transform visual-spatial relationships
4. Musical intelligence – an ability to communicate and create meaning from the sound
5. Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence – involves the use of one's body to produce movements or to manipulate objects
6. Intrapersonal intelligence – reflects to understand oneself, including the capacity to distinguish feelings and to draw upon self-knowledge to guide one's behaviour
7. Interpersonal intelligence – connotes sensitivity to the feelings, moods and needs of others
8. Naturalist intelligence – refers to the ability to understand patterns found in natural environments

Additionally, to these eight core intelligences Gardner admits the evidence of two more intelligences; spiritual – which involves recognition of the spiritual realm, and existential intelligence – concerning one's purpose in the world and sense of consciousness.



In order to achieve the learner's potential these multiple intelligences should be catered for, and together with learner's uniqueness, embraced in lesson planning. However, all of these intelligences are not static, and so as not to limit the learner's potential, all of them should be fostered and further developed. Moreover, MI expand beyond their distinct features. Commonly, each learner possesses a combination of these intelligences which closely interact depending on the performed task or activity (Cuellar in Clauss-Ehlers, 2010, p. 644). MI theory suggests that all learners have their strengths, and these should be reinforced by proper teacher implementation.

Although MI theory can serve as a powerful tool for learning, it can often be misapplied, as observed by Hoerr (2000). The teacher's complete understanding of MI theory and certain degree of devotion is required to fulfilling its purpose. Berman (2002) presents practical applications of MI theory in his book *A Multiple Intelligences Road to An ELT Classroom* and each chapter focuses on catering to a specific learning intelligence including a reflection of its strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, Berman advises implementing all the learning styles of all the participating learners in order to reach learning potential and his book provides ideas and a diagnosis test (p.201) that can provide an insight into a learner's learning preferences. Another individual learner's preferences test is supplied by Scrivener (2005, p.405) and may be used for a learner's self-assessment.

Convincingly, using MI in teaching creates a positive learning environment prone to creating more learning opportunities for learners with various learning needs. Also, Scrivener (2005, pp.64-66) recommends working with individual differences as they promote learner autonomy and self-awareness. Although balancing the individual needs with the whole class needs, choosing activities that appeal to different types of learners and their learning styles, might be demanding and require the professional teacher's expertise, it is still an effective tool for fostering learner autonomy.

### 4.3 Methodology

Choosing an appropriate methodology that leads to achieving specific goals is pivotal to creating a successful teaching strategy. The various methods and approaches suitable for fostering learners' autonomy will be explored in this chapter with the emphasis on using the authentic materials as was appointed for this thesis.

#### 4.3.1 Setting the aims

To begin with, the objectives of the lesson must be clearly defined. According to Obst (2017, pp.44-46) the learning objectives must be complex, meaning that cognitive, affective and motor skills should be strived for in long term planning. Additionally, the objectives must be consistent, verifiable and adequate.<sup>2</sup> Besides the aforementioned skills, the key competencies bound by the FEP (2021) are coveted to accommodate. These competencies consist of learning competence, problem-solving competence, communicative competence, social and personal competence, citizenship competence, employment competence and digital competence. The key competences are to promote the learners' personal development and ensure their successful inclusion in the society. When designing a lesson plan, particularly with an objective of fostering autonomous learning, cognitive and affective skills, as well as key competences, are desired aspects of the teaching strategy.

Moreover, the language skills or language systems must be determined to achieve the intended purpose. Harmer (2001) identifies four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are interconnected and are used in different ways to communicate in various situations. Harmer also describes language systems as the different components of language that learners need to acquire in order to communicate effectively. These systems include vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and discourse. According to Harmer, language skills and language systems are interconnected. For example, in order to listen effectively, learners need to understand the vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation used in the spoken language. Similarly, when learners write, they need to use the appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and discourse features to convey their ideas effectively. Harmer emphasizes the importance of developing both language skills and language systems in order to become effective communicators in a language. By focusing on both skills and systems, learners can develop a solid foundation in the language and use it to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.

#### 4.3.2 Methods and approaches

There are many traditional, or less traditional methods and approaches, teachers can implement, nonetheless, only those relevant to the topic of this thesis will be featured in this subchapter. The most appropriate means of fostering autonomous learning seem to be the humanistic approaches that are based on a behaviourist theory. According to Thornbury (in

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<sup>2</sup> Translation from the Czech language provided by the author of this thesis.

Babická, 2017) the humanistic approach is a learner-centred approach with the focus on human values, personal growth and the learner's own initiative and engagement in the learning process. The teacher's role is typically suppressed, and the teacher merely serves as a manager of the activities, a facilitator or a guide.

An example of this is being the Communicative approach that focuses on developing learners' communicative competence by focusing on real communication and activities that involve meaningful tasks, and language that is meaningful to the learners. As described by Babická (2017) this approach identifies several elements and among these are: authentic language or realia; target language being the main language used in the classroom; language skills being taught as integrated skills; grammar being taught within an inductive approach; learners being encouraged to cooperate/negotiate with classmates in pair or group work; learners being encouraged to experience the language and express their ideas and opinions; feedback being provided but errors being considered a natural part of the learning process.

For instance, approach such as The Silent Way (in ÇELIK, 2014, pp.41-53), also promote the learners' autonomy by active participation. This method facilitates learning through discovery and creation, not repetition or memorization. It employs the learners to use their own mental capacity to explore the language and apply their knowledge to monitor their language production. It also uses physical subjects that enable the five senses and along with the usage of the real objects the problem solving skills are facilitated thus critical thinking and autonomous learning is fostered. In The Silent Way method, the role of the teacher is suppressed, in fact, the teacher uses only gestures and remains silent, hence the name of the method. The idea of the silent teacher's guidance encourages the learner autonomy as the teaching becomes subordinate to learning (Babická, 2017).

Task-based learning (TBL) is another approach that is based on the idea that language is best learned in context, through meaningful and purposeful communication. By providing learners with tasks that are relevant and interesting, TBL creates a motivating learning environment that encourages learners to take control of their own learning and to develop their own language learning strategies. It emphasizes the use of meaningful and authentic tasks as the basis for language learning. By focusing on tasks rather than on language forms, TBL encourages learners to develop their own language learning strategies and to use the language in context. Task-based learning can also be used with a variety of materials,

including authentic materials. Research by Ellis (2003) proved that TBL can lead to improvements in language proficiency, motivation, and engagement.

Cooperative learning strategies such as pair work or group work follow the humanistic idea. For instance, Harmer (2001, pp.114-125) discusses the advantages and disadvantages of whole-class teaching compare to individualised teaching and recommends an implementation of varied teaching strategies such as grouping, pair work or individualised learning in lesson planning to maximize the teaching output. Proper class diagnosis and generalising of types of activities with specific objectives in mind help the teacher with managing and organizing lessons, and a compromise of fulfilling as many wishes and needs as possible is suggested.

The desire to communicate and express an opinion in the target language can be fostered by asking open questions. The key technique to asking open questions is using questions that require longer answer by using e.g., *why, where, who, what, how, what do you think of* etc. to maximize the length of the learner's answer. In addition, allowing sufficient time to reply and formulate the answer will support the learner without interruption, comments or adding additional questions to avoid talk-talk loop (Scrivener, 2005, pp. 146-147). Fluency in speaking/expression of thoughts can be encouraged by raising a learner's speaking confidence and allowing experimenting with language and structures. Although feedback should be provided, so as to raise learners' awareness of the language, it should be handled cautiously with the focus on fluency rather than accuracy.

Activation methods are other learning strategies that engage learners in the learning process. While teaching, teachers should focus on facilitating engagement and raising learners' motivation. Eison (2010) supports active learning and claims that questioning purposefully, employing classroom demonstrations, assigning short in-class tasks, using ice-breaker or warm-up activities, adding humour to the lesson, using popular films or videos, role-playing, creating class games, or connecting learning to current events ensure active learners' participation. Many tools, techniques and activities are also mentioned by Scrivener (2005, pp. 333-369) and his recommendations include using games (to activate the learners), flashcards (for vocabulary revision or storytelling), getting-to-know-you activities (to create safe and welcoming learning environment), using videos or audios (to provide authentic input) or including drama and poetry (to stimulate the language production). The activation

techniques can serve as a practical tool for activating learners' motivation and engagement and teachers should assemble a personal collection of their popular activities and methods.

Reflective practices can also foster learners' autonomy by encouraging learners to take ownership of their learning process. By reflecting on their own experiences, learners can identify what works for them, and how they can adapt their learning process to suit their individual needs. Encouraging learners to monitor their own progress, evaluate their own performance can help learners to take the responsibility for their own learning. Scrivener (2005) suggests that self-assessment and feedback should be integrated into the language learning process as part of a cyclical process of planning, doing, and reflecting. This cyclical process allows learners to set goals, monitor their progress, receive feedback, and adjust their learning strategies as needed. Self-assessment techniques can have a positive impact on learning outcomes, as it encourages learners to be more engaged in learning process. According to Ross (2006), self-assessment can be a valuable tool in promoting learning and development, as it encourages individuals to take an active role in their own learning or performance improvement. However, self-assessment should be used in conjunction with other sources of feedback, such as peer or expert assessment, to ensure a more accurate and comprehensive evaluation of performance or progress. Thus, receiving feedback from others, such as teachers, peers can help learners identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop strategies for improvement.

In order to maximise the learners' potential careful lesson planning and organizing is essential. The factors discussed in the previous chapters must be considered in conjunction with the objective of promoting autonomy by using authentic materials to engage the learners' motivation.

## Summary

The topic of this thesis *Using authentic materials to foster autonomous learning of English at lower secondary schools* was elaborated in the preceding chapters. The first chapter features the definitions of authentic materials and realia. Furthermore, authentic learning as well as language acquisition were explored as they play a pivotal role in a successful implementation of the authentic materials.

Using authentic materials has been proven to be effective, yet has its limitations, and the second chapter is devoted to a discussion about a selection of the authentic materials, the difficulty of the language of authentic exposure, the development of critical thinking skills and finally the drawbacks of time constraints that selection and implementation of authentic materials bring. The aforementioned aspects were examined with their advantages and disadvantages as they are essential in planning a lesson.

The third chapter deals with the issue of autonomous learning that comes secondary to the usage of authentic materials. The learner autonomy and self-determination, i.e., learner's own participation in the learning process, is elaborated together with the importance of intrinsic motivation. The teacher's role as a subordinate element is also mentioned. Fostering autonomous learning as a coveted attribute is explored and the learner's self-determination is mentioned as the key incentive for lifelong learning.

