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**The role of lower secondary school coursebooks in ELT for learners'
listening skills**

Diplomová práce

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Prohlášení:

Prohlašuji, že jsem magisterskou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen prameny uvedené v seznamu literatury.

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Anotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Pavlína Horáková
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Název práce:	Úloha učebnic na druhém stupni základních škol pro poslechové dovednosti žáků
Název v angličtině:	The Role of Lower Secondary School Coursebooks for Learners' Listening Skills
Zvolený typ práce:	Výzkumná práce – zpracování primárních dat
Anotace práce:	Předmětem této diplomové práce je srovnávací analýza dvou vybraných učebnic Project třetí a čtvrté vydání používaných na druhém stupni základních škol a jejich přínosu pro poslechové dovednosti žáků. Práce se také zabývá významem poslechových dovedností pro osvojení cizího jazyka, typy poslechových cvičení a preferencemi učitelů a žáků ve výuce cizího jazyka
Klíčová slova:	Učebnice, poslechové dovednosti, poslechová cvičení, učitelé, žáci, 2. stupeň ZŠ
Anotace v angličtině:	The objective of my study deals with the comparative analysis of two selected coursebooks Project third and fourth editions, used in lower secondary schools and their contribution to learners' listening skills. The study also addresses the importance of listening skills for language acquisition, types of listening exercises and the teachers and learners' preferences in English Language Teaching
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Coursebooks, listening skills, listening exercises, listening activities, learners, teachers, lower secondary school
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Interviews with teachers Open questions for teachers Questionnaire for learners Rozhovory s učiteli Otevřené otázky pro učitele Dotazník pro žáky
Rozsah práce:	92 s.
Jazyk práce:	Anglický jazyk

Table of Contents:

Introduction

The English language belongs to the most important subjects of the school curriculum. Learners at basic schools are taught English from the second grade and nowadays it is quite usual to start learning English in the first grade or even earlier. The syllabus is designed to provide learners with language skills to be able to communicate in the language, discuss simple topics, be acquainted with foreign-language culture, learning tolerance to foreign nationals and communication with them.

Searching for teaching materials, a coursebook is still a fundamental source of school language teaching. It seems easy to see all the advantages that a coursebook offers to a teacher or a learner. A good coursebook assists teachers with providing a well-thought-out preparation and can help learners by giving material for revising, and a belief that they are improving their knowledge with passing units. Proceeding on the assumption that a coursebook plays a major role in the education system, the aim of my study is to find out if it is concurrently a supportive element of the teaching/learning process by comparing teachers and learners' views of the available materials.

Following from my own experience, as a student at grammar school in 1980's, English textbooks written in the L1, were commonly used as grammar-teaching material, leaving students to practise English through writing and reading skills. The current English Language Teaching (ELT) introduces a different strategy, encouraging teachers not to teach language skills separately, taking into a consideration a proportional representation of all four skills, when selecting a coursebook for their learners. TOEIC tests, providing a connection between each two of these skills lead to the claim that receptive skills are essential skills, affecting the most central and important parts of communication. According to the tests, the process of producing more advanced speaking and writing, is determined by the gradual growth of receptive skills from the very beginning of the language learning. Following from this, the first chapter deals with one of the receptive skills - listening compared with hearing, and understanding the role of listening in language proficiency development.

The next chapters discuss listening activities in coursebooks generally, aiming to identify which types of activities should be the focus of further research. This evaluation will specifically target the selected coursebooks 'Project, Third Edition' and 'Project, Fourth Edition' which are the subjects of this study.

In addition, a questionnaire survey is conducted among learners, focusing on their views regarding the use of coursebooks for developing listening skills in English lessons at lower secondary schools. The analysis of this survey forms part of the practical section of this study.

Furthermore, an analysis is conducted to examine listening activities in both coursebooks and compare their effectiveness for teaching and learning listening skills in lower secondary schools.

Interviews with teachers are conducted to comprehend their preferences and identify their strategies in teaching listening skills.

There are three research questions which are to be answered:

What is the relative weight of listening skill activities, in terms of the number of pages in selected lower secondary school coursebooks, as compared to other language skills? Answering this question allows for a concrete measurement of the listening skill's prominence in the coursebook compared to other language skills.

What are the prevalent types of listening activities and exercises, included in selected coursebooks? The research identifies the types of listening activities and exercises that are frequently included in the selected coursebooks and analyses their prevalence.

What are the preferences of English language teachers and learners, regarding teaching materials in selected coursebooks? The study can highlight trends in educational listening materials, specifically in lower secondary school coursebooks. It can determine what works well for teachers and their learners in terms of listening activities.

How do learners and teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of listening in their lessons? This research is aimed at exploring the experiences of both learners and teachers regarding teaching and learning listening skills.

1 Communicative competence relevant to listening skills in ELT

Learning a new language is a complex journey, influenced by different ideas about how we acquire languages. One important theory by Krashen (1982) suggests that we learn languages both consciously, by studying them, and unconsciously, through exposure and practice. This text explores the difference between simply hearing a language and actively listening to it, which is a skill we can develop over time. Listening plays a big role in our everyday communication and it helps us become better at speaking and understanding languages.

1.1 Second language acquisition

Based on Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, learners gain their experience of any language in the same way as with their mother tongue through their own efforts, and together with their ability and behaviour (Solak, 2016, p. 31). According to Krashen (Krashen 1982, cited by Raju and Joshith, 2018, p. 180), language skills become more advanced by '*learning and acquisition* 'when learning is the knowledge, focusing on the system of a language, requiring learners' efforts *'consciously'* and acquisition is learners' skill to absorb a language '*subconsciously* ', just by using it for diversity of purposes. It seems that the second and the first language acquisition are similar but not in every detail. It is assumed that if language comes to learners naturally, they can do learning easily and well, and concurrently, if a project, time, knowledge, valuable and useful ideas are put in their learning, learners can produce relevant information to make it succeed. They are supposed to obtain language input of a higher level than their ability is to be motivated sufficiently. To get the acquired knowledge, they must do different sorts of language learning such as *'reading books, watching the video, conversation with natives* and *listening in the target language '(*Raju and Joshith, 2018, p. 180).

1.2 Hearing compared with listening

Listening and hearing are distinct processes. Hearing is often characterized as a passive, natural and a primary physical phenomenon. In contrast, listening encompasses both a physical and mental aspects, requiring active engagement, and it is a skill that can be acquired and refined (Solak, 2016, p. 30). Among our language skills, listening takes the lead, constituting a substantial 45% of our daily communication efforts, and remarkably, it doesn't demand years of formal training. Speaking follows closely behind, consuming about 30% of our daily

communication time and it usually necessitates one to two years of formal training (Solak, 2016, p. 31). The art of listening, which is a receptive skill, is the beginning of human language development. The journey of learning to listen to the target language becomes a transformative power which lifts one's language proficiency up. The complicated parts and details of sound, rhythm, intonation, and a stress within a language can only be absorbed through the act of listening. To grasp all the slight differences in meaning and sound that are unique to a particular language, one must cultivate their listening skills. As we become completely involved in the collection of sounds and noises that we can hear in a particular area of a spoken language, our journey to improve other language skills and at the same time to build confidence becomes smoother (Renukadevi, 2014, p. 59-60).

1.3 Exploring the Nuances of Listening Comprehension in Language Acquisition

Working with listening material, learners usually feel very frustrated when finding difficulties in their understanding. They are convinced that not being successful at listening activities means automatically having problems in their ability of making themselves understood. For many second language (L2) learners, particularly those who are less proficient in the language, listening often proves to be the most challenging skill in English (Renandya & Farrell, 2010, p. 52-59). In classes learners are usually exposed to recorded listening material twice or more times to be understood better, but a natural conversation never gives the same experience to them. Experience with a real conversation makes them react in a spontaneous way, accept information at a fast rate without possibility of repeating the same speech (Ur, 2012, p.106). Ur (2012, p. 106) states that listening is to prepare learners for the real world in which target language is different from recorded listening material in coursebooks, not using informal English language and not planned but produced in real conversations. Moreover, making a dialogue you can see your counterpart, both experiencing a real situation and knowing a thing about the topic of your discourse, which is very helpful for your understanding. Although limited vocabulary can lead to obstacles to a good grasp of listening, we as teachers should not refuse to allow learners to have the opportunity of experiencing '*visible speakers and situational contexts'* (Ur, 2012, p. 102-103).

In the Section 5.2 of the CEFR 2001, can be found descriptor scales that outline various facets of communicative language competence, which are categorized into three key domains: 'Linguistic competence, 'Pragmatic competence' and 'Sociolinguistic competence'. It is essential to emphasize that these aspects are inherently interconnected in the application of language and they do not exist as independent 'components' that can be detached from one another (CEFR, 2001, p. 129). This scale concerns the learner's ability to choose an appropriate expression from all the things that the learner is able to do. As the learner's competence increases, this skill becomes reliant on associative patterns such as colocations and lexical phrases where one expression naturally leads to another (The CEFR, 2001, p. 130) There is a fundamental concept in language proficiency for the levels A1-B1 which is defined as *'familiarity of topics'* that evaluates the learner's comfort level with a range of topics. At lower A1 level it focuses on basic, everyday subjects while at B1 level (intermediate stage) the learners are expected to be familiar on a wider range of topics and are to be able to express themselves coherently (CEFR, 2001, p. 132-133).

2 Listening strategies

Exploring the nuances of effective listening strategies, the text focuses on interactive relationship between top-down and bottom-up approaches in comprehension and how learners adjust their listening abilities according to particular situations and objectives. As a component of both approaches is learning of vocabulary or complementary activity 'reading-while-listening' that support the overall development of listening skills. The chapter also deals with intensive and extensive listening which refer to different types of listening practice.

2.1 Intensive listening compared with extensive listening

To enhance learners at listening skills, their studying happens in two ways, both intensive and extensive listening while the former is produced during teaching by their teachers, the latter is done by and for themselves (Harmer, 2001, p. 208). Both these ways of listening, mixed together, offer learners activities that are needed in order to be exposed to different voices from their teacher and a chance of taking in various spoken ways of English (Hammer, 2001, p. 230). When using intensive listening material, teachers are to be ready to activate learners to be involved in a listening activity through which they concentrate on their learners' listening skill. The teacher's aim is to develop learners' correct habits of pronunciation, get them accustomed

to various situations, providing them with used listening texts, and help learners with their self-assurance while making a practice (Harmer, 2001, p. 231). Guiding learners through listening difficulties, teachers usually use intensive listening which occurs purposely. Extensive listening refers to learners' choice what they enjoy listening to or where or when they listen to it, having a large variety of listening material in which they are engaged and by which they are motivated with or without any effort of their teacher. The aim of the listeners does not really mean to follow every single word or get to every detail, but they listen for meaning, not realizing any intended growth, but learners' new vocabulary. Getting pleasure from their listening of movies, live lectures or videos published via internet, listeners improve their understanding which occurs incidentally (Ur, 2016, p. 29).

2.1.1 The Significance of Intensive Listening in Language Learning and Teaching

Speaking about intensive listening, the listening text is useful for learners for a particular purpose to get an advantage of studying the small features of the text. Analysis of the text help learners to understand the form of a language, the different sections that are contained in the text or a particular type or style of the text (Ur, 2012, p. 28). Listening material serves teachers as a source for further work, providing learners a lot of opportunities for studying, completing tasks, making dialogues and conversation work. This kind of listening occurs in the classrooms and language laboratories where teachers, pointing to the areas of interest, help learners cope with listening difficulties (Harmer, 2001, p. 230-231). The teachers' role with these activities is irreplaceable as they are to engage their learners in listening work by giving them tasks which create learners' interest, providing occasional questions to check learners' comprehension or giving them support for listening out for a gist or details. Learners need to know how to omit nonessential details or how to get to the general meaning of a text. Setting tasks before a piece of listening is a crucial part of listening work as it helps learners stimulate their previous understanding the subject which they are to work with. Moreover, one of the things, having a great influence on learners' comprehension, is a pre-listening activity when learners predict the topic (Ur, 2012, p. 106-107). What has been mentioned so far is that intensive listening, taking place inside a classroom, plays an important role in learning and teaching this skill, offering learners to work with assistance of their teacher who is to encourage their enthusiasm for listening work and help learners succeed in dealing with listening difficulties.

2.1.2 Exploring Benefits of Extensive Listening in Second Language Acquisition

Regarding extensive listening, it is very beneficial to learners' studying the second language. It attracts their attention and uses all abilities of their knowledge as learners themselves can decide which thing they want out of the available material. Using this material can happen where learners wish or need as it usually brings them not only a delight of learning but at the same time a lot of experience coming out of a collection of texts on different subjects which learners have chosen. Not becoming involved in this learners' listening, teachers are expected even so to motivate learners for this kind of learning and recommend them a possible choice of material which is suitable for extensive listening even if it depends on the learners themselves which preference they give. Sometimes, they need a prod by their teachers, giving learners explanations why extensive listening is profitable for them (Harmer, 2001, p. 228-229). What learners can improve by extensive listening is an ability to get used to fast flow of words in speech, which is possible to train, a skill to get to know the words which they hear because they have seen them or heard them before, an ingenuity to recognize the marks of these words or to become familiar with tendencies of spoken English and also an improvement of all the other language skills as reading, speaking or writing as they are exposed to *'higher and deeper'* levels of English (Renandya and Jacobs, 2016, p. 6-7). Related to extensive listening, learners can dramatically improve their language comprehension while listening for joy not realising at all that their learning happens random although their teachers are not present but ready to help with suitable material for this kind of listening. To sum up, intensive listening involves focused analysis of texts in classroom settings guided by teachers, while extensive listening allows learners to freely engage with diverse materials, enhancing comprehension and language skills. It suggests that both intensive and extensive listening provide learners with valuable material that enhances their comprehension.

2.1.3 Top-down and bottom-up approaches

The concepts of bottom-up and top-down processes originated in computer science and later became part of linguistics. When learners focus of decoding on phonemes, syllables, words, phrases and sentences, they employ a bottom-up strategy. Conversely, if they rely on context, previous knowledge such as the topic, genre, cultural cues or other information stored in their *'long-term memory'*, they employ a top-down strategy (Solak, 2016, p. 35).

Listeners use the top-down process to anticipate the likely content of the incoming information and understand how individual pieces contribute to the overall context. To promote this approach, teachers present on-topic pictures, outline event sequences or provide learners with key words before listening activities, which allows to hit learners' former knowledge to compensate unfamiliar vocabulary. This method benefits learners lacking information about the subject. Before listening activities, listeners are equipped with flashcards, photographs, or images closely related to the topic or situation, increasing participation, refining listening skills and minimizing the effects of limited vocabulary (Solak, 2016, p. 36).

2.1.4 Top-down Listening Strategies in Language Comprehension

The skills that learners employ, often vary based on the specific purpose of their listening. Top down strategies in listening comprehension are characterized by a learner's approach. The effectiveness of these strategies depends on the learner's background knowledge relating to the subject matter, comprehension of the listening context, familiarity with the text type and linguistic competence (Renukadevi, 2014, p. 61).

First, listeners can grasp the main idea of a conversation without focusing on every detail, which is about understanding the overall meaning without analysing each information from the speaker. This type of listening uses top-down processing for a broader understanding of the situation. Secondly, listeners can comprehend spoken words rapidly because they use their own mental frameworks to realize quickly what is said. This helps them process the information better as it goes along. Thirdly, listeners often employ guessing as a strategy to comprehend conversations, particularly after identifying the subject of the spoken text. They may attempt to predict upcoming content or make assumptions based on what they have partially heard. This involves applying their existing mental frameworks to make sense of the information. Subsequent listening serves to confirm if their expectations match the actual events, based on learners' past experience (Harmer, 2001, p. 201-202).

2.1.5 Effective Listening Strategies: Top-down vs Bottom-up Approaches

Conversely, bottom-up strategies involve relying on the text for comprehension. In this approach, learners use their linguistic knowledge, such as understanding the combination of sounds, words and grammar in the message, to grasp the overall meaning. These strategies focus on paying attention on specific details during listening and recognizing patterns of word order

(Renukadevi, 2014, p. 61). In certain instances, learners engage in attentive listening when they are presented with a specific information, such as an address or telephone number. Similarly, in environments like airports, listeners adopt a concentrated listening approach to absorb all the details. Unlike listening for the overall meaning, there are occurrences where learners turn their attention to spoken content to extract specific details. For instance, focusing on the news when the particular topic is discussed, all the other information is omitted (Harmer, 2001, p. 202).

