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Usage of Authentic Materials in Practising Listening

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Diplomová práce zkoumá využití autentických materiálů k procvičování poslechu u pokročilých studentů angličtiny. Teoretická část se zabývá dovednostmi poslechu a metodikou jeho nácviku. Praktická část se skládá z dotazníků a doplňkových cvičení, která jsou založena na materiálech převzatých z Prager University a na analýze učebnic používaných při výuce praktického jazyka. Cílem práce je zlepšení poslechových dovedností studentů katedry anglického jazyka na Technické univerzitě v Liberci.

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Anotace

Diplomová práce se zaměřuje na využití autentických materiálů při procvičování poslechu v anglickém jazyce. Jako cílová skupina byli zvoleni studenti bakalářského a magisterského programu katedry anglického jazyka na technické univerzitě v Liberci. Cílem práce je pomoci zlepšit poslechové schopnosti studentů katedry anglického jazyka. Práce se dělí na tři hlavní části, teoretickou, metodologickou a praktickou. Teoretická část vymezuje pojmy poslech, poslechová dovednost a problémy s ní spojené a autentický text. Metodologická část popisuje postup tvorby poslechových cvičení v prostředí e-learningu. Praktická část obsahuje analýzu dat, která byla získána s pomocí vytvořených poslechových cvičení vytvořených v prostředí e-learningu a dotazníků.

Klíčová slova

Poslech, poslechová dovednost, autentický text, autenticita, autentický materiál, pravda/nepravda, cvičení s více volbami

Abstract

The diploma thesis focuses on the use of authentic materials for the purpose of the listening practice in the English language. Students of bachelor and masters degree program at the English department of the Technical University Liberec were chosen as the target group. The aim of the paper is to help to improve the listening skills of the students of the English department. The thesis is divided into three main parts, theoretical, methodological and practical. The theoretical part discusses items listening, listening skill and difficulties connected with it, and authentic text. The methodological part describes the procedure of the development of the listening exercises in the e-learning environment. The practical part contains the analysis of the data which were gained via the listening exercises created in the e-learning environment and via surveys.

Keywords

Listening, Listening skill, authentic text, authenticity, authentic material, true/false, multiple-choice exercises

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| CAE: | Cambridge Advanced English |
| EFL: | English as Foreign Language |
| ESOL: | English for Speakers of Other Languages |
| FCE: | First Certificate English |
| PET: | Preliminary English Test |
| PR 1: | Practical language 1 |
| PR 2: | Practical language 2 |
| PR 3: | Practical language 3 |
| PR 4: | Practical language 4 |
| PR 5: | Practical language 5 |
| PU: | Prager University |
| TUL: | Technical University Liberec |

1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on the use of authentic materials for the purpose of practising listening. I initially chose this topic for a personal reason: I wondered why I sometimes did well and sometimes scored badly on listening exercises and, most importantly, on the tests. My performance was unbalanced as were the scores which I obtained. These scores occasionally reached low and high value. At the time, I assured myself that my success or failure was solely due to the nature of the exercise, that it was, say, confusing. The confusion was mainly because of the distractors and occasionally due to the speakers and their performance. This may be considered a highly subjective claim, however, the same observation was confirmed by peers at the university. My motive for conducting this research was to gain insight into what makes listening exercises difficult for non-native speakers of English.

The second reason for selecting this topic is that listening practice is generally believed to be insufficient in the classes. Speaking from personal experience too, I know that the exercises based on listening cause difficulties to many students. Thus, in the practical part of this thesis, I wanted to provide an opportunity for undergraduates of English at the Technical University of Liberec (TUL) not only to practise their listening skills but also to be better prepared for the testing of their listening skills.

The third reason for carrying out research into listening skills is that the books which are used at the English department provide listening practice but this practice is limited due to the limited space in the classes.

In response to this need, I decided to see if it would be possible to develop my own materials. These were to be based on videos created for native speakers of English, unlike the exercises in coursebooks which were designed for EFL learners.

The beneficial elements of creating one's own materials are that they are new and can be appreciated as a supplement to the already existing volume of materials.

The practical part of my thesis comprises the thesis focuses on exercises which are discussed in detail in part 5. This part includes the description of the exercises and their process of the creation. In addition, other features of the testing and problems which occurred are included. A parallel is also drawn between the book *Complete Advanced* and the exercises from which data were collected, analysed, compared and consequently evaluated. The practical part also includes a survey of students and

teachers to gain an insight into their attitude towards the listening. This is discussed in part 6.

Certain literature was selected for the purpose of the thesis. The literature used is only a small fraction of the books which deal with listening skills or individual aspects of listening in the EFL classroom. It is possible that the authors have a certain point of view which disagrees with other authors, however, it is beyond the scope of the thesis to cover every available piece of literature.

A theoretical part consists of a discussion focusing on the authentic materials with an endeavour to define the term *authentic*. A part of the practical part is devoted to the skills and sub-skills with the main focus on the listening skills which cause considerable problems to the students.

2 Skills

In order to master a language, a learner should be able to use the skills proficiently. It is imperative to make a distinction between skills and systems. As skills we regard listening, reading, writing and speaking but as a system, we regard phonology, morphology and syntax. Those two language items are closely linked together. Bachman provides support by stating “Indeed, a model of language proficiency [...] describes language ability in terms of the four skills and several components (for example, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation)” (Bachman 1996, 75). Bachman does not use the term “system” directly but *several components* refer to them. To provide an example, if one has a poor knowledge of phonology, one might encounter difficulties with listening comprehension. Similarly, if learners have difficulties with syntax, they might find writing challenging.

Skills are, according to the Collins English Dictionary, “the ability to use language” (Collins English Dictionary). In other words, skills enable us to use, produce language and at the same time to receive and understand the language at a certain level.

The skills are further distinguished as *receptive* and *productive*. Bachman calls it *mode* (1996, 70). Productive skills are those skills by which a person produces language. This can be in forms of writing and speaking. The writing involves a production of written texts such as essays, emails or letters. The speaking does not necessarily have to involve any other skills but it often employs them, for instance a university lecture or a business meeting where people debate, have a dialogue or even monologue. It is important to mention that in the case of a monologue, the speaker is the one who produces the language. The others receive the language via listening skills.

Listening belongs to the class of the receptive skills. This suggests that a person receives information unlike, for instance, in writing in which a person produces language. Harmer states that “Receptive skills are the way in which people extract meaning from the discourse they see or hear” (Harmer 2001, 199). This claim indicates that a person has to decode a piece of information in order to obtain the desirable answer. Consequently, receptive skills are not completely passive skills. All the skills are interconnected in language learning. One listens to a recording which helps to enhance one’s listening skills and help one to acquire better

pronunciation. During the listening, one has to read the task given which includes reading skill. The person also has to produce an answer which employs writing skills. Consequently, receptive skills are not completely passive skills.

I decided to focus on listening skills. The reason for the choice is that it is my belief that little time is devoted to listening in class and this can cause difficulties for students. Of all the skills, the listening is complex since a listener has to overcome numerous potential difficulties. These factors can be directly or indirectly linked with the listening itself. These problems are discussed in chapter 2.1.1.

2.1 Listening

Listening is one of the major and essential skills in language learning and until the late 1960s, it was not even considered to be a skill (Richards and Burns 2012, 207). Downs defines listening as “making an effort to hear something; to pay attention or heed” (Downs 2008, 1). According to Garanpayeh, listening is the most complex to test (Garanpayeh 2013, 84). It is considered to be one of the most difficult skills to master because of the nature of the process of listening apprehension. The difficulty arises from the fact that, in some cases, if we listen to someone or to a recording, we are expected to react immediately or with a short delay. This is the case whether taking tests at school or interacting in a dialogue in a real-life situation. There are, of course, listening situations which are not reciprocal but only one-way communication such as a university lecture.

Anderson and Lynch also add that “Listening is, under many circumstances, a reciprocal skill. We cannot practise listening in the same way as we can rehearse speaking, because we cannot usually predict what we will have to listen to” (Anderson and Lynch 1991, 4). This argument is valid; however, it should be stated that the listeners are able to anticipate to a certain extent what they will hear. This is due to a set of ideas which we have in our mind. These ideas are called schemata and we will discuss this in part 2.1.1.2. The claim that it is a reciprocal skill can be understood in a way that listeners produce answers to the question and think about the answer. This employs speaking or writing and hence the communication is mutual. The anticipation of a topic is further influenced by the rubrics which provide the listeners with cues about what they will listen to.

Rixon supports the reciprocal claim by making a distinction between listening and hearing. “Hearing is simply the recognition of sounds, as when we say ‘I am

sorry, I didn't hear exactly what you said'. Listening implies some conscious attention to the message of what is said, as when we say, 'Are you listening to me?'" (Rixon 1986, 28). This can be interpreted that the listeners listen to the message and tries to decode it in order to gain the necessary information and produce a suitable answer while hearing does not employ any higher cognitive thinking. Downs also mentions the difference between listening and hearing by noticing that "It is different from hearing, which is the physiological process of the ear absorbing sound waves and transferring them along neural pathways to parts of the brain" (Downs 2008, 1). This shows that listening involves more than hearing and it is rather a psychological process.

It is also important to point out that listening involves a multiplicity of the skills. Rixon says "In real life, even though listening may be a major activity in a particular situation, the listeners are usually expected to perform more than one language skill simultaneously" (Rixon 1986, 3). A similar idea is acknowledged by Coombe who says "The learners' ability to handle other language skills is also important and the success or failure of learners on the test may rest not so much with their listening ability but with their reading, writing or speaking proficiencies." (Coombe 2012, 228). These statements can be understood that while listeners listen to an audio recording, the listeners have to write and read simultaneously. While doing so, they are at peril of making a mistake in spelling, misunderstanding or misreading the question. This claim is further supported by Ur who adds "Such exercises are a test of memory, intelligence and careful reading as much as of listening comprehension, and may not; therefore, be appropriate for younger pupils or for those whose reading is much behind their oral skills" (Ur 1992, 137). In other words, listening is a complex process which involves a vast variety of aspects which can influence the overall results.

Ur also highlights other problematics with the listening. Ur says "Many listening comprehension exercises used today in the classroom are still based on formal spoken prose" (Ur 1992, 22). This, however, has changed over the past two decades since recordings are nowadays based on informal speech or at least try to imitate it. The description in ESOL says "A variety of voices, styles of delivery and accents will be heard in each Listening paper to reflect the various contexts presented in the recordings, as appropriate in the international contexts if the tests takers." (2016b, 54).

The listening tasks/exercises in the classroom should prepare learners for everyday life speech, however, they may not do so sufficiently. I contacted bachelor students who work in London and they confirmed that the books did not prepare them adequately for communication with a native speaker but rather they were taught to focus on a specific task. Everyday speech contains informal language and mistakes which can cause difficulties with the comprehension, especially for younger learners. A phone call can serve as an example of everyday life speech. Communication via phone is extremely difficult for non-native speaker because the speaker's voice may be less clear, visual cues such as facial expressions are missing and, as a result, the message is more challenging for the non-native speaker.

2.1.1 Complexity of listening

Listening is especially difficult compared to reading because one relies only on aural skills to recognise the words themselves. One cannot see the words of the text, only the words of the questions and potential answers. The speaker sets the pace whereas as a reader one can often read at one's pace. Anderson and Lynch provide four factors which make the listening task difficult. The first is how the information is organized, the second how familiar the listeners are with the topic, the third point is how explicit the given information is and the last point is input (Anderson and Lynch 1991, 48-50). To better illustrate each difficulty, I decided to examine the exercises from the book *Complete Advanced* by Brook-Hart and Haines (2014, 7). This is one of the course books used at the TUL in the subject Practical Language. The book will be analysed in chapter 5.2.

2.1.1.1 Organisation of topic

The first point considers the text of the listening and how it may be organized in a sequence and in a simple narrative text so that it is not difficult to decode. This is done in EFL but the real life situation can present a more challenging and disorganized sequences of a text.



Part 4 Five short, themed monologues, with ten multiple-matching questions

Figure 1: Five short monologues

Proof of EFL organization of topic can be the fourth part of Certificate Advanced English (CAE). The description of the exercise in the *Complete Advanced* book says “Five short themed monologues, with ten multiple-matching questions” (Brook-Hart and Haines 2014, 7). This description states that the listeners have to do two listening tasks simultaneously and have to choose, for instance, the correct person and the correct activity.

The listeners have to listen, read, and remember not only the options available but also the answers and connect them with suitable options. If we acknowledge that the creators of the exercises often try to distract listeners by use of words which the listeners would expect to be the solution for a different question, it appears this exercise is highly demanding as a listening comprehension task. The survey, which I conducted among the students, shows that over 50 % of students consider this a difficult task. The survey is covered in chapter 6.2.

Another obstacle adds to the difficulty and that is the number of options and number of the answers. There are eight options for the left part and eight options for the right part. From this, there are just five correct answers for each part. This indicates that there are three incorrect options for each part. This type of exercise can be used as a perfect example of disorganized information. The listeners need to constantly check all of the options in both parts which means that the eye is not focused on one sentence. In general, this exercise is considered by the students to be highly demanding even though the results often make an opposite impression. Despite the fact that this disrupts the rule of clear organisation of the topic, the students are mostly able to manage and gain good results.

2.1.1.2 Familiarity with the topic

The second factor is how familiar the listeners are with the topic. The familiarity of the topic can be a key component in listening comprehension. If a person is knowledgeable in a certain field and the listening exercise employs the topic of one’s interest, it will probably prove to be less challenging for the person mainly because of the vocabulary. Professions which use a specific vocabulary such as doctors or car mechanics can serve as an example. It is probable that listening containing a medical topic will be less challenging for a doctor while a car mechanic will be put in front of a difficult task. This can be demonstrated in the second part of CAE sentence completion or also known as *gap filling*. The second part is described

in *Complete Advanced* as “a monologue with a sentence-completion task which has eight items”. *Cambridge English Proficiency* says that “This part tests candidate’s ability to listen for specific words or phrases and produce written answers in response to the sentences” (Cambridge ESOL 2016a, 40). In other words, listeners have to fill gaps with expressions which they hear. These words often change in a manner of the part of speech so the listeners have to alter, for example, a noun to a verb. It is also important to state that a person not only listens for a specific piece of information but also has to produce a written answer. This can cause problems since spelling is usually equally important. If an expression is written incorrectly, it may be considered wrong. This is not, of course, the case if the students are given the answers such as multiple choice.