The last chapter of the theoretical part deals with the lesson planning strategies essential for successfully executing a lesson. This thesis is based on application in lower secondary schools thus the age of lower secondary learners, and its typical characteristics, are further explored. In order to foster learner autonomy and engagement in the learning process it is essential to expand on Multiple intelligences theory that creates positive learning strategies vital for autonomous learning. Subsequently, the suitable methodologies and approaches for achieving set objectives are discussed. The theoretical part provides the academic support for the empirical part where the attained knowledge is practically implemented.

# THE EMPIRICAL PART

## 1 Research

The empirical part is devoted to the research performed in order to obtain data needed for the conclusion of this thesis. The detailed procedure of the performed research will be depicted in the subsequent chapters. The decision behind designing the lesson plan used as the foundation of the research will be explored along with the personal reflection on the executed lesson. The findings of the study will be presented in the in-depth analysis followed by the results, conclusion and the discussion about the potentials and limits of this particular study. The first chapter will elaborate on the research procedure, primarily on setting the objectives, research sample, research instrument, designing of the lesson plan and the questionnaires, execution of the lesson plan and data collection.

### 1.1 Research objectives

The main objective of the research that accompanies this thesis was to examine the questions as to whether the usage of authentic English materials fosters autonomous learning in the lower secondary school learners, whether learners enjoy using authentic materials in the lessons and are aware of the necessity of using and improving their English language skills thus autonomous learning becomes an essential part of their lives. The pivotal research questions were set as follows:

Q1: To what extent do learners enjoy using authentic materials in the English lessons?

Q2: How does using authentic materials in classroom promote autonomous learning?

Q3: To what extent would learners like to improve their English language skills and to work on becoming independent learners?

Primarily the research was aimed at lower secondary school learners, and secondly at their English teachers to obtain the feedback on the performed lessons. In order to utilize and examine the thesis objective of whether the autonomy of the learner is promoted by using authentic materials in the classroom, it was necessary to design a lesson plan that satisfies all the aforementioned attributes. Subsequently, it was crucial to find participating schools and teachers willing to get involved in the project, and who were expert teachers and

simultaneously evinced a good teacher-student rapport to provide a welcoming learning environment that promotes intrinsic motivation.

In addition to the customised lesson plan, questionnaires were needed to be developed to collect data for the study, with the intention of using these questionnaires prior to and after the lesson to obtain all the desired information. The teacher's stance on the lesson was also recorded through a self-assessment questionnaire and the research process is further elaborated in corresponding chapters.

The data from the collected questionnaires were gathered and analysed. The quantitative research method was used to obtain the results and to answer the research questions. Cohen et al. (2013) has defined the quantitative research as research that typically involves collecting data through surveys, tests, or standardized assessments, and then analyses the data using statistical methods such as correlation, regression, and analysis of variance which complies with the intention of this particular research study.

## 1.2 Research sample

For the purpose of this study nine elementary schools in the district of Hodonín in the South Moravia were addressed. Nonetheless, only three schools, out of these nine, decided to participate in the project. One of the schools that participated in the project was the school where I undertook my teaching practice, and I personally was one of the participating teachers. I had contacted two English teachers at the other schools and commenced the collaboration. The appointed teachers had already had some experience with using authentic materials in their lessons and were open to using a specifically designed lesson plan in their teaching. In order to spark intrinsic motivation and promote autonomous learning it is essential to provide welcoming class atmosphere and ensure a good teacher-learner rapport. After interviewing the participating teachers, I got the impression that the teachers would do their best to meet these requirements. It is also essential to state that the research sample was chosen intentionally as certain attributes such as teacher's attitude towards using authentic materials was pivotal (Gavora, 2000, p.64).

After a collegial discussion it was decided to undertake the lesson plan for the learners of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and the teachers chose the lesson plan which seemed to be most suitable for the researched group of learners, which denotes that the decision was based on the thorough class diagnosis. The homogeneity of the age and the selection of the same lesson plan, using



the same authentic materials and tasks, provided the unity and compactness for the obtained data. Altogether in the study 42 learners participated; teacher no.1 was able to collect data of 12 learners, teacher no.2 of 17 learners and teacher no.3 of 13 learners. There were no learners with specific learning needs at the time of the study and the ratio of male/female learners was not recorded as it seems irrelevant to the research objectives. Due to this limited number of participants, this research can be classified as a small-case study. According to Bryman (2016), small-scale studies are useful for exploring new research questions and testing new hypotheses. They are often less costly and time-consuming than larger studies, but the results may not be generalizable to a larger population. Despite these limitations, small-scale studies can provide valuable insights into the research question being studied and can serve as a starting point for larger studies.

### 1.3 Lesson plan

In order to meet the research objective, a conscientiously planned lesson plan is fundamental. The lesson plan that was designed for this thesis satisfies the intended requirements and was diligently chosen to be used in the appointed classes and can be found in the Appendices section of this paper. The process of designing the lesson plan will be further described in detail in the following sections.

#### 1.3.1 Setting the aims of the lesson

The optimal learning environment is a desired attribute. Therefore the teacher's personal class analysis is significant in forming the objectives. As mentioned in chapter 2.1 *Choice of authentic materials* the class needs are to be analysed in the context of the topical theme, learning objectives or class dynamics. The class diagnosis was performed by the participating teachers, and it followed the main principles recommended by Scrivener (2005). The multiple learners' intelligences (Gardner, 1983) were also taken into consideration and their implementation was emphasized while designing the plan.

According to Harmer (2001), setting clear aims helps to provide a focus for the lesson and enables learners to understand what they are expected to achieve. By clearly communicating the aims of the lesson, teachers can help to create a sense of purpose and motivation among their students. He also adds that aims that are too easy may not provide

enough motivation for the learners, while aims that are too difficult may result in frustration and demotivation (Harmer, 2001, p.85-87).

The learning aims as well as personal aims were set to meet the requirements for lower secondary school learners considering all the accompanied educational and psychological aspects. The learning objectives were set in compliance with Bloom's cognitive taxonomy as well as key competences, required by FEP (2021), were included.

When setting the lesson aims, along with acquiring and practicing language skills and systems, developing of cognitive skills, had also been established. For the purpose of this thesis, practising of integrated skills, in this particular case reading, listening, writing and speaking with focus on fluency, expressing thoughts and opinions were targeted. Practicing of both receptive and productive skills was also included in the referring lesson plan. Furthermore, the voluntary homework and at home project-learning was endorsed to foster autonomous learning. The voluntary homework is an additional assignment outside of the classroom that promotes a positive attitude towards the learning. According to a study conducted by Fernández-Alonso, Suárez-Álvarez, and Muñiz (2015), voluntary homework can have a positive impact on student achievement, as well as on their attitudes towards learning. Learners who completed voluntary homework reported higher levels of interest and engagement in their schoolwork and showed better academic achievements.

Personal teacher's aims were also set and were aimed at learners' active participation, gaining learners' confidence in speaking skills and creating a safe learning environment where learners openly discuss and express their opinions. The designing of the lesson plan was done prior to the research and was generalised in order to be used in all participating classes.

### 1.3.2 Authentic materials selection

Due to the wide array of authentic materials broadly available, the selection of the most suitable and most engaging materials was not an easy assignment. To spark learners' motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, lessons must be interesting and engaging. The choice of proper materials that enhance the lesson is critical in initiating learners' interest (Harmer, 2001, pp. 85-87). Harmer emphasizes the importance of using materials that are relevant to the learners' needs and interests, and that provide appropriate levels of challenge and support. He also suggests that teachers should consider the cultural appropriateness of the

materials they choose and be mindful of potential sources of offense or misunderstanding. Nevertheless, after the collegial discussion with the cooperating teachers, the main theme, topic and aims were successfully formed.

For the appointed classes, the suitable authentic material was selected upon an oral interviewing, analysing and determination of the learners' interests and needs, in this particular case, learners of the English language in 9<sup>th</sup> grades in the town Hodonín in the South Moravian region. The learners were previously introduced to world literature, American history and had already acquired some skills by using authentic texts. With regards to the learners' cultural background, i.e., European descent, the Afro-American author Maya Angelou<sup>3</sup> was chosen to initiate the discussion that arouses critical thinking, most importantly, cognitive and affective skills. Subsequently, the poem named *Caged Bird* was selected as the main topic of the lesson. The poem focuses on the contrast of slavery and freedom, and a lively debate amongst learners was anticipated.

### 1.3.3 Methodology

As this lesson plan is aimed at integrated learning skills, the methods used to execute the lesson also vary. The lesson plan is based on active learner participation and the engagement is being prompted by the teacher's positive approach, enthusiastic attitude towards the topic and chiefly by asking appropriate open questions that facilitate long and deeper answers.

Additionally, the lesson plan contains a listening part that needs to be properly introduced so the learners become adequately acquainted and pre-prepared for the expected outcomes. It was essential that teachers had familiarised themselves with the authentic materials, the poem, the author and a brief history background of the poem, and obviously with all the parts, links and tasks of the lesson. Fluency, rather than accuracy, is the main goal of authentic learning, so the teachers' prerequisite knowledge of the subject was needed in order to continuously encourage the learners' production, either spoken or written.

Teamwork and pair work is another applied method in the appointed lesson plan and is enabled by implementing proper tasks where learners are paired or grouped with classmates to lessen the peer pressure thus promote learning incentives. By incorporating

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<sup>3</sup> Maya Angelou (1928-2014) was an Afro-American writer, poet and civil rights activist.

teamwork social competencies such as negotiating, agreeing, disagreeing, making compromise together with facilitating language skills are being promoted.

For the purpose of fostering learner autonomy using the dictionaries was incorporated in the lesson. The individual search for the new vocabulary varies, depending on the level of learner's knowledge, and requires the skills that are essential for the learner's independence. Furthermore, autonomous learning is being fostered by voluntarily homework that encourages learners to seek information on their own and find an authentic text that personally interests them. Moreover, the writing task, an opinion essay, along with project-based assignment of creating a presentation, facilitate communicative and digital competencies which are expedient tools for implementing multiple intelligence theory. The sample of the aforementioned lesson plan is included in the appendix section of this paper.

#### 1.3.4 Lesson execution

All the lessons were conducted during November 2022. Unfortunately, due to the high level of learner absence, the research sample contains only 42 respondents. Teacher no.1 performed the lesson for 12 learners. Teacher no.2 teaches English for all learners of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in her school and this grade is further divided into 2 smaller groups. Even though this teacher performed the lesson plan twice, all in all, it was possible to collect information from 17 learners. Teacher no.3 executed lesson for 13 learners. The total number of 42 learners were included in the study and for the purpose of this research will be analysed as one sample of respondents.