These tactics assist the learners in understanding the ideas by engaging in processes such as identifying the main idea, making prediction, filling in the information to make correct interpretations, or summarizing the information from the auditory input. Listening comprehension is not limited to these processes but it is a conversation where learners use what they already know and apply their language skills to make sense of what is said (Renukadevi, 2014, p. 61). Effective listening involves employing various strategies, including top-down and bottom-up approaches, depending on the specific purpose of listening. These strategies help listeners to comprehend spoken language by focusing on meaning, making predictions, and using linguistic knowledge and mental frameworks. Listening comprehension is a process where learners actively engage with auditory input to understand and interpret information.

2.2 Teaching vocabulary through listening

Lessons in listening comprehension emphasize the importance of vocabulary acquisition within communicative contexts. In English language teaching, managing vocabulary in listening activities is crucial for comprehension.

2.2.1 Balancing Vocabulary and Comprehension

Specifically, lessons in listening comprehension serve as a means to teach aspects of grammar and provide a context for introducing new vocabulary within the context of communicative discourse (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 70). Learners' ability to understand comes from the assumption that learners need to be familiar with at least half of the words in the text which they hear or listen to, otherwise their efforts do not bring any proceeds which make comprehension possible (Harmer, 2001, p. 203). According to the new facts about how much you must be familiar with vocabulary to be able to comprehend any part of a text, information even says ,*between 95 % and 98 %* '(Ur, 2012, p. 63), which might certainly discourage a lot of learners. Nevertheless, learners do not necessarily need to actively employ every vocabulary

word present in a listening passage. They play a significant role in helping listeners 'comprehension but not all the words may need to be integrated into the learners 'active vocabulary later on (Ur, 2012, p. 65). Ur (2012, p. 103) states that learners are capable to comprehend the text, containing more advanced vocabulary than their capacity of vocabulary includes, for that reason more difficult listening texts for learners in ELT classes are required to be enough challenging (Ur, 2012, p. 103). It implies that learners need to know half of a message to comprehend it although they can understand even more advanced vocabulary, not necessarily having belonged to their active vocabulary then.

2.2.2 Vocabulary Management in ELT

One of the previous statements suggests that learners' 50% vocabulary must exist as a process of getting ready for dealing with listening difficulties. Yet, offering all unknown vocabulary before any listening activity is not advised as learners give up the possibility of becoming better in their demand for comprehension. Harmer (2001, p. 203) puts stress on *‚a common-sense solution'* of teachers to decide how much vocabulary is needed to pre-teach. A good reason for pre-teaching vocabulary can be a better chance of learners to be involved in preparation for a listening activity, but to the contrary, teachers should not take learners away from the chance of struggling through unknown words themselves (Harmer, 2001, p. 203). The problem is with '*word recognition problems'* here which means that even if learners know vocabulary, it is not easy for them to recognize it while listening as the words are mixed with others, making harder acknowledge the edges of the words. For that reason, it is important to lower the quantity of unknown words (Renandya and Jacobs, 2016, p. 6-7). It implies listening lessons help in grammar and vocabulary acquisition, emphasizing comprehension over active word usage, not necessarily needed to actively use every word encountered. Teachers balance pre-teaching vocabulary, offering learners support to tackle unfamiliar word independently as recognizing unknown word in speech can be challenging, as well as the importance of minimizing the number of unknown words introduced to learners.

2.2.3 Reading-while-listening

Simultaneous reading and listening activities are one of the six principles of *'Implementing Extensive Reading and Extensive Listening'* programmes in ELT. Teachers are advised to promote simultaneous reading and listening among students as it has some obvious benefits. It

serves as a crucial support mechanism, particularly helping lower-level learners who struggle to identify unfamiliar words by connecting spoken words with their equivalents. that will thus strengthen their comprehension skills (Chang, 2011 cited by Renandya and Jacobson, 2016, p. 10).

2.2.4 The Benefits of Reading-while-listening technique

Reading-while-listening is a language learning technique used by researchers in the field of second language acquisition. It aims to assist learners in improving both their listening and reading skills. Many learners struggle to comprehend spoken or written content, especially when faced with unfamiliar words or fast speech rates. In listening tasks, slower comprehension is often due to the rapid pace of speech. Similarly, when reading in a second language, learners may encounter difficulties understanding the overall meaning of a text when encountering unknown vocabulary. Additionally, poor reading fluency can result in incomplete comprehension, particularly for struggling readers. However, if learners can automatically and fluently recognize words, they can focus more on understanding the text as a whole rather than solely on word identification (Asrimawati, 2020, p. 214).

Learners face difficulties when trying to understand what they hear, especially in recognizing spoken words and quickly analysing information. Even though they struggle with these challenges, researchers suggest teaching advanced thinking skills and strategies for better understanding to overcome listening problems. Their studies have led to adding activities that improve listening skills into modern language textbooks. These activities help learners become aware of listening strategies, develop their own, and guide them in practicing and using these strategies. However, making sure that these activities work well requires a lot of effort and organization, which can be challenging for teachers in terms of understanding theories, choosing strategies, arranging activities in order, putting different parts together, and finding enough time. Some educators criticize that focusing too much on teaching strategies might forget how important it is to practice, which is really crucial for learning listening skills in language (Renandya and Farrell, 2010, p. 54-55).

3 Well-suited coursebooks

3.1 Coursebook design and integration in ELT

This chapter deals with the role of coursebooks in the Czech educational system, specifically how they align with the national syllabus and curriculum framework. I examine key aspects of international coursebooks for General English and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). including learners' needs and teachers' concerns and the process English teachers undergo when assess coursebooks. I will discuss the numerous advantages offered by quality coursebooks and explore opportunities to enhance their effectiveness through the use of additional instructional materials.

The predominant focus of major international coursebooks appears to be on two distinct teaching environments as 'General English' within English -speaking countries and 'English as a Foreign Language' (EFL) in regions where English is not the primary language. These standardized coursebooks which are intended for use by EFL learners and teachers in different countries and regions around the world are created by major publishing companies (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 18). Based on a survey conducted among General English teachers and learners, it is clear that the learners have several key needs. The main concern for the learners is improving their language skills, especially speaking and listening in everyday situations as they recognize the importance of English as a global language. Another significant reason for the learners is their desire to enhance their job opportunities by becoming fluent in English. Finally, they are also interested in enriching their vocabulary and strengthening grammar as they feel that their English proficiency is insufficient and that they make mistakes while communicating in spoken or written English (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 18).

In the same survey, General English teachers identified several major issues with General English materials which are the presence of boring and uninteresting texts, lack of authenticity in many of them, not sufficient preparation of learners for real-life situations through the text and activities, which are not to captivate the interest of foreign learners, a perception of cultural bias towards a specific demographic like white, middle class and British, grammar exercises not being closely tied to the texts, too many activities to complete or following a predictable and unvarying pattern or a structure, which can lead to lack of creativity in learning experience (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 21).

On the other hand, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and their teachers appear to be interested in texts that talk about everyday situations in the UK or the USA. However, they often feel that the texts are not directly related to their own lives. According to international teachers, coursebooks do not accurately represent the world in which EFL learners live and they are to contain topics that are more connected to the learners' own experiences and more engaging texts that would make them think (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 22). Some criticism arises from the fact that global coursebooks may not always address the specific needs and interests of learners in different regions and cultural contexts. They might prioritize content related to English speaking countries like the UK or the USA, which can be less engaging for learners from other parts of the world. Additionally, global textbooks are accused of perpetuating stereotypes or not adequately representing the diversity of cultures and experiences of EFL learners (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 22). It is crucial coursebooks match the learners' knowledge and interests, yet they acknowledge criticism that they may not always meet the diverse needs of learners in different places, showing stereotypes or overlooking cultural diversity.

3.1.1 Coursebooks and national curricula

Coursebooks are chosen in alignment with the national syllabus, in the Czech Republic 'The Framework Educational Programme,' corresponding with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which is fundamental (Ur, 2012, p. 201).

A high-quality coursebook is to correlate with curriculum documents, particularly the Framework Educational Program. This means that a coursebook for basic schools will include content defined in the Framework Educational Program for Basic Education and will meet the expected outcomes.

According to Průcha (1998), there is a brief description of a coursebook in the given systems:

A coursebook as a component of the curriculum project.

A coursebook as a part of a set of didactic resources.

A coursebook as a type of school didactic texts.

(Průcha, 1998, p. 14)

It is a common practice for coursebooks in many basic schools in the Czech Republic to serve as the foundation of the school curriculum.

3.2 Flexible Approaches to Coursebook Use in ELT

One way to address the coursebooks, people see in them, is not to use them at all and instead take a self-guided *'DIY approach'* to learning (Harmer, 2001, p. 304). Teachers can always modify or adjust the teaching materials they use in their classes, whether they are exercises directly from coursebooks or exercises from the internet, to better meet the needs of their learners or the given situation. For *'the DIY approach'* to succeed, Harmer (2001, p. 305) suggests that for teachers, it's essential not only to have access to a wide range of materials but also to be able to select the appropriate material and effectively utilize it with their learners. In certain contexts, the use of coursebooks as the primary instructional resource is assumed, while in others, they may be entirely omitted. Instead, instructors rely on a syllabus or their own curriculum, incorporating personally curated teaching materials as needed. A third scenario involves a middle ground, where coursebooks are used selectively, not necessarily in a linear fashion, and supplemented extensively with additional resources (Ur, 2012, p. 197). Nevertheless, this effort demands considerable time investment and carries the inherent risk of combining diverse resources that lack consistence. However, through careful planning, teachers can create exemplary lessons that are customized to meet the specific needs of their learners, while still being well organized and varied.

3.2.1 Evaluation and Use of English Coursebook

When an English teacher wants to get a sense of a coursebook very fast by flipping through its pages to understand what it offers, what it does well and what it lacks, he or she pays attention to stand out elements like the quality of pictures and diagrams, the overall content that it provides, how well-organized and appealing its pages are or how its topics are arranged in the book. It is important to understand that it cannot be guaranteed to provide sufficient detail to ensure a perfect combination between the coursebook's content and the specific needs of the learning or teaching situation (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 1, p. 3-4).

The teacher and the coursebook work the best when they team up with shared goals and unique contributions. The coursebook's objectives are to match the teacher's goals closely and their both aims are to meet the learners' needs. Having clear goals and understanding the distinct yet complementary roles of the teacher and coursebook makes this partnership even better. Most people agree that coursebooks are to assist teachers and learners instead of controlling them.

21

They are not to act as authorities dictating what and how to teach. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that teaching materials can significantly influence of what and how teachers teach. Therefore, selecting material that corresponds with the teaching plan's objectives, methods and values is of great importance (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 7). When teachers are looking at coursebooks, it is important to consider what learners think. Leaners are to be listened to their thoughts on how the book looks, its design, what is inside, and how it feels. Learners' feedback is to influence teachers' judgement before using the coursebook and when they evaluate it after the using it (Harmer, 2001, p. 301). In short, English teachers, going through the process of quick evaluating their coursebooks focus on elements like content, quality, organization and alignment with teaching goals. In the collaborative relationship between teachers and coursebooks, a significant aim emerges and is underscored: to meet the expectations and needs of learners.

3.2.2 Advantages and limitations of coursebooks

Coursebooks offer a well-defined structure, allowing teachers and learners to have a feeling of organization and advancement. They are used as the syllabus, so a planned set of language topics is covered in a structured way. The coursebooks offer texts and educational exercises that are suitable for the majority of the learners, reducing the teachers' need to create their own materials, finally saving them time and effort. With coursebooks, learners can learn new content, track their own development and review independently. Without them learners might rely more on their teachers for guidance and support (Ur, 2012, p. 198). As for limitations of coursebooks, when not used well, can force certain teaching methods and topics on both teachers and learners, making it seem like they have no say in that thing. Coursebooks stick to a routine of *'Presentation, Practice and Production'* as the primary teaching method, even though there is a growing interest in different teaching approaches. The repetitive structure of units and lessons can lead to boredom and lack of motivation for both learners and teachers. Additionally, as stated above, coursebooks sometimes offer uninteresting or not suitable topics for the cultural context (Harmer, 2001, p. 304). However, coursebooks provide structured content for organized learning, reducing the need for teachers to create materials and enabling learners to study independently if they do not resonate with the cultural background, interests or experiences of the learners, it can lead to the lack of involvement and active participation. Additionally, Ur (2012, p. 197) states that the benefits and drawbacks of coursebooks are relevant to both physical or virtual formats.

3.2.3 Using supplementary materials alongside coursebooks

Many coursebooks often benefit from additional resources to better address the specific needs of learners (Ur, 2012, p. 210). Ur (2012, p. 203) emphasizes the importance of teachers thoughtfully evaluate teaching materials and highlights the need for teachers to understand the benefits and drawbacks of these materials so they can boost their impact and overcome any limitations. If the material is incomplete, for example, if there are insufficient exercises in a coursebook, teachers can enhance them by searching on the Internet or combining additional sources. Harmer (2001, p. 134) calls additional resources which teachers employ as the foundation for entire activities, clarifying the meaning and structure of the language or involving their learners in a subject *'teaching aids'*. Ur (2012, p. 210, p. 212) categorizes educational materials into paper-based and digital formats.

3.2.3.1   Integrating visual and virtual materials

Visual teaching materials are used to convey information, illustrate concepts, or stimulate discussion in the classroom. These materials are often displayed on posters, slides, or digital screens to engage students and enhance their understanding of the subject matter. *'Pictures and images'* (Harmer, 2001, p. 134) can include photographs, diagrams, charts, graphs, illustrations, and artwork. All work created by a teacher during lesson on the board can help explain concepts, clarify information or provide visual aids to support learning. Such visual materials are commonly used in classrooms to enhance instruction and engage learners in the learning process. They are valuable resources for teachers to create a visually rich and interactive learning environment.

Teachers commonly create worksheets for extra reading or language practice, and many resources are available online. These worksheets are typically printed on A4 paper and provide space for students to write their answers. Compared to work cards, worksheets are more versatile, easier to produce, and often included in workbooks that accompany coursebooks. Work cards are small, laminated cards with short tasks meant to be completed in five minutes or less. They can be used for various subjects, such as reading, grammar, writing, or vocabulary practice (Ur, 2012, p. 211). Cards are versatile for various activities such as matching exercises, sorting sounds or vocabulary groups, and forming questions or sentences by arranging them in a line. They can also be used for interactive tasks where students find a partner with a matching card or the answer to their question (Harmer, 2001, p. 140-141).

Building upon the effectiveness of visual aids such as images and diagrams, teachers can further enrich language learning experiences by integrating virtual resources to provide learners with engaging and comprehensive learning opportunities in contemporary times. Cameron (2003, as cited in Tomlinson, 2008, p. 51) suggests that the use of computers and the Internet is changing the way to language learning. His caution that young learners may disengage from language learning in the absence of modern technology is understandable. To address this, Cameron advocates for the incorporation of computers, videos, and potential future technological innovations to seamlessly integrate education into their daily routines. Additionally, multimedia materials offer valuable resources for learners who prefer independent study, encompassing visual, auditory, and interactive elements like videos, animations, interactive simulations, and multimedia presentations. In classrooms, visual teaching materials like posters and digital screens are used to explain concepts and engage students. These materials, which include images and diagrams, help clarify information and create an interactive learning environment. Teachers also utilize virtual resources, like computers and multimedia materials, to enhance language learning experiences and integrate technology into daily education routines, catering to the needs of modern learners.

3.2.3.2 Enriching Learning Experiences with Multimedia

As mentioned above, a significant portion of teaching and learning relies on technology today. While the term *'CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning)'* has been widely used, it is becoming less common as people recognize that technology is not simply an aid, by the term of *'assisted'*, but an integral part of the learning and teaching process. Computers, along with a variety of software and internet access, are now considered essential tools in many educational settings, much like traditional boards (Ur, 2012, p. 212). Nowadays, it is unusual to find coursebooks without videos and teachers integrate supplementary video materials in their classrooms to intensify learners' engagement. Video enhances the learning experience in several ways. Firstly, it provides both auditory and visual input, helping learners' comprehension with nuances such as emotion and tone that are transmitted thanks to facial expressions and body language. As a result, learners can understand the material more deeply by paying attention to these signals. Secondly, videos provide learners with situations outside their classrooms, offering valuable opportunities to observe cultural nuances. For instance, students can explore diverse aspects of culture, such as food habits and clothing styles in different countries (Harmer, 2001, p. 282). In modern times, digital tools, including mobile

phones offer the capability to produce video and audio content. Learners can make their own video clips or audio recordings, while teachers can capture learners' performances to review later. Furthermore, live audio or video streams can be broadcast over the internet (Ur, 2012, p. 213). Harmer (2001, p. 282) states that learners have the opportunity to craft memorable and enjoyable content. The process of creating videos can inspire authentically innovative and effective ways of using language, enabling learners to explore new ways of expressing themselves in English. Additionally, many students become more engaged when they can observe language being used alongside hearing it, especially when combined with engaging activities (Harmer, 2001, p. 282). To summarize, the integration of modern technology has become essential in language learning, especially for young learners. The need to include technology into education is to prevent learners from feeling disconnected. As multimedia materials continue to develop, they offer valuable resources for classroom or independent study, blending visual, audio, and interactive elements to improve the learning experience and adapt to the demands of contemporary education.