Familiarity with the topic, may at first sight seem to be an advantage, yet it can have certain drawbacks. Listeners can be influenced by the knowledge of what they know and might lose the focus on the listening. This can cause the speaker deliberately says a piece of information which is incorrect according to general belief and the listeners might choose the different option based on the knowledge. One of the questions which I used in the listening files can serve as an example. The exercise was based on True/False. The question *Communism failed because it was not properly put into practice.* was answered by one of the attendees as True; however, the speaker provided different explanation thus the correct answer was False. The attendee explained that he was under the impression that the answers had to be answered according to their knowledge. This unique case shows that the intrusion of pre-acquired knowledge can influence the performance. Another example can provide one of my friends, Jan Štěpánek, (name used with permission) who helped me with piloting the exercises. When he gave me feedback he confirmed that he had to pay attention not to be influenced by the knowledge he already had about the topic.

Schemata can be considered as a part of the familiarity. Cook employs this term which supports the idea of listeners being able to predict what they will listen to provided that they have the necessary knowledge. *Schemata* are “mental representations of typical situations, and they are used in discourse processing to predict the contents of the particular situation which the discourse describes” (Cook 1996, 69). Gilakjani agrees with Cook and adds “The listener uses linguistic and situational cues about the new input to extract schemata. When a schema is extracted,

it becomes a guiding structure in comprehension” (Gilakjani 2016). This underlines the crucial part of the pre-acquired knowledge. Harmer claims that “Understanding a piece of discourse involves much more than just knowing the language” (Harmer 2001, 199). Geranpayeh provides another definition of schemata: “A schema is best defined as a knowledge structure containing all that an individual knows about and associates with a particular concept” (Geranpayeh 2013, 92). This supports the idea that we have a set of ideas in our mind and can influence our decisions while we listen to a recording.

2.1.1.3 *Explicitness of the information*

The third point is how explicit the information given is. If the information sought is stated clearly, explicitly, there is minimal problem with receiving and little potential misunderstanding. However, the nature of the listening exercises at advanced levels mostly does not provide the listeners with a clear answer due to the change of the vocabulary or the attitudinal aspect of the speakers. At a higher level of proficiency, the listeners are asked not only to listen for the correct answers but also to “read between the lines”. Listeners are often placed in front of the listening task where the speaker expresses the attitude in a form of the tone of the voice and verbal clues. Description of exercises in ESOL provides the main focus of the listening tasks. For example, multiple-choice with four and three options as well as multiple matching focus on feelings attitudes and opinions (ESOL 2016b, 54). This can be demanding for the listeners because the answer is not explicitly stated. Thus, options might provide similar answers but only one answer is correct.

2.1.1.4 *Types of input*

The last point is the type of input. Brown and Yule, who were also used by Anderson and Lynch (Anderson and Lynch 1991, 54), state 3 different types of input: static, dynamic, and abstract (Brown and Yule 1983, 109). The static input mostly represents descriptions and instructions. An example of static input could be recipes for a meal. In this case, the speaker dictates the process step by step and the listeners follow the procedure.

The dynamic input involves story-telling. This is a more complex input than the previous. Unlike the static input, the listeners can expect a change in a story which can deviate from the expectation. As an example can serve an audiobook

where the speaker tells a story and the listeners are unable to predict the next part or are only able to do so with difficulties.

The last, abstract input, involves expressing an opinion. This is considered to be the most difficult type of input because listeners are expected to be able to identify the attitude of the speaker as was discussed above. For instance, listeners have to differentiate whether the speaker was sarcastic or the utterance was meant to be genuine.

Buck also gives two additional types of input (Buck 2001, 4-6). The first one is the acoustics. Acoustics is influenced by phonological modifications, stress and intonation. It must be said that this does not concern the acoustics of the room but the acoustics provided by the speaker. Those can generally be understood as paralinguistic clues. Paralinguistics is a discipline "... dealing with those phenomena that are modulated onto or embedded into the verbal message, be this in acoustics (vocal, non-verbal phenomena) or in linguistics (connotations of single units or of bunches of units) (Schuller et. al. 2013, 5). Brown provides several examples of paralinguistics features such as a pitch span, placing in voice range, a direction of pitch, a tempo, loudness or a voice setting (for more detailed information see Brown 1990, 112-143).

The second input is redundancy and shared knowledge. Buck explains redundancy and shared knowledge that if people are knowledgeable about the topic of the discussion, they tend to be less accurate and speak faster. This may be because the people do not focus on their utterance and expect the others to understand. For this reason, they do not tend to use all the necessary pieces of information. As an example can serve a field of any science where two scientists discuss a certain topic. An ordinary person would probably need to be provided with additional knowledge in order to understand their utterance

Bachman uses a term language of input and divides it into two main categories (Bachman 1996, 53). The first category, "language characteristics", is divided into two sub-categories the first of which is *organizational characteristics*. This includes grammatical characteristics such as morphology, syntax etc. The second sub-category is *pragmatic characteristics* which branches into functional characteristics and sociolinguistic characteristics. The second main area is "topical characteristics" which describes what type of information is used (1996, 53).

Hence one can argue that the type of input dictates the overall difficulty of the exercise. This can be shown in a model situation. A listener listens to two audio recordings based on the same topic about a bench. The first recording contains a blueprint and procedure for a bench building while the second recording contains abstract ideas about why the bench was made and which purpose it serves. The listener can expect that the first recording explicitly states the procedure for the bench construction. The second recording is likely to be more obscure.

2.1.1.5 Other problems with the listening

There are several other problems which were not mentioned in the book; however, these factors should be mentioned. They can disrupt and make the recording almost inaudible and thus they can cause difficulties with the receiving of the message. I would divide these obstacles into two groups. The first group represents problems with the performance of the speakers in the recording. The second group represents problems which are of a mechanical or a technical origin. It must be said that these two groups overlap at some points so we cannot clearly claim that one problem is in the first group and the other is in the second group. To support this, I prepared a survey as a part of my research which I distributed in an on-line form. This is further discussed in chapter 6.2.

2.1.1.5.1 Performance of the speaker

As mentioned above, the first group represents comprehension problems. Geranpayeh explains “There are differences of voice quality due to the size and position of the speaker’s articulators” (2013, 86). This can be seen in the case of accent which can prove to be an insurmountable problem. It is highly demanding for a non-native speaker whose level of proficiency is insufficient to understand a person who speaks with a different accent from the one the listener is used to. This does not apply only for a lower level of proficiency. Even skilled listeners can be challenged with a listening text which may at first seem almost impossible to understand. This is due to the fact that the learners of a language are accustomed to a specific accent.

An accent is closely connected to pronunciation. The predominant pronunciation at Czech schools is British which can cause a problem since the predominant pronunciation in the movies tends to be American. Of course, it depends on which movie one watches. The listeners might know the word and

understand the meaning but in a certain accent. If the word is said in a different accent, the listener may not distinguish the individual sounds or even understand the word itself.

To further increase the difficulty, the recordings for the Cambridge Certificate are recorded by native speakers who imitate the other accents. Thus, the recordings are made by speakers who imitate Spanish, Indian or even Russian accent and for this reason, the speech sounds contrived.

The second problem is also connected with the actors and that is the pace of their speech. It is assumed that the listeners at a higher level of proficiency such as C1 should be able to understand natural speech. However, this cannot be considered as a rule. The score of the test can be influenced by the pace of the speech because the listeners simply did not understand the sought word or the idea.

The third problem is the articulation. This might be the severest problem. Some actors do not articulate in a proper way. This causes the speaker “to swallows” a part of a word or, in some cases, the whole words. For example, there was a case of a listening exercise which employed a word grains and should be pronounced as /gremz/. The problem was that the /g/ sound was not heard. This caused that the word sounded as rains /remz/. Based on this example and the evidence, we can guess that the most probable problem is the articulation.

2.1.1.5.2 Technical problems

The second group represents the technical problems. These problems may include the quality of the recording, the acoustics of the room or the device which plays the recording. The quality of the recording, nowadays, is mostly sufficient; however, if we connect this with the problems from the previous chapter, we can reach a conclusion that the problem is still valid. Difficulties from the previous chapter can influence the quality of the recording so if we combine them, we can receive a bad quality recording.

The second problem is the acoustics. A teacher cannot rebuild the room, however, the teacher may choose a different room which is better in terms of acoustics. Bad acoustics can have a disastrous impact on listening comprehension. This is due to an echo which distorts the sound and causes a hum. An interesting way how to work with this problem and preferably completely avoid it is to try a different layout of the benches and furniture inside the room. In some cases, this can help to reduce the echo to a minimum.

The last problem is the device which plays the recording. Some players, when the volume is too loud, tend to produce an unpleasant sound in the form of a buzz. This can have a major impact on the listening comprehension of the listeners. There is a simple solution to this problem. A teacher should ask the students to sit in the first row if it is possible. Of course, there are, for instance, university classes in which many students participate so it is difficult, or nearly impossible, to accommodate every student's needs. Also, there is the forementioned problem with acoustics.

As we can see, there are many problems with listening and listening comprehension. Needless to say, not every problem can be solved by a listener and some of them should be solved by the person who provides the listening or by the person who gives a test as listening exercises. Having considered all the technical problems, the teachers should always try the recording in advance in the room which is supposed to be used. By doing so, a teacher is able to prevent unpleasant experience and can improve the chances of the students to successfully sit a test.

2.2 Listening sub-skills

Listening is divided into several sub-skills. Authors tend to use the term skills and sub-skills. I decided to adopt the term sub-skills because the process of listening is a skill and it is superior to the other (sub)-skills. It needs to be mentioned that some authors treat the term listening skills in a different way than the others. The different approaches to the listening skills are discussed in the following chapters.

2.2.1 Traditional sub-skills

The first group of sub-skills could be called traditional sub-skills. There are several listening sub-skills which are recognized in a field of languages. Listening for gist and listening for detail belong to recognized sub-skills (Scrivener 2005, 179). The first sub-skill, listening for gist, can be appreciated as listening for the general idea. In other words, listeners do not concentrate on a specific piece of information but on the message of the text as a whole. Harmer says "A simple gist exercise is to ask for basic information under the headings What? Who? Why?" (Harmer 2001, 82). Listening for gist is also called by some authors as *extensive listening* (Scrivener 2005, 179). Harmer appreciates *extensive listening* in a different way. According to him, it is simply listening to a large number of texts in order to improve one's skills (Harmer 2007, 339). This approach to the text uses the strategy

of *skimming*. Skimming can be understood as the process when a participant in the test quickly reads, skims, the text and tries to acquire the general overview.

The listening for a specific piece of information stands in the opposition of the previous sub-skill. Listeners try to recognize a certain piece of information which is provided by the recording. An example of the specific information can be a number, name or location. This approach uses the strategy of *scanning*. Buck also classifies these skills as the direct meaning comprehension (Buck 2001, 54). It should be noted that in both cases the participant should listen to the whole recording; however, the strategies differ. This is explained in chapter 2.3.

Harmer also mentions inferring as a skill. He defines it as “A thinking skill in which we make a deduction by going beyond what is actually stated” (Harmer 2001, 84). This is connected with the type of input which is discussed in chapter 2.1.1.4. Buck also specifies that “Inferences vary depending on how much background knowledge is needed to make the inferences” (Buck 2001, 19).

Other skills, mentioned by Harmer, are identifying the topic, predicting and guessing, listening for detailed information and interpreting text. Predicting and guessing the content is important in the case of the listening exercises such as gap filling where listeners have to fill a correct word or a phrase. As a result of an accurate prediction, the listeners are able to anticipate which part of speech probably has to be used. Listening for detailed information is used when listeners need to understand and remember the whole text or a part of the text. The last skill is the text interpretation. It means that listeners go beyond the text and try to provide a different point of view than the text of the recording has. (Harmer 2001, 201-202).

Ahmed introduces an additional skill on the British Council’s web-page known as *detecting signposts* (Ahmed 2015). This skill is useful in a scenario that the speaker provides a list of items and uses connective terms such as conjunctive adverbs, conjunctions, or ordinal number. These signposts give an indication to listeners that the recording shifted into the next part.

For example, a listener listens to a recording about a family trip and a speaker gives an account of events they experienced such as “At first we went to a shop. Then we picked up the bottle. The last event of the day was the dusk.” In this artificially created example, we can see signpost *at first, then, the last*. It gives a listener a sequence of events and one can recognize it. For example, conjunctive adverb such as *however*, in a certain context, tells a listener that an event occurred

but there were consequences. On the other hand, *moreover* adds items to the already existing group of items.

2.2.2 Non-traditional sub-skills

I call this chapter non-traditional sub-skills because these sub-skills differ in that they do not directly search or identify the keywords or the main idea of the recording but rather help the listeners to identify the keywords.

Anderson and Lynch recognize a different set of skills while the process of listening (Anderson and Lynch 1991, 4). It needs to be said that these listening skills are used mainly while listening face-to-face so the recorded speech is limited; however, not entirely. Among these skills belong identification of the spoken signals. The spoken signals can be a pitch of the voice or word stress. It is generally known that, in the case of English, the important words in the sentences are stressed. This can help listeners to identify the focus of the sentence; thus, the listeners can produce a suitable answer. In the case of questions, the most important word in a question is stressed; thus, the listeners are able to recognize which word carries the highest importance.

The second skill is that the listeners should be able to recognize speech as known words. If listeners are unable to distinguish the words and cannot identify the individual words, they will probably not be able to produce a correct answer. Thus the segmentation of speech has to be made; otherwise, the speech would be one continuous sound and, as a result, incomprehensible. This is supported by Richards and Burns who claim “As well as difficult phonological features of the L2, target areas might include lexical segmentation [...] and recognition of current chunks, intonation patterns, turn-taking signals, linkers and patterns of logical argument” (2012, 210).

The third point is that the listeners should be able to grasp the syntax of the utterance. This mainly influences the sentence structure. It is important in the case that the listeners are able to distinguish, for instance, types of sentences. The syntax plays an important role in the utterance. Listeners are able to react properly according to the type of the sentence and are able to understand the meaning provided by the speaker. If listeners do not understand the message for a certain reason, the listeners cannot decode the message and cannot answer properly.

2.3 Top-down and bottom-up strategies

There are two strategies used for the work with a text – top-down and bottom-up. Harmer explains Top-down strategy as “the reader or listener gets a general view of the reading or listening passage by, in some way, absorbing the overall picture” (Harmer 2001, 201). Students attempt to grasp the overall picture of a text (Harmer 2007, 337). It is possible to draw a parallel with listening for gist by which listeners also do not search for a piece of information but rather wants to obtain the overall picture.