All the participating teachers were asked to fill in the questionnaire, after the performed lesson, which was thoroughly analysed, and the findings will be presented in the chapter 2.3. However, as I personally was one of performing teachers, I will elaborate on the lesson procedure, the personal observations, including reflection in more detail in the subsequent chapter.

### 1.4 Questionnaires

To obtain the requisite data, the research instruments in form of the custom designed questionnaires, were developed. Altogether there were three questionnaires used in the performed research. The questionnaires were both in English and Czech language to assure the correct translation by the Czech learners. The questionnaires contained mainly closed

questions assessed by the Likert scale and followed the design principles mentioned in Gavora (2000, pp.88-109). The Likert scale is a measurement tool used for gathering data on opinions or beliefs, it typically consists of series of questions or statements to which indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. The Likert scale used in the questionnaires contained five levels, ranging from *yes - rather yes - no opinion - rather no - no*. In the case of the question of rating learner's skills or rating the lesson the typical grading scale 1 to 5, one for the best (excellent) and five for the worst (unsatisfactory), was appointed.

Two questionnaires were focused on the learners; firstly, their self-assessment of their English language skills, their attitude towards learning English, and whether intrinsic motivation is being facilitated and autonomous learning is already being fostered. The first questionnaire contained five closed questions; the data was collected through a five-level Likert scale, additionally, there was one open-ended question where learners could specify where or how they use English outside of the school. This questionnaire was executed prior the lesson.

The second questionnaire, which was carried out immediately after the lesson, focused on the learners' opinion of the performed lesson which firstly asked learners to rate the lesson according to the five level grading system, and it was followed by eight closed questions assessed by a five-level Likert scale. It also contained two open questions where pupils could specify their most favourite and the least favourite part of the lesson.

The third questionnaire was aimed at the teachers and contained twelve closed questions assessed by the Likert scale and one open question asking for the comments, recommendations and improvements of the used lesson plan. The teachers were instructed to fill in the questionnaire as soon as possible after the performed lesson.

## 1.5 Data collection

All three participating teachers had been thoroughly acquainted with the lesson plan and the authentic materials required for teaching the lesson, additionally, they were instructed on how to proceed with questionnaires. The learners had not been informed in advance that they would be studied and questioned. On the day of the research, at the beginning of the lesson, the questionnaires were distributed among the learners. The learners were told to fill in a short questionnaire about their English skills and their opinion about learning English

language; it was emphasized that the answers were anonymous. After the collecting of all the questionnaires, the specially designed lesson commenced.

At the end of the lesson, the second questionnaire was handed out. The learners were asked to evaluate and express their opinion about the lesson. The total amount of time spent on the filling in the questionnaires did not exceed ten minutes. Lastly, after collecting the learners' questionnaires, the teachers were obliged to fill in the teacher questionnaire to reflect the lesson. The questionnaires of all participating learners and teachers were gathered and subsequently analysed as one research sample. The findings of the research are elaborated below.

## 1.6 Personal reflection on the performed lesson

The lesson was realized in November 2022 at an elementary school in the South Moravian region. At the time of the study there were 13 learners of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade present in the classroom. It was a heterogenous class of learners, no learners with special educational needs attend this class.

The lesson was commenced by the short greeting of the learners and the announcement that the learners were expected to fill in an anonymous questionnaire that would survey their attitude towards learning English. The information was received without major hesitation and the questionnaires were distributed. It was emphasized that the questionnaire was anonymous, and learners could use both Czech and English to answer the questions. The majority of the learners were finished with the questionnaire within five minute time, the rest handed them in shortly after. After the collection of the questionnaires the lesson began.

It was announced to the learners that the main objective of the lesson was the poem *Caged Bird* by Maya Angelou. I asked questions in accordance with the provided lesson plan and the learners seemed interested, however, could not recall the author Maya Angelou so a short presentation of photos and biography was needed. For this activity I used the PC and the projector which were available in the classroom. Two of the girls kept chatting among themselves while I was speaking so I asked them politely if they could pay attention and they calmed down so I could proceed. This short incident did not substantially disrupt the lesson.

The first task was to provide the worksheet with missing words to the learners. This task enables learners to work independently thus varied levels of English can be facilitated. It was stated that the learners could just read the poem, but also the more advanced learners could guess and fill in the missing words. I was walking among the learners and provided guidance, if necessary. There was no need for translation of the poem at this time. After about five minutes I announced that I would play the audio where a native speaker recites the poem, and the learners were expected to carefully listen to the poem and write down the missing words in the provided *Worksheet no.1*.

After the listening part, I chose learners to recite the poem. They all had used the correct missing words and were praised accordingly. I also asked the learners to come to the board and write the missing words on the board. In one instance a learner made a mistake in the word *throat*, so I asked the rest of the learners to advise him of the correct spelling, nonetheless, I made sure this was done in an amiable manner to avoid any learner embarrassment. He was praised after doing the task. The learners seemed to enjoy this activity they were raising hands and wanted to be called out, either to read the poem or to write the word on the board, so I made sure that the vast majority of the learners got an opportunity to participate in this part of the lesson.

The next step of the lesson plan calls for the usage of the dictionaries in pairs or small groups. I provided dictionaries together with *Worksheet no.2* and allowed the learners to work in pairs according to their own choice. Most of the learners collaborated with the closest classmate, one learner moved further to sit next her friend and one girl sat on her own. As there was an uneven number of the learners in this class, there was a need for one group of three learners. One girl was reluctant to move at first but after my prompt she changed her position. This girl is little shy and typically does not speak much during the lessons, however, she obeyed and according to my observation, she enjoyed this pair activity despite the initial resistance.

This was a learner oriented activity therefore I walked among the learners, observed, and provided guidance only when absolutely necessary. I also encouraged the learners to write down the advanced or challenging vocabulary they found in the poem; they were expected to write the English definition of the word, or the Czech translation if they were the weaker learners. As I was walking among the learners, I observed that the new vocabulary slightly varied, the learners were having lively discussion that in some cases slid to a

conversation in the Czech language. Upon my interjection, when I joined the conversation and used only English, the learners commenced using English as well.

As the time of the lesson was passing by, it was needed to move onto the next part of the lesson, requiring open discussion about the characteristics of the caged and free bird, the main objective of the poem. The aim of the task was to find the metaphors in the poem attributed to these expressions. I had decided to shuffle the learners, to change the discussion partners so the learners had the opportunity to practise with learners of varied levels of English, furthermore, to get acquainted with the other classmates and practice social communicative skills. The four groups of three and one group of four learners were formed. The collective work lessens the pressure on the individual, and as I noted, the stronger learners in the class were typically leading the discussion, however, as I walked and observed I prompted the quieter learners to express their opinion as well. After about 10 minutes of time, I thanked the learners for their work and announced it was time to summarize their opinions. I provided a chart similar to their worksheet on the board; a column for characteristics of a caged bird and a column for a free bird. The learners began calling out their remarks and observations. I aimed to include all the learners evenly and fairly, and I felt that learners were confident in expressing their opinions. As the class atmosphere was friendly, the learners did not worry about providing the incorrect answers, what actually happened in a few instances. From the direct metaphors used in the poem, the class discussion turned into a general opinion debate about slavery. Some learners mentioned the films they had seen about the topic and also compared Czech history to American history. The learners cognitive and affective skills were facilitated, and critical thinking skills were promoted.

The lesson time was coming to an end, and it was time to conclude the lesson. I thanked all the learners for their work, I emphasized that all of them did a great job in working with dictionaries, participating in the tasks and speaking in front of the others. I had announced that there was voluntary homework which was rather flexible. The learners could choose from varied assignments, and these were: finding a poem they like and bring it the next lesson (including a brief author biography), writing an opinion essay about slavery (open word count) or making a PPT presentation about slavery (the history, occurrences in films, the comparison to Czech serfdom). The connection to the subject of history is apparent so cross curriculum awareness is necessary. The voluntary homework promotes autonomous



learning, and the variation of the tasks implement multiple intelligences which are the desired objectives of the appointed lesson plan.

Overall, I think the lesson proceeded as planned and it was well received by the learners. There were few instances where teacher needed to improvise and set an order to performing the task, nonetheless, these occurrences did not interfere with the lesson performance. The learners were engaged and stayed focused throughout the whole lesson, participated well, and felt confident in expressing their opinions.

As this lesson was the subject for the research of this thesis, it was obligatory to distribute the second questionnaire to the learners. The learners were informed that they needed to fill in another questionnaire, similar to the one used in the beginning of the lesson, to rate the lesson. Again, it was emphasized that it was anonymous, and the learners would not be judged for their opinion. The easiness of using Likert scale assured that the time for the questionnaire did not exceed five minutes. As this questionnaire was done during the break time, I felt that some learners answered rather hastily as they wanted to leave the classroom. Nevertheless, the questionnaires were collected, and the needed data were obtained.

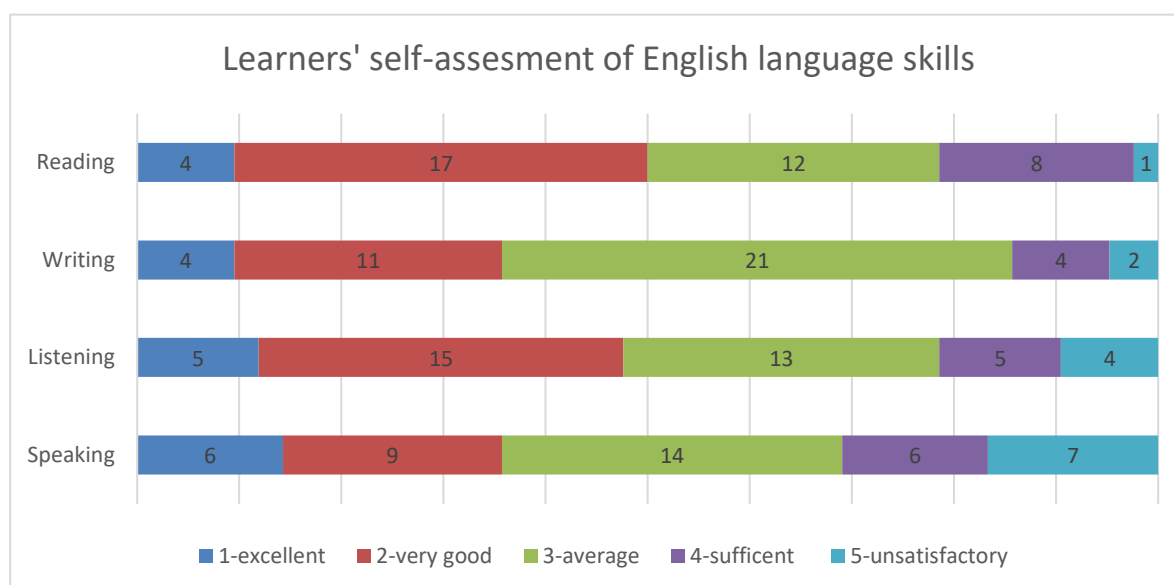
## 2 Data analysis

The obtained data has been thoroughly examined and will be presented in this chapter. A quantitative research method was used as the study is based on the collecting and verifying numbered data received from the respondents. The data were analysed from the learners' perspective; the learners' self-assessment of their English language skills and their attitude towards the learning English, done prior to the lesson were recorded. Subsequently, the learners' stance on the execution of an engaging lesson using authentic materials was questioned followed by the inquiry whether the learners' intrinsic motivation was sparked and whether the learners planned on self-study and doing the voluntarily homework, thus fostering the autonomous learning. Lastly the teachers' perspective and evaluation of the lesson will be examined and presented.