3.3 The Role of the Language Learning Process

Language learning plays important role in personal development, helping us connect with different cultures and improve our communication skills. By understanding how language are acquired and used, we can think differently, which opens up new opportunities. Exploring language learning develops our thoughts and help us understand each other better.

3.3.1 Listening lesson process

To increase the benefits of a listening lesson, the lesson plan is typically structured into three distinct phases: pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening (Underwood, 1989, cited by Hue, 2019, p.372). The significance of pre-listening activities, mentioned in Chapter 1.2.1.1, aligns with the primary goal of a teacher: to motivate learners to engage actively in listening exercises. 'Pre-listening' work consists of various activities, as for example, offering learners background information, reading something related, providing them with pictures, connected with listening passage, classroom discussion about the topic. 'While-listening' work include all tasks to do while listening itself and assist learners for better comprehension. They include for example, marking or checking, multiple-choice questions, putting things in order, True/false exercises, filling tables. The 'post-listening' phase extends the activities conducted in the

preceding two stages. It encompasses tasks directly linked to a specific listening text and is undertaken after completion of both preceding stages. These tasks cover such as role-playing, setting the disposition of the speaker, written assignments, filling in forms, or 'matching with a reading text' (Underwood, 1989, cited by Hue, 2019, 273-274).

Field (1998, cited by Hill and Tomlinson, 2013, p. 429) outlined the common steps for a listening task in coursebooks:

1/ Pre-listening: This sets context and motivates the listener.

2/ Extensive listening: It includes questions to understand the situation.

3/ Pre-set questions or tasks: These are given before listening.

4/ Intensive listening: This is the core listening activity.

5/ Review of questions or tasks: After listening, the questions or tasks are reviewed.

6/ Inferring new vocabulary and examining functional language: This is about learning new words and language function.

Once more after a longer period, Field (2012, cited by Tomlinson, 2013, p. 429) argues that this method is too focused on the outcomes rather than on the learning process. He promotes 'a subskills methodology' where learners are taught challenging phonological features, such as lexical segmentation, recognition of repeated patterns, and indicators where to take their turn in conversation. Additionally, he supports 'a task-based approach' that inspires learners to use strategic methods during their comprehension lessons (Field, 2012 cited in Tomlinson, 2013, p. 429).

However, the listening activities found in coursebooks are just one aspect of the numerous opportunities for listening within 'a textbook-based lesson'. Additional possibilities are caused by basic classroom interactions, such as paying attention to the teacher's directions, or through 'speaking activities' when learners are involved in information exchange. These activities are as much about listening as they are about speaking. This kind of exercises may be included in the coursebook, available in extra materials or introduced by the teacher (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 432).

3.3.2 Planning and structuring learning activities

Celce-Murcia et al (2001, p. 33) have categorized the array of *'activity types'* based on four stages of '*instructional sequencing'* within lessons. Instructional sequencing typically involves planning and structuring learning activities in a logical order to optimize learning outcomes. Breaking down activities into phases can help ensure that learners progress through the material effectively. Below is an overview of how activities could be organized into four distinct phases of instructional sequencing:

Introduction: This phase introduces the topic or concept to the learners. Activities in this phase often aim to capture learners' interest, provide context, and activate prior knowledge. For example, icebreaker activities, engaging videos or multimedia presentations.

Development: In this phase, the main content or skills are taught and explored. Activities focus on the essential concepts, providing explanations, and offering opportunities for practice. Examples of activities in this phase include reading assignments, interactive simulations, problem-solving tasks.

Application Phase: This phase focuses on applying the knowledge or skills learned in the development phase. Activities include critical thinking, and problem-solving. For example, cooperative tasks in pairs or groups, role-playing exercises, debates or discussions.

Assessment and Evaluation Phase: This phase assesses learners' understanding and mastery of the content or skills covered. Activities measure learning outcomes, provide feedback, and identify areas for improvement. Examples of activities in this phase can include quizzes or tests, essays or reports, peer evaluations or self-assessments, portfolio presentations.

(Celce-Murcia et al, 2001, p. 33)

D. Willis and J. Willis (2007, p. 23) suggest that the teacher's planning process starts with identifying the target tasks, followed by integrating introductory and preparatory activities, which they refer to as 'facilitating tasks.' D. Willis and J. Willis (2007, p. 16) confirm the statement about not focusing on grammatical form at the beginning of the task sequence as learners are unable to 'think about both form and meaning' simultaneously, which does not help language practice. Conversely, it is very beneficial to address grammatical form at the end of the task sequence, which helps learners to make sense of what has been experienced, and increases possibility of noticing and applying the correct form in the future, and subsequently,

providing learners with knowledge about what they have learned (D. Willis and J. Willis, 2007, p. 25).

Celce-Murcia (2001, p. 257) presents one technique for guiding learners' focusing on grammatical structure which is known as 'input processing.' Instead of concentrating on memorizing and applying rules, 'input processing activities' involve using language structures in a meaningful context. For instance, learners engage in activities where they use the imperative form to carry out commands given by the teacher. In some cases, communicative tasks are aimed at specific language features, such as providing directions on a map or completing prepositions. A significant advantage of introducing communicative tasks to encourage noticing is that learners are motivated to use target structures, producing 'output' that invites feedback from either the teacher or peers (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 257).

3.3.3 Balancing language learning activities

Celce-Murcia et al. (2001, p. 78) state that it is beneficial to blend two distinct types of emphasis in language classes: 'language use tasks' and 'language analysis activities.'

The aim of 'language use tasks' is to provide learners with opportunities to practice listening for information and immediately applying it. These types of lessons involve specific communicative outcomes as 'listening and carrying out actions' when learners do tasks, for example, finding routes to particular places on a map, 'listening and solving problems' when learners compare tasks to recorded conversations, 'listening and writing notes', 'listening and summarizing information' both verbally and in written form, and 'interactive listening' involving meaningful exchange through questioning and answering activities focused on repetition, checking, explanation and interpretation, or detailed discussion. By practising specific tasks, learners gain a set of strategies which they can use in future conversations in the language (Celce-Murcia et al. 2001, p. 78).

D.Willis and J.Willis (2007, p. 59) consider that the simplest spoken texts to find and adapt for task-based activities are recordings from the coursebook. However, there are other sources of audio recordings on websites to engage learners' interest. While it is ideal for listening materials to be motivating and engaging to learners, a suitably selected task can increase motivation regardless of the topic (D. Willis and J. Willis, 2007, p. 59-60).

Even if a text is interesting on its own, it is helpful to use 'a task-based framework' for understanding it as it has three benefits: it introduces important vocabulary in a meaningful way, helps learners process the text like they might do in real life by setting expectations, and makes the task more engaging and motivating (D.Willis and J. Willis, 2007, p. 60).

In comparison with 'language use tasks', the aim of 'language analysis tasks' is to provide learners with opportunities to examine specific elements of linguistic framework and to develop individual strategies to help them understand rapid speech patterns and examine how words are put together to make sense (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 78).

To sum up, combining 'language use tasks' and 'language analysis activities', involved in learners' practical listening, can help learners build conversational strategies and recognize spoken language when exposed to these two types of language teaching.

3.3.4 Enhancing language acquisition through listening activities

Language acquisition is significantly enhanced through immersive and interactive listening activities, as detailed by both Tomlinson (2013) and Cunningsworth (1995). These activities are essential in promoting a deeper understanding of the target language, emphasizing the importance of both emotional engagement and practical application.

Cunningsworth (1995, p. 67) discusses the role of listening activities in coursebooks, noting that they are often integrated into oral exercises such as dialogues and roleplays, where listening is secondary to speaking. He points out the challenge learners face in real-life conversations due to the unpredictability of responses. Learners can control what they say but must quickly and accurately respond to what they hear, which requires practice and skill.

To address this challenge, coursebooks often include recorded listening exercises aimed at various purposes. Tomlinson (2013, p. 436) proposes that learners should concentrate on immersing themselves in the target language by engaging with texts that evoke both their emotions and cognitive processes. Diverse listening exercises, as suggested by Tomlinson (2013, p. 436), such as listening to teachers, reading poems or stories, watching teachers to act out scenes from plays, or engaging in peer presentations, offer opportunities for deep language learning. These activities help learners better understand spoken language and facilitate a connection of each learner with the content, depending on the experiences, beliefs, values and interests. To increase the benefits, Tomlinson (2013, p. 436-437) recommends starting with

longer and more engaging listening materials without always checking for comprehension. He emphasizes the value of tasks that involve sensory imagining, inner thoughts, or personal connections while listening, as these methods significantly improve understanding. Visualization or mental imagery before listening can help learners create vivid mental images of characters or scenes, and subsequently understand the main ideas and details in the content.

Cunningsworth (1995, p. 67) also stresses the importance of coursebook activities before the listening tasks that might involve asking questions related to the listening topic or directing learners to search for specific details within the material, which gives the listening task a purpose, enabling learners to make predictions, and making the listening experience more manageable and meaningful. Additionally, Tomlinson (2013, p. 438) highlights the importance of learners engaging in listening activities with a particular reason. Furthermore, such activities, discussing the strategies that have assisted comprehension and reflecting on the used techniques can prepare learners for similar future tasks. This reflective practice stimulates a deeper understanding and evoke listening skills. Harmer (2001, p. 208) points out that learners who are given listening passages which do not interest them, expect future activities to be boring as well, so it becomes the teachers' responsibility to change this pessimistic view.

Combining these observations, it is evident that efficient language acquisition through listening involves emotionally engaging activities and structured, purpose-built exercises. Integrating both immersive experiences and structured exercises into listening activities can contribute to successful language learning.

4 Coursebook listening activities

To ensure a comprehensive and productive learning journey, it is required to plan learning activities from which learners derive advantages that improve their listening skills and support the development of efficient listening strategies. Before teaching essential content, it is necessary to capture learners' interest and activate prior knowledge.

4.1 Task selection in listening

Harmer (2001, p 207) emphasizes the importance of selecting appropriate comprehension tasks that focus on assisting learners in their predictions, or making interpretations 'through conversation or comparison', and overall, encouraging them to analyse the listening material. Harmer further describes the need for the balance between text difficulty and assigning tasks to ensure optimal engagement and learning outcomes, depending on the cognitive demands, the number of components or the level of required skills that the tasks contain (Harmer, 2001, p. 207-208).

Conversely, Ur (2012, p. 108) suggests that assigning tasks may not always be necessary for effective listening practice. With sharing a joke or a personal experience, or reading a story from a book, learners are not required to reply actively to the listening material as their physical gestures indicate whether they understand. Occasionally, learners provide brief replies, such as noting a single word or symbol, while at other times, they offer more extensive responses, composing longer answers. Detailed replies are needed when learners perform activities which demand a blend of skills to complete effectively. The listening component serves as the initial step in a broader activity that involves other language skills besides listening (Ur, 2012, p. 108-109). To sum up, teaching listening skills means getting learners actively involved in selected tasks which assist learners for better understanding and realizing that different activities need different levels of response.

4.2 Classifying listening activities

Drawing from Ur's (2012, p. 104-105, p. 106-107, p. 108-110) listening instruction, the following chapter presents listening exercises, divided into these distinct groups, based on their focus and the skills they target. Firstly, pronunciation exercises through which different phonemic features are introduced to learners. Secondly, exercises with specific goals that

learners are probably motivated to engage in, followed by exercises with learners' responds, and finally, integrated exercises with other language skills.

4.2.1 Pronunciation exercises

Listening input is present to challenge learners to recognize spoken language which is segmented into brief units, such as phrases or concise sentences. In everyday conversations, individuals frequently exchange speaking, often delivering brief remarks or responses. To align with this characteristic, listening materials are often structured as dialogues, integrating various speakers, pauses, and sound effects to simulate conversational dynamics. Learners often encounter spoken words and phrases that are pronounced with 'slurred and altered sounds' different from phonetic presentation introduced in their lessons or presented in dictionaries. There may be sounds which are clear in listening input but sometimes one or two sounds disappear when people speak (Ur, 2012, p. 103-104). Harmer 2001, p. 183) advocates for pronunciation instruction to be part of ELT teaching as by explaining how sounds are produced, and describing word stress, teachers provide learners with additional support in understanding and being understood when they speak English. Harmer (2001, p. 185) suggests two ways to teach pronunciation. Firstly, teachers may demonstrate how sounds are made using diagrams and explanations. Secondly, they can draw attention to sounds whenever they appear in listening input or during class conversation. This suggests that students should aim to have pronunciation clear enough to be understood otherwise there is a risk that they will struggle to communicate efficiently (Harmer, 2001, p. 184).

4.2.2 Pre-listening activities

Our expectations are often connected to our reasons for listening. If we're looking for an answer to a question, we ask it and expect a relevant response. This often makes us 'listen out' for specific phrases or words. For instance, when we ask a question starting with 'where,' we listen for information about a place. The same applies to other question words used in open questions, which frequently involve predicting the type of information that will follow (Ur, 1984, p. 3).

Ur (2012, p. 107) challenges the conventional notion that learners are expected to grasp every aspect of a listening text immediately, cautioning that such an expectation may discourage learners from other comprehension challenges. Instead, learners should possess the ability to

filter out extraneous information. Similarly, readers and listeners often make guesses to understand the content better, particularly after identifying the topic. They may look ahead to predict what comes next or make assumptions based on partial information, using their prior knowledge to interpret what they encounter. As they continue to read or listen, they either confirm their initial predictions or adjust their understanding based on the new information they receive (Harmer, 2001, p. 201-202).

Pre-listening activities are included in coursebooks to give learners the purpose to listen. They are presented either visually or orally in class, offer background information that activates learners' corresponding cognitive frameworks, drawing upon their prior knowledge, which reflects listening situations in real life and improves understanding.

4.2.3 Classifying listening activities by learners' involvement

Ur (2012, p. 108-110) provides a classification of various listening activity tasks, based on the level of response complexity and extent of involvement.

According to Ur's (2012, p. 108-110) categorization, some tasks involve learners' listening without any required action, only 'though their facial expressions and body language':

1/ No overt response – stories

songs

entertainment (films, theatre, video)

Other tasks require short answers, such as 'writing a word or symbol, or physical movement'.

2/ Short responses – obeying instructions

ticking off items

true/false

detecting mistakes

cloze

guessing definitions

skimming and scanning

33

Longer tasks call for learners to write more detailed answers, possibly 'in full sentences' (Ur, 2012, p. 108-109).

3/ Longer responses – answering questions

note-taking

paraphrasing and translating

summarizing

long gap filling

Ur (2012, p. 109) presents listening as a starting point for activities, integrating reading, speaking and writing, classified as 'extended responses.'

4/ Extended responses – problem-solving

interpretation

dicto-gloss

Tomlinson (2013, p. 431) argues that most activities focused on learners extracting facts from spoken text, which is the most common traditional listening comprehension task. The second most common activity, 'listen and check' is similar to the first, where students complete a written task and then listen to the recording to confirm their answers, also listening for specific information related to their responses. Tomlinson (2013, p. 434) recommends that coursebooks enhance their listening activities by incorporating input from various sources, including the teacher, other teachers, classmates, invited guest speakers, or individuals interviewed by the learners.

4.2.4 No respond activities

All these activities I have mentioned when I cited Tomlinson in the theoretical part of this study (chapter 3.1.3). This term used by Ur (2012, p. 109) refers to listening activities where learners are not required to produce immediate answer rather focusing on comprehension and internal process than on verbal or written learners' output. learners listen for their enjoyment and interest without any immediate task to complete. They include listening to stories, anecdotes, silent reading or listening to books, listening to short stories or videos from the

Internet and all other activities connected with 'films or theatre' as cited (chapter 3.1.3) in theoretical part. Last but not least, teachers should not forget to incorporate listening to songs in their listening lessons. Harmer (2001, p. 242) defines 'music as a powerful stimulus for student engagement because it speaks directly to our emotions while still allowing us to use our brains to analyse it and its effects if we so wish'. Harmer's (2001, p. 242) feeling is that listening to songs can provide enjoyment and contributes to relieving tension in class learning environment and allowing learners to listen without the pressure of immediate production. Teachers have a lot of methods for integrating lyrics of a song into their lessons. They may provide learners with lyrics containing blanks or a list of words to fill in in the song. Alternatively, learners may be asked with sequencing lines or completing unfinished lines, or allowing their learners to speculate on the song's title or other context questions for its enjoyment.