Bottom-up is the second employed strategy while working with a text. It is explained by Harmer as “the reader or listener focuses on individual words and phrases, and achieves understanding by stringing these detailed elements together to build up a whole” (2001, 201). In another book, Harmer provides a slightly different explanation “Bottom-up processing happens when listeners concentrate on understanding individual words as a way of understanding the whole” (Harmer 2007, 338). This means that listeners simply tries to compile pieces of information together to gain the overall picture. Buck provides a different point of view on this strategy “Bottom-up view sees language comprehension as a process of passing through a number of consecutive stages, or levels, and the output of each stage is the output of the next higher stage” (Buck 2001, 2). These stages are phonetic, syntactic and semantic. In other words, the listeners listen to an utterance of the speaker which is the phonetic level. This can be modified by assimilation, elision or intrusion (Buck 2001, 32-33). Then one distinguishes the type of the sentence and how the sentence is structured. This is the syntactic level. Lastly, the listeners search for the meaning of the utterance, which is the semantic level. Yi'an supports this by claiming “For listening comprehension, linguistic knowledge consists of phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantic knowledge which serves as ‘abstract cues or instructions’ for making sense of the input.” (Bransford and McCarrell 1977, 389 in Yi'an 1998, 22).

3 Authentic materials

The major part of the thesis is based on the use of authentic materials. There are two major questions which need to be answered regarding the authentic materials. The first question is devoted to the notion of the word “authentic”. The second question is whether the authentic materials can be used in the classroom and if it is beneficial for the teachers and the listeners.

Merriam-Webster’s dictionary online defines authentic as “conforming to an original so as to reproduce essential features”. This means that the word authentic is a representation of those materials which bear similarities to the original act of speech. A different definition is given by Rixon claims that “Authentic materials consist of speech recorded in a real situation, often without the speakers’ knowledge at the time, so that the students are encountering a totally natural ‘slice of life’” (Rixon 1986, 13). This claim can be perceived as obsolete because the word *authentic* is understood as materials which are not made for the school purpose. For this reason, the definition given by Rixon is not suitable for the purpose of the thesis. Moreover, the majority of texts could not be appreciated as authentic for the reason that the texts go through a process of correction and censorship.

Wilson gives a more suitable definition “One way to define authenticity may be to say that if the text exists for a communicative purpose other than teaching language, then it is authentic” (Wilson 2008, 30). To provide another opinion we can use a fundamentally same definition provided by Tomlinson “Authentic text: a text which is not written or spoken for language teaching purpose” (Tomlinson 1998, viii). Tomlinson gives examples of authentic materials such as a newspaper article, a rock song, a novel, a radio interview and adds that a written story to exemplify the use of reported speech, a dialogue scripted to exemplify ways of inviting and a linguistically simplified version of a novel would not be authentic texts.

Geddes and White provide other two definitions of authentic discourse. The first is “language which was originally written or spoken for a non-pedagogical purpose, and which was, in its original context, a genuine act of communication”. The second definition is “language produced for a pedagogical purpose but exhibiting features which have a high probability of occurrence in genuine acts of communication” (Geddes and White in Hedge 2000, 246).

The second definition by Geddes and White, the language made for pedagogical purposes but which is likely to be used in real life, can be applied to the term semi-scripted text. Wilson explains the term *semi-scripted* and adds another term called the *authentic-based language*. The authentic-based language would involve pauses, hesitations and fillers such as *er* or *uhm*. Needless to say that this approach is still scripted but it appears more natural than a completely scripted and flawless text. A semi-scripted text involves actors who are given points according to which they are supposed to “play” a role. This approach is mainly about improvisation (Wilson 2008, 33). Buck agrees with Wilson’s definition of the semi-scripted text and claims that “semi-scripted texts are in the case when we decide the content in advance, but only the ideas, not the words. Speakers then speak freely expressing these ideas in whatever way comes naturally” (Buck 2001, 146).

Besides the term semi-scripted, Rixon also uses the terms tightly-scripted and unscripted. Tightly scripted listening represents exercises in which the speaker follows the text word by word and unscripted listening recordings are recordings without notes or text (Rixon 1986, 22-23). As a tightly scripted text can serve the evening news where the reporters read the news from the screen. On the other hand, we can use the recorded dialogue in the street as an example of the unscripted text. Hedge says that scripted texts are “similar to written prose with little repetition, rephrasing, or other performance features; reasonable speed and relatively formal and deliberate style” (Hedge 2000, 245). It is important to say that regardless of the nature of the texts they can be still considered authentic. If we use the definition of Tomlinson, we can conclude that if the text is not made *for the purpose of the teaching*, then it can be considered authentic.

Tomlinson explains the term teaching as “to refer to anything done by materials developers or teachers to facilitate the learning of the language” (Tomlinson 1998, 3). We can, thus, appreciate the term *for purpose of the teaching* as texts and materials which were graded for a certain level of English in order to facilitate the learning. I would also add that this does not involve only language learning but learning in general. Materials for the schools are adapted for the level of proficiency and for this reason, they cease to be authentic. Thus we can reach the conclusion that texts outside the *purpose of the teaching* can be considered authentic. This is important for the thesis since the materials used were not adapted for the level of the participants of the research. I directly addressed the Prager University (PU)

which is the source for the thesis and I was assured that the scripts undergo an extensive editing process to provide as an accurate performance as possible. From the Rixon's point of view this would mean that the materials are not authentic materials; however, as we argued above this claim is rather obsolete. For this reason, I decided to adopt the Tomlinson's definition and thus we can call the materials authentic.

Authentic materials are beneficial to the students. The students can feel pleasure and satisfaction because they work with materials which are for native speakers. If they understand the materials, they would most likely understand the native speaker. Wilson states "From the behavioural point of view, listening is rewarding by itself. People are rewarded by understanding." (Wilson 2008, 17). It is beneficial to include authentic materials because it accustoms listeners to real life situations (Richards and Burns 2012, 211). Ur argues in favour of the usage of the authentic materials which are beneficial for the students "Students may learn best from listening to speech which, while not entirely authentic, is an approximation to the real thing, and is planned to take into account the learners' level of ability and particular difficulties" (Ur 1992, 23). The part *not entirely authentic* can be understood in a way that, for example, a newspaper article underwent an editing process thus it ceases to be authentic. This means that there are high chances that the original article contained mistakes which were removed. Thus *not entirely authentic* indicates that the article is not the original but in its nature, it is still authentic because it was not made for the school purpose.

Teachers can use authentic materials but there are certain drawbacks in doing so. Materials can be quite difficult to comprehend if we work with people whose proficiency does not reach a higher level. This, however, does not restrict a teacher in the use of authentic materials in classes. Teachers can use, for instance, a radio broadcast recording; however, the teacher should ideally grade the task. By grading the task, we understand adjusting rubrics and questions to the level of task takers, not the altering material itself. If the material was graded, it could no longer be considered authentic. The problem arises while grading the listening task's rubrics. The instructions can be clear and easy to understand but this does not guarantee that the listeners will understand the speech of the recording. Thus the teachers should always choose a task which level of difficulty is the same or, preferably, slightly above the level of the students.

Although, we talk about authentic materials, it should be varied considerably. For instance, a fairy tale can be used as an authentic text in a class for beginners while a scientific discussion in a class of advanced listeners. Both qualify as being “authentic”. Thus a teacher should consider which material can be used. Gower supports this claim and says “because authentic materials are not designed for the EFL student they are not graded for level, although some are obviously more difficult to understand than others” (Gower, Phillips and Walters 2007, 82).

One of the main points in favour of this type of material is that the authentic materials of this kind have not been used yet. Moreover, the videos used are made for the native speakers thus it can be considered beneficial for the students because the students experience the ungraded English which is not in the books.

The second main point in favour of creating ones own materials is that the learners have the freedom to practice on their own. Needless to say that this is convenient because the learners can access the listening exercises from almost everywhere where is the internet connection. This saves learner’s time and money.

Online tests provide freedom and autonomy to learners. Students are not limited by the paper form which has drawbacks such as potential loss or damage of the test. Students are able to see the results immediately so they do not have to wait and experience anxiety in the case of real testing. There is also an option to give an explanation of why the answer is not correct in the case of a bad choice so the students can see why their choice was incorrect without any delay. There is also the advantage that the students can access their tests almost anytime via the smartphones, which is convenient; however, the e-learning has to be adjusted to the smartphone interface.

The third factor is that e-learning form can also help the other teachers who can share already developed questions. This can save time and energy of the teachers who would otherwise have to prepare their new materials. Also, the teachers do not have to spend time correcting the tests and are to be less affected by the potential unreliability. The teachers, as well as the students, have the tests at their disposal almost anytime. They are aware of the current state of the test or the participation of the students. Lastly, they can alter the test in the case that the teacher makes a mistake and the alteration is visible immediately not only in the test itself but also in the results which are changed and corrected.

The exercises made via the e-learning platform can be altered by the teacher anytime according to the need. This means that the exercises can be updated or corrected anytime. A teacher can, for example, delete the question in the test if the teacher considers it to be badly phrased, and wants to save the test for future use. There is also an option to give an explanation of why the answer is not correct in the case of a bad choice so the students can immediately see the mistake. The teacher can set up the date when the test is available and when it closes. This means that the teacher does not have to check if the students attend the test or not since the results show who attended the test and who did not. Another option is to set up the time limit for how long the test runs after the students enter the test. This is convenient not only for the students who can see how much time is there left but also for the teacher who does not have to check if the students have handed in the tests. Another advantage is that if there were any changes made, they are available immediately after commencing the change. For example, in multiple-choice exercises, a teacher makes a mistake which lowers the grade of the students. The change of the answer corrects the grades and teacher does not have to check individual tests and recount the points. Most importantly, the teacher can modify the tests so that the teacher can use the already existing questions which are saved in the question bank and rewrite them which saves time. The teachers can also share the exercises or individual questions so that they do not have to make their own. This can save time and energy of the teachers who would otherwise have to develop their new materials. Also, the teachers do not have to spend time correcting the tests and are to be less affected by the potential unreliability. All this can be done from home.

The fourth point to mention is that these exercises supplement the books. The advantage is that the students do not have access to this type of material. Thus this can help to enhance the skills. Moreover, the students can benefit from this kind of exercises because they are not tempted to cheat by reading the transcript which is in the back of the books. By this, the teacher can be certain that the results are valid. The validity will be discussed later.

4 Difficulties

The e-learning is a great asset for a teacher and teaching; however, it is not a solution for every problem. Without any exaggeration, we can use Murphy's law "Anything that can go wrong will go wrong". As a matter of fact, I encountered several problems during my research despite the great effort to prevent any potential problems. I divided these drawbacks into groups. Each group of problems originates in a different way.

The computers themselves belonged to the first group. The first one occurred when the computers update was initiated. This can potentially take valuable time for the testing and put the testees under unnecessary pressure. This problem happened during my exercises; however, it did not have such a severe impact since the update was finished quite fast. However, it needs to be remembered that this can happen and thus the computers should be checked in advance for necessary updates.

Another problem might occur when there is a power cut or a glitch in the technology, which the teacher may not be able to solve. The computers are dependent on electricity in the language laboratory and thus there is a potential danger of a blackout. Fortunately, this problem did not occur during my research; however, the next obstacles more or less prevented the participants to finish the exercises seamlessly. It needs to be remembered that this kind of problem is valid.

The second group of problems consists of the place where the exercises were commissioned. The exercises were piloted and used for my research in a language laboratory at the TUL in P building. This laboratory enables the teacher to control and check the activity of the students. Each student has their own computer and can work independently. When I piloted the exercises, I found out that the listening files, which are part of the exercises, were absent. This meant that some of the students told me that the sound does not work. Although my colleagues and I had tested the exercises several times, the sound did not work in the language laboratory. My thesis supervisor and I checked the exercises after the piloting stage and the sound was available; however, on different computers. Needless to say that the sound files were available when played on a teacher's computer in the laboratory. Retrospectively, I should have tested the exercises in the room where the tests were commissioned.

The similar problem occurred when the tests were distributed among the students. I asked Ondřej Tavoda, a graduate of Information Technology and English, to help me to transfer the tests from my course to a course of practical language. Unfortunately, there must have been an error during the transfer because, again, the listening files were missing. This problem was solved by enrolling the participants to my course where I was preparing the material for my thesis. Fortunately, they were able to listen to the recording in my course so I was able to obtain valuable data.

The third group of the problems was caused by participants and me. The human factor often causes difficulties despite the utmost endeavour which was put into the prevention. I would divide the third group into three smaller sub-groups. The first sub-group consists of problems which were caused by me, the second sub-group the problems which were caused by the participants, and the third sub-group which was partly my fault and partly a fault of the participants. It needs to be stressed on behalf of the participants that none of these problems were intentional.

An error which I made was an incorrect answer in one of the exercises. When I was preparing the exercises, I had to rewrite each question three or even more times depending on the feedback by colleagues. The question was in a True/False listening exercise. However, I quickly realised that I must have made an error because nobody answered the question correctly. The question asked was “*According to the speaker, the communist government of the Soviet Union kept people from the truth.*”. I checked the listening file which said: “*The communist government of the former Soviet Union thought that by controlling access to information, they could keep their citizens in line*”. I realised that the answer was supposed to be *yes* instead of *no*. Fortunately, I was able to add the correct answer and regrade all the tests at the click of a button; the e-learning then adjusted all the answers and the results.

The second sub-group consists of problems which were caused by the participants. The major problem is that the participants were able to *see* the correct answers. The words *see* is italicised because the results are not available directly; however, if a person is knowledgeable in a field of IT and opens the source code of a test, the person can easily find the results. Moreover, the browsers enable a user to manipulate the code. This is a major drawback of the e-learning since this feature is a part of browsers in general. A person can obtain the results without making any

larger effort. We discovered this problem when we administered one of the tests because one of the students opened the code and tried to find the results. Even though this can be perceived as an issue, it is beneficial to know that this problem might occur in the future and one can make the necessary preparation for this.