### 2.1 Questionnaire for learners – before the lesson

Firstly, this questionnaire deals with the learners' self-assessment of their English skills. The learners were asked to rate their four English language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking based on five scale grading system, typical for the Czech school environment and the learners are well familiarized with. The learners' self-assessment is core to becoming an independent learner since it helps learners to diagnose their learning needs thus foster the autonomy. The findings can be seen in Figure 2.

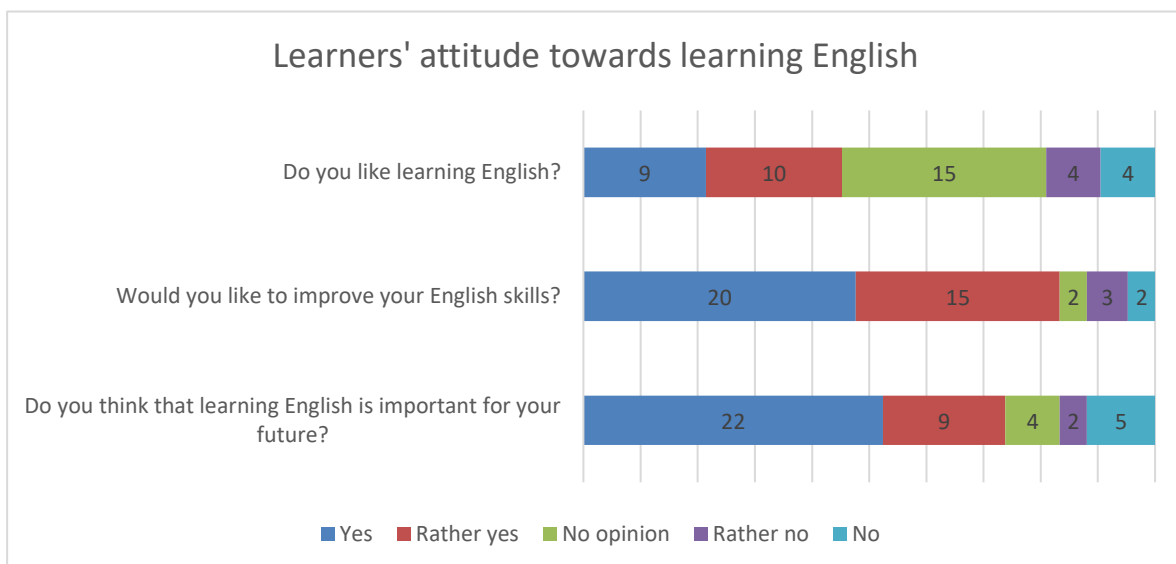
Figure 2: Learners' self-assessment of English language skill



The chart shows that 4 respondents are very confident in their reading skills as they think their reading skills are *excellent*, 17 respondents are somewhat confident, 12 respondents felt their reading skills are *average* and marked their reading skills as grade three, 8 respondents felt their skills are below average, and 1 respondent thought their reading skills are *unsatisfactory*. The very similar pattern can be seen in listening skills and the overall results differ only by few individual numbers. When it comes to writing skills, majority of the respondents, 21 of them, felt their writing skills are *average*, and graded themselves as three. Eleven respondents felt their writing skills are *very good* and 4 felt they are *excellent*, on the contrary to 4 who felt they are only *sufficient* and 2 who believe they are *unsatisfactory*. The most varied results are recorded in the self-assessment of the speaking skills where 7 respondents marked their skills as *unsatisfactory*, 6 *sufficient*, 14 *average*, 9 respondents felt somewhat confident and 6 very confident, which was interestingly the highest number in all of the skills. By examining the above results, the learners' personal attitudes towards their own assessment is shown, and which can be, but not necessarily has to be, in compliance with learners' official grading by their English teachers.

Furthermore, the first questionnaire consists of three closed questions also assessed by the Likert scale. These questions concentrate on learners' attitude towards learning English and the results can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Learners' attitude towards learning English



From the above chart it can be interpreted that 9 learners assuredly like learning English and 10 learners answered *rather yes* to this question. Relatively large number, 15

learners, stated that they have *no opinion* which shows an uncertainty of their stance to this question. Four learners answered *rather no* and 4 *no*, which makes it 8 negative answers. The second question whether learners would like to improve their English skills, 20 learners answered *yes* and 15 learners *rather yes*. This proves that the vast majority of the learners yearn for the improvement of their English skills. Also 2 learners expressed *no opinion* to this question, 3 *rather no* and 2 learners answered convincing *no*. The third question in this chart presents the question whether the learners think that learning English is important for their future. This question indirectly points to the awareness for the long-term learning thus fostering learner autonomy. Twenty-two learners replied *yes* to this question and 9 *rather yes*. Four learners expressed *no opinion*, 2 *rather no*, and 5 *no* to the fact whether they think they will need English in the upcoming years.

The last question of the first questionnaire was a semi-open question where learners were asked to answer whether they use English outside of the classroom. When the reply was *yes*, they were prompt to specify where, and some ideas such as social websites, PC games, music, friends, reading, extra classes etc. were provided for them. All in all, 30 respondents confirmed the usage of English language in their personal free time, 8 respondents answered negatively and 3 did not reply at all. Out of these 30 positive answers were most commonly mentioned the following instances organized by the order of frequency:

1. music
2. social websites
3. films, series
4. PC games
5. travelling
6. reading

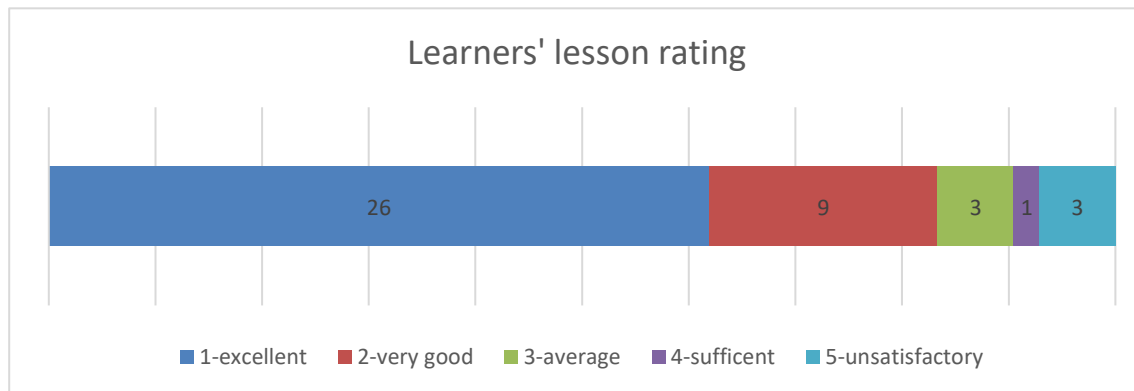
The above mentioned questionnaire initiates and studies the learners' own perception, provides learners with the self-awareness of their English skills which can be used for a diagnosis of their needs and facilitating the learning autonomy.

## 2.2 Questionnaire for learners – after the lesson

The second questionnaire was also aimed at learners and its main purpose was to study learners' stance on the executed lesson, primarily their evaluation of the lesson and the

choice of authentic materials. Additionally, it examined whether learners' intrinsic motivation was sparked, and learners' autonomy was promoted. The first item of this questionnaire prompted learners to rate executed lesson by five level grading system similar to school grading system. The results of learners' rating of the lesson can be seen in Figure 4.