4.2.5 Short-response listening activities

The second category covers a variety a short-response listening activities that are essential for developing comprehension skills, requiring active engagement in auditory input.

'Obeying instructions' – an activity when learners are required to understand and follow directions given orally by the speaker.

'Ticking off items' – another task that necessitates brief replies is 'item identification.' when learners are provided with a list of statements, text, or image, and as they listen to a dialogue, monologue or passage, they mark the corresponding items (Ur, 2012, p. 109).

'Detecting mistakes' – in such an exercise, listeners are required to identify errors in spoken content (Ur, 2012, p. 109).

'Cloze' – in this exercise, words or phrases are intentionally omitted from a passage, requiring learners to fill in the missing parts while listening to the passage (Ur, 2012, p. 179).

'Matching' – each item needs to be paired with another (Ur, 2012, p. 174)

In a similar way, learners are presented with a set of claims and tasked with determining their accuracy in a *'True/False'* exercise. With true/false statements learners only identify information without necessarily having to produce it themselves. Ur states that as items evaluate if learners comprehend a spoken language or written text, learners possess a fifty-percent

possibility of selecting the right answer by chance, without their grasp of the content (Ur, 2012, p. 176).

'Guessing definitions' – in this activity, listeners are presented with spoken descriptions of unfamiliar words, and they are required to use context clues and their existing knowledge to guess the meaning of these terms.

'Skimming and scanning' – in a skimming and scanning listening activity, learners are given a task or questions, a picture or a chart presented for completion beforehand and then listen to audio recording to record the relevant information. They use skimming to grasp the main idea and scanning to find out specific details needed to answer the task or question accurately.

4.2.6 Long-response listening activities

'Answering questions' belongs among exercises producing longer replies, which is a listening exercise where learners are presented with a series of questions related to the content of an audio recording. Learners listen to the recording carefully and then answer the questions based on the information they have heard (Ur, 2012, p. 110). These questions could range from simple comprehension questions, e.g. 'Do you know any of these places?' (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 44) to more detailed questions requiring specific information, e.g. 'Who else was at the house at the time? 'or 'What was each person doing' (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 36).

'Note-taking' is an activity when learners are required to actively listen to spoken content and simultaneously record important information, key points, or details in written form. Note-taking, requiring proficiency in rapid, legible writing and the comprehension of auditory input, helps learners focus their attention, organize information, and keep important details for future reference (Ur, 2012, p. 179).

'Paraphrasing or translating' using this activity, learners are required to comprehend spoken content and then translate it into another language or express it using different words.

'Summarizing' in this activity, listeners are tasked with locating the main points and compose a short overview from a listening passage.

'Long gap filling' – listeners are presented with audio recording in which certain parts have been intentionally omitted. Learners are required to fill in the missing gaps which are longer

sections of the listening text with the appropriate information, based on their understanding of the context (Ur, 2012, p. 110).

4.2.7 Extended-response listening activities

These listening activities require learners to provide detailed and comprehensive responses based on their understanding of spoken content. They commonly involve listening to longer passages, such as dialogues or monologues, or texts, demanding more-in-depth comprehension and requiring learners to analyse and interpret (D. Willis and J. Willis, 2007, p. 93).

In *'problem-solving activity'*, a problem is presented verbally. Learners then engage in discussion to formulate a solution or may individually write down their proposed solutions.

'Interpretation' is a listening activity when learners are presented with an excerpt of dialogue or monologue without any context. They then attempt to recognize the situation, character dynamics, and emotions expressed through factors such as voice tone and other contextual cues. In higher-level classes, certain poems can be recited, discussed, and examined using either written or oral form (Ur, 2012, p. 110).

Tasks involving problem-solving encourage learners to provide advice on different problems from general to specific ones. According to D. Willis and J. Willis (2007, p.93-94) it is very beneficial to introduce the topic in a previous lesson, explaining the problem and informing learners that the task will involve discussing and agreeing on a solution. Problem-solving tasks comprise other small activities, such as listing the effects of the problem, sharing personal experiences, comparing solution ideas with peers, and evaluating criteria for solutions.

4.2.8 Integrated activities

There are exercises which involve integration with other language skills, such as speaking, reading or writing. Listening materials should be utilized in many ways, like practising different language skills and giving content for more activities. In many listening activities, various language skills are practiced together, but usually, one skill is emphasized more than the others. Listening which happens at different times during teaching lessons, can be the starting point for activities that come next. It can be the initial phase of a lesson plan where learners replicate what they hear, or the stage for another language skill which might be the main focus of the lesson (Harmer, 2001, p. 232).

When it comes to live listening activities, learners listen to a spoken language in a real time, as opposed to recordings or prepared materials. These activities involve listening to a speaker, such as a teacher as they deliver information and engage in a conversation. In these spontaneous situations, a teacher shares a story with learners or play a role when a relevant topic arises or as a way to engage learners' concentration and help them understand spoken language in real-life contexts (Harmer, 2001, p. 232

Harmer (2001, p. 232), emphasizes the integration of listening with other language skills, such as speaking, reading, and writing. It suggests that listening materials should serve multiple purposes, allowing for practice in various language skills and providing content for additional activities. While many listening activities involve practicing multiple language skills simultaneously, there is usually an emphasis on one particular skill.

Despite modern materials including audio recordings of listening texts along with corresponding tasks, Ur (2012, p. 111) advises teachers to modify them or add to them if needed.

In summary, there are various types of listening activities in language learning, categorized by the level of learner involvement. These activities range from passive listening with no required action to tasks prompting short or detailed answers, and even extended tasks integrating multiple language skills. Listening materials serve as valuable tools for practicing different language skills and initiating various activities in language lessons. Live listening activities, involving real-time spoken language, further enhance learners' understanding by engaging them in spontaneous conversations led by the teacher.

4.2.9 Comprehension questions

Many contemporary educational resources provide audio recordings of comprehension texts in coursebooks which come with related comprehension activities to check learners' understanding of the text. In reading comprehension texts, the most prevalent structure, similar to listening texts, involves presenting a text followed by comprehension questions. These questions typically take form of gap-fills, multiple-choice questions or open-ended questions which encourage learners to provide their own responses (Ur, 2012, p. 179). Ur (2012, p. 48) points out that listening comprehension exercises often involve more reading than actual listening, which makes them less useful. Learners spend a lot of time reading the questions,

which are usually longer than the listening part. Mostly, learners are not acquainted with the topic, and still they are required to remember a lot of details. To make these exercises better, Ur (2012, p. 48) suggests to leave learners take notes while listening and compare among themselves, or inviting teachers to give learners questions to think about before listening so they know what to focus on.

The tasks might be based on different ways of thinking that enable learners to look at one topic from many perspectives, using various thinking skills that pose different language challenges (Willis and Willis, 2007, p. 66)

There is a list of different task types according to Willis and Willis (2007, p. 66):

1 Listing brainstorming and fact-finding

2 Ordering and sorting, sequencing, ranking and classifying

3 Matching words and phrases to pictures, directions to street map

4 Comparing, finding differences and similarities

5 Sharing personal experience story-telling, anecdotes, reminiscences

6 Projects and creative tasks class newspaper, poster, survey fantasy

7 Problem solving puzzles, logic problems, predictions

(Willis and Willis, 2007, p. 108)

To sum up, current educational materials often assess listening comprehension through comprehension questions, but these exercises may prioritize reading over listening. To improve efficiency, learners could take notes while listening or receive pre-listening questions to direct their attention.

The theoretical part focuses on the role of coursebooks in teaching English with regards to the development of listening skills in lower secondary school learners, examining also which methods and material should be used to ensure that learners' acquiring these language skills is efficient. The following practical part examines teaching methods and the selection of material through a practical analysis of two selected coursebook, interviews with selected English teachers, and a questionnaire for a selected group of learners.

5 Project objectives

The aim of my diploma project is to assess the coursebooks of Project 3 Third edition and Project 3 Fourth edition in enhancing learners' listening skills within the context of lower secondary education. This analysis focuses on the frequency and types of listening activities in comparison with activities related to the other three language skills presented in these coursebooks. In particular, this study examines the common listening activities identified in the coursebooks, explores teachers' preferences regarding these activities, and assesses the level of learner engagement with them, using the selected coursebooks. Special attention is given to how learners and teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the listening procedures depicted in these coursebooks.

6 Research questions

The research questions are as follows:

1 What is the relative weight of listening skill activities, in terms of the number of pages in selected lower secondary school coursebooks, as compared to other skills?

2 What are the prevalent types of listening activities and exercises, included in selected coursebooks?

3.What are the preferences of English language teachers and learners regarding teaching materials in selected coursebooks for listening skills development?

4 How do learners and teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of listening procedures during their listening sessions?

7 Research procedures and criteria

Based on grounded theory, the research involved data collection and subsequent analysis. The theory emphasizes the importance of data collection from diverse sources (Švaříček and Šeďová, 2014, p. 87-88), that is why data sources were chosen, through both qualitative and quantitative research. Firstly, interviewing with teachers was chosen as the most commonly used data collection in qualitative research, often referred to as 'in-depth interviews' (Švaříček and Šeďová, 2014, p. 159). Secondly, a questionnaire surveying learner from lower secondary schools was carried out at the end of the last school year. According to Švaříček and Šeďová

(2014, p. 87), there are three key processes in the research: data collection, material coding, and theoretical construction based on the acquired information, each conducted with consideration for the others. The teacher interviews were conducted in two phases: firstly, at the end of the last school year and secondly, at the beginning of this school year. This approach was necessary to obtain more specific information required for the research.

The practical part was divided into three subchapters, detailing the procedures and criteria for the coursebook analysis, the questionnaire survey conducted among learners, and the interviews with teachers.

8 Coursebook analysis

The selected coursebooks for this study are Project (Third Edition) and Project (Fourth Edition) authored by Tom Hutchinson, as they are widely used in English lessons within Czech lower secondary schools. The research focused on older learners who are more adept in expressing their opinions regarding English language instruction. Therefore, specifically the third volume of these textbooks, which I have selected for analysis, was compared. The focus was on analysing these coursebooks primarily in terms of listening skill practice in relation to other language skills, and identifying predominant types of listening exercises in both coursebooks. The conclusion of the first section included a comparison of both coursebooks and their evaluation based on predetermined criteria.

The criteria used to evaluate the importance of listening skill activities were encompassed by various factors, including the quantity, complexity, and integration of these activities within the coursebooks. As a result, a thorough content analysis of both editions of the coursebooks was conducted. This analysis involved the identification and categorization of all activities related to listening skills, as well as those connected to other language skills namely speaking, reading, and writing.

The pages dedicated to listening skill activities in comparison to other skills in each edition of the coursebooks were quantified. Additionally, the relative emphasis placed on listening skill activities between the third and fourth editions was compared, with any significant changes or differences being identified.

Furthermore, an evaluation was made regarding how listening activities were presented in each edition, examining factors such as task types, level of difficulty and authenticity.

8.1 Project 3 Third edition

The Project third edition is a series of educational materials designed for young learners aged 10-15, consisting of five levels from beginner to pre-intermediate. Project 3 includes Student's Book, Workbook, CD-ROM, class CDs, and Teacher's Book. Each unit of Student's Book is structured with six sections, encompassing vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, pronunciation, and skill exercises, along with a Culture page, English across the curriculum section, Revision part, Project segment, and a song.

8.1.1 Integration of language skills in the coursebook

Proficiency in all four language skills is addressed by the coursebook of Project 3 (Third edition), but according to the research conducted on exercises in the coursebook, it is apparent that they are not equally distributed. To assess the balance of these exercises, the overall number of all exercises was counted and then compared with the individual numbers of exercises according to the skills they focus on. Finally, the percentage representation of all exercises focusing on each skill was counted. Accuracy in counting was ensured by considering even the subparts of exercises (like 1a, 1b, 1c) individually.

The coursebook comprises a total of 463 exercises, distributed as follows: 101 listening exercises, 81 reading exercises, 110 speaking exercises, and 39 writing exercises.

Skills	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing	Other exercises	Total exercises
Number of exercises	101	81	110	43	128	463
%	22 %	17 %	24 %	9 %	28 %	

Table 1: Number of exercises devoted to language skills – student's book

As shown in Table 1, the prevalent skill in the coursebook is speaking with 24 % of exercises, comprising a total of 110 exercises. Following closely behind is listening, representing 22 % of the content, totalling 101 exercises. Subsequently, reading accounts for 17 %, encompassing 81 exercises, while writing, the least represented skill, comprises only 9 %, with a total of 43 exercises in the coursebook. The remaining exercises encompass grammar (86 exercises) or vocabulary practice (31 exercises), project-based tasks (six exercises), and other exercises (five exercises).

It is important to note that each exercise was counted only once, even if it could be classified under multiple skill categories. Each exercise was assigned to the skill that appeared to be the primary focus. The research is focused on listening, which is why an exercise focused on reading and concurrently listening, was categorized as a listening exercise, even if it also included a reading component.

8.1.2 Integrated exercises in the coursebook

Within listening exercises, there is a series of 33 exercises that integrate another language skill alongside listening, 24 exercises that combine listening and reading, and six exercises that combine listening and speaking, or three exercises that combine listening and writing.

In this context, I present a model exercise that integrate the skills of listening and reading:

Task 1: Read and listen to the story. Who are these people?

Lewis Trish Martin   Mrs Dunn Mr Graham

(Hutchinson, 2008, p. 6)

I also provide illustrations of exercises that integrate the skills of listening and speaking, typically featured in the Pronunciation section:

Task 2: The phonetic alphabet only shows the sounds. Silent letters are not shown. Look at these words. Which letters are silent? Listen, check and repeat (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 27)

Here is an example of an exercise which combines both listening and writing:

Task 3: Close your book. Listen to the questions and write your answers. (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 7)

Four listening exercises, included in Revision sections, are designed to integrate grammar practice, encompassing Units one, three, five and six. examples of these exercises are as follows:

Task 4: Put the verbs in brackets into the past simple or continuous. Listen. Correct the information in the texts. (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 42)

Three listening exercises incorporate vocabulary learning, included in Units one, two and three. The exercises are exemplified as follows:

Task 5: Look at the picture and listen. Label the picture with the words. (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 20)

The third edition of Project extensively incorporates group and pair activities, offering a wide range of exercises and enhancing lesson diversity. Everyday English sections in the coursebook contains 19 exercises specifically designed for conversation practice. I provide an example of such an exercise concerning 'Introducing people' in the following line.

Task 6:

   a/ Put these in the correct order to make a conversation.

Nice to meet you, too. ----

She's in my class. ---

This is my friend, Martin. ---

Hi, Trish. ---

Martin, this is Trish. ---

Nice to meet you. ---

b/ Listen and check.

c/ Work in a group of three. Introduce each other.

(Hutchinson, 2008, p. 15)

In Unit 6, a listening exercise related to 'turning down a suggestion', building on the practice learners have already undertaken in this section, strengthens real communication skills.

Task 7:

   a/Put the dialogue in the correct order.

No, I don't think I'll bother. ---

I just don't feel like it. ---

Shall we go to the disco? ---

Why not? ---

b/ Listen. Which of these things do the people suggest?

c/ Listen again. What reasons do the people give for refusing?

d/ Work with a partner. Make dialogues.

Student A   Suggest something.

Student B   Refuse.

Student A   Ask for a reason.

Student B   Give a reason.

Student A   Respond. (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 75)

Integrated exercises with other language skills	Listening and reading	Listening and speaking	Listening and writing	Total number of integrated exercises	Total number of listening exercises
Number of exercises	33	6	3	42	101
%	33 %	6 %	3 %	42 %	

Table 2: Number of integrated listening exercises – student's book

Based on Table 2, there are 33 integrated listening exercises, which are combined with other language skills. Among these, there are 28 exercises devoted to listening and reading, representing 28 % of the total number of listening exercises. Additionally, there are six exercises focused on listening and speaking, making up 6 % and three exercises focused on listening and writing, representing 3 % of the total count.

In summary, reading and listening exercises represent one fourth of the total listening exercises, while there is a smaller percentage dedicated to listening and speaking tasks and the smallest percentage given to listening combined with writing. Overall, one third of the total number of listening exercises is devoted to the integration of listening exercises with other language skills.