Another problem was due to students not paying attention to the instructions. The instructions were written at the beginning which clearly stated that at the beginning of the recording there is a minute of silence so the students have enough of time to familiarize themselves with the questions and the answers. However, one of the students appeared not to understand the instructions and claimed that the listening did not work properly. In a matter of fact, we cannot exclude this possibility properly because the previous experience revealed that the recording might have been corrupted. It needs to be stated; however, that the rest of the participants did not encounter any problem. Moreover, the timer did not display one minute of the listening thus the recording did not start. Because of this problem, I had to remake each listening file and add additional instructions. Fortunately, one of my peers, Jakub Maryška, helped me by preparing the necessary adjustments. These adjustments consisted of a short spoken introduction given by Karásková which informed the participants that they had one minute to read through the questions and the answers. Another change was an addition of a beeping sound, similar to the one in the professionally produced Cambridge listening tests. I had to take each individual recording and use Audacity so the initial sentence and the beep sound was included in the recording as a whole.

The last problem with the instructions was the submission of the answers. The students were instructed that they are obliged to submit the test. Despite this, one of the students did not submit the test so the results are not included in the final evaluation. Thus, I had to change the test's setting so the tests are submitted automatically after the timer ends. It needs to be mentioned that a teacher can see individual answers for individual questions so the result of a particular student can be included additionally.

The third sub-group demonstrates a problem which was discussed in chapter 2.1.1.2 This chapter discussed familiarity with the topic. It is argued that the familiarity of the topic can have a negative interference regarding listening to

a recording. This proved to be true in the case of a student. There was a statement “*Communism failed because it was not properly put into practice*“. The student chose *yes* which was the wrong answer. He later claimed that he thought that the answer is *yes* because the Communism *failed* for the reason that it was not properly put into practice. I did not expect any participant to choose an answer based on their attitude or knowledge; however, this proved me wrong.

Consequently, I had to remake each question in each listening exercise by adding a phrase *the speaker says* or *the speaker claims*. This phrase did not have to be used in every sentence eventually. After a consultation with the supervisor, we reached a conclusion that it would be more convenient to put the phrase to the same question where the listening file is because the sentences appeared to be slightly clumsy.

5 Exercises

The exercises are based on authentic videos which are provided by Prager University. PU is an American portal which focuses on contemporary issues in society. Short five minute lectures are given by prominent figures particularly in academia, but also in American society. Since it is an American portal, it should be noted that the accent of the speakers will be different from the accent of the speakers in the books used at TUL. I contacted PU directly to ask for permission to use their videos and was granted permission to do so.

I prepared six listening exercises from which three were multiple-choice with four options and three true/false exercises. Each exercise contains ten questions whereas the standard number of the questions in multiple-choice in a CAE listening exercise is six questions per a test and six questions per Preliminary English Test (PET) (Geranpayeh 2013, 344-373).

There are three more gap-filling exercises which are, however, in a piloting stage. Gap filling must be criticised because a teacher has to foresee, if possible, every option which might be written by the students. This is highly demanding and time-consuming since there are mostly multiple possibilities in which a student can answer. Needless to say that spelling plays an equally important role.

It is highly demanding to develop a proper multiple-choice item for a non-native speaker. Madsen states three principals which should be remembered when multiple-choice exercises are prepared: focus on meaning; keep the options simple; and learn to adjust the difficulty of the items (Madsen 1983, 135). Those three principals should be followed in order to prepare a suitable multiple-choice exercise. Even if those principles are followed, it is time-consuming. For a native as for a non-native speaker, it is difficult to properly develop exercises which would include all the principles stated by Madsen.

The multiple-choice exercises are composed of stems followed by four options (Karegar, Barzegar and Ghasempour 2016, 32). A stem is defined according to the Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods as "...the part of the survey question that presents the issue about which the question is asking..." (Lavrakas 2008, 665). The similar definition provides Duffett et al "The question stem is the statement or question to which a response is sought" (Duffett 2008, 246).

Hsin-Wen and Chiou give examples of detailed-stems and simple stems in their research (2012, 330). An example of a detailed-stem can be *What is the example of...?* or *Explain why...?*. On the other hand, simple stems can be formulated in relation to the detailed-stem examples as *What sample...?* and *What....?* Each stem has several answers consisting of the correct answer and the distractors.

One or more of the false answers can serve as a distractor. Wilson says “Multiple-choice questions have distractors which are wrong options. The distractors need to be kept as short as possible.” (Wilson 2008,137). Buck provides a different point of view. According to him, it must be possible to say, based on the listening passage that certain responses are definitely correct and others are definitely incorrect (Buck 2001, 121).

A question from the exercise Multiple-choice 3 can serve as an example of distractor. The question which was given to the listeners was *Moving between Brussels and Strasbourg*. The students had to choose the correct answer and exclude three answers which were wrong. One of the wrong answers was *costs more than €300 million every year*; however, the speaker said that it costs *nearly €300*. The distractor was, in this case, a single word *more* which was not said in the listening. This proved to be a complicated question since three out of four attendees chose the distractor and only one person chose the correct answer.

The major problem with the multiple-choice is that a listener has to remember the question and all four options which is highly demanding. Geranpayeh provides a good explanation of why the listening, the multiple-choice in particular, is difficult “The task imposes quite heavy cognitive demands which go well beyond those that would apply in a non-test context. The test takers first have to discriminate, often finely between the three or four options that are presented; and then has to carry forward these multiple concepts in mind while listening to the recording” (Geranpayeh 2013, 129). In other words, a test taker has to be able to do four tasks simultaneously. One has to remember the questions, the answers, listen to the recording and eventually choose the correct option. This can potentially cause problems for people who are unable to focus on the given task. In the case of the exercises created for this thesis, the attendees had to choose the correct answer and they did not have to write it. This is covered in the chapter 2.1 where the use of multiplicity of skills was discussed.

Wilson advocates that “Non-verbal responses, such as true/false questions and multiple-choice, take less time for students to complete and ensure little distraction from actual listening” (Wilson 2008, 137). It is a truth that the listeners’ task is to *circle* the correct option but Wilson omitted the fact that the listeners are supposed to remember all the answers for the question. This is covered in chapter 2.1.1.1. All in all, Karegar, Barzegar and Ghasempour justify the multiple-choice because they are easy-to-correct and there is a lesser possibility to guess the answer unlike true-false (2016, 32).

The next type of exercises is True/False. Even though a True/False listening task is not part of CAE testing, I decided to include it in the exercises I created. The reason is that it is easier to create than multiple choice questions, it is less demanding for the students, and it also provides a good opportunity for learners to practise listening intensively. This type of exercise can be considered as one of the easier because the plausibility of choosing the correct answer is exactly fifty per cent so even if a listener does not understand, the listener can guess. Criticism of True/False tasks can be justifiably criticized. For example, Toppino and Brochin conducted research regarding True/False. Their main focus was on reading but it is applicable for a listening exercise. The research indicates that testees tend to choose True rather than False (Toppino and Brochin 1989, 122). It could provide results which may not be considered reliable because they may not potentially show if the attendees truly understood and answered the question because they were aware of the correct answer or they simply guessed.

It is generally believed that True/False exercises are easier than multiple-choice. This is due to the fact that True/False questions should have a simple structure (Frey 2014, 123). The simple structure should be less demanding for the listeners; however, a research done by Tasdemir proved that “Those results demonstrate that multiple choice tests are not superior to true-false ones in uncovering students’ achievement compared to true-false tests; neither are true-false tests when compared to multiple choice ones.” (Tasdemir 2010). By this, we can conclude that True/False can be as demanding as multiple choice.

I did not include two types of exercises which are multiple-choice with three options and multiple-matching. The first one was not included because the tests are made in a similar way as multiple-choice with four options. The web page Cambridge English states that these types of listening focus on feeling, attitude,

opinions etc. (Cambridge English); however, the file Cambridge English Proficiency, which is available on the web-page, discriminates the multiple-choice with four options and multiple-choice with three options more subtly. The first type “tests candidate’s ability to listen for a variety of focuses.” while the latter “tests candidate’s ability to listen for opinion, gist, detail and inference” (Cambridge ESOL 2016a, 40). Despite this difference, I did not include both types of exercises. The major difference between these two types of a task is that the first one is divided into three short dialogues while the latter is one long dialogue (Cambridge English). Of course, there are chances that the recording is done as a monologue. This, however, shows that the source which I used deviates since it is just a monologue of a person. This difference can be seen by testees as difficulty.

The multiple-choice with four options is often prepared in the way that the speaker or speakers, who answer the questions, are interrupted by the speaker who interviews them. This interruption often indicates that the listening shifted itself to the following question. This is quite important since, in the case of the recordings which I used, there is no interruption so the listeners cannot rely on this feature.

The last type of exercise is multiple-matching. Cambridge English Proficiency describes this type of exercise as “[This] part tests candidate’s ability to identify the gist of a number of short texts on a theme by identifying main points and interpreting context.” (Cambridge ESOL 2016a, 40). I did not include this type of exercise because it was technically impossible for me. The sources for the recordings are monologues about one particular topic. I would have to select suitable parts of the recordings and prepare a whole new recording which would consist of several small parts. I was not allowed to edit the recordings due to the copyright laws. Thus this type of exercise was impossible to prepare for me.

Before I started preparing the exercises, I had to choose suitable listening files. The choice of the topic involves a variety of fields from which I selected topics involving history, politics, and social science. These topics were chosen based on the content of the recordings. Some of the recordings proved to be quite difficult to work with since the topics were either too abstract or too difficult to understand because of the cultural difference. Abstract topics involved themes such as religion. The cultural difference arises from the fact that American’s mentality differs from ours. This problem does not involve only the way of thinking but also, for instance, the political system. After a consultation with the supervisor, we decided to change some

of the questions in tests since the question could prove to be highly challenging due to the fact that the students are not familiar with the cultural and political situation in the USA.

As a next step, I read thoroughly the transcripts and analysed the text in the listening file. The analyses include the length of the recordings and word counts. Unfortunately, I was unable to find a good software which would count the words for me so I had to use an old-fashioned procedure and count words in the transcript.

Table 1: Length and word count of the files

| Name | Length minutes/ seconds | Word count | Length total min/sec |
|-------------------|----------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| Multiple-choice 1 | 4.07 | 664 | 11.07 |
| Multiple-choice 2 | 4.34 | 708 | 12.05 |
| Multiple-choice 3 | 5.21 | 853 | 13.44 |
| True/False 1 | 5.53 | 783 | 14.49 |
| True/False 2 | 5.22 | 846 | 13.46 |
| True/False 3 | 5.32 | 771 | 13.58 |

Table 1 shows the length of the recordings in minutes and the number of the words which each recording contains. As it is shown the length ranges from 4.07 minutes to 5.32 minutes and the word count from 664 to 853 words. An interesting issue can be observed in the recording True/False 3 where the length of the recording is 5.32 minutes and the word count is 771 while True/False 1 is 5.22 minutes and 846 words. Despite the fact that the latter is shorter time wise, the word count is considerably larger.

Consequently, I commenced working on the questions and answers to the exercises. This proved to be a highly demanding problem. I spent on average over two hours on each exercise. After the exercises were finished, a native speaker checked them for mistakes and returned them with notes for improvement. This involved additional work by rephrasing and adding additional corrections. This was done several times due to discrepancies which could have possibly influenced the listening comprehension.

The next step was to prepare the exercises in the e-learning environment. Since I had never worked with e-learning before, I had to learn some basics. This proved quite challenging and entailed me devoting a considerable amount of time to the task. Fortunately, Andrea Dufková, Jan Štěpánek and Ondřej Tavoda provided counsel

advice and technical support whenever I needed it. As a result of our combined endeavour, I managed to learn to work relatively comfortably within the e-learning environment.

The most challenging task proved to be uploading sound files. The initial idea was to direct the test takers to the web-page where they could listen to the videos. On the reflection though, the chances of cheating were high. The videos were captioned for example and a transcript was provided. This would have defeated the object of creating materials for listening practice. Thus, I decided to extract the listening files not from the site itself but from Youtube, where the talks had been uploaded. For this, I used a web-page Video Online Converter. A link to the relevant video is copied and pasted to this this web-page. Then the format can be selected, for example mp3, mp4, wma and more. However, it must be said that if a user wants to use material which is available on Youtube, the person should always ask for permission and acknowledge the person or company due to copyright laws. I would also want to add that I do not claim ownership of the recordings. Although the recordings are not on the TUL e-learning platform, the rights to the recordings belong to PU and a music group Sabaton from which I borrowed a part of their song as means of sound testing.

When the listening files were extracted, I used free open source software Audacity. First of all, I had to learn how to work with the software. Fortunately, it is quite intuitive so it did not cause any major difficulties and I had to spend just a day to familiarize myself with the options that Audacity provides. Audacity enabled me to prepare new sound files.

The new sound files were then assembled from several separate parts. The first part was a minute of silence to enable the listeners to read the questions and the answers thoroughly. Initially, I wanted to provide ninety seconds of silence so the attendees would have more time to comfortably read the questions and the answers. Eventually, I decided to choose just a minute of silence form, since ninety seconds appeared to be long and rather stressful. The second part is the recording. The third part is a minute of silence again. I wanted to provide the examinees with a sufficient amount of time to check the answers and to decide whether their answers are correct or not before the second listening start playing. After the second minute of silence, the text of the recording is played for the second time. The final part of the recording is the last minute of silence. Each listening file has its own timing.

This can be seen in table 1. I chose to use two listenings because the purpose of the first listening is to give an opportunity to the students to get the general idea about the listening and the second listening was to check or correct the answers. This approach is explained by Green “On the first listening, they are establishing the approximate whereabouts of the relevant evidence. [...] On the second listening, the actual position of the information is confirmed.” (Green 2017, 43-44). It must be said that there might be a slight deviation in the timing. This is caused because when I was preparing the final version of the recordings, I had to insert the files manually.

The final step was the uploading itself. Despite the fact that e-learning is a great aid for educators, for a person who is not familiar with all the options and possibilities it is quite difficult to familiarize oneself with the environment. When I uploaded the files, I realized that the recordings could be paused by the students. This was a significant problem since the aim of the listening task was to provide a listening practice which would simulate the real testing situation, Fortunately, my peers were able to help me and provided me with a manual which helped me to learn how to disable the stop/play option for the testees. The result was that the recording would play automatically once the test was opened by the user. These options can be found in advanced settings.

After everything was prepared, I made the last adjustments. The first adjustment was the instructions which were written. The instructions are displayed before the examinee enters the tests itself. The second adjustment is the timer. As was written above, each test has its own timing. The timing of the exercises corresponds with the timing of the recordings. The third adjustment is the visibility of the results. The e-learning enables a test creator to choose if the creator allows the examinee to see the results immediately after the test or with a delay, or not at all. Furthermore, there is an option to enable the testees to see the correct answer if they have chosen an incorrect one.