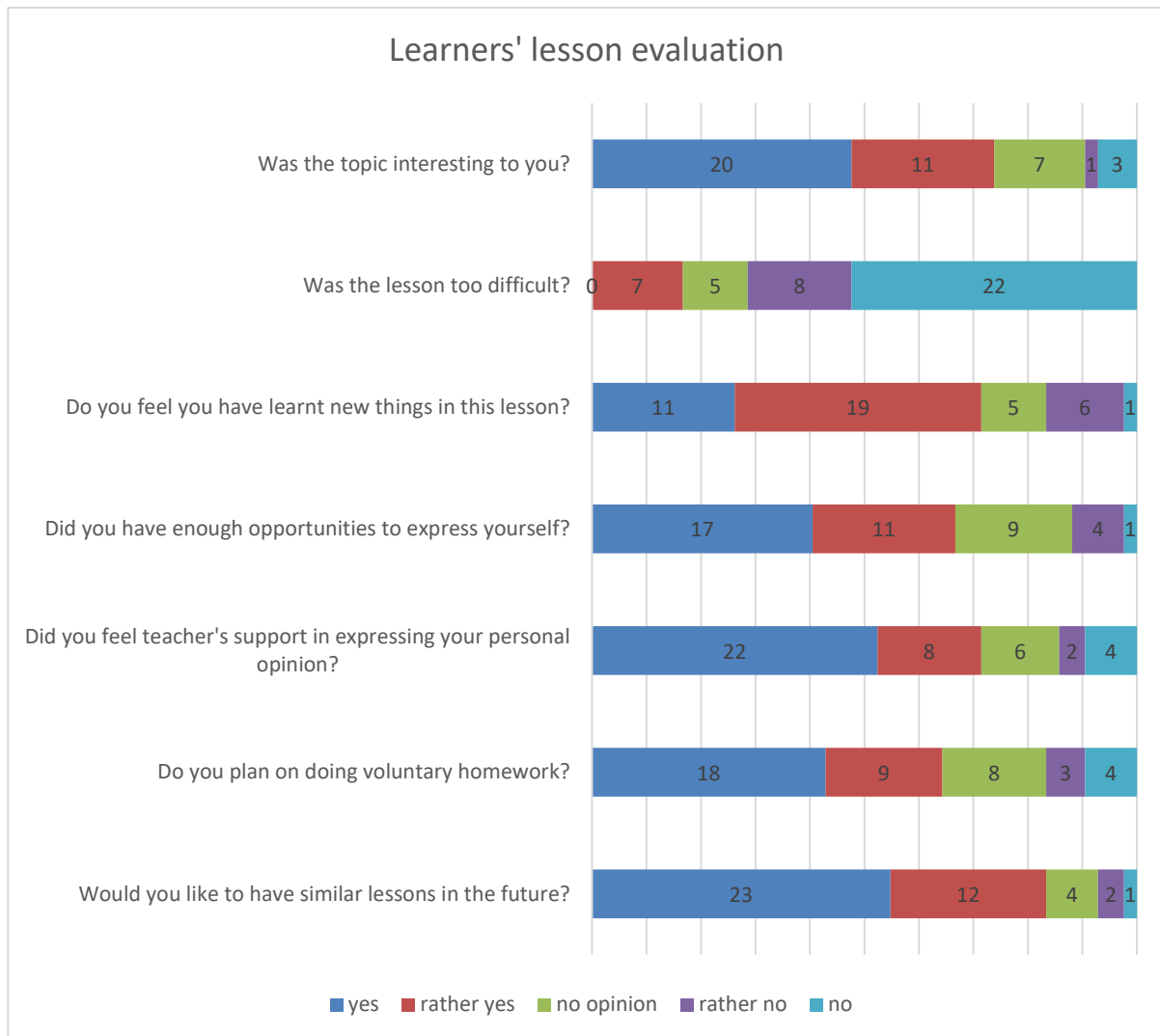
Figure 4: Learners' lesson rating



From the provided findings it can be determined that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the performed lesson, 26 rated the lesson as *excellent*, 9 as *very good*, 3 respondents thought it was *average*, 1 *sufficient* and 3 respondents found the lesson *unsatisfactory* which can be explained as their intrinsic motivation was not sparked. The 35 positive answers, excellent to very good, can be explicated that the learners' engagement in the lesson was accomplished. The real factors behind the negative rating, sufficient or unsatisfactory, ought to be further studied as there might be physical, personal or topical issues determining learners' answers.

The consecutive section of this questionnaire contains seven closed questions also assessed by the five-level Likert scale. The questions were developed with the aim to evaluate the executed lesson and to measure the attitude, and opinion of the teacher's performance, and to check whether the intrinsic motivation was sparked. The clarity of the word usage in the questions, accompanied by the Czech translation, corresponds to the level of learners of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The easiness of circling the measurable answer, provided by the Likert scale, assured the prompt reply without longer delay or hesitation to avoid learners' weariness or unconcern. The detailed lesson evaluation as obtained from the learners was closely elaborated and is depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Learners' lesson evaluation



To interpret the collected data, the learners' lesson evaluation is as follows: 20 respondents found the topic of the lesson interesting, 11 respondents rather interesting, 7 did not have an opinion, 1 found it rather uninteresting and 3 did not enjoy the lesson at all. The negative data illustrate that the variation of learners' personalities and multiple intelligences of the learners must be taken into consideration and should be recorded for future lesson planning.

The second question as to whether the learners found the performed lesson difficult showed that majority of the respondents, total of 22 who answered *yes* and 8 who answered *rather yes*, found the lesson easy which was not necessarily the desired outcome as the lesson was planned to be slightly lexically or grammatically challenging. None of the learners found

the lesson particularly difficult, 7 learners considered the lesson rather difficult and 5 did not have an opinion.

The question as to whether learners felt they have learnt anything provided 11 confidently positive replies, in addition to 19 *rather yes* replies. The total of 30 positive replies (out of 42) is undoubtedly a gratifying finding to all participating teachers. It also shows learners' awareness of the learning process that can lead to fostering autonomy. Five *no opinion* replies are consistent with five *no opinion* replies with the preceding question about the lesson's difficulty. Nevertheless, 6 respondents believed that the learning was rather not enabled, and 1 respondent convincingly answered *no* to this question. The varied level of individual learner's knowledge plays a significant role in answering the question thus obtained information is still relevant to the aim of the study.

The next question checks whether learners had enough opportunities to express themselves during the lesson which points indirectly to the control question whether aims of the lesson, in terms of productive and critical thinking skills, were achieved. There were 17 affirmative replies in addition to 11 *rather yes* replies which confirms the positive outcome. Nine learners did not have an opinion, 4 felt *rather no*, and 1 felt as he/she did not express at all. As these responses are a collection of all participating learners from three different schools it is not possible to verify whether the one learner who felt as he/she did not have enough opportunities to express himself/herself were accurate or if there was a side issue that needed to be addressed.

The following question is targeted at the teacher's performance and was developed in order to check whether teachers were able to provide a friendly and welcoming classroom atmosphere essential for the successful learning process. The majority of the respondents, 22 of them, confidently answered *yes*, 8 replied *rather yes*, which is in accordance with the preceding question about the learners' confidence in expressing themselves. There were 6 *no opinion* answers, and 2 respondents who rather did not feel teacher's support and 4 respondents who assuredly did not feel teacher's support. Once again, as this research is a collaboration of three participating teachers, it is not possible to investigate which teacher's performance lacked the support.

The sixth question focuses on an option of doing the voluntary homework that accompanies the appointed lesson plan. The voluntary homework can serve as an incentive for sparking the intrinsic motivation and thus fosters learner autonomy. The total of 21

respondents plans on doing the voluntary homework as 14 confidently answered *yes*, 7 answered *rather yes*. Ten respondents could not decide at the time of filling in the questionnaire and chose *no opinion*. Seven learners replied *rather no*, and 4 learners circled definitely *no*. However, the learner’s decision whether to or not to fulfil the task might change over the course of time and whether the learners who agreed to do the homework actually realized it, would be a subject for another study.

The last closed question of this questionnaire asks learners whether they would like to have similar lessons in the future. This lesson involves the usage of authentic materials with the methodology and tasks that promote autonomous learning. According to 23 respondents they would like to have similar lessons in the future, 12 respondents answered *rather yes* which makes it a positive number of 35 respondents out of 42. Four respondents did not have an opinion, 2 answered *rather no* and 1 *no*, which demonstrates the diversity of learning attitude and personalities of the participating learners.

The last part of this questionnaire contains two open questions which prompt learners to specify their most favourite or the least favourite part of the lesson. Even though this part of questionnaire does not closely correspond to the main objective of this thesis, it provides the lesson feedback that might become important for future lesson planning and improving the lesson plan. There were no ideas provided and learners were expected to write their own answers. Unfortunately, some respondents left these questions intentionally unanswered. However, some learners provided answers, even multiple answers, and as observed the English language was mainly used. These answers were recorded and are arranged in descending order according to their frequency of reference. The obtained data are provided in the table below.

*Figure 6: The most favourite and the least favourite parts of the lesson*

<b>Most favourite part of the lesson</b>	<b>Least favourite part of the lesson</b>
<i>Asking questions</i> (11 respondents)	<i>Nothing</i> (5 respondents)
<i>Speaking</i> (8 respondents)	<i>Writing words/notes</i> (4 respondents)
<i>Everything</i> (6 respondents)	<i>Grammar</i> (3 respondents)
<i>New vocabulary</i> (5 respondents)	<i>Questions</i> (3 respondents)
	<i>End of the lesson</i> (2 respondents)

The aforementioned information provides learners’ feedback on the lesson therefore the teachers can verify whether the lesson objectives, as well as personal aims, were met.



Moreover, it provides insight into the learners' preferences and needs, and thus supports the class diagnosis for the future references.

### 2.3 Questionnaire for teachers – after the lesson

The questionnaire for teachers was designed to receive teachers' feedback on the lesson. Although the teachers' stance on the lesson was not the main focus of this study it was considered by the author of this thesis to be essential to obtain the data to receive a reflection, including a self-reflection, on the lesson. There were three participating teachers included in the study who teach at the elementary schools in the South Moravia region. One of the teachers was the author of this thesis and her self-reflection, including complete procedure of the performed lesson was provided in chapter 1.6. The reflection of other two teachers, the detailed analysis of the teachers' questionnaires, who all together undertook three separate lessons, will be elaborated below.

The questionnaire that was distributed to the teachers contained twelve closed questions, assessed by the five-level Likert scale which was applied to reduce the amount of time thus simplifying the answering process, and one open question where teachers could write any additional comments or ideas. One teacher submitted 2 filled questionnaires as she taught two separate lessons, and there was one collected questionnaire from the other teacher. All in all, three executed lessons taught by two different teachers were analysed.

The first question was in conformity with the learners' first question and inquired the teachers to rate the lesson plan based on the typical school grading system. Both teachers graded the lesson plan as *one* which can be interpreted that the teachers were satisfied with the provided lesson plan. The following question further examined the teachers' opinion about the lesson plan and they both uniformly agreed that the appointed lesson plan was easy to use, the instructions and tasks were comprehensible, and the aims of the lesson were achievable.

The next set of questions as to whether the teachers feel that the usage of the authentic materials used in this lesson engaged the learners they both answered *rather yes* to showing the slight hesitation about the question. The identical answer was also provided for the question as to whether learners were actively participating in the lesson. For the question

whether the teachers believed that level of English was appropriate i.e., slightly challenging, one teacher answered *yes*, the other one *rather yes*, which is nevertheless a positive outcome.

For the questions as to whether the teachers felt that the learners had learnt new things and their intellectual curiosity was fostered both teachers answered *yes*. However, the answers for the question as to whether the teachers felt that the learners felt confident in expressing themselves were inconsistent as one teacher answered *rather yes* in two instances, but the other noted *rather no*. The negative reply might signify that despite the fact the learners were active during the lesson, the challenging topic of slavery and racism, was not easy to ingest and some background knowledge and personal time for comprehension and forming an opinion would be necessary. When the teachers were prompted to reply whether they felt they had provided proper guidance to learners to promote self-learning, both teachers replied *yes*, showing that the teachers were confident in their teaching performance, and reflected on a successful achieving of the lesson objectives.

The last closed question focused on the overall teachers' attitude towards using the authentic materials in the lessons, using the aforementioned methodology with the discussed objectives. One teacher answered *yes*, in two instances, the other teacher answered *rather yes*.

Finally, the teachers were given an opportunity to write comments, ideas, or changes they would recommend for this particular lesson plan. One teacher did not write any notes, the other wrote that the time management was hard to follow with some tasks, as the learners in her class needed more time for the discussion. It is understandable that some adjustments and improvisation are needed as the interest and engagement of the learners might vary for each class.