8.1.3 Story-Based Listening Exercises

Listening skills form a significant aspect of learners' practice, comprising a number of 101 exercises. Nearly half of these exercises integrate listening with reading skills, where each A, B, C, D section of every unit initiate with combined listening and reading activities. These 'Read and Listen' exercises involve listening to texts directly related to the unit's main subject, sourced from a variety of materials. These materials include factual content, such as article 'Making people aware'; narratives, represented by 'The Tailor of Swaffham'; cartoons, as seen in 'Smart Alec and Sweet Sue'; and photo stories, titled 'Kids'.

In the coursebook, teachers are expected to engage learners in various activities, either by having them complete tasks or by predicting what they will hear. With all photo stories teachers have at their need to use a story outline in Teacher's Book 3, Third edition which serves as a guidebook for the plot and structure of the narrative to help learners introduce the next story.

Before listening to each exercise, learners are given an introductory question to help them predict what they will hear.

Task 8: Look at the pictures. What is happening in each picture? (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 48)

For each photo-story episode, teachers have the option to use a story outline as a helpful tool for guiding the plot and structure of the narrative. This assists them in introducing the next story to learners. Additionally, pictures are provided to set the context.

Task 9: What has happened in the story so far? Look back and check your ideas. (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 26)

In each lesson, there are also various animated detective stories featuring Sweet Sue and Smart Alec, with each new story always concluding within the lesson. Throughout the coursebook, learners are always given a task to complete while listening, which helps them focus on the purpose of their listening. While-listening tasks involve answering 'wh-questions', identifying individuals, objects, and locations in the stories, or searching for specific information. Following that, comprehension tasks are given to evaluate learners' comprehension of the stories.

Task 10: Read and listen to the story. What does Sweet Sue throw through the window? Why? (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 22)

Type of a task	Asking questions/		Longer responses/	True/false/	Ordering
	Scanning	Skimming			
Number of tasks in the coursebook	10	2	8	3	1

Table 3: Number of comprehension tasks – student's book

Based on Table 3, the most common comprehension exercise in the coursebook is 'answering questions,' totalling 12 exercises. This kind of exercises aims to assess learners' understanding of the material, their ability to extract relevant information and their comprehension skills through scanning and skimming, helping learners reinforce vocabulary, deduction, and critical thinking abilities. The next most prevalent exercises are 'longer answers' (chapter 1.6.3.3) which involve a series of questions, focusing on the information from the context after listening, totalling eight exercises. Additionally, 'true/false' answers involving three exercises and 'ordering' with one exercise, concerning story-based exercises.

Comprehension tasks included in the coursebook are based on the classification in theoretical part (chapter 1.6.3.2):

1/ <u>asking questions</u>

These exercises connected with the text are divided in exercises that use skimming or scanning while scanning in the following Task 13 requires scanning the text or audio to identify the relevant statements that provide the explanation, and skimming in Task 14 needs from the reader or listener to grasp the main idea of the story to identify the reason for the character's anger. An example of scanning:

Task 11: Read and listen to the story. Why doesn't Lewis dance with Trish? (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 26)

An example of skimming:

Task 12: Now read and listen to the story. Why is Sweet Sue angry? (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 6)

2/ <u>longer answers</u>, (chapter 1.6.3.3) focus on learners' understanding the context and details provided in the content to deduce the motivations or circumstances

An example.

Task 13: Read and listen. Answer the questions.

1 What does Louis want?

2 Why does he want them?

3 Why does his mother think he's got a headache?

4 Why doesn't he want to sit in the armchair?

5 What is his mother going to do?

6 Why?

(Hutchinson, 2008, p. 68)

3/ <u>true/false</u> - answers, evaluating the correctness of statements regarding the text

An example.

Task 14: Read and listen to the text. Are the statements true or false, or doesn't it say?

1 Smart Alec won the award last year.

2 Sue solved the Bristol Bank robbery case.

3 Pinkie Pooch is Mrs. Basset's dog.

(Hutchinson, 2008, p. 23)

4/ Ordering

An example.

Task 15: Read and listen to the story. Put the pictures in the correct order. (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 48)

5/ <u>no response</u>

Task 16: Do you know the song? Listen and check. (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 65)

8.1.4 Listening Exercises in Culture and English across Curriculum section

Culture section introduces learners to life in English-speaking countries, including family relationships, transportation, emergency services in the UK, British geography, famous British figures, and famous landmarks in New York. Learners are encouraged to compare and relate these topics to their own country's context.

This section introduces topics from various school subjects, such as Biology, Science, Geography, Math, History and Music. It provides learners with relevant vocabulary to understand these subjects, demonstrating that English can serve as a tool for enhancing their knowledge in other areas. This approach may be particularly motivating for learners whose interests lie in these other disciplines.

The texts present a grammar concept of each unit, and are accompanied by comprehension activities which support the vocabulary introduced in the text. The Teacher's Book offers valuable advice to help teachers assist learners in improving their comprehension skills. Using visuals like pictures can help to provide background information and encourage learners to predict the content of the audio. Introducing essential vocabulary items, when necessary, can help in learners' comprehension. However, it is important to avoid introducing every new word, as part of the learning process involves realizing that understanding every word is not always necessary to grasp the overall message, as it has been stated in the theoretical part of the study.

There are nine listening exercises which are present in these sections to help learners assess their comprehension.

Type of an exercise	Scanning	Longer responses	Matching4	True/false2	No response5/
Number of exercises	4	2	1	1	1

Table 4: Listening exercises connected with additional texts – student's book

According to Table 4, the most common exercises for evaluating learners' comprehension in these sections are 'scanning activities,' totalling 4 exercises, followed by 'longer responses' and 'matching exercises', numbering 2 each. Among the most frequently presented exercises are 'scanning exercises' which comprise completing charts and finding out specific details in the input texts. Additionally, there is one matching exercise' where learners identify specific

information related to events, described in the texts. Culture section contains one true/false exercise in which learners verify information in the text, and English across curriculum section includes one exercise 'listening to a song' which is entirely for enjoyment, without any additional tasks.

All other songs in this coursebooks are placed in 'Your project' sections which are at the end of each unit. They are accompanied by one or two tasks which are related to song lyrics. Nine listening exercises associated with song comprehension can be categorized as follows (Hammer, 1992, p. 242):

1/ Identifying specific grammar items two exercises (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 31)

2/ Answering questions – two exercises (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 43)

3/ Filling in blanks – one exercise (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 19)

4/ A list of words to fill in – one exercise (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 79)

5/ Sequencing lines – one exercise (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 31)

6/ Finding rhyming words – one exercise (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 67)

7/ Listening for enjoyment – one exercise (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 55)

Type of an exercise	Scanning activity	Answering questions	Filling in blanks	A list of words to fill in	Sequencing lines	Finding rhyming words	Listening for enjoyment
Number of exercises	2	2	1	1	1	1	1

Table 5: Listening exercises connected with songs – student's coursebook

The listening exercises, diverse in number, significantly enhance learners' listening proficiency and vocabulary practice, providing enjoyment at the conclusion of each unit.

8.1.5 Listening exercises within grammar practice

Simultaneously, along with comprehension activities to evaluate learners' understanding of the material, each text introduces a grammar concept related to the unit. The 'grammar section' provides learners with the chance to both practice and analyse new grammar concepts within the comprehension texts. The grammar sections feature follow-up exercises where learners practise grammar concepts, emphasizing one or two of four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Out of 12 grammar sections, only one includes listening along with the other skills in equal measure. In the remaining sections, grammar practice often combines three skills, such as speaking, writing, and reading. Three sections focus solely on reading and writing, while others emphasize writing and speaking, or only reading in one of the grammar practice sections. The listening exercise, featured in one of the grammar sections, is a listening comprehension activity called 'listen and check your ideas' when learners complete the correct forms of the verbs and then listen to an audio recording and check their answers.

At the conclusion of each A, B, C, D section, there is a 'Revision' part, comprising exercises that integrate grammar practice with all language skills. Among these parts, units one, three, five and six incorporate listening skills for grammar practice, featuring the following types of listening exercises (chapter 1.6.3.2):

1/ 'Ticking off items' an exercise focused on verb forms and syllable counting, and indefinite and definite articles (two exercises) p. 18, p. 78)

2/ 'Scanning' filling in the chart with relevant information provided in an audio recording (two exercises) p. 18, p. 42

3/ 'Detecting mistakes' - correcting information' in the text or in a dialogue when learners listen to audio recordings and then identify wrong information provided in the text or dialogue (two exercises) p. 42, p. 66

(Hutchinson, 2008, p.18, p. 42, p. 66, p. 78)

Type of an exercise	Ticking off item	Scanning	Detecting mistakes
Number of exercises	2	2	2

Table 6: Number of listening exercises within grammar practice – student's book

According to Table 6, there are six exercises that practise grammar through listening activities, and there are three types of these exercises in Revision sections – 'ticking off, scanning, and detecting mistakes' – each containing two exercises.

8.1.6 Listening exercises in 'Everyday English' section

In every unit of the coursebook 'Photo Episodes' are followed by 'Everyday English' sections. These segments focus on practicing English language skills. Listening exercises within 'Everyday English' section serve for verifying grammar accuracy, ordering conversation part, or reinforcing vocabulary practice.

Tasks are centred on the story, where useful expressions are explored through dialogues. Learners engage in pair or group activities to practice various conversation topics such as invitations, offering help, or making plans. Apart from speaking, which receives the most emphasis, learners also practice reading by completing expressions from the story within the dialogues, then comparing their answers with their peers. Subsequently, learners act out the dialogues or the entire episode in pairs or groups. Regarding writing, they transcribe lines from their dialogues and construct sentences for grammar practice (for example, using 'will or going to'), while simultaneously practicing conversation skills through phrases as 'offering help' or 'stating intentions'. Three segments are devoted to practicing listening skills through a series of exercises centred around conversation topics. All such exercises are 'Listen and Check' activities, designed to assist learners in comparing their dialogues with those presented in the listening material.

Listening exercises featured within this section involve:

1/ Ordering exercises

Task 17: Put these in the correct order to make a conversation.

Nice to meet you, too. ----

She's in my class. ---

This is my friend, Martin. ---

Hi, Trish. ---

Yes. ---

Martin, this is Trish. ---

Nice to meet you. ---

b/ Listen and check.

(Hutchinson, 2008, p. 15)

2/ <u>Matching</u> (chapter 1.6.5) when learners are engaged in pairing items, for example the beginnings of the expressions in A to the endings in B.

An example.

Task 18: Listen. Match the beginning of the expressions in A to the endings in B.

A	B
1 Sorry	Arrived, too
2 I´ve just	Dear
3 You won´t believe	I´m late
4 I don't want	all about it
5 Tell me	to know
6 Oh	what's just happened

(Hutchinson, 2008, p. 63)

8.2 Project 3, Fourth edition

The Project fourth edition consists of five courses designed for young learners between the ages of 10 and 15. This comprehensive curriculum guides students from a beginner level to an intermediate level of proficiency.

The Project 3, part of the fourth edition, includes a Student's Book, Workbook, class CDs, DVD, classroom presentation tool, Teacher's book, teacher's resources, and test bank. Each unit in the Student's Book is organized into six sections covering vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, and skill exercises, as well as featuring a Culture page, English across the curriculum section, Revision section, and Project section. Unlike the previous third edition, this coursebook also includes a Pronunciation section after each of the six units, as well as an extended reading section focusing on classic tales from around the world. Additionally, there is a Support section for teachers to assist in implementing the activities, providing general guidance and no-preparation activities that can be used flexibly. The resources accessible from the DVD and the Classroom Presentation Tool are also identified by a distinctive camera icon. These materials comprise cartoon stories, photo stories, and cultural pages, each focusing on topics that students can compare with their own country's context. The texts are intended to be engaging, illustrating the use of English in subjects of different fields. The 'English Across the Curriculum' section features different presentations on topics from other school subjects, including Science, Geography, History, and Computer Studies. Learners can discuss these topics using the newly introduced vocabulary, and also vocabulary learned in the related unit.

All listening materials recorded on class CDs are marked in the coursebook by a special headphone symbol, clearly identified that the exercise is connected to listening.

8.2.1 Integration of language skills in the coursebook

The coursebook Project 3 (Fourth edition) aims to improve proficiency in all four language skills. However, research on the exercises within the coursebook reveals an unequal distribution. To evaluate this balance, the total number of exercises was counted and compared with the number of exercises targeting each specific language skill.

Finally, the percentage representation of all exercises focusing on each skill was counted. Accuracy in counting was ensured by considering even the subparts of exercises (like 1a, 1b, 1c) individually. Additional exercises are grammar exercises above all or project tasks belonging separately to each unit, addressing the relevant topic.

To conclude, the percentage of exercises devoted to each skill, was calculated. The accuracy in counting was ensured by examining each subpart (1a,1b,1c) of exercises individually. The coursebook contains 473 all exercises, divided into the following categories: 117 exercises for listening, 76 for reading, 101 for speaking, and 48 for writing, corresponding to each unit.

It is highlighted again, as it has been mentioned with the previous analysis that every exercise was counted only once, even if it could belong to other skill categories. Each exercise was assigned to the skill that appeared to be the primary focus. An exercise involving both reading and listening was counted as a listening exercise, even though it involved reading as well.

Skills	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing	Other exercises	Total exercises
Number of exercises	117	76	101	48	131	473
%	25 %	16 %	21 %	10 %	28 %	

Table 7: Number of exercises devoted to language skills – student's book

Table 7 reveals that listening dominates the coursebook with 25% of exercises (117 in total), closely followed by speaking at 21% (101 exercises). Reading forms 16% (76 exercises), while writing is the least represented at 10% (48 exercises). The rest of the exercises involve grammar (82), vocabulary (29), project tasks (6), and other activities (14). The number of reading exercises has decreased because almost all texts now include added listening exercises. Consequently, the number of listening exercises has increased while the number of reading

exercises has decreased. This shift is due to the focus of the research, being on listening exercises.

8.2.2 Integrated exercises in the coursebook

Within listening exercises, there is a series of exercises that integrate another language skill alongside listening, 38 exercises that combine listening and reading, and ten exercises that combine listening and speaking, or four exercises that combine listening and writing.

Compared to the earlier edition, the newer edition of Project 3 includes 14 additional exercises in listening-reading activities, four more in listening-speaking exercises, and one extra in listening-writing activities. The exercises, combining both listening and reading, do not really change from the previous coursebook, content is the same but the coursebook has been redesigned with new illustrations, photos, and character names accompanying the reading texts and stories. Many reading texts in the Culture sections have been updated, particularly those addressing topics, such as families in Britain, the future, and transport (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 16, p. 20, p 28). Notably, the topic in unit six has been changed from 'emergency services' to public signs (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 76). Similar revisions were made in the English Across the Curriculum section, where the subjects in units one and five were replaced with History and Computer Studies (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 17, p. 65). Additionally, different famous personalities have been introduced in reading-listening exercises to engage more young learners, as seen in the coursebook (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 18, p. 56). Unlike the previous edition, all texts in the newer edition are accompanied by listening activities, allowing learners to listen simultaneously.

The reading passages offer learners the opportunity to become acquainted with the new vocabulary introduced in the course (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 12, p. 34, p. 44-45, p. 56, p. 60-61), or within the context of the texts and stories new grammar concepts are introduced as well (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 10-11, p. 22-23, p. 34-35, 46-47,56-57, 70-71). New vocabulary may be practised in comprehension exercises which follow up after reading passages. All these exercises are initiated with pre-listening tasks, mainly involving skimming or scanning activities, responding to questions or true/false exercises. These tasks vary in length and complexity, as illustrated in the following examples.

Ten exercises combining listening and speaking are included in the Pronunciation section of this coursebook, located separately at the end. These exercises primarily focus on listening activities that are focused on various aspects of pronunciation, such as short and long vowel sounds, diphthongs, identifying words using the phonetic alphabet, distinguishing between voiced and unvoiced consonants, and recognizing special consonant symbols. This focus is illustrated in the following example:

Task 19: Listen and repeat.

Sam just has a cheese sandwich, but Suzie usually chooses fish and chips.

(Hutchinson, 2014, p. 81)

Additionally, there are other speaking exercises that serve as follow-up tasks developing from previous listening exercises; however, these are classified separately as speaking exercises. An example of this is:

Task 20:

Listen and choose the correct answers

What can you remember? Give two more pieces of information about the woman.