5.1 Features of the exercises

Testing and practising are closely linked in terms of certain features. We will discuss two major features which are validity and reliability. These should assure that the exercises may be used for the testing or practice. They should be achieved in order to receive suitable results and data. There are other aspects of the testing such as interactiveness, subjectivity and relativeness (Bachman 1990, 25-38)

but this part cannot be included due to the limitation of the thesis. Buck also adds usefulness as a criterion of a test (2001, 195).

5.1.1 Validity

Validity is one of the key terms in the field of testing. It must be stressed that validity is a large topic which is out of the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, I would like to mention a few authors who examine this field in their books. Geranpayeh (2013) distinguishes cognitive, context, scoring, consequential and criterion-related validity. Gavora distinguishes content, construct, criterion validity and inter and external validity (Gavora 2008, 87-90)¹.

The previous authors suggest that the validity is complicated topic, on the other hand, Coombe provides a clear definition. “Test validity refers to whether or not the test appears to test what it is intended to test.” (Coombe 2012, 229). In other words, the test should test one certain item or items. What is tested should be clarified in advance or in the rubrics. For example, the final mark from a test, which tests only the listening comprehension, should not be influenced by the spelling. This means that listeners should obtain points for the right answer even if the listener has misspelt the word or a phrase. An example can be found in the case of gap-filling exercises which test the spelling and listening comprehension at the same time. For this reason, listeners might recognize the word but due to an error in the spelling, they may not receive the point.

I decided to assess listening comprehension. Since the exercises were done by means of e-learning, the validity was ensured. This is due to the fact that the correct answers were clearly chosen in advance and listeners were supposed to select the most suitable one in the case of multiple choice or to decide if the statement was truthful or false in the case of *True/False*. I wanted the listeners to focus on the listening itself and allow them to practice only listening and exclude any possible problems regarding the spelling. Even with this, there was an additional skill to listening, reading skill, because the listeners had to read the questions and four answers in the case of multiple-choice and.

¹ The text was translated from Slovak. The original version is Obsahová validita, Konštruktová validita, Kritériová validita, Interná a externá validita

5.1.2 Reliability

Reliability is another important term associated with practising and testing. It represents the part of the testing which should guarantee that the test ideally reaches the same scores regardless of the environment or situation. However, the test and testees can be influenced by many factors. These issues which can influence may be poor health, fatigue, lack of interest or motivation (Bachman 1990, 160). There may be other issues which can influence the tests such as the room where is the test conducted or even season. Buck adds “Reliability is concerned with how accurately the test measures” (Buck 2001, 195). This may be interpreted as to which extent the test was influenced by the factors which are not directly linked to the test itself. Reliability was one of the main considerations in designing the listening exercises. By administering the tests to 78 students, both bachelor and masters degree studies, there is sufficient data to evaluate whether the tests are reliable or not. However, some of the students claimed that some tests appeared to be easier than the others when I asked. This means that reliability is almost not possible to assess when dealing with people because each individual is unique.

5.2 Comparison of the recordings with the book

My main focus is on the course book *Complete Advanced* used at the TUL. The whole book forms the basis of three language courses which are taught in the third, fourth and sixth semester. *Complete Advanced* is supposed to prepare students for the final exam in practical language. I examined the listening recordings which are part of the book. The whole process was time-consuming since I spent over 11 hours of counting the words in all transcripts throughout the whole coursebook.

Altogether, there are two CDs which consist of 45 listening files. I did not make any distinction between the listening files which are part of the tests and listening files which are not devoted to testing. I focused on the length of the listening files and the number of words. I counted every single word and I treated contracted forms as two words. I classified the recording into several categories according to the type of listening – multiple matching, multiple-choice 3 options, multiple-choice 4 options, gap filling, true/false and *listening*. *Listening* is the type of exercise which does not resemble the typical exercises. Those are mostly used as an example of the oral exam. The timing of the recording was taken from the cover of

the CDs which are a part of the course book For a better overview see appendix A.

The longest listening file is 7 minutes and 6 seconds long with the total number of 630 words. I was surprised that despite my former belief that the longer the listening file is the higher the number of words it contains, I was proved to be wrong. The largest number of words 802 is in the listening which is 5 minutes and 19 seconds long. Thus there is a difference of 1 minute and 46 seconds and the difference between the word count is 172. This indicates that the speaker had to speak at a faster pace in the listening file which was shorter.

The shortest recording is only 38 seconds and has a word count of 43 words. It consists of three sentences instructing learner what to do during listening. In this case, I would like to stress again that I did not distinguish the recordings which are part of the exercises that are supposed to test students and the recordings which contain only the instructions for listening. I decided to include every listening file because it is my genuine belief that students practice listening even though they do not do any exercises.

Drawing a parallel with the listening files which I obtained from PU, we can see in table 1 that the longest listening file is 5 minutes and 53 seconds with a total number of 783 words while the longest listening file in the book is 7 minutes and 6 seconds with a total number of 630 words. This comparison is done with the recordings without the introduction provided by Karásková. Comparing the recordings with the highest number of words from the recordings, we can see that there is a difference of approximately 150 words between PU's recording and the book recording and the time difference is 1.17 minutes.

The shortest PU recording is 4 minutes and 7 seconds long with a total number of 664 words. While the shortest recording in the book is 38 seconds with 43 words. There is a large variety of exercises within *Complete Advanced* in terms of length and word count as there is a variety of length and word count in the chosen PU recordings.

As it can be observed, the length of the recordings varies. PU recordings stretch from 4 minutes and 7 seconds to 5 minutes and 53 seconds. As with the recordings in the book, the recordings show that the longest recording is 7 minutes and 6 seconds and the shortest recording is 38 seconds. The highest number of words in PU is 853 words and the highest number of the words from the book is 802. This shows that the difference is minimal word-wise.

To conclude the difference between the recordings in the book and recordings used for the thesis is quite prominent length-wise but word-wise it is minimal. In other words, a three minute recording may contain the same number of words as a five minute recording. This piece of research indicates that the length of the recording does not correspond with the word count. This varies whether the recording is from PU or from the *Compete Advanced*. This indicates that the speaker's speeches may vary in their pace.

5.3 The results of the exercises

Table 2: Number and scores of testees

| | Number of testees | Lowest score of testees | Highest score of the testees | Average score of the testees |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Multiple-choice 1 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 6.33 |
| Multiple-choice 2 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 8.75 |
| Multiple-choice 3 | 5 | 8 | 10 | 8.80 |
| True/False 1 | 63 | 0 | 10 | 7.42 |
| True-false 2 | 28 | 3 | 9 | 7.83 |
| True/False 3 | 34 | 4 | 10 | 8.55 |

Regarding the listening exercises which I created from authentic recordings, six videos were selected in which the speaker spoke clearly and not too quickly. Six exercises were created, one set for each recording: three were True/False and the other three were multiple-choice. Each exercise consisted of 10 questions regardless of whether the task was true/false or multiple choice. This gave the exercises consistency and allowed for some comparison. A student could obtain one point for each question. Even though these exercises were created for the purpose of practice, the students were asked to aim for at least seven points. A total of 63 second year full time students of practical language 3 as well as distant studies participated in the True/False listening. Multiple-choice tasks were designed mainly for the masters studies. The first True/False exercise, however, was done by all of the participants both undergraduate and graduate students of English. For the next two listening exercises, the students were divided into two groups. Table 2 represent the listening exercises, number of testees and their results. The third column shows the lowest score achieved, the fourth column shows the highest score achieved and the last column shows the average score for each exercise achieved by the testees. It is clear that number of testees influences the average of the exercise. It can be also seen that

the first multiple-choice appeared to be more demanding than the multiple-choice 2 and 3. True/False exercises appear to be more evenly difficult.

The first True/False listening exercises were submitted by 63 students. Only 9 participants were able to answer the quiz flawlessly and reached 10 points. One group of 15 participants answered the questions and reached 9 and one group of 15 participants reached 8 points. The fourth group consists of 14 participants. This group reached a score of 7 points. Only 10 participants scored six points and below. The average score for all the questions was 7.42². Question number 6 reached the highest score of 0.92. The stem of the question was *The cold war lasted for four decades* and the answer was false because the speaker gave a piece of information that it lasted five decades. Even if this question could probably have been answered by using general knowledge, the students were explicitly told in the listening instructions that they should choose the answer “according to the speaker”. Interestingly, question 10 was answered correctly only by 51 % of the participants. This could be because students answered the question according to their own views and were not focused on the words of the speaker. It is impossible to prevent this occurring since all listeners bring their prior knowledge to a listening exercises. Perhaps the only way to ensure that learners have minimal understanding of a topic is to choose exotic or unusual ones, such as a little known historical figure.

The second True/False listening exercise was submitted by 28 participants. The highest score of 10 was not reached by anybody. The highest score of this exercise was 9. The average of points in this test obtained by participants was 7.83. The most difficult question proved to be question 4. Only two participants answered this question correctly which gives a score of this question 0.09. Question 8 was answered correctly by all the participants. Judging by the results it would appear that students found this exercise more demanding. This could have been because the speaker spoke rapidly.

The third True/False was done by 34 participants. The lowest score was 4 which was reached by one testee. The highest score 10 was reached by 6 testees. The average of the exercise was 8.55. The most difficult question proved to be question 6. The score of the question was 0,61. The highest success rate was achieved by the testees in questions 3. This question was answered correctly by each

2 This means that average number of questions answered correctly was 7.42.

testee. For overview of the statements and question for True-false see appendix B.

All in all, the average scores of True-false tests range from 7.42 to 8.55. This means that the point deviation of the tests is 1,13. In other words, there was a high degree of consistency between the three listening tasks even though the topics were different, the length of recording varied from 13.46 minutes to 14.49 minutes in total. This would indicate that the listening tests were to a high degree reliable and valid.

The multiple-choice was designed for the students at the Master's degree. For this reason, the data which were obtained is limited since there are only 6 testees for the first multiple-choice, 4 for the second one and 5 for the third. Nevertheless, I managed to persuade 6 of my peers and 4 students at the undergraduate level to take the tests designed with graduate students in mind. Some of the students did more than one exercise so for clarity's sake, they will be treated as individual testees.

The first multiple-choice exercise was finished by 5 testees. Similarly, as the previous multiple-choice, the lowest score was 8 but the highest 10. The average of the test is 8.80. The most difficult question proved to be question 7 which reached an average score of 0.60. The easiest questions proved to be 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 which have the average score of 1. For the questions and possible answers see appendix C.

The second multiple-choice exercise was finished by 4 testees. The lowest score is 8 and the highest 9. Participants reached a total average of 8.75. The most difficult question proved to be question 10 with the success rate 0.25. Only one participant answered the question correctly. Questions 6 and 8 were answered correctly by 3 testees with the scores 0.75. The rest of the questions were answered correctly by all the testees. This proves that these tests were feasible for the students. For the questions and possible answers see appendix D.

The third multiple-choice exercises were given to 6 testees. The lowest score is 5 and the highest score is 7. The average of the scores is 6.33. The most difficult question proved to be question 8 with an average score of 0.17. Only one testee selected correct answer. This question concerning Brussels was explained in part 6. The scores were, otherwise, even. The highest success rate was achieved in questions 1, 2, 3 and 7. All of them reached on average 0.83. For the questions and possible answers see appendix E.

Unlike True-false listening exercises, multiple-choice do not provide a sufficient amount of data. For this reason, the results must be treated as an example. A wider measurement could show that the scores may be different. However, it can be observed that the score difference is considerably larger than it is in the case of True-False. The lowest average score in multiple-choice was 6.33 and the highest was 8.80. This makes the score gap of 2.47. The number of testees was more or less equal. This indicates that True-False were probably less demanding than Multiple-choice. This might be due to the nature of the exercises.

5.4 Language courses of Practical Language

Table 3: Courses of practical language

| | Practical language 1 | Practical language 2 | Practical language 3 | Practical language 4 | Practical language 5 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| The year and semester of studies | 1 winter semester | 1 summer semester | 2 winter semester | 2 summer semester | 5 summer semester |
| Number of classes for a subject weekly | 1 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1 | 1.5 |
| Time donation per week in minutes | 90 | 135 | 135 | 90 | 135 |

The practical language classes focus on the skills in the classes which should test students on their command of English. The structure simulates FCE and CAE exams thus students are tested via written tests and oral exams. The problem with the classes is that they are limited in a number. Table 3 shows practical language time

donation per semester. Practical language 1 and 2 are taught in the first year at the university. The practical language 1 (PR1) consists of one class per week which is 90 minutes weekly. Practical language 2 (PR2) has a donation of one and a half class per week which covers 135 minutes per week, however, it should be noted that the classes in PR2 are divided. One class is devoted to all the skills apart from writing. Writing is covered in the classes which are taught once per two weeks.

Practical language 3 (PR3) and Practical language 4 (PR4) are taught in the second year at the university. PR3 has the same time donation as PR2 which is one and a half class per week. PR4 covers only one class per week which is only 90 minutes as the time donation. Practical language 3 it is 135 minutes and for the PR4 only 90 minutes. It should be mentioned that only practical language PR1 and PR4 are taught by one teacher otherwise the rest of the subjects is divided between two teachers from which one class is devoted to writing skills. Thus the limited number of classes is a problem when we consider the amount of time which should be distributed among the other skills.

The last subject, practical language 5 (PR5), is taught in the third year and the time allocated to this course is 135 minutes. It is also divided between two teachers from one of whom holds a class focusing on teaching writing. Moreover, these classes end up with an exam comparable to the CAE exams thus they tend to be demanding in nature.

The major problem is that PR5 is in the last semester of the third year while PR4 is taught in the last semester of the second year. This shows that the first semester in the last year does not include any practical language classes. For this reason, students, in general, find the PR5 course demanding since they often do not have the opportunity to practise listening between the two courses.. Additional problems arise with the fact that not every class is devoted to the listening, which is, however, understandable and the coursebook used in the classes is not covered entirely.

6 Surveys

Two surveys were conducted for the research purpose. The first survey was distributed among the teachers of the English department who teach practical language or similar courses. The second survey was distributed among the students of the English department. I wanted to gain insight into the attitudes and habits of both the teachers and the students.