### 3 Outcomes of the research

The performed research and its subsequent detailed data analysis has provided the sufficient data for concluding this thesis. It can be reported that the research met its main objective, and the research questions that were the primary focus of the study were able to be successfully deduced. The questionnaires designed for this particular thesis proved to be an effective research instruments and brought an insight into learners' perception of the usage of the authentic materials in the English lessons. Subsidiarily, the topic of fostering learner autonomy was addressed and thoroughly analysed. The learners' awareness of the need for life-long learning was also examined.

The research was performed on the grounds of three elementary schools in the South Moravia region and the research sample contained 42 participants of English subject in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The respondents were instructed to fill in two questionnaires, one prior to the lesson and one after the specially designed lesson that included the usage of authentic materials for the purpose of promoting autonomous learning. To focus on the main research questions, the analysed data were reviewed and arranged into a relevant order. The research questions were set as follows:

Q1: To what extent do learners enjoy using authentic materials in the English lessons?

Q2: How does using authentic materials in classroom promotes autonomous learning?

Q3: To what extent would learners like to improve their English language skills and to work on becoming independent learners?

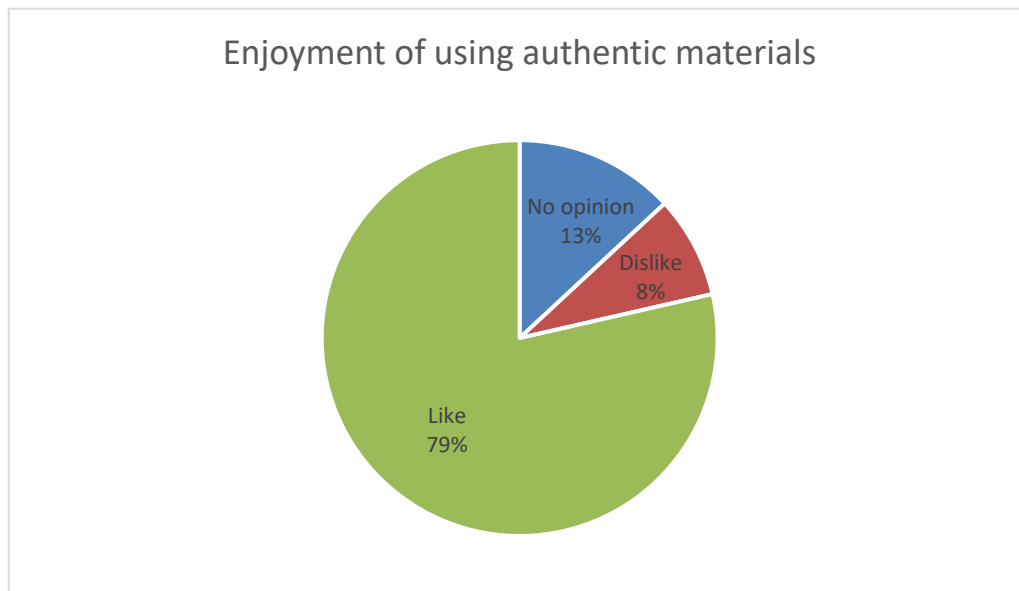
#### 3.1 Enjoyment of using authentic materials

To verify to what extent learners enjoy using authentic materials in the English lessons two questions were developed in the second questionnaire that was distributed after the executed lesson. The authentic materials, used in the lesson, were presented in the form of the poem written by the native author, used in conjunction with the audio insert of the poem recorded by the native speaker. The authenticity of the language was further supported by the excerpts of the authentic articles about the author of the poem, which were found online and are attached to the provided lesson plan. As noted, by interviewing the participating teachers, the learners were previously acquainted with authentic materials in the English lessons. However, the occurrences were not on daily basis, they were rather random, and never

surveyed. Moreover, the topic of racism and slavery, introduced in the form of poetry, might seem slightly provocative to some learners and might find its objectors. Nonetheless, this agenda is included in the curriculum of the lower secondary schools, thus it is relevantly incorporated in the lesson plan, in this particular instance in the form of cross curriculum integrated learning and was chosen to be the main theme of the appointed lesson plan.

To answer the first research question, I merged the submitted data of two questionnaire questions: *Was the topic interesting to you?* and *Would you like to have similar lessons in the future?* The popularity of authentic materials is determined by the likeability or the enjoyment of the lesson. By affirmatively replying to this question the enjoyment of the usage of the authentic materials can be verified. The findings are depicted in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Enjoyment of using authentic materials



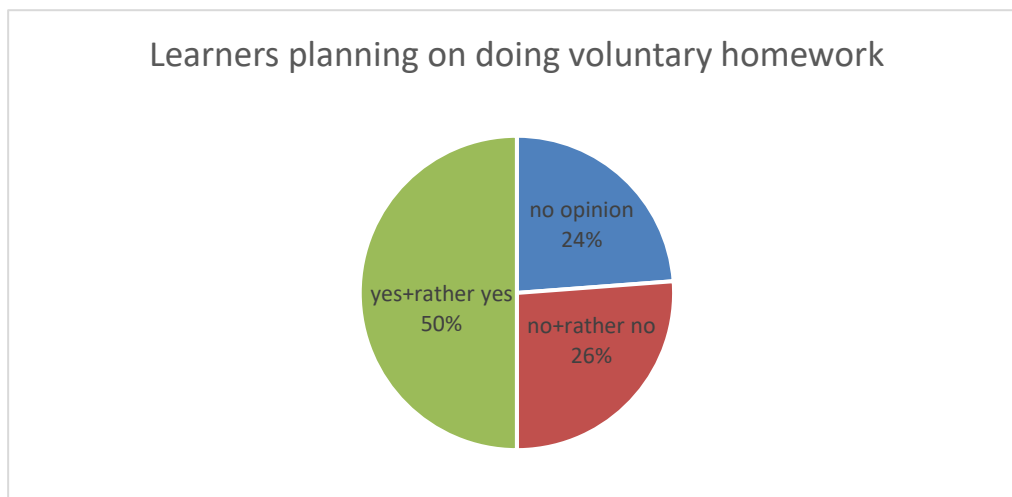
The percentual depiction clearly points to the high popularity of using the authentic materials, and above all, the lesson in general. The 79% of respondents who replied *yes* or *rather yes* to above mentioned questions liked the lesson with all the accompanied aspects, including the usage of authentic materials. The number of 8% learners who disliked the lesson is not surprising as the theme of the lesson and the subject of poetry, with the underlying issue of racism and slavery, might not be appealing to all learners. It was partially expected to receive some negative feedback as some compromise of the theme and tasks had to be made. The 13% learners chose *no opinion* which can be attributed to indecisiveness of some learners, lack of interest in the topic, or any other external factors that

are difficult to define at this point. The positive result of 79%, among 42 respondents, answers the research question of likeability of the usage of the authentic materials.

### 3.2 Promoting autonomous learning

The subsidiary focus of this research is devoted to autonomous learning and its fostering. The appointed lesson plan was designed with this objective in mind and the corresponding tasks were appropriately chosen. The role of the teacher as a guide and a facilitator of the learning process was established beforehand. The submitted data were sufficient for answering the second research question *How does using the authentic materials in classroom promote autonomous learning?* To validate this question, a question prompting learners to answer whether they plan on doing voluntary homework was developed to indicate if their intrinsic motivation had been sufficiently sparked to engage in an afterschool learning activity. The voluntary homework helps the learners to reinforce their skills and knowledge and leads to improving their academic performance. The outcomes can be read in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Learners planning on doing voluntary homework



The chart shows that an even number of 50% of respondents were engaged enough to participate in voluntary homework thus their autonomous learning, intrinsic motivation and their self-determination was promoted. Half of the learners had decided to conceive a home based project on the topic of the lesson which can be interpreted as proof that the classroom activity that incorporated the authentic materials had facilitated the learners' interest and determination to self-study. The number of 26% of negative answers states that these learners

decided not to utilize the offer of voluntary homework. The 24% learners provided hesitant answer *no opinion*. The other half of the learners chose not to do voluntary homework at the time of the research, however, the real reason behind their decision or whether the learners who replied *yes, rather yes* had dutifully fulfilled the assignment was not studied and cannot be included in this study. Nonetheless, half of the learners agreed to study and seek the information on their own in their free time, which can be considered as a positive outcome of the executed lesson. Thus it can be stated that the usage of the authentic materials in the classroom did foster autonomous learning in half of the respondents.

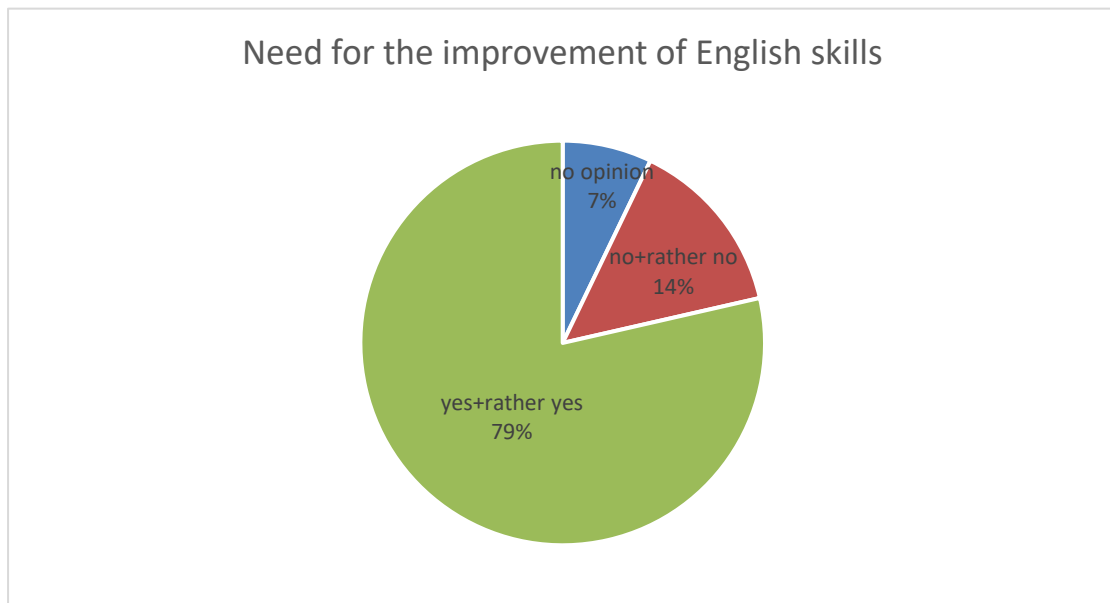
### 3.3 Becoming independent learners

The third research question is related to the topic of autonomous learning and is in compliance with this research. Learner autonomy means becoming an independent learner, whereby the learners should be able to diagnose their learning needs, their learning preferences all of which facilitate language acquisition. By being able to properly diagnose and work on self-improvement, the learners can become successful independent learners and maximize their learning potential and personal growth. To help learners to achieve the aforementioned skills, the teachers should help learners to navigate throughout the learning process, and furthermore, teach awareness of the learners' skills and goals.