(Hutchinson, 2014, p. 9)

Four additional listening exercises are integrated with writing tasks, requiring learners to listen to a recording and simultaneously write their responses. These tasks may include writing information about interviewed individuals or describing problems that people encounter. For example:

Task 21: Copy the chart. Listen. Write the problems in the first column. (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 69)

Integrated exercises with other language skills	Listening and reading	Listening and speaking	Listening and writing	Total number of integrated exercises	Total number of listening exercises
Number of exercises	45	10	4	59	117
%	38 %	9 %	3 %	50 %	

Table 8: Number of integrated listening exercises – student's book, Project Fourth edition

According to Table 8, there are 56 integrated exercises out of a total of 117 listening exercises that incorporate other language skills. Specifically, listening and reading exercises account for 45 tasks, representing 38% of the total. Listening and speaking exercises comprise ten tasks, making up 9% of the total. Lastly, listening and writing exercises constitute four tasks, which is only 4% of the total. Overall, these integrated exercises comprise 50% of all listening exercises.

To sum up, in the new edition, the number of listening-reading exercises has increased by 17. Additionally, there are four more listening-speaking exercises compared to the previous edition, while the number of listening-writing exercises remains unchanged.

8.2.3 Story based listening exercises in Project Fourth edition

All texts, including photo stories, cartoon stories, thematic texts connected with lesson topics, texts focused on life in English-speaking countries, or texts presenting various topics based on learners' school subjects, are supplemented with listening exercises in this edition. These additions aim to enhance comprehension and practice listening skills. In contrast to the

previous edition, the new coursebook includes extended texts focusing on classic stories, originating in various countries in the world. The texts contain vocabulary and dialogues intended as supplementary material for classroom presentations and acting activities.

Additionally, these stories help learners in expanding their active vocabulary. Through the use of extended texts, learners engage in extensive reading (chapter 2.3.1), complemented by simultaneous listening activities. Teachers have the opportunity to provide learners with background information to motivate them towards reading. In addition, teachers are encouraged to avoid focusing on grammar and vocabulary during learners' reading. Instead, they are advised to allow learners to find out language elements within context themselves.

Type of exercises	Answering questions		Ordering	Matching	Longer responses	True/ false	Multiple-choice exercise
	Scanning	Skimming					
Number of exercises	28	2	5	4	3	2	1

Table 9: Number of comprehension exercises – student's book, Project Fourth edition.

Based on this Table 9, the most frequently represented comprehension exercises are 'answering questions,' totalling 30 exercises. Among these, 28 exercises focused on scanning, while only two relate to skimming. Five exercises are devoted to ordering, four exercises focus on matching, two exercises assess true/false comprehension and only one exercise is related to multiple-choice types (chapter 1.6.5).

Comprehension tasks used in the coursebook were classified (chapter 1.6.3.2) as follows:

1/ answering questions about the text

Some answering exercises focus on scanning when learners look for the relevant information within the text or audio, here in the example it requires finding specific cues that match the people shown in the pictures. An example of a scanning exercise:

Task 22: Read and listen to the story. Who are the people in the pictures? (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 56)

Sometimes, these answering exercises use skimming which requires understanding the main events and overall outcome of the story, here in the following example to explain character's happiness. An example of skimming exercise:

Task 23: Read and listen to the story. Why is Sweet sue happy at the end? (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 58)

2/ ordering

An example:

Task 24: Read and listen to the story. Put the pictures in the correct order. (Hutchinson, 2014, p. 82)

3/ matching

An example:

Task 25: Read and listen to the story. Match the names to the actions.

1 Simon Yates	a/ stays at base camp
2 Joe Simpson	b/ cuts the rope
3 Richard Hawking	c/ breaks his leg

(Hutchinson, 2014, p. 86)

4/ longer responses

An example:

Task 26: Read and listen to the story. Answer the questions.

1 What is James's news about Matt?

2 What does Dylan think the news about Matt is?

3 Why does Dylan walk out?

(Hutchinson, 2014, p. 74)

5/ true/false statements

An example:

Task 27: Read and listen to the text. Are the statements true or false, or doesn't say?

1 Carl moved to England last year.

2 He wanted to leave New Zealand.

3 His father got a job with an international bank.

6/ <u>multiple-choice</u>

An example:

Task 28: Read and listen to the text. Choose the correct answers.

1 The plague came from

    a/ Europe   b/ Asia   c/ America

Type of exercises	Matching	Answering questions/scanning	Extended questions	Ordering	Multiple-choice exercise	Labelling
Number of exercises	4	4	2	1	1	1

Table 10: Number of listening exercises in 'Cultural and English across Curriculum' sections

Based on Table 10, there are four exercises dedicated to matching and scanning activities, and two exercises focused on extended questions. Additionally, there is one exercise each for ordering, multiple-choice, and labelling.

Extended questions (chapter 1.6.3.4) are comprehension questions focused on deeper learners' understanding and with these exercises, learners are encouraged to 'interpret and analyse.' An example:

Task 29: Read and listen to the text. Answer the questions.

    1 Why is the time different around the world?

    2 When did the system of time zones start?

    3 Why didn't we have them before?

    4 How many time zones are there?

5 Where is the Prime Meridian?

6 How many time zones are there in Russia?

7 How can you travel from today to yesterday?

(Hutchinson, 2014, p. 41)

Types of exercises	Ordering	Matching	Extended questions
Number of exercises	3	2	1

Table 11: Number of listening exercises in 'Reading section' – student's book

According to Table 11, this section of the coursebook, which is new in this edition, includes six listening exercises that develop learners' listening skills. These consist of three ordering exercises, two matching exercises, and one exercise focused on extended questions.

8.2.4 Listening exercises within grammar and vocabulary

New grammar concepts in this coursebook are introduced using interesting texts and stories. These contexts assist in making the grammar more memorable for learners. Activities that emphasize language skills are used to enhance learners' abilities to comprehend and communicate better in English. The fourth edition of Project adopts an inductive approach for teaching grammar, employing structured activities that encourage learners to deduce grammatical rules independently (Ur, 2012, p. 81).

Through offered reading learners become acquainted with the new vocabulary as well, applying it in subsequent language skill exercises which focus on vocabulary testing. Speaking and listening activities further strengthen the newly acquired vocabulary, encouraging learners' confidence.

In sections A, B, and C, there are grammar exercises and grammatical rules, followed by language skill activities to practice these rules through speaking, listening, and writing exercises. In this analysis, attention is given specifically to listening exercises that are used to practise grammar in each section of the lessons.

Type of exercises	Matching	Scanning	Answering questions	Multiple-choice	Detecting mistakes	Taking notes	Ticking off
Number of exercises	6	5	5	4	3	2	2

Table 12: Number of listening exercises within grammar and vocabulary practice

As presented in Table 12, within sections A, B, and C, listening exercises mainly consist of matching exercises, counting six exercises, as well as scanning exercises and answering questions, each comprising five exercises. Additionally, there are four exercises involving multiple-choice questions, three exercises focused on detecting mistakes, and two exercise devoting to taking notes and ticking off tasks.

At the end of each A, B, and C sections there is 'Revision' part which is meant to assist for seeing how well the language of the unit has been learnt, which is helpful either for learners or teachers who can discover if it is required further revision.

Types of exercises	Scanning	Ordering	Detecting mistakes
Number of exercises	3	2	1

Table 13: Listening exercises in 'Revision section'– student's book

According to Table 13, there the same exercises in this section as in the previous coursebook of Project third edition and the exercises almost have not changed.

8.2.5 Pronunciation section

Pronunciation exercises focus on key elements of English pronunciation, and the phonetic alphabet is consistently integrated into these activities. Total physical response exercises enhance pronunciation by encouraging students to physically react to the sounds they hear.

At the end of the student's book, there are two pages dedicated to a 'Pronunciation' section that focuses on important aspects of English pronunciation. This differs from the previous edition, where pronunciation exercises were scattered across sections A, B, C, or D. In total, there are 15 listening exercises to help learners improve their pronunciation. The content of these ∂exercises is the same as in the previous coursebook.

In the third edition, there are 45 pronunciation exercises, compared to only 26 in the fourth edition. Of these, 15 exercises in the fourth edition focus on listening skills. In the third edition, 31 out of the 45 exercises are dedicated to listening.

The number of exercises shows that some pronunciation topics are omitted in the newer edition compared to the older edition. The topics not covered in the newer edition include intonation, sentence and word stress, and the sounds /ə/, /p/, and /b/. Conversely, the fourth edition introduces the practice of the /dʒ/ sound and includes phonetic writing. Additionally, the topic of weak forms in the third edition is replaced with negative auxiliaries in the fourth edition.

8.2.6 Revision section

In both coursebooks songs are used to provide learners with engagement and motivation for learning natural language, the melody and rhythm can help in remembering vocabulary, through songs learners develop various listening skills, as different sounds of letters, accents and last but not least the speed of unclear speech as described in chapter 1.6.3.1.

Both these coursebooks integrate various songs, combining educational content with the enjoyment of music. At the end of each unit in the 'Revision' section', there are songs, making a total of six songs in each coursebook. The fourth edition has updated some of these songs to be more engaging and current for young learners. Three songs in the fourth edition have been replaced in all units except for Unit 1. To practice listening to songs, both coursebooks include various listening exercises designed to be enjoyable and appealing for learners.

Types of exercises	A list of words to fill in	Sequencing lines	Multiple-choice
Number of exercises	2	2	2

Table 14: Number of listening exercises within song listening activities – student's book

As represented in Table 14, this edition includes three types of exercises, each comprising two activities. A new type, multiple choice, is introduced and is more prevalent in this edition compared to the previous one.

8.3 Coursebooks Comparison

An outline based on the theoretical part (chapter 3.2.1) was created for better comparison of both textbooks.

Aims and objectives

The new edition essentially follows the same plan as the earlier edition and has not undergone any significant content changes, thus aligning with the outcomes of the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Schools and continuing to serve as suitable material for English language instruction.

Design and organization

Both coursebooks feature a suitable design and systematic arrangements, while each part has its own function which addressing learning and teaching needs. The original design has been enhanced in the fourth edition, with individual sections being more clearly colour-coded than in the previous edition, making them easier to navigate for both learners and teachers. The new graphic and content design of the coursebook further enhances this popular material in lower secondary schools. It is supplemented with new illustrations, more current photographs, and updated material that resonates more with the younger generation. The outdated characters of the series have been replaced in the fourth edition, along with the characters in the animated stories, which are now more accessible to today's learners and connect better with current trends.

Listening exercises

Coursebooks activities address the four fundamental language skills which are essential for efficient communication (See chapter 1.1). Listening activities in coursebooks follow a structured approach, including pre-listening, while-listening or post-listening reviews (See chapter 3.3.1). Coursebook listening activities, involving intensive listening (See chapter 2.1.1) in Project third edition, and a mixture of both intensive and extensive listening (See chapter 2.1.2) in Project fourth edition, contribute for enhancement of learners' listening skills. Listening exercises do not focus only on specific details but rather encourage learners to engage with the content meaningfully, supporting both cognitive and emotional connections. Both coursebooks include numerous group and pair activities, providing a variety of exercises which use listening skills for conversation practice and improve lesson diversity. New vocabulary is practiced through comprehension exercises that begin with pre-listening tasks (See chapter 4.2.2), which involve skimming or scanning activities (See chapter 4.2.5). The most common activity in the coursebooks are comprehension questions (See chapter 4.2.9), ranging from short to extended questions. Both coursebooks include pronunciation exercises. In Project Fourth

Edition, there is a dedicated section for pronunciation at the end of the book, while in Project Third Edition, these exercises accompany each lesson (See chapter 4.2.1).

Skills

Both coursebooks aim to integrate all language skills in a balanced manner. In the third edition, there are 463 exercises, and in the fourth edition, there are ten language skill exercises more. Looking at the proportion of individual language skills, listening takes the lead with 22% in both the third and fourth editions, with an additional three percentage points in the fourth edition. Despite all texts in the fourth edition being supplemented with listening exercises, the percentage difference is not significant. This is because the fourth edition significantly reduced exercises focusing on pronunciation, which counted 31 in the third edition and only 15 in the fourth, resulting in a considerable decrease in listening opportunities.

In contrast to the fourth edition, the third edition contains more speaking activities, counting 110 exercises, whereas in the fourth edition, there are only 101. According to the coursebook analysis, these speaking activities are likely replaced by listening exercises, which the new edition focused on more by supplementing all texts with listening activities. Reading activities continue to rank third in the fourth edition, with their quantity remaining relatively unchanged. As the coursebooks in this analysis were assessed based on listening, most reading activities that also incorporated listening elements were included in the count of listening exercises.

Writing remains in the fourth position in both textbooks, being the least represented among all language skills and, it must be said, somewhat neglected. However, considering that learners use workbooks, they have the opportunity to practice this skill in all these exercises, which are conducted only in written form and therefore in sufficient quantity to supplement the insufficient representation of written skills in the coursebooks.

In integrated exercises, listening is often combined with other language skills, particularly reading, in 45 exercises, representing a 5% increase compared to the third edition. The number of listening-speaking exercises has increased by 3%, while listening-writing exercises remain the same at 3% in both coursebooks.

Listening exercises in the newer coursebook are more diverse compared to the third edition. The fourth edition includes more multiple-choice exercises, extended questions, and note-taking activities.

Topic

The cultural content in the fourth edition now reflects the diverse ethnic population found in a lot of regions of contemporary Britain. The fourth edition has been significantly enhanced to meet the demands of the modern era and the diverse interests of today's learners.

In contrast to the previous edition, the new coursebook includes extended texts with simultaneous listening, focusing on classic simplified stories, originating in various countries in the world. Parts of each story are adapted into dialogue; which learners can practice in class.

Methodology

In terms of methodologies, the fourth edition has been enhanced with the introduction of more modern techniques in the learning and teaching processes. This includes the incorporation of total physical response activities in pronunciation exercises, aiming to attract learners' attention by encouraging physical responses to the sounds they hear. Additionally, the important method of 'extensive reading' has been added to promote independent reading among learners, allowing for responses only if desired (See chapter 2.1.2). None of these methods were included in the previous edition.

Practical considerations

The third edition coursebook can be supplemented with a DVD that enhances the Culture pages. The newer edition, however, is equipped with digital components designed to actively engage learners in the English language.

9 Questionnaire survey among learners

Having interviewed the teachers, a group of eight and ninth graders was selected because of their better experience with English learning than with younger learners of lower secondary school. The questionnaire was chosen as an efficient way to collect data from a large number of people. Asking each learner, the same set of multiple-choice questions ensured that the collected information was consistent, which helped in comparing and analysing the responses. This analysis aims to understand learners' engagement in listening in classroom lessons.140 respondents were involved in the questionnaire survey mong learners, eighth and ninth graders of four lower secondary schools.

9.1 Quantitative analysis

Question 1: We do listening exercises from the textbook.

Figure 1: Textbook listening

Based on the survey (See Figure 1), the majority of learners (135 out of 140) reported that they do listening exercises from the textbook, which indicates that the textbook's listening activities are widely used and learners likely to consider it valuable. This suggests that the textbook is a competent resource for developing listening skills, as it appears to meet the needs of most learners. The fact that five learners said they do not use the textbook for listening exercises. It could be useful to understand their reasons – for example, preference for other materials or any other problems they might have.

Question 2: I enjoy listening from the textbook because it prepares me for using English in the real world.
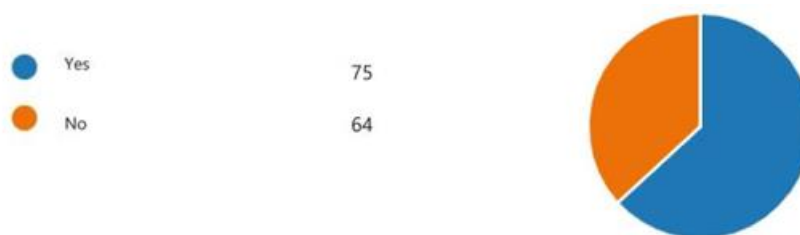
Figure 2: Listening enjoyment

The survey results (See Figure 2) about the textbook's listening exercises shows that 75 learners enjoy the listening activities and 64 do not find them enjoyable, so the coursebook meets the needs and preferences of just over half the learners. The feedback suggests that the textbook's listening exercises are efficient for a significant number of learners, yet there is room

for improvement to better engage the remaining students. The cause of such a result might be the textbook's content which is difficult or uninteresting for them.