The surveys were prepared via Google Forms. This Google's utility enables a user to prepare professional surveys. Responses are automatically saved and evaluated. As a result, the person who conducts the survey obtains automatically generated results in a form of charts so the survey conductor does not need to create one's own. As an aid for the better orientation, I used pictures of each exercise so the teachers and students know exactly what type of exercise is being introduced. The samples of exercises were taken from *Complete Advanced* and from e-learning test. The only drawback of Google Forms is that one has to have English as the default language in order to have English text in the charts. Unfortunately, I did not know this and for this reason, there are Czech words in figures such as *odpověď*.

6.1 Survey for the teachers

1. Are you a native speaker of English?

5 odpovědí

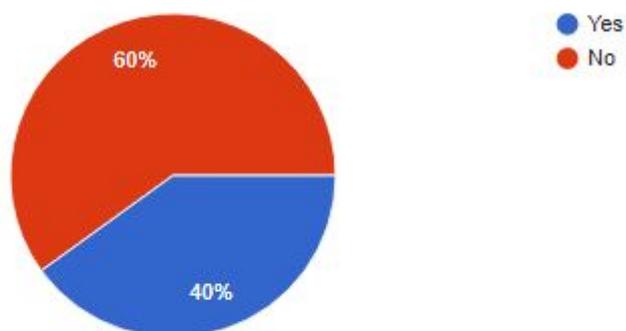


Figure 2: Native speaker

The survey for the teachers consists of 13 questions. I wanted to know the teacher's habits regarding listening and practising listening with their students in the classes. I therefore addressed selected teachers who teach practical language or similar courses. Five participants contributed in the survey from which two are native speakers and three are non-native speakers as it can be seen in figure 2.

2. In your opinion, how difficult is it for learners of English to master listening skills?

5 odpovědí

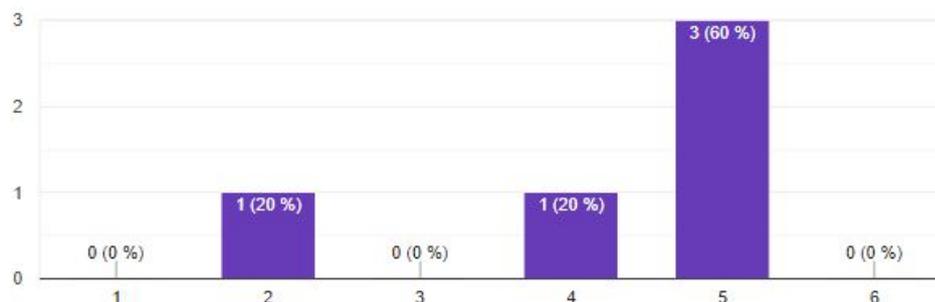


Figure 3: Difficulty of mastering listening skills

For mastering listening skills difficulty, I decided to choose the scale between 1 to 6 from which 1 is the easiest and 6 is the most difficult. Figure 3 depicts that one of the respondents believes that mastering listening skills is rather easy. One respondent believes that it is rather difficult and three respondents chose option 5 which may be considered difficult.

3. How important is it for learners to listen to the recordings provided by the course book?

5 odpovědí

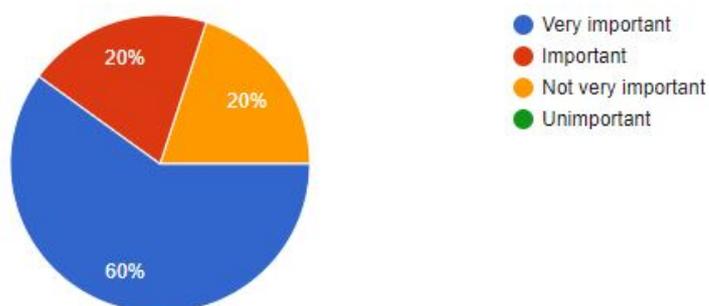


Figure 4: Importance of recordings from the course book

The next question considered the importance of listening to recordings provided by the course book. Figure 4 shows that 3 respondents believe that it is very important to listen to the recordings. One respondent believes that it is important and

one that it is not very important. None of the respondents chose the option *unimportant*. Base on this evidence, it is clear that each respondent gives a certain amount of importance to the coursebooks.

4. Which course book do you currently use?

5 odpovědí

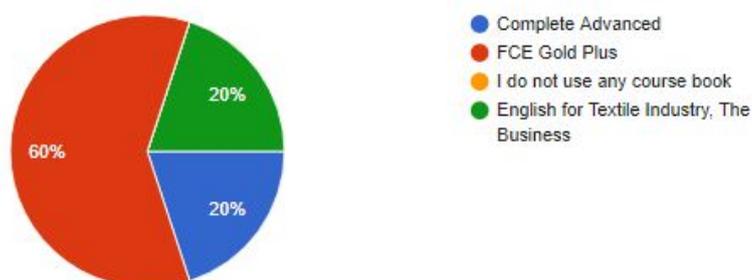


Figure 5: Course book

Figure 5 shows that three respondents use *FCE Gold Plus* as a course book, one *Complete Advanced* and one uses *English for Textile Industry and The Business*. In this thesis, *Complete Advanced* was used to draw a parallel with the prepared recording for this thesis, however *FCE Gold Plus*, *English for the Textile Industry and The Business* are not included. All in all, each respondent uses at least one course book.

5. How would you evaluate the overall quality of the listening content in the course book(s)?

5 odpovědí

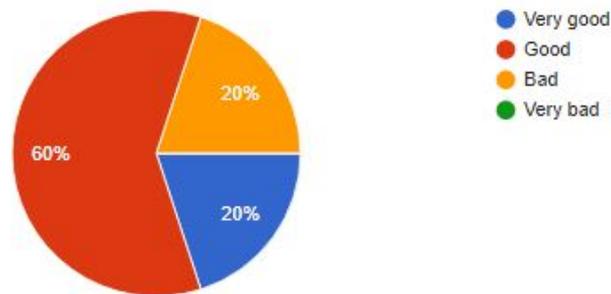


Figure 6: Content evaluation

The evaluation of the quality of the recordings is depicted in figure 6. Three correspondents believe that the overall quality is good. One respondent evaluates it as very good and one as bad.

6. Which activities are the most useful for learners who wish to improve listening skills?

5 odpovědí



Figure 7: Usefulness of activities

The next question concerns the activities which might be useful regarding the improvement of the listening skills. This question was made as multiple answers so the respondents could answer more than one item, however, there was a restriction which stated that they were allowed to choose only the three most important. As figure 7 shows, three respondents believe that the most useful is listening to a native speaker. Two respondents chose to listen to or watching films and series,

listening to course book recordings³ and listening to audiobooks. The rest of the answers, apart from listening to songs, were chosen by one respondent as useful.

7. During my classes I do:

5 odpovědí

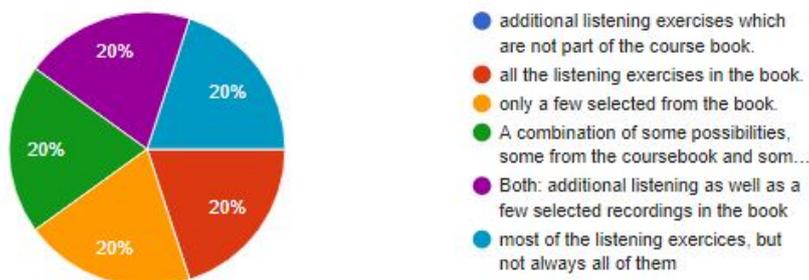


Figure 8: Classroom activities

The following question was to clarify what the respondents do with their students during the classes regarding the listening practice. Initially, there were three options which are depicted in figure 8 as dark blue, red and yellow. The rest of the answers were added by the respondents by the use of the *other* option. As it can be seen, each respondent uses a slightly different approach in the listening practice. Two answers given by the respondents are similar. The respondents use a combination of the course book and additional listening exercises. One respondent uses most of the recordings from the book. None of the respondents chose the option of additional listening exercises which are not part of the course book.

3 Unfortunately, this option is not visible in the chart because the previous option proved to be too long.

8. Do you do any additional listening activities during your classes to practise listening? If so, please specify.

5 odpovědí

| |
|---|
| no |
| I do my on listening comprehensions. I tell the students stories and ask them questions |
| Short clips from Youtube videos and Prager University videos. |
| I occasionally use a song that contains a grammar items that are being covered. |
| No |

Figure 9: Additional listening activities

The next question, if the respondents do any additional listening activities, was an open question. The respondents were asked to write a short answer. Figure 9 shows that two respondents do not do any additional listening practice in the classes. One of the respondents tells stories with subsequent questions. One respondent uses PU videos and the last respondent uses occasionally songs which contain the grammar items.

9. Do you give students any additional listening tasks for homework? If so, please specify.

5 odpovědí

| |
|--|
| no |
| Sometimes watching videos |
| Yes, students have to listen to selected PU videos. These videos are accompanied by a transcript and a quiz for comprehension. |
| No. |
| No |

Figure 10: Home assignment

The subsequent question was to find out if the respondents give any listening home assignment. Figure 10 shows that three respondents do not employ any listening tasks as a home assignment. Two respondents claim to use videos

10. How regularly do you do listening tasks with your students?

5 odpovědí

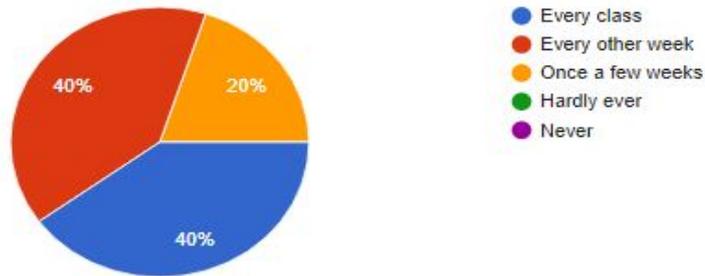


Figure 11: Listening task in classes

Figure 11 shows that two respondents use listening in the classes every class, two every other week and one respondent uses listening one a few weeks. None of the respondents chose the option hardly ever or never.

11. If you do a listening exercise in your class, how long (approximately) does the whole activity last? Please include giving instructions, any pre-listening task, post-listening etc.

5 odpovědí

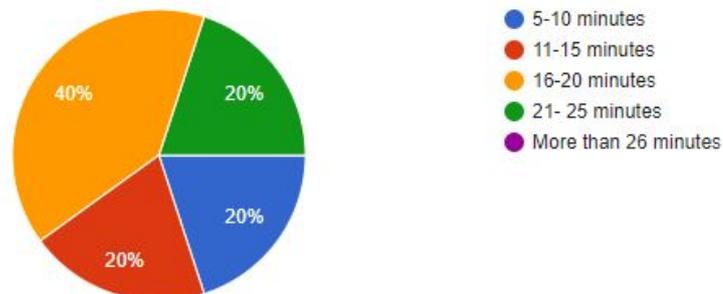


Figure 12: Activity duration

In addition, figure 12 shows the estimated time of the whole listening activity. As it can be seen, two respondents estimate that the activity lasts between 16 to 20 minutes. One respondent estimates that the activity lasts between 21 to 25 minutes. One respondent estimates that the activity lasts 11 to 15 minutes and the last respondent believes that the listening lasts from 5 to 10 minutes.

12. In your view, which exercise is the most difficult for your students?

5 odpovědí

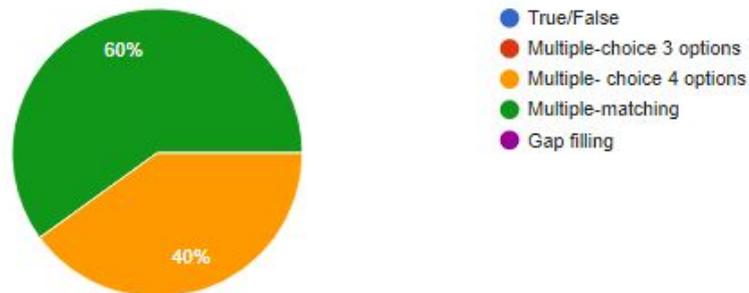


Figure 13: The most difficult exercise

Figure 13 shows the opinion of the respondents regarding the difficulty of exercises. As observed, the most difficult seems to be multiple-matching. This correlates with the general belief that these exercises are one of the most difficult. Two respondents believe that the most difficult is multiple-choice with four options.

13. Rate the difficulty of each exercise.

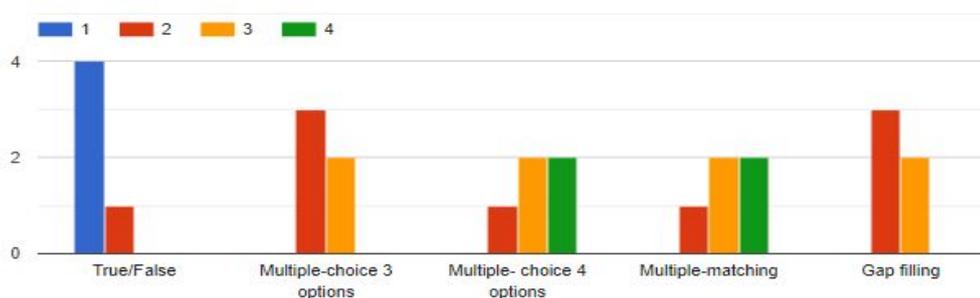


Figure 14: Exercise difficulty

As for the last question, the respondents were asked to evaluate the difficulty of listening tasks. The scale ranged from 1 the easiest to 4 the most difficult. Figure 14 shows the rating of each exercise. The True/False exercise was

evaluated by 4 respondents as 1 and one respondent as 2. Multiple-choice three options was evaluated by three respondents as 2 and two respondents as 3. Surprisingly, multiple-choice four options differ from multiple-choice 3 options. One respondent evaluated this as 2, two respondents as 3 and the other two respondents as 4. The same evaluation was selected in the case of multiple-matching. The last type of exercise, gap filling, was evaluated by three respondents as 2 and by two respondents as 3.

6.2 Survey for the students

1. Are you male or female?

66 odpovědí

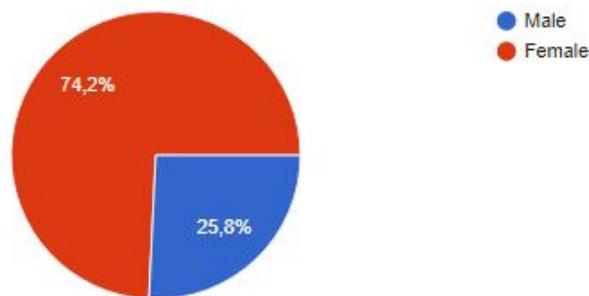


Figure 15: Gender

Survey for the students was answered by 66 respondents. Figure 15 shows that slightly above 74 % of the respondents are female and slightly less than 26 % are male.