The third research question focusing on the learner autonomy was set as follows *To what extent would learners like to improve their English language skills and to work on becoming independent learners?* The learners' awareness of their English language skills was surveyed in the first questionnaire where learners were asked to rate their skills. This is not necessarily relevant to the chief aim of the thesis; however, it is essential for raising the learners' awareness of their knowledge and language skills, thus working on becoming independent learners is prerequisite.

To help answer the question, the questions presented in the first questionnaire were used: *Would you like to improve your English skills?* and *Do you think that learning English is important for your future?* The latter question subconsciously stimulates the learners' mind and points to the idea of a call for improvement; hence it was also included in the results. The Figure 9 depicts the outcome.

Figure 9: Need for the improvement of English skills



Interestingly, 79% of learners would like to improve their English skills, which is the identical number with the number of learners who found using authentic materials in the lesson enjoyable. It can be deduced that most likely the same learners who are aware of the importance of using the English language outside of the classroom also enjoy the lesson enhanced by the usage of authentic materials. However, the number of learners who think English language is not needed for their future, therefore they do not need to work on improvement, was 14% of the respondents. This is not the smallest outcome, however, there might be factors such as learners' young age, current psychological indisposition, or low level of engagement that had determined the negative answers. Seven percent of learners could not clearly state whether they would like to work on the improvement of their English skills and opted for *no opinion*.

The above provided findings and charts conclude the research accompanied with this thesis. The research questions were determined, examined and answered by applying the aforementioned research instruments and assessed by the quantitative research method. The results were analysed and the provided outcomes comply with the research questions and fulfil the set objectives.

### 3.4 Limits of the study and discussion

The performed research, along with the research procedure, has undoubtedly bore fruit, yet some limits of the study have been observed. The initial idea of designing a special lesson plan that uses authentic materials had been hindered by the broad range of the authentic materials, and the process behind the decision to select the most suitable material for this particular study was exhaustive. After all, it is the well-chosen authentic material that determines the learners' engagement in the learning process and initiates the learners' motivation that in turn defines the success of the lesson and achieving its main objectives (Scrivener, 2005).

The choice of the authentic material used in the appointed lesson was selected upon the interviewing the participating teachers. The collaboration with other teachers can be marked as another drawback of the study as these teachers were not randomly chosen. On the contrary, they were carefully selected to meet the requirements of the expert teacher who evinces a good teacher-learner rapport. The teacher's approach and personality play a significant role in presenting and performing the provided lesson plan. The popularity of the lesson and the enjoyment of the authentic materials used is substantially influenced by the teacher's attitude towards the subject. Therefore, this study can only be applied to the selected group of the participating teachers and cannot be broadly generalised.

Not only teachers' personalities affect the results of the study, but the personalities of the learners also need to be taken into account. Forty two learners of three elementary schools participated in this research. These learners were not acquainted prior to or after the research, which as a matter of fact is the advantage of the study. However, the factors that have impact on learners' answers might vary, and the topical class atmosphere, the mood of the learners, the psychological or physical aspects certainly need to draw our attention (Kidd and Czerniawski, 2011). To verify this particular research, the subsequent studies ought to be performed, and the variable and diverse lesson plans or the research samples should be examined repeatedly, ideally on a few disparate occasions.

As learner autonomy is a life-long learning process it should be tracked over a longer period of time. The research has confirmed that the learner autonomy can be fostered in the classroom setting. Half of the participating learners agreed to implement the acquired skills to use them in home environment. However, whether the voluntary homework was ever actually



realised, and to what extent and in what form, has not been a subject of this study thus cannot be further elaborated upon.

Additionally, the questionnaires used as the research instruments in this study evince some signs of the discrepancies. It must be admitted that the design and formulation of some questions employed in the questionnaires were not always relevant to the main objectives of this thesis and were not pertinent to answering the research questions. However, the questions focusing on the learners' self-assessment were considered important for acknowledging learners' preferences or awareness of the designated topic which can lead to facilitating learners' self-diagnoses of their learning needs and goals. Despite the fact that not all the questions provided in the questionnaire were utilized for the outcomes of this research they provided a valuable source of information for the participating teachers as well as the author of this thesis. The after lesson feedback, the learners' as well teachers' reflection on the executed lesson, serves its purpose, and has brought valuable data for future lesson planning, improving the teachers' performance or learners' recognition of their learning needs.

Finally, it needs to be stated that the research sample, containing 42 learners of lower secondary schools, is a small-scale study and the outcomes of this research cannot be broadly generalised. Even though, the research findings evidently comply with the intended purpose, more research needs to be undertaken.

## Conclusion

Foremost, I would like to state that my personal aims and the anticipated outcomes of this research were achieved. The process of forming the theoretical part, as well as the empirical part of this paper, have significantly enriched my professional teaching experience. The thorough preparation and investigation on the given topic, including the procurement of participating schools and teachers, have helped me to evolve and enhance my social and communicative skills.

The theoretical part of this thesis provides essential background knowledge for research and elaborates on authentic materials and autonomous learning at lower secondary schools. It explores the benefits as well as the drawbacks of using authentic materials in teaching English language skills. The paper also provides a detailed analysis of the methodology and didactics required for planning a lesson with this objective. The author has provided an in-depth examination of the theoretical aspects of the research, which enhances the credibility and reliability of the study.

The empirical part of this paper is equally important, as it describes the quantitative research that the author has conducted to answer the research questions. The research has provided a valuable insight into the topic, demonstrating the learners' and teachers' perspective towards the specifically designed lesson. The findings of the study suggest that the use of authentic materials in teaching English language skills is highly effective and well-liked by students. The research confirms that learners have personal awareness of the need for improving their English language skills, they recognize the benefits of authentic materials in achieving this objective, and the learner autonomy can be fostered by the proper stimuli.

Overall, this paper has served its purpose, the research has provided anticipated outcomes. While additional research is needed, this study offers potential ideas for fostering learner autonomy. Hopefully, it will contribute to ongoing discussions and development within the pedagogy field.

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# Appendices

Figure 10: SWOT Analysis by Mind Tools



 <b>Worksheet</b> <b>SWOT Analysis</b> 	
<b>Strengths</b> What do you do well? What unique resources can you draw on? What do others see as your strengths?	<b>Weaknesses</b> What could you improve? Where do you have fewer resources than others? What are others likely to see as weaknesses?
<b>Opportunities</b> What opportunities are open to you? What trends could you take advantage of? How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?	<b>Threats</b> What threats could harm you? What is your competition doing? What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?



Figure 11: The lesson plan used for the research

<b>Lesson plan</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>African American Poetry, Maya Angelou</b>
<b>Class</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>Level</b>	A2-B1 (teenagers)
<b>Length</b>	45 min
<b>Lesson Aims</b>	To get acquainted with the author Maya Angelou, the poem Caged Bird To discuss topic of slavery, freedom, Afro-American struggle (CLIL) To practise integrated learning skills, to learn new vocabulary To practise reading, listening, writing and speaking skills with focus on fluency To foster cognitive, affective skills To gain confidence in expressing thoughts and opinions, making arguments To foster autonomous learning
<b>Personal Aims</b>	To create friendly class atmosphere, learners should actively participate in the lesson, should openly and freely express personal opinions and gain confidence in speaking skills
<b>Materials</b>	PC to show photos, biography, and the audio of the poem, dictionaries for learners, Caged Bird poem, Worksheet 1 and Worksheet 2
<b>Warm up</b> 5 min	<b>Announce the topic of today lesson</b> , introduce the author Maya Angelou. Show photos, tell facts about the author, mention her famous work. Talk briefly about Afro-Americans. Ask learners the questions: <i>Have you heard about Maya Angelou? Tell us about her.</i> <i>What do you know about African Americans living in the USA?</i> <i>Do you think there is equality between white and other races?</i> <i>What do you know about slavery?</i> <a href="http://mayaangelou.com">Caged Bird Legacy (mayaangelou.com)</a>
<b>Task 1</b> 5 min	<b>Provide Worksheet 1</b> with the missing words. Tell learners to read the poem on their own. Allow time to explore the poem, no translation of the poem needed at this point.
<b>Task 2</b> 5 min	Tell learners they will now <b>listen to the poem</b> , and they will try to fill in the missing words. Assure learners that they do not need to worry about the proper spelling yet. Play the poem. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...">Caged Bird by Maya Angelou - YouTube</a> With the weaker class- play the audio twice. With the stronger class – learners can guess the missing words before the listening or find the rhymes within the poem.
<b>Task 3</b> 10 min	<b>Read the poem</b> – Assign learners to read the poem, they self-check the missing words. After the reading learners come to the board and provide the missing words. Make sure as many learners as possible have a turn. Correct the spelling if necessary. Praise the learners.
<b>Task 4</b> 15 min	Announce to the learners that <b>Worksheet 2</b> , with additional tasks, will be distributed. Hand in Worksheet 2.

	<p><b>Activity a)</b> Divide the class into random pairs. Learners work in pairs, or individually, as needed. Provide dictionaries to the learners, instruct learners how to properly use the dictionaries. Allow enough time to write down new vocabulary (may differ by the learners) and the short definitions. (The weaker learners can search for the Czech translation; the stronger learners can provide English definitions). Learners can collaborate and explain among themselves, collectively search in a dictionary or discuss with the teacher. Walk among the learners, observe and advise if necessary.</p> <p><b>Activity b)</b> Rearrange the pairs or groups of learners. Preferably form groups of 3-4 learners. Tell learners to discuss and write down common characteristics of a caged bird and a free bird as they can be found in the poem. Notify learners of the usage of metaphors within the poem. Provide sufficient time to discuss.</p> <p><b>Activity c)</b> Tell learners to summarize their notes, the notes can be written on board in similar pattern to the Worksheet 2. Prompt a discussion about slavery and freedom. Let learners know their opinions are welcomed and unjudged. Encourage learners to use the familiar expression such as: <i>In my opinion, I believe, I think, I personally, I feel that, I can't imagine, I'm sure, It seems to me that etc.</i> Initiate the discussion by the following questions: <i>What is slavery?</i> <i>What do you think of slavery?</i> <i>Is the metaphor a caged bird and a free bird accurate? Explain.</i> <i>How would you feel as a caged bird/a free bird?</i> <i>Were there slaves in the Czech history?</i> <i>Do you think there is slavery/racism nowadays?</i> Adjust the questions according to the learners' interest. Praise the learners after the activity.</p>
<p><b>Voluntary homework</b></p>	<p>Announce there is voluntary homework on the given topic. Learners can prepare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An own poem of their choice, including a short author's biography.</li> <li>• Write an opinion essay about slavery.</li> <li>• Create a presentation about slavery.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Revision and Feedback</b> 5 min</p>	<p>Praise the learners for the active participation. Highlight the most common grammar mistakes (only those that interfered with the understanding) without addressing the specific learner to avoid embarrassment.</p>

Figure 12: Worksheet 1

Worksheet 1:

Read and listen to the poem, fill in the missing words:

## **CAGED BIRD** **By Maya Angelou**

A free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow \_\_\_\_\_  
can seldom see through  
his bars of \_\_\_\_\_  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his \_\_\_\_\_ to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of the things \_\_\_\_\_  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant \_\_\_\_\_  
for the caged bird  
sings of \_\_\_\_\_.