Question 3: The listening from the textbook provides enough vocabulary for subsequent conversations.
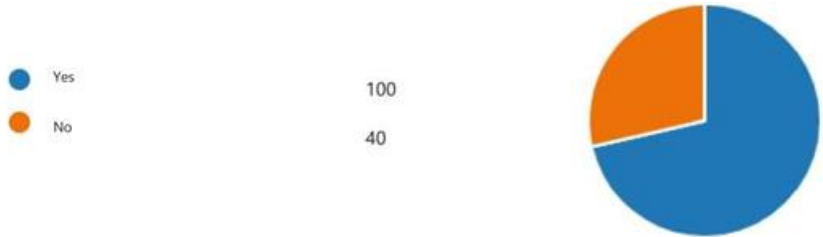

Figure 3: Textbook vocabulary

The survey result (See Figure 3) indicating that 100 out of 140 learners believe that the textbook provides enough vocabulary to continue with subsequent dialogues is a positive answer. This suggests that a majority of the learners find that the coursebook supports their learning needs in terms of vocabulary acquisition (See chapter 2.2.2). It illustrates that the coursebook is a supporting tool in preparing learners for conversations among each other, or future language use. However, it also means that 40 learners feel that the vocabulary provided is insufficient. This could suggest that the textbook could consider adding more vocabulary exercises or supplementary materials to ensure all students feel prepared for dialogues. It may also be useful to gather more detailed answers from these learners to understand their specific needs better.

Question 4: We also use other listening material than from the textbook.

Figure 4: Other listening material

The survey (See Figure 4) results indicate that students like YouTube videos as their preferred resource for learning English, followed by song lyrics and English teaching websites. This suggests that learners find multimedia content and interactive resources particularly engaging and efficient for language learning. Following closely behind are song lyrics and English teaching websites, which also offer interactive and multimedia learning experiences (See chapter 3.2.3.2). Learning through song lyrics can enhance listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, while English teaching websites provide structured lessons and additional learning resources. Audio podcasts were ranked as the third in preference, indicating that learners also value audio podcasts, offering them a method of learning that can be taken with them wherever they go. Presentations were ranked as the least preferred resource as they may not offer such engagement as other multimedia resources.

Question 5: We always practise all four language skills equally.

Figure 5: Practising language skills

The results (See Figure 5) reveal that a significant majority of 86 learners reported practicing all four language skills reading, writing, speaking, and listening equally, which indicates a balanced and comprehensive approach to learning a language (chapter 1.1, 1.2). On the other hand, the 50 learners who answered that they do not practice all four language skills equally present a contrast. This number of learners may have specific preferences that influence their learning methods. They might focus more on the skills which they find easier or more enjoyable, or they may need to focus on the skills they might need to improve.

Question 6: I am least concerned with this language skill.

🔵 Reading	26	
🟠 Writing	45	
🟢 Listening	44	
🔴 Speaking	24	

Figure 6: The least emphasized language skill

The survey results (See Figure 6) show a fairly balanced distribution of language skills with different preferences among the learners. Writing and listening are nearly equally prioritized, with 45 learners focusing on writing and 44 on listening. Reading and speaking are also distributed similarly, with 26 learners emphasizing reading and 24 focusing on speaking. Above all, it indicates that learners recognize the importance of developing all four language skills but they have various needs for language learning. The differences in numbers between the skills suggest that individual learners may have different learning styles, interests, or needs when it comes to language skill development.

Question 7: I mostly deal with this language skill.

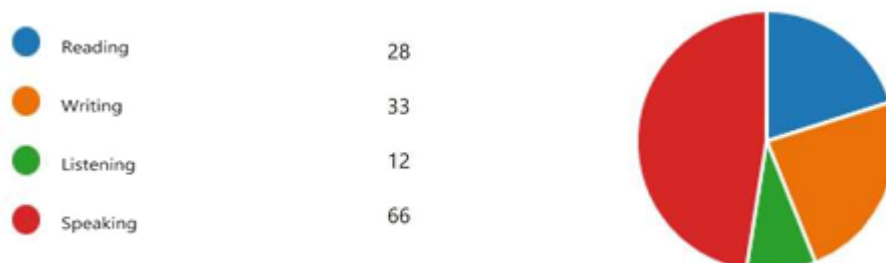|		
🔵 Reading	28	
🟠 Writing	33	
🟢 Listening	12	
🔴 Speaking	66	

Figure 7: The most emphasized language skill

The survey results (See Figure 7) indicate various levels of emphasis among learners on different language skills. A majority of 66 learners in total prioritize speaking, which suggests a strong focus on communication in the language and using the language efficiently. This preference for speaking may come from the understanding of the importance communication and interactions with other people in the real life. However, a number of 30 learners also emphasise writing skills, which indicates understanding of the importance of written communication as well, such as writing essays or emails. In contrast, fewer students prioritize

72

reading and listening skills, with 28 for reading and 12 learners for listening. Although reading and listening are important for understanding and learning a language, the fact that learners focus less on them suggests they might prefer speaking and writing because they find them more relevant or interesting at present.

Question 8: We often practise listening:

Yes   84

No   55

Figure 8: Listening practice

It is notable (See Figure 8) that a significant majority of 84 learners reported frequently practicing listening skills in class. This suggests that many learners recognize the importance of developing their listening skills within the classroom environment. However, the 55 learners who do not often practise listening in the class represent a smaller but still significant portion. Understanding the reasons behind their responses might need further observations about the learners' difficulties or problems.

Question 9: We listen to a teacher who speaks English.

Yes   118

No   22

Figure 9: Listening to an English-speaking teacher

It is clear from the survey results (See Figure 9) that 118 learners listen to an English-speaking teacher. This suggests a significant interest in learning from someone who communicates in English, when learners can be exposed to the language, improving their listening comprehension skills. It also indicates the efficiency of having English-speaking educators in facilitating language acquisition among learners.

73

Question 10: We play different roles that prepare us to use English in the real world.

Figure 10: Role-playing

The survey results (See Figure 10) show that 80 out of 140 learners confirmed that role-plays in the classroom prepare them for using English in the real life, which indicates an active learners' engagement in the classroom. By immersing themselves in different roles and interacting with others, learners can apply their language skills in similar situations as in the real life and improve learning a language and their confidence. The rest of learners, however, did not answer that playing roles help them use English in the real world, which may suggest that this approach may not be applicable to all. According to interviews with some teachers, it was mentioned that some learners do not like performing in front of the class, which might be the reason they do not believe in role-playing practice during English lessons.

Question 11: I don't mind engaging in a conversation with a classmate in the classroom.

Figure 11: Engaging in conversations

The survey results (See Figure 11) illustrate that 95 out of 140 students do not mind engaging in a dialogue with a counterpart in the class. This indicates a strong willingness among the majority of learners to participate in interactive activities, which is beneficial for developing communication skills and building confidence in using English as well. These interactions can improve their speaking and listening skills in a supportive classroom environment. However, it also suggests that there is a minority of 45 students who may feel less comfortable with such

activities. The reason could be the same as in the previous question that they do not feel comfortable when speaking in front of the class, as reported in teachers' interviews. Understanding their concerns could help create an even more effective learning environment.

Question12: We communicate in English class by asking each other questions.

● Yes	17
● No	123

Figure 12: Communicating by asking questions

According to the survey results (See Figure 12), 123 learners out of 140 do not engage in communication by asking questions in the classroom. This indicates that most learners might not be actively participating in classroom discussions or sharing ideas for better understanding. There could be barriers such as shyness, language proficiency, or lack of confidence preventing learners from asking questions. The classroom atmosphere may not be suitable for asking questions, possibly due to fear of judgment or time constraints. It might indicate a need to encourage more interactive learning and questioning.

Question 13: We only communicate in English in English lessons?

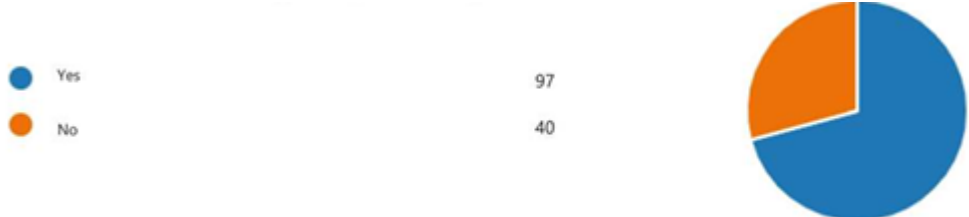|	
● Yes	97
● No	40

Figure 13: Communicating only English

The majority of learners (See Figure 13), 97 out of 140, reported exclusively communicating in English during their lessons. This suggests a strong commitment to

immersion in the English learning process, which can be very beneficial for developing fluency and proficiency in English. However, the 43 learners who did not confirm communicating in English may have various reasons for this, such as the level of language skills, feeling uncomfortable about using English, or other preferences. Addressing their concerns and providing additional support could help create a more efficient learning environment for all students.

Question 14: Textbook communication exercises prepare us to use English in the real world.
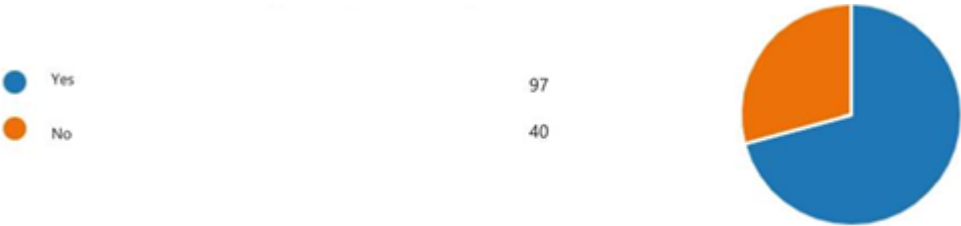
Figure 14: Textbook communication exercises

The survey results (See Figure 14) demonstrate that a large number of learners, 97 out of 140, believe that communication exercises from their coursebook prepare them to use English in real-world situations. This indicates a positive perception of the coursebook's communication activities as learners may feel that communication activities in the textbook can be useful for practical application outside the class. However, the fact that some learners did not share this attitude suggests that there may be room for improvement or variation in the types of communication exercises provide in the textbook.

10 Interviews with teachers

Interviewing with teachers was chosen as the most commonly used data collection method in qualitative research, often referred to as in-depth interviews (Švaříček and Šeďová, 2014, p. 159). This approach was suitable for more detailed questioning of a smaller number of research participants. It was considered a more appropriate choice compared to the questionnaire, which was employed in the subsequent research when surveying learners in the eighth and ninth grades.

The dialogues, conducted with four randomly chosen English teachers from two rural and two urban lower secondary schools, were guided by prepared open-ended questions designed to encourage discussion on topics which where the focus of the research.

Firstly, coding the texts of the dialogues was started to analyse systematically the gained information and to identify major themes and find relevant categories. Secondly, after coding which allowed to form comprehensive framework, a short story was written for each of the respondents which reflected the main ideas and observations during the coding process (Švaříček and Šeďová, 2014, p. 159-160).

10.1   Interview 1 summary

There is a summary of the provided information in dialogues, based on four open-ended questions (see Appendix E):

1/ Procedures and Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

- The teacher emphasizes teaching learners how to listen effectively through clear demonstrations and examples.
- Before playing listening material, she provides introductory information, pre-teaches vocabulary, and encourages eye contact and note-taking.
- Maintaining a quiet classroom environment during listening activities is crucial for learners to concentrate fully.
- Assigning tasks such as gathering specific information or finding key details gives learners a reason to listen and helps their focus.
- Post-listening activities include discussions, questions, and reflections to reinforce comprehension and connect the material to learners' interests.

2/ Evaluation and Comparison of Strategies

- The teacher evaluates her strategies based on learners' engagement, comprehension, and success in handling listening material.
- Pre-listening preparation, clear instructions, and post-listening discussions have proven effective in fostering listening skills.
- Utilizing models and examples, such as writing sample answers on the board, helps learners understand expectations and improves comprehension.
- Pair conversations, reading assignments, and various listening exercises from the coursebook contribute to comprehensive language skill practice.

3/ Listening Material and Beneficial Activities

- Listening exercises, typically done once a week, involve playing material multiple times to aid pronunciation and comprehension.
- Vocabulary pre-teaching, note-taking, and completing tables during listening exercises enhance learners' understanding and maintenance.
- Drawn stories, introductory texts, and illustrated stories are enjoyable listening activities for learners.
- The teacher acknowledges the potential benefits of multimedia content in newer coursebook editions for motivating learners in the digital age.

4/ Integration of English Language and Use of Native Language

- English is predominantly used for instructions, greetings, conversations, and reading texts, fostering an immersive learning environment.
- However, the teacher switches to Czech when explaining new grammar concepts or addressing disciplinary issues to ensure understanding.
- Maintaining a balance between English immersion and using the native language for complex explanations and disciplinary matters is essential.

To sum up, the teacher's approach emphasizes active engagement, clear instruction, and a balance between English immersion and native language support to effectively develop learners' listening skills and overall language proficiency.

Teacher 1 – interview summary

Ms Smith seems to be a dedicated educator who believes in the importance of teaching listening skills effectively to her learners. Throughout her dialogue, it is evident that she takes a methodical approach to this task, incorporating various strategies and techniques to ensure her learners grasp the content and improve their language comprehension.

Ms. Smith emphasizes the significance of pre-listening activities, providing contextual information, and introducing key vocabulary before playing any listening material. She believes this preparation helps learners build a foundation of knowledge, enhancing their ability to understand the content they hear. Moreover, she insists on maintaining a focused and quiet classroom environment during listening activities, understanding the challenges learners face in concentrating solely on auditory tasks.

To further engage her learners, Ms. Smith claims to assign tasks that require active listening, such as gathering specific information or identifying the main idea. By giving clear objectives, she aims to guide her learners' attention and facilitate their comprehension. Additionally, she encourages interaction by incorporating pair work and group discussions, acknowledging that some learners may feel more comfortable speaking in smaller settings.

Recognizing the importance of reinforcement, Ms. Smith tries to ensure that learners practise and reflect on what they have listened to. By asking for opinions and thoughts after a listening exercise, she encourages deeper engagement and aids in memory retention. Furthermore, she integrates various types of listening materials, including conversations, illustrated stories, and vocabulary exercises, to cater to different learning preferences and interests.

Despite facing constraints such as limited time and outdated course materials, Ms. Smith remains adaptable and resourceful in her approach. She acknowledges the need for improvement, such as updating materials to reflect current interests and utilizing multimedia resources for enhanced engagement. Additionally, she negotiates with the balance between English and Czech instruction, recognizing when each language is most effective for communication and comprehension.

10.2   Interview 2 summary

Below is a summary of the provided information in dialogue 2, based on the four open-ended questions:

1/ Procedures and Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

- The teacher employs a structured approach to listening activities, including pre-listening, listening, and post-listening phases.
- She emphasizes creating a conducive environment for listening, ensuring clear instructions, and providing contextual information.
- Interactive discussions about cultural aspects related to the material help learners understand the context better.
- Specific tasks assigned before and after listening exercises encourage learners to focus on key details and facilitate comprehension.
- After listening, discussions and reflection activities help learners connect the material to their own experiences.

2/ Evaluation and Comparison of Strategies

- The teacher evaluates the effectiveness of her strategies based on learners' engagement, comprehension, and participation.
- Pre-listening preparation and interactive discussions have proven beneficial for learners' understanding and maintenance of listening material.
- Utilizing visual aids and interactive elements from the coursebook, such as videos and sound clips, enhances engagement, especially for weaker learners.
- While some strategies may limit the perception of the broader context for some learners, the overall approach ensures varied and comprehensive listening practice.

3/ Listening Material and Beneficial Activities

- The coursebook provides diverse listening materials, including CDs, DVDs with photo stories, and an interactive classroom presentation tool.
- Tasks directly focusing on specific information during listening activities help learners anticipate questions and stay focused.

- Visual support and interactive elements aid comprehension and engagement, while additional resources like TED Talks and e-books offer supplementary listening practice.

- Post-listening discussions and role-plays based on the listening material further reinforce comprehension and communication skills.

4/ Integration of English Language and Use of Native Language

- English is mainly used in class for instructions, tasks, and communication, fostering an immersive learning environment.

- The teacher addresses disciplinary issues and explains English grammar primarily in English, adapting to the needs of individual learners.

- Occasionally, explanations may be provided in Czech, especially for weaker learners during differentiated instruction, to ensure understanding and engagement.

To sum up, the teacher's approach emphasizes active engagement, contextual understanding, and varied practice to develop learners' listening skills effectively while maintaining a balance between English immersion and support in the native language when necessary.

Teacher 2 – interview summary

Ms. Black represents herself as an educator who organises each session with precise attention to detail and care to ensure her learners' development within the English language acquisition. Her dedication to cultivating effective listening skills among her learners is evident in her systematic and methodical approach to lesson presentations.

At the heart of Ms. Black's methodology lies the Project 4th edition textbook, a versatile tool that integrates digital elements to make learning engaging and interactive for elementary school learners. Through listening exercises provided on Classroom Presentation Tool DVDs and featuring acted photo stories or animated drawn stories, it is apparent that Ms. Black attracts her learners' attention and immerses them in the English language.