2. How old are you?

66 odpovědí

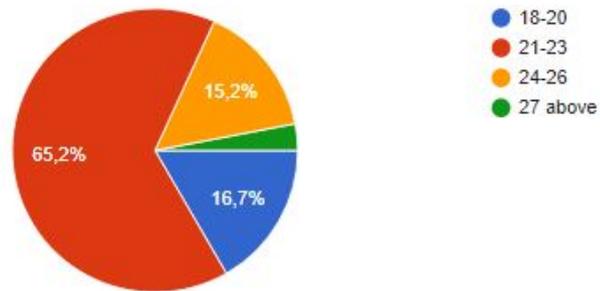


Figure 16: Age

Figure 16 shows that a majority of respondents are between 21 to 23 years. Next two groups are 18 to 20 years and 24 to 26 years. The smallest group consists of respondents 27 years and above.

3. How do you rate yourself regarding listening skills?

66 odpovědí

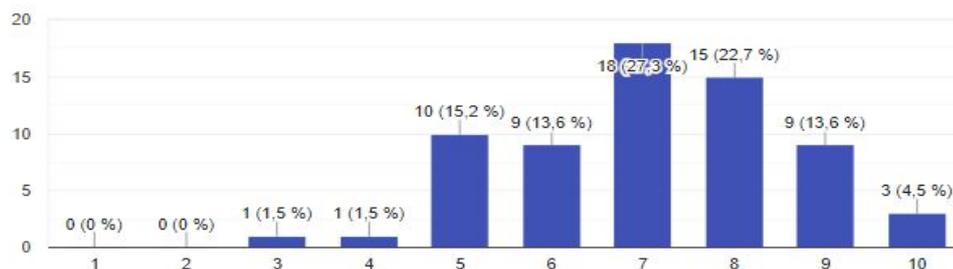


Figure 17: Listening skills rating

I wanted to know how the students evaluate themselves in listening proficiency. I used a scale 1 to 10 from which 1 is the worst and 10 is the best. As figure 17 depicts the majority of respondents regard their listening skills 7 to 8. Only nine people believe that their proficiency is 9 on the scale and three people believe that their proficiency is 10 on the scale.

4. What do you do to improve your listening skills?

66 odpovědí

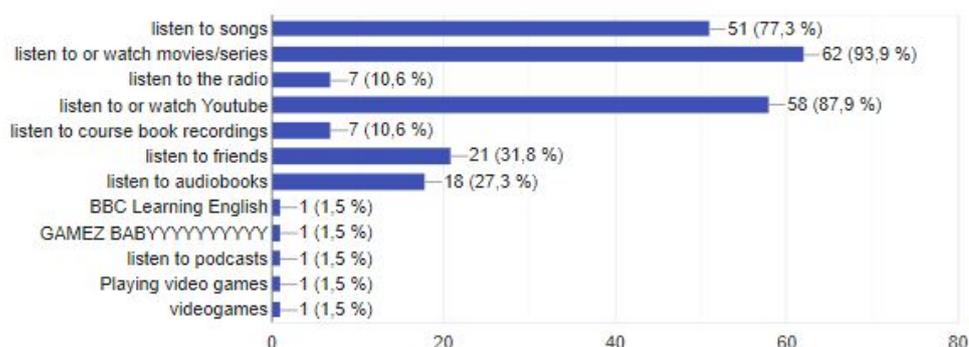


Figure 18: Additional listening activities

The next question focused on the students' habits to improve their listening skills. The respondents were allowed to choose multiple items from the list and to add any activity they do which is not on the list. In other words, each respondent was allowed to choose every item in the question if it were according to the respondent's belief.

Figure 18 shows that the majority of the respondents choose three main activities in practising listening: 77,3 % listen to songs (51), 93,9 % watch or listen to movies/series (62) and 87,9 % watch or listen to Youtube (58). Next group of habits consists of listening to friends (31,8 %) or audiobooks (27,3 %). I did not include video games as an option which was an error, however, three respondents added this option⁴.

4 I would like to apologise to the reader for the expression *Gamez Babyyyyyyyyyy*. Alas, I cannot influence the answer which was written by the respondents.

5. Which activities do you consider the most useful regarding listening practice?

66 odpovědí

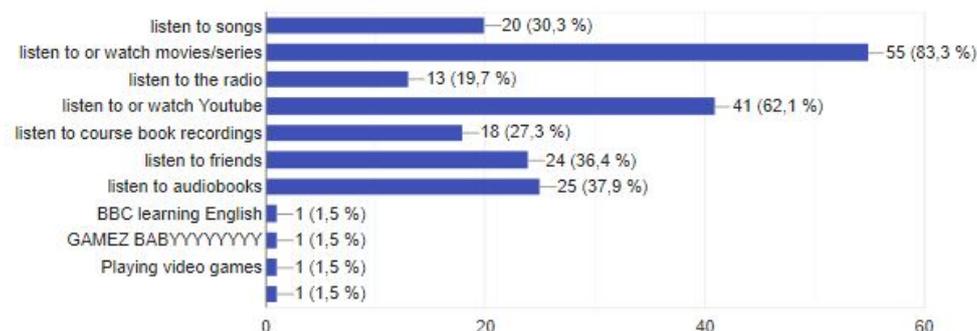


Figure 19: Activities usefulness

As for activities which are considered to be useful, figure 19 shows data which deviates from the previous chart. We can see that despite the habits of the respondents, fewer respondents regard listening to songs as a means of good practice (30,3 %). Watching movies or series reached similar value (83,3 %) as listening to or watching Youtube (62,1 %). 13 respondents believe that listening to the radio is beneficial but only 7 respondents do so. As for the audiobooks, 37,9 % respondents believe that audiobooks is a good means of practice but the figure 18 shows that only 27,3 % of respondents listen to audiobooks.

6. I find listening in Complete Advanced

66 odpovědí

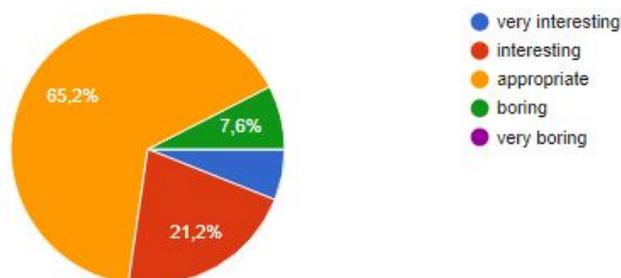


Figure 20: Book recordings interest

Next two questions were about the course book *Complete Advanced*. The survey participants had to decide whether the content in the book is attractive for them or is not. Figure 20 shows that the vast majority of the respondents (65,2 %) believe that the content is appropriate. 21,2 % of respondents regard the content as interesting, 7,6 % boring and 6,1 % very interesting.

7. The length of the recording is

66 odpovědí

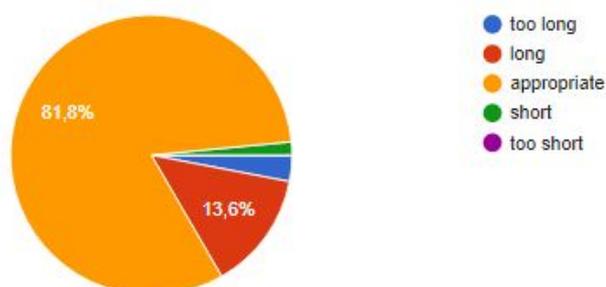


Figure 21: Length of the recordings

Figure 21 depicts an opinion considering the length of the recordings. Almost 82 % of the participants believe that the length is appropriate, 13,6 % thinks it is long, 3 % too long and 1,5 % short.

8. Which problems do you encounter during listening?

66 odpovědí

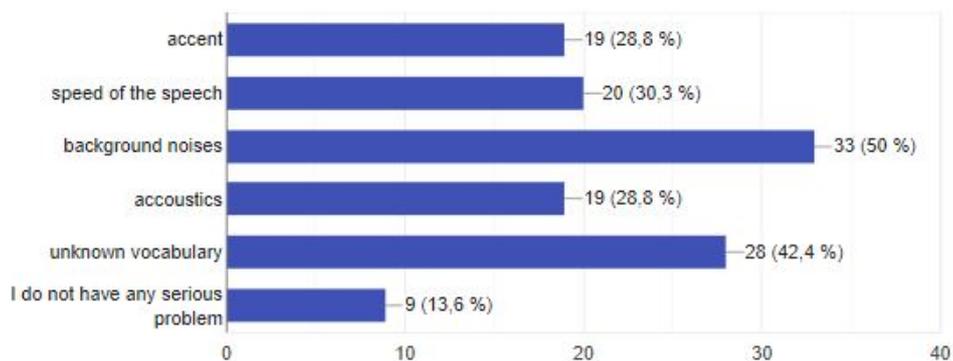


Figure 22: Difficulties while listening

The consequent question shows results regarding the difficulties of the respondents while listening. The respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers. Figure 22 presents several problems. The most prominent (50 %) is the background noise. There noises in the recordings used for the purpose of this thesis. When I was piloting the exercises, one of the attendees asked me if it would be possible to delete these sounds. Based on this, one can conclude that the background noises may indeed cause difficulties. 42,4 % of respondents find unknown vocabulary as a key factor which makes listening difficult. 30,3 % of the respondents claim that the speed of the speech can cause problems. 28,8 % of the respondents find accent and acoustics challenging. Only 13,6 % do not have any serious problem.

9. Which exercises do you consider the most difficult?

66 odpovědí

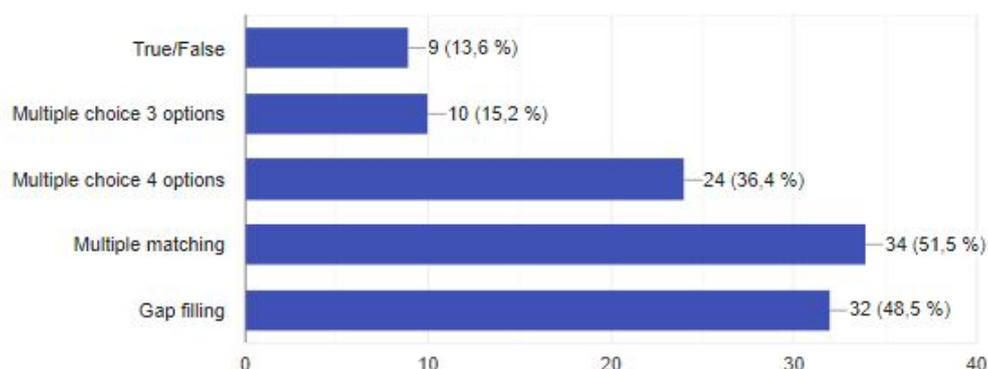


Figure 23: The most difficult exercise

As for the previous question, the respondents were allowed to select multiple answers. Figure 23 represents the most difficult exercises. 51,5 % of the respondents consider multiple matching as the most challenging exercise, slightly less 48,5 % consider gap filling as difficult. Surprisingly, 36,4 % believe that the most difficult is multiple-choice 4 options. Only 15,2 % have the impression that multiple-choice 3 options is the most difficult and lastly 13,6 % believe that True/False is the most difficult.

10. Rate the difficulty of the listening exercises.

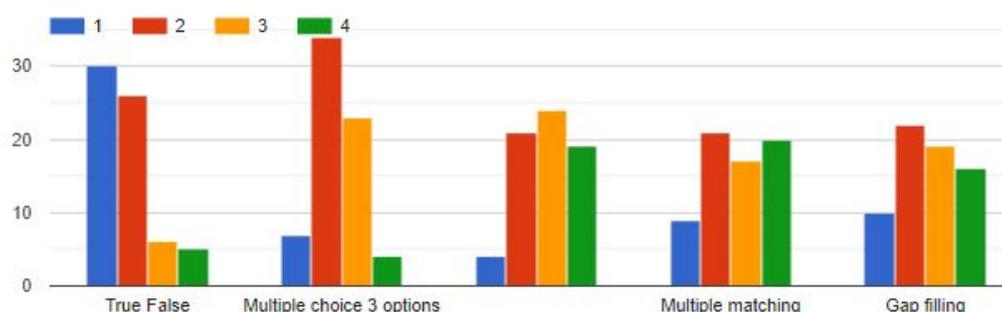


Figure 24: Exercise rating difficulty

The last question investigated the difficulty of each type of exercise. The scale was between 1 the easiest to 4 the most difficult. Figure 24 shows that 30 respondents believe that True/False is has the value 1. 26 respondents decided to

evaluate it as 2. Only 6 respondents think that the difficulty is 3 and the last 5 respondents believe that the difficulty is 4.

The charts show that multiple-choice 3 options is regarded as 1 by only 7 respondents. 2 by the majority (34 respondents), 23 respondents evaluated it with a difficulty 3 and 4 respondents evaluated this type of exercise as 4.

Multiple-choice 4 option provides different data. Unlike multiple-choice 3 options, the results are evener. 4 respondents believe that this type of exercise is 1. Only 21 respondents gave mark 2 which is a considerable difference from the previous exercise (34 respondents chose 2 for multiple-choice 3 options). 24 respondents evaluated it with 3 and 19 respondents consider evaluated it as 4.

Multiple-matching provides similar data as multiple-choice 4 options. 9 respondents believe its value is 1. 21 respondents decided to choose 2 as the mark. 17 respondents chose 3 and 20 respondents believe that it is 4. The last gap-filling shows that 10 people chose 1, 22 people think that it is 2, 19 people regard it as 3 and 16 respondents think that it is 4.

Based on this, we can see that multiple choice 4 answers exercises, multiple-matching and gap-filling are considered to be almost equally difficult. True-False resulted as the easiest. The second easiest is multiple-choice 3 options.

7 Conclusion

The thesis focuses on the use of authentic materials in practising listening. The first part of the thesis is the theoretical background, which includes the definition of the listening skills, authentic materials and e-learning as a means for distributing the listening exercises. This is followed by methodology where it is explained the means which were used for the paper. The last part is the practical part which consists of practise tests and surveys. The tests were distributed via e-learning. The second practical part was conducted among the teachers and students of the English department at the Technical University of Liberec with the use of surveys.