The free bird thinks of another \_\_\_\_\_  
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees  
and the fat \_\_\_\_\_ waiting on a dawn bright lawn  
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams  
his shadow shouts on a \_\_\_\_\_  
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
so he opens his \_\_\_\_\_ to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things \_\_\_\_\_  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant \_\_\_\_\_  
for the caged bird  
sings of \_\_\_\_\_.

Figure 13: Worksheet 2

Worksheet 2:

a) Discuss the vocabulary and explain. Make notes.

b) Compare the caged bird and free bird characteristics.

<b>Caged Bird</b>	<b>Free Bird</b>

c) Express your opinion about slavery and freedom.

## Caged Bird

BY MAYA ANGELOU

A free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow **cage**  
can seldom see through  
his bars of **rage**  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his **throat** to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of the things **unknown**  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant **hill**  
for the caged bird  
sings of **freedom**.

The free bird thinks of another **breeze**  
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees  
and the fat **worms** waiting on a dawn bright lawn  
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams  
his shadow shouts on a **nightmare scream**  
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
so he opens his **throat** to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things **unknown**  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant **hill**  
for the caged bird  
sings of **freedom**.



Figure 15: Key to worksheet 2

Worksheet 2: **POSSIBLE ANSWERS**

a) Discuss the vocabulary and explain. Make notes.

- Leap – jump*
- Float – swim*
- Downstream- river*
- Current – river flow*
- Dip – touch*
- Sun rays – light/shine of the sun*
- Dare – to have courage*
- Claim the sky – call his own*
- Stalk – look*
- Narrow cage – too small for him*
- Rage – anger*
- Tie – cannot move*
- Trill – song*
- Long for st.- want st.*
- Distant hill – freedom is far away*
- Sighing trees – trees that talk*
- Dawn – early morning*
- Lawn – grass*
- Fat worm – a good lunch, abundance*
- Grave of dreams – unfulfilled dreams*
- Nightmare scream – scary dream*
- Breeze – light wind*

b) Compare the caged bird and free bird characteristics.

<b>Caged Bird (slavery)</b>	<b>Free Bird (freedom)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>lives a narrow cage</i></li> <li><i>behind bars of rage</i></li> <li><i>wings are clipped</i></li> <li><i>legs are tied</i></li> <li><i>fearful trill (instead of a song)</i></li> <li><i>sings for freedom</i></li> <li><i>unknown things</i></li> <li><i>can be heard on a distant hill</i></li> <li><i>grave of dreams</i></li> <li><i>his shadow is a nightmare scream</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>leaps</i></li> <li><i>floats</i></li> <li><i>dips his wings</i></li> <li><i>dares to claim the sky</i></li> <li><i>thinks of another breeze</i></li> <li><i>flies freely among the sighing trees</i></li> <li><i>fat worms</i></li> <li><i>dawn bright lawn – fresh early in the morning</i></li> </ul>

c) Express your opinion about slavery and freedom. – *Varied answers*

Figure 16: Questionnaire for learners – before the lesson

### 1. Questionnaire for students – before the lesson

#### 1. Dotazník pro studenty – před hodinou

Grade/Ročník

Date/Datum

Circle one answer. /Zakroužkuj jednu odpověď.

**How would you rate your English skills? (1-the best.....5 -the worst)**

Jak bys oznámkoval/a své anglické dovednosti? ( 1- výborně.....5-nedostatečně)

Reading/Čtení 1 2 3 4 5

Writing/Psaní 1 2 3 4 5

Listening/Poslech 1 2 3 4 5

Speaking/Mluvení 1 2 3 4 5

Circle one answer according to the table. Zakroužkuj jednu odpověď podle tabulky.

yes ano	rather yes spíš ano	no opinion bez názoru	rather no spíš ne	no ne
1	2	3	4	5

**Do you like learning English? 1 2 3 4 5**

Učíš se rád/a angličtinu?

**Would you like to improve your English skills? 1 2 3 4 5**

Chtěl/a by sis zlepšit svou angličtinu?

**Do you think that learning English is important for your future? 1 2 3 4 5**

Myslíš si, že učení angličtiny je důležité pro tvou budoucnost?

**Do you use English outside of the school? 1 2 3 4 5**

(Friends, social websites, PC games, music, reading, extra classes etc.)

Používáš angličtinu mimo školu? (s kamarády, na sociálních sítích, PC hry, poslech hudby čtení, mimoškolní hodiny angličtiny atd.)

If yes, specify.

Pokud ano, upřesni.

Figure 17: Questionnaire for learners – after the lesson

## 2. Questionnaire for students- after the lesson

### 2. Dotazník pro studenty – po hodině

Grade/Ročník

Date/Datum

*Circle one answer. /Zakroužkuj jednu odpověď.*

**Rate the lesson. (1-the best.....5 -the worst) 1 2 3 4 5**

Oznámkuj tuto hodinu. ( 1- výborně.....5-nedostatečně)

*Circle one answer according to the table. Zakroužkuj jednu odpověď podle tabulky.*

yes ano	rather yes spíš ano	no opinion bez názoru	rather no spíš ne	no ne
1	2	3	4	5

**Was the topic interesting to you? 1 2 3 4 5**

Bylo téma této hodiny pro tebe zajímavé?

**Was the lesson too difficult? 1 2 3 4 5**

Zdála se ti tato hodina příliš náročná?

**Do feel you have learnt new things in this lesson? 1 2 3 4 5**

Más pocit, že jsi se v dnešní hodině naučil/a něco nového?

**Did you have enough opportunities to express yourself? 1 2 3 4 5**

Měl/a jsi dostatek příležitostí vyjádřit svůj názor?

**Did you feel teacher's support in expressing your personal opinion? 1 2 3 4 5**

Cítil/a jsi učitelovu/učitelčinu podporu při vyjádření svého názoru?

**Do you plan on doing voluntary homework? 1 2 3 4 5**

Plánuješ si udělat dobrovolný úkol?

**Would you like to have similar lessons in the future? 1 2 3 4 5**

Chtěl/a bys mít v budoucnu více podobných hodin angličtiny?

**What was your favourite part of the lesson?**

Co bylo tvou nejoblíbenější částí hodiny?

**What was your least favourite part of the lesson?**

Co bylo tvou nejméně oblíbenou částí hodiny?



Figure 18: Questionnaire for teachers – after the lesson

**3. Questionnaire for teachers – after the lesson**

Grade                  Date

Circle one answer.

yes	mostly yes	no opinion	mostly no	no
1	2	3	4	5

How would you rate this lesson plan?                  1 2 3 4 5  
 (1-the best.....5 -the worst)

Was the lesson plan easy to use?                  1 2 3 4 5

Were the instructions and tasks comprehensible?                  1 2 3 4 5

Were the aims of the lesson achievable?                  1 2 3 4 5

Do you think the usage of the authentic materials in this lesson engaged the students? 1 2 3 4 5

Was the level of English appropriate (slightly challenging) to the students?                  1 2 3 4 5

Do you feel that the students had learnt new things in today lesson?                  1 2 3 4 5

Did you feel that intellectual curiosity of the students was fostered?                  1 2 3 4 5

Were the students actively participating in the discussions?                  1 2 3 4 5

Do you think that students felt confident in expressing themselves?                  1 2 3 4 5

Do you think you provided a proper guidance to students to promote self-learning? 1 2 3 4 5

Would you like to teach similar lessons in the future?                  1 2 3 4 5

What would you change next time when teaching this lesson plan?

## Annotation

### ANOTACE

<b>Jméno a příjmení:</b>	Bc. Jana Gajdová
<b>Katedra:</b>	Ústav cizích jazyků
<b>Vedoucí práce:</b>	Mgr. Josef Nevařil Ph.D.
<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2023

<b>Název práce:</b>	Využití autentických materiálů k podpoře autonomie ve výuce AJ u žáků na druhém stupni základních škol
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	Using authentic materials to foster autonomous learning of English at lower secondary schools
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Tato diplomová práce se zabývá využitím autentických materiálů k podpoře autonomního učení anglického jazyka jako druhého jazyka pro žáky druhého stupně základních škol. Teoretická část definuje klíčové pojmy a potenciální výhody a nevýhody používání autentických materiálů. Empirická část se zaměřuje na výzkum a plán výukové hodiny, který využívá autentické materiály a zároveň podporuje autonomní učení. Data pro výzkum byla shromážděna prostřednictvím sebehodnotících dotazníků a výsledky jsou prezentovány v této práci.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	autentické materiály, autonomní učení, žáci na 2. stupni
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	This diploma thesis explores the use of authentic materials to foster autonomous learning of English as a second language among lower secondary school learners. The theoretical part defines key terms and outlines potential benefits and drawbacks of using authentic materials, while the empirical part focuses on the research and a lesson plan that incorporates authentic materials to promote autonomous learning. Data for the research was collected through self-assessment questionnaires and the findings are presented in the thesis.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	authentic materials, autonomous learning, lower secondary learners
<b>Přílohy vázané v práci:</b>	Figure 10: SWOT Analysis Figure 11: The lesson plan used for the research Figure 12: Worksheet 1 Figure 13: Worksheet 2 Figure 14: Key to worksheet 1 Figure 15: Key to worksheet 2 Figure 16: Questionnaire for learners – before the lesson Figure 17: Questionnaire for learners – after the lesson Figure 18: Questionnaire for teachers – after the lesson
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	82
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	angličtina