It is clear that listening is complex skill involving a multiplicity of skills which adds to its difficulty. It can be influenced by many factors, for instance, an organisation of topic or familiarity with the topic. Familiarity with the topic proved to a problem as one could see in the case of about communism. Another difficulty can be explicitness of the information. Generally speaking, the recordings for this thesis did not prove to be difficult, however, on the individual level, we can find testees who encountered difficulties. The input of the recordings did not constitute any serious problem for the listeners. There might also be a prominent problem with the speaker's performance or technical issues such as acoustics of the room or damaged recording. During the research, none of these problems appeared; however, it should be remembered that these problems can appear.

The authentic materials in the listening practise are a valuable asset for the teacher. Certainly this is the first time, to my knowledge, at least in recent years, that listening materials have been specifically created for students at the English department based on authentic materials. There is therefore great scope to develop the use of authentic materials in the teaching and testing of listening skills. I asked several students and their feedback was positive. Authentic language is therefore a welcome feature in a language classroom of advanced learners of English.

It must be said, however, that designing materials is not only demanding and time consuming but it requires cooperation between a Czech developer and a native speaker of English proficient in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Opportunities and perhaps even the motivation to develop own materials is understandably limited. Also, there are plenty of semi-authentic materials available.

Moreover, the level of English in the Czech schools might not reach sufficient level to. On the other hand, at the university level, it is a valuable asset for the teachers and students who can profit from the authentic materials. Students may consequently improve their language considerably. Both the students and the teachers can gain experience and a new point of view in studying a language.

The usefulness of the materials based on authentic text is large for the teachers and the students. The teachers may add new materials to their own materials and reuse them. Other teachers might gain inspiration to adopt a similar approach or share the materials. The students may appreciate contemporary topics if the teachers use the newest sources or, on the other hand, older sources which may not, otherwise, be made as exercises. The students can also find the newness and convenience of such materials as a useful asset.

One can conclude that the final value of the exercises is large. I gained experience and a new perspective regarding teaching listening. Generally speaking, the reactions of the testees were positive. This started a project which will be further developed in order to improve the quality of teaching at TUL.

I created six exercises in the practical part which were done by 66 testees. These exercises are compared with the course book *Complete Advanced*. Consequently, these exercises were distributed among the students who finished them. The results show that some of the questions were easier than the others. The results indicate that the majority of the students and the majority of the teachers consider the multiple matching and multiple-choice with four options as the most difficult. On the other hand, True/False exercises are considered to be the easiest by both parties.

The second part of the practical part consisted of the surveys for the teachers and the students. To conclude the survey for teachers, the respondents generally believe that listening is demanding to master and the course book is essential. It is precisely for that reason that I chose to focus on this listening skill in my thesis. Regarding the quality, the majority of the respondents consider the materials from the course book of good quality. As the most useful activity to improve the listening skills, the respondents believe that listening to a native speaker is beneficial as is watching films, videos on the internet or series. This is why I sought to use audio materials by and for native speakers and design listening exercises around these for

non-native speakers of English.

Some of the respondents include additional listening practice in their classes or provide listening practice as a home assignment. This is indisputably beneficial for the students. Regarding the exercises, the most difficult are considered multiple-choice with 4 options and multiple-matching. For this reason, more of these exercises ought to be included in the classes so the students feel more comfortable during the lessons; however, in the case of multiple-matching, it is difficult to develop these kind of exercises due to its nature.

It must be stated that the initial aim was to help students to improve their listening skills. It is hoped that these new exercises can form the beginning of a set of similar exercises based on authentic materials aimed at helping my peers to improve their listening skills. Having gained a considerable amount of experience in producing online materials for fellow graduates as well as undergraduates, my aim would be to continue some form of cooperation with those who worked with me on this project. Were this work to continue, then it will be possible over time to measure students' progress as regards their listening skills. At the moment, however, with only six exercises at hand, and only one semester to test them, it is not yet possible to determine progress or improvement. In order to successfully gain measurable data, longitudinal research ought to be conducted.

As for personal enrichment, I came to realise that the listening is far more complicated than I anticipated. I always wondered what it is that makes listening comprehension complicated and some tests infeasible to pass. I know now that occasionally it may not be because of insufficient level of listening skills but rather the nature of the recording or technical issues.

8 Future research

The topic is not exhausted and there are many many fields which could be further explored, for instance, analysis of stems of questions and their relation with the scores, analysis of a syntax of recordings, impact and usefulness of the exercises, deep analysis of validity and reliability of the tests, use of different sources as authentic materials, connection between auditory processing and the listening tasks. These items were not included in the thesis because it would be beyond the scope of the research. I would like to also continue developing the exercises with the cooperation of the native speakers.

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10 Appendices

Appendix A: Complete Advanced recordings

Appendix B: True/False questions and answers

Appendix C: Multiple choice 1

Appendix D: Multiple choice 2

Appendix E: Multiple choice 3

Appendix A: Complete Advanced recordings

| Type | Length | Number of words | Page |
|-----------------------------|--------|-----------------|------|
| Multiple matching | 3.27 | 588 | 9 |
| Listening | 1.07 | 172 | 15 |
| True/False | 1.14 | 200 | 15 |
| Listening | 2.50 | 364 | 18 |
| Multiple choice 3 options | 8.12 | 660 | 19 |
| Gap filling | 1.53 | 261 | 24 |
| Gap filling | 0.43 | 85 | 32 |
| True/False | 3.12 | 458 | 32 |
| Listening | 2.42 | 475 | 37 |
| Gap filling | 3.43 | 506 | 45 |
| True/False | 2.59 | 454 | 47 |
| Multiple choice 3 options | 8.06 | 707 | 53 |
| Listening | 1.40 | 221 | 58 |
| The recording was not found | 2.20 | 358 | |
| Multiple choice 4 options | 4.46 | 640 | 63 |
| Listening | 4.21 | 638 | 69 |
| Listening | 1.00 | 133 | 70 |
| Listening | 2.08 | Song | 74 |
| Multiple matching | 3.44 | 604 | 75 |
| Recording not found | 1.53 | 271 | |
| Multiple choice 4 | 4.43 | 713 | 85 |
| Listening | 0.57 | 71 | 86 |
| Listening | 0.38 | 43 | 86 |
| Listening | 3.27 | 564 | 88 |
| Listening | 1.09 | 163 | 88 |
| Multiple choice 3 options | 2.58 | 211 | 96 |
| Multiple choice 3 options | 2.45 | 208 | 97 |
| Multiple choice 3 options | 2.50 | 209 | 97 |
| True/False | 2.38 | 384 | 102 |
| Listening | 0.45 | 94 | 103 |
| Listening | 0.45 | 97 | 103 |
| Gap filling | 3.24 | 522 | 107 |
| Listening | 2.00 | 280 | 109 |
| Multiple choice 3 options | 7.06 | 630 | 119 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|------|-----|-----|
| Listening | 1.41 | 234 | 125 |
| Listening | 1.44 | 201 | 129 |
| Gap filling | 3.48 | 555 | 129 |
| Listening | 2.26 | 432 | 134 |
| Listening | 1.34 | 236 | 134 |
| Listening | 5.19 | 802 | 140 |
| Listening | 2.18 | 299 | 143 |
| Multiple matching | 3.04 | 441 | 150 |
| Multiple matching | 3.43 | 600 | 152 |
| The recording not foun | 2.19 | 341 | |
| Gap filling | 1.00 | 96 | 156 |

Appendix B: True/False questions and answers

| True/False 1 | Statements/Questions |
|---------------------|--|
| Question 1 | The speaker is currently a police officer. |
| Question 2 | The speaker has had a lot of experience being a police officer. |
| Question 3 | The speaker thinks police officers should be perfect. |
| Question 4 | Police officers face difficult circumstances every single day. |
| Question 5 | The speaker hopes that one day police officers will be perfect. |
| Question 6 | The speaker believes some activists try to persuade the public that the police are bad. |
| Question 7 | Speaker claims lack of respect towards the police is the reason why many black men have died. |
| Question 8 | The speaker advises people to do what a police officer says even if you don't want to. |
| Question 9 | According to the speaker, crime in some areas is increasing because there are fewer police officers there. |
| Question 10 | According to the speaker, police officers don't want to act because of fear of being killed. |
| True/False 2 | |
| Question 1 | According to the speaker, the communist government of the Soviet Union kept people from the truth. |
| Question 2 | According to the speaker, people in the Soviet Union were not aware of the lies in the press. |
| Question 3 | According to the speaker, most Americans are not aware that the media tells lies. |
| Question 4 | According to the speaker, the media in the US is biased. |
| Question 5 | According to the speaker, project Veritas is an organization which works for the major media. |
| Question 6 | According to the speaker, CNN has evidence that Russians influenced the 2016 presidential elections. |
| Question 7 | According to the speaker, all New York Times videos go on Facebook. |
| Question 8 | According to the speaker, Des Shoe, a New York Times editor, tried to discredit Obama and Hillary Clinton. |
| Question 9 | According to the speaker, Dean Baquet, executive editor of the New York Times criticised the speaker. |
| Question 10 | According to the speaker, the New York Times does not keep its own standards. |
| True/False 3 | |
| Question 1 | The Soviets and Americans never fought directly against each other. |
| Question 2 | The Cold War was a conflict between ideologies. |

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| Question 3 | The Cold War was like a "Third World War". |
| Question 4 | Roosevelt wanted to remove the Soviet leader at the Yalta Conference. |
| Question 5 | The expression "the Iron Curtain" was created by Winston Churchill. |
| Question 6 | The cold war lasted for four decades. |
| Question 7 | Nikita Khrushchev wanted to bury disagreements with the West. |
| Question 8 | The USA almost became a Communist country. |
| Question 9 | Communism was defeated mainly because some of the Western leaders strongly opposed it. |
| Question 10 | Communism failed because it was not properly put into practice. |

Appendix C: Multiple choice 1

| Question | Possible answers |
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| The speaker believes that | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Americans can't imagine what living in Europe is like. b. more bureaucracy creates more problems. c. it is super to have a national government of Europe. d. governments are like horror shows. |
| The speaker thinks that success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is simple. b. involves working without breaks. c. comes from hard work. d. means you have to find a job |
| The speaker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is a sports reporter. b. won't tell lies. c. dreams of having a job with NBC. d. plays football on Sunday nights. |
| During her first job she | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. learned skills needed for success. b. wasn't paid over-generously. c. didn't appreciate the manager. d. was a university student |
| A few years later | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. she ran an insurance company. b. she learned that you fail before you succeed. c. she failed to make good money as a telemarketer. d. she thought that a lot of people didn't like her. |
| When she was a waitress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. she found it hard to smile. b. expected to be shown the door. c. she learned to always be friendly. d. she often had bad days. |
| After finishing college, the speaker went to Los Angeles where she | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. went to visit relations. b. applied for seven jobs. c. got used to working hard. d. worked as a shop assistant. |
| In North Carolina she | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. aimed to be the best woman doing her job. b. decided to become the best professional in her field. c. became a talent show host. d. wondered if women can have anything to do with sports journalism. |
| When she got a job with CBS sports she | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. was not used to being in the public eye. b. thought the huge jump had been a mistake. c. made mistakes so that she could improve. d. saw that some of the public is honest and some dumb. |
| After leaving CBN Michele | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. discovered that the formula for success is to have a job. b. worked at ESPN for five years. c. worked at NBC for ten years. d. realized that you have to work hard to succeed. |

Appendix D: Multiple choice 2

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| The speaker believes that tolerance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. means disagreeing with other people’s opinions. b. is spoken about too much these days. c. cannot really be defined easily. d. has a dictionary definition which society agrees with. |
| According to the speaker, tolerance is also | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a cause of conflict b. something America should be built on c. a way to remove differences between people d. absolutely necessary for a healthy society |
| According to the speaker, The declaration of independence gives Americans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. greater tolerance towards non-Americans b. a way of removing the death penalty c. happiness d. certain fundamental rights |
| The speaker believes that the mainstream media is | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. does not tolerate homosexuals b. non-fair in its reporting c. is largely run by white people d. is full of Christian males |
| The speaker say that Americans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. are called names by those who disagree with them b. are becoming more racist c. should close the borders d. are xenophobic for putting up borders |
| The group “Antifa“ is given as an example of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. security agency b. main stream conservatives c. a potential danger d. tolerance |
| The speaker says that he | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. thinks he will be punished b. is hated by the media c. says what he thinks d. gluten intolerant |
| The speaker claims that political left | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. has the right to dictate people’s lives b. welcomes people who have a different opinion c. knows how people should live d. does not tolerate people who disagree with them |
| According to the speaker, conservatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. has evolved politically b. consists of ordinary people c. prefer eating ethnic food d. shouldn’t be taken at their word |
| The phrase „live and let live“ is | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a summary of the meaning of tolerance b. a slogan he has just found out c. believed by both the political left and right d. is a better definition of tolerance than that of the dictionary |

Appendix E: Multiple choice 3

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| The speaker believes that | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Americans can't imagine what living in Europe is like. b. more bureaucracy creates more problems. c. governments are like horror shows. d. it is super to have a national government of Europe. |
| The speaker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is now leader of the UK Independence Party. b. campaigned for Britain to leave the European Union. c. is a member of the British Parliament. d. represents the South of England as a member of the European Parliament. |
| He believes that | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a country should be able to decide its own laws. b. people should only live within the borders of their own country. c. Brexit is anti-European. d. Belgians are like EU bureaucrats |
| He thinks that the elites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. are out of touch with ordinary people. b. mainly studied sociology or engineering. c. don't work hard enough. d. should not have studied for college degrees. |
| The speaker says that he | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. he is anti-Europe. b. that Europe is a diverse place. c. people hijacked the European Union. d. that bureaucracy will stop growing |
| The European Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. represents the people of Europe. b. has more power than the European Parliament. c. cannot make its own laws. d. has got no real power. |
| The European Parliament | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. used to meet in Brussels but has now moved to Strasbourg. b. spends four days every month in Strasbourg. c. is building a new office in Strasbourg. d. moves to Brussels once a month. |
| Moving between Brussels and Strasbourg | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. costs more than €300 million every year. b. will be reformed in the future. c. benefits France economically. d. is something the 28 governments want to change |
| The United Kingdom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is planning to leave EU. b. feels like an island separated from the EU. c. has to sell 20 % of its fish to Brussels. d. once had a successful fishing industry. |
| The speaker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. believes that European nations should be free to trade among themselves. b. wants quite the opposite from Europe. c. ultimately won't put up with the French and Italians. |

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| | d. wants good relations between the French and the Italians. |
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