Ms. Black seems to utilize well-established practices for listening sessions, which include pre-listening, listening, and post-listening activities. In her own words, she emphasizes the importance of maintaining a quiet environment during these exercises, presumably, allowing her learners to fully concentrate and engage with the material presented to them.

Before engaging in listening activities, Ms. Black seems to provide her learners with clear introductory information to grasp the purpose of the listening task and familiarize with key vocabulary or cultural contexts relevant to the topic at hand. By encouraging interactive discussions on traditions, customs, and cultural significance, she may deepen her learners' understanding and connection to the material.

Motivated by the desire to engage her learners actively, Ms. Black appears to assign specific tasks adapted to each listening exercise, prompting her learners to search for key details and essential information. Following this, she might facilitate discussions that encourage reflection and sharing of opinions, possibly allowing her learners to consolidate their learning and relate it to their own experiences.

Despite challenges such as the limitation of visual support and the need for occasional explanations in Czech, it seems that Ms. Black remains adaptable and resourceful in her teaching. Through using interactive features and online resources, she appears to skilfully maintain her learners' attention engaged, integrating role-playing activities based on video content for additional support.

Collaborating with a native speaker could potentially benefit both learners and teachers, as learners may be accustomed to constant exposure to English during classes, possibly finding it enjoyable. Throughout her teaching, Ms. Black also seems to maintain a consistent use of English in the classroom, providing instructions, tasks, and guidance in the language. It appears that she recognizes the importance of differentiation, adapting her teaching to meet the needs and abilities of individual learners, ensuring that each learner may receive the necessary support and attention to facilitate their success.

10.3   Interview 3 summary

Based on the provided information in dialogue 3, there is a summary of the teacher's approaches to teaching English, along with her evaluation of these strategies:

1/ Procedures and Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

- The teacher utilizes listening activities once a week, following a three-phase approach: pre-listening, listening, and post-listening.
- She emphasizes vocabulary review before listening and engages learners with questions to activate prior knowledge.
- Learners work independently during listening, take notes, and engage in group discussions afterward to consolidate understanding.
- Follow-up tasks include writing summaries, completing stories, and creating conversations in pairs based on the listening material.

2/ Evaluation of Strategies

- The teacher finds the current methodology effective, especially in maintaining engagement and comprehension.
- She acknowledges the limitations of time and curriculum constraints but believes in the value of consistent listening practice.
- Strategies are evaluated based on their ability to cater to individual learner needs and maintain a stimulating classroom environment.

3/ Listening Material and Activities

- Listening materials are solely sourced from the coursebook, focusing on conversations and dialogues.

- The teacher incorporates various follow-up tasks to reinforce listening comprehension, such as writing assignments and paired conversations.
- Role-plays and group activities are less emphasized due to time constraints but are still practiced in pairs or small groups.

4/ Integration of English Language

- English is chiefly used in class, with clear instructions given in English to promote language immersion.
- The teacher switches to the native language (Czech) when learners struggle to understand complex instructions or grammar explanations.
- Learners engage in English language activities such as discussions, reading, and listening exercises, but may return to Czech for deeper comprehension or clarification.

The teacher's approach emphasizes structured listening practice, vocabulary reinforcement, and a balance between English immersion and native language support to facilitate comprehension and engagement among learners. While time constraints and curriculum requirements present challenges, the teacher makes a strong effort to maintain a stimulating learning environment for her learners.

Teacher 3 – interview summary

Ms. Jones gives an impression of being an experienced teacher, with 17 years of teaching English to eighth and ninth graders. Her devotion to her work is evident in her commitment to providing her learners with comprehensive listening exercises, despite time constraints imposed by the curriculum.

At the centre of Ms. Jones's teaching lies the textbook of Project 3, Third edition, in her opinion, a trusted resource that she has found to be effective in her classroom over the years. While aware of the newer Project 4th edition, Ms. Johnson remains loyal to the third edition due to its well-suited methodology and familiarity.

In her classroom, Ms. Jones conducts listening to activities once a week, using materials exclusively from the coursebook. Despite the absence of additional resources like videos, in her own words, learners listen to the text twice, discuss it and then listen again for reinforcement. The entire text is listened to in parts, discussing them in detail to enhance comprehension. Ms

Jones seems to focus on checking comprehension through discussion rather than having learners follow along with the text.

It appears that Ms. Jones follows a three-step strategy to her listening sessions: pre-listening, listening, and post-listening activities. She believes in activating her learners' pre-existing knowledge before listening, possibly allowing them to better situate the material and focus on key information during the exercise.

During listening, Ms. Jones suggests that her learners may find it helpful to take notes, helping them organize information and remember essential points. Afterward, she facilitates group discussions, aiming to check understanding and reinforce learning through peer interaction.

Reflecting on her teaching practices, Ms. Jones seems to emphasize the importance of catering to individual learner needs and maintaining a stimulating classroom environment. She evidently acknowledges the value of repetition in improving listening skills and actively involves both advanced and weaker learners in follow-up tasks.

While Ms. Jones primarily relies on the coursebook for listening materials, it seems that she occasionally modifies activities to suit her learners' needs and interests, prioritizing essential skills such as communication and grammar.

10.4   Interview 4 summary

Based on the provided information in dialogue 4, there is a summary addressing each question using the open coding method:

1/ Procedures and strategies for developing listening skills:

- Starting with vocabulary to ensure fair understanding for all learners.
- Providing tasks beforehand to aid comprehension during listening activities.
- Utilizing a variety of listening materials beyond the coursebook, including online resources.
- Engaging learners with diversity listening materials such as songs, short films, and interactive websites.
- Encouraging regular listening practice and providing feedback after each activity.

2/ Evaluation of strategies and comparison with successful methods:

- The teacher's approach involves a systematic method that integrates vocabulary, prediction tasks, and post-listening discussions, which aligns with successful teaching methods.
- Emphasis on exposure to diverse listening materials and regular practice reflects effective strategies for developing listening skills.
- Integration of interactive resources and multimedia content enhances engagement and motivation, contributing to successful outcomes.

3/ Listening material and beneficial activities:

- Utilizing listening materials from the coursebook, supplemented with digital resources, DVDs, and online exercises.
- Beneficial activities include pre-listening tasks, prediction exercises, and post-listening discussions.
- Engaging learners with diverse and authentic listening material, such as songs, short films, and interactive websites

4/ Integration of English language and use of the native language:

- English language lessons are conducted entirely in English to promote immersion and language practice.
- Native language is used sparingly for clarification or explanation of complex concepts.
- Emphasis on English communication during assessments and disciplinary matters, with occasional use of native language for efficiency

Teacher 4 – interview summary

Ms. Anderson appears to be a teacher committed to her profession, having taught English to ninth graders for several years. She seems to handle the challenges presented by the coursebook of Project 3, Fourth edition, with apparent grace and determination.

According to Ms. Anderson, her learners encounter obstacles with the coursebook, particularly in recognizing its rich vocabulary and extensive grammar content. Despite its difficulty, she appears to devote significant time to listening activities, conducting them twice a week to adapt her lesson plans to meet the needs of the curriculum.

In her classroom, Ms. Anderson follows a clear procedure for each listening activity, beginning with introducing vocabulary to ensure her learners grasp key concepts. She believes that this preparatory step helps them anticipate what they will hear and remember important information, essential for learners who struggle with retention.

Before the listening tasks, Ms. Anderson apparently provides her learners with focused questions, keeping them engaged and attentive throughout the exercise. It seems that she mainly utilizes various tasks from the coursebook to extract information from the listening material, sometimes integrating image-based guessing to enhance engagement.

Seemingly, during listening sessions, taking notes is required of her learners to organize thoughts and remember details. She tries to include all four language skills in listening activities, although occasionally this may not be completed due to time constraints.

Following each listening activity, Ms. Anderson facilitates her learners through a series of clear and straightforward questions aimed at evaluating comprehension and enhancing retention. Learners might be prompted to write summaries in their notebooks, possibly facilitating review and subsequent classroom discussion.

In her own words, Ms. Anderson believes in the effectiveness of the new coursebook, which she finds more engaging for her learners. Its interactive features, such as the Classroom Presentation Tool, cultivate a learning environment that motivates her learners to participate actively.

To supplement their learning, Ms. Anderson states that she introduces various online listening materials to her learners, such as songs, short films, and interactive websites like 'Free Rice. She sees these resources as valuable opportunities for learners to engage with real-world English while making a positive impact through charitable activities.

Listening activities may be complemented by practical applications, such as pair work through conversations and group work through role-plays based on real-life situations. After each activity, feedback is invited, possibly enabling learners to assess their development and identify areas for improvement.

11 Interview comparison

All interviewed teachers demonstrate a dedicated approach to teaching listening skills (see Appendices A, B, C, D) even if with distinct emphases and approaches.

The interview (see App. A) revealed that Ms. Smith engages learners in active tasks, pair work and group discussions, acknowledging that some learners may feel more comfortable speaking in smaller settings. Ms Smith tries to ensure active engagement by asking for opinions and thoughts after listening exercises (see App. A). Despite some limits, she remains adaptable and resourceful, aiming to update materials when using illustrated stories or vocabulary exercises (see App. A). According to Appendix C, Ms. Jones also relies on the Project 3 third edition coursebook for her listening activities, even though a newer edition is available. She prefers this coursebook due to its methodology and her familiarity with it (Appendix C). Unlike Ms Smith, she prioritizes comprehensive listening exercises (see Table 3) and emphasizes these activities on a weekly basis (see App. C). Appendix C displays that she employs a three-step strategy, including pre-listening, listening and post-listening activities (chapter 2.3.1, Table 3, Task 15) and encourages peer interaction to enhance comprehension through repetition and discussion. Providing a comfortable learning environment for each individual learner, she engages her learners in pair activities as Ms Smith (see Appendices A, C).

In contrast, Ms. Anderson, committed to the Project 3 fourth edition, addresses challenges in vocabulary and grammar content by conducting listening activities two times per week (see App. D). She introduces vocabulary and focused questions to engage learners, using interactive features in the coursebook, and additional online resources, such as songs, short films, and interactive websites to supplement learning (see App. D). Appendix D shows that pair work and group activities are accompanied by feedback sessions. Ms. Black's methodology also focuses on the coursebook of Project fourth edition, integrating digital elements such as Classroom Presentation Tool and DVDs with acted photo stories and animated stories for learners 'engagement (see App. B). Appendix B presents her established practices, including clear introductory information and appropriate tasks.

Appendix A emphasizes the importance of pre-listening activities, such as providing contextual information and introducing key vocabulary to build a foundation for understanding. Ms. Jones activates preceding knowledge before listening, encourages note-taking during listening, and uses group discussions afterward (App. C). During listening, Ms Smith and Ms

Jones provide a comfortable and focused environment for learners to engage with the language through assigning active listening tasks in pair work (Appendices A, C). Ms Smith includes post-listening discussions for reflection and reinforcement, in a similar way as Ms Jones (App. A, C).

The appendices B and D indicate that both these teachers follow a structured approach to classroom listening, including pre-listening, while-listening and post- listening activities. Both teachers begin with introducing vocabulary (Appendices B and D), Ms Anderson also provides focused questions to keep learners engaged, learners are required to take notes during listening and post listening activities include summarizing and discussion questions to evaluate comprehension and retention (App. D). In Ms Black' classroom, post-listening activities often involve discussions, interactive discussions on cultural context, role-playing activities based on video content to reinforce knowledge. Ms. Black assigns specific tasks for each listening exercise and she also collaborates with native speakers to enhance engagement and language exposure (App. B**).** Ms. Anderson enhances engagement by using image-based guessing tasks and integrating practical applications like pair work and group role-plays. She invites feedback after each activity to help learners assess their progress and identify areas for improvement (App. D).

Ms. Anderson acknowledges the obstacles her learners face with the extensive vocabulary and grammar content of the coursebook. She adapts her lesson plans to meet curriculum needs and supplements with additional materials to provide a more engaging learning experience (App. D). App. C presents that **Ms. Jones** is committed to her chosen coursebook but modifies activities to suit her learners' needs and interests. She recognizes the importance of repetition and the need to cater to individual learning styles. Ms. Smith faces constraints such as limited time and outdated materials but remains adaptable. She acknowledges the need for improvement, such as updating materials and using multimedia resources for enhanced engagement (App. A). Ms. Black faces challenges such as limited visual support and the need for occasional explanations in Czech. However, she remains adaptable by using interactive features and online resources to maintain learner engagement and support comprehension (App. B).

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of listening instruction by comparing the content and methodologies of two selected coursebooks, the third and fourth editions of 'Project'', and their impact on listening acquisition within the context of lower secondary education.

The theoretical part focused on summarizing the theoretical aspects of teaching and learning listening in the context of foreign language acquisition and described the practices, processes, and strategies essential for various listening purposes and contexts. Additionally, the development of communicative competencies through listening was addressed, which helps learners overcome challenges faced in listening instruction. Furthermore, the role of coursebooks in teaching and learning listening skills was examined, highlighting the materials and activities that a useful coursebook should contain to support both teacher preparation and the development of learners' listening skills. Finally, categories of listening exercises designed to improve the practical use of the language within the classroom were listed, which was then used in the subsequent comparison of coursebooks in practical part of the study.

The analyses in the practical section focused on four selected lower secondary schools, English language teachers, and learners in the eighth and ninth grades. This section examined the extent to which listening skills are represented in coursebooks and compared the listening exercises in the third and the newer fourth editions of the 'Project' coursebook. Additionally, it investigated teacher and student preferences and shortcomings of listening exercises and materials in the selected coursebooks, based on their feedback. Information was gathered by comparing both coursebooks and creating tables for individual parts of each book. A questionnaire was administered to learners, and graphs were created based on this questionnaire to illustrate preferences and shortcomings in listening instruction. Concurrently, interviews were conducted with teachers, who highlighted their proven practices, strategies, and processes for teaching listening skills, and mentioned deficiencies encountered in the teaching process.

Based on the research findings, it is possible to address the research questions examined in this study.

What is the relative weight of listening skill activities, in terms of the number of pages in selected coursebooks, as compared to other skills?

It was found that listening is represented in both coursebooks to a nearly equal extent, with the newer edition showing a 3% increase in the number of listening exercises. The comparative results from the coursebooks under consideration were satisfactory, realizing that listening skills play a primary role among language skills.

What are the prevalent types of listening activities and exercises, included in selected lower secondary school coursebooks?

Both examined and compared coursebooks contain similar types of listening exercises, with the most common exercises focusing on comprehension and assessment of listening skills through questions presented to students at the beginning, during, or after listening. In the newer edition of the coursebook, there is a higher occurrence of multiple-choice exercises, which are not present at all in the previous edition. Both coursebooks include pre-listening activities preceding each listening exercise. Listening exercises targeting gist or detail comprehension are evenly distributed in both materials, as they are exercises aimed at vocabulary, pronunciation or grammar acquisition through listening.

What are the preferences of English language teachers and learners regarding teaching materials in selected coursebooks?

After analysing the preferences of English teachers and their learners regarding teaching materials in the selected coursebooks, the conclusion was reached that the coursebooks meet the requirements of both learners and teachers, particularly with the fourth edition introducing several improvements over the third edition. While the coursebooks and classroom activities efficiently support language learning for a majority of learners, there is a clear need for continuous improvements and more individualized approach to address the diverse needs and preferences of all learners.

Preferences for other learning resources revealed a strong inclination towards multimedia content, with You Tube videos being the most favoured, followed by song lyrics and English teaching website. This preference emphasizes the importance of integrating interactive and multimedia resources into language learning. Teacher interviews confirmed that teachers evaluate coursebooks with an emphasis on their role in supporting rather than dictating the teaching process. They also noted that multimedia resources provide valuable improvements to traditional coursebooks, making it more engaging and relevant for today's lower secondary school learners.

How do learners and teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of listening in their lesson?

A balanced approach to practising all four language skills is evident, with three quarters of learners reporting equal practice of all skills. The most prioritized language skill was speaking, which confirmed a strong focus on communication, emerging from the fact that a majority of students and teachers confirmed communication exclusively in the English language during their English lessons, which was supported by learners' surveys and teacher interviews, indicating that role-plays and dialogues in class are fairly appreciated. The improvement in speaking skills is closely linked to the enhancement of listening skills, highlighting that both abilities are actively practiced in classrooms and favoured by learners.

However, the student questionnaire revealed that the vast majority are afraid to ask questions and respond independently in English when faced with uncertainties. Such questions arise from the direct initiative of the learner, and this spontaneity appears to be a problem in communication within the selected classes. Role-playing and dialogues with classmates are not an issue for the students because these are controlled forms of communication in which they feel comfortable, unlike spontaneous reactions in front of all their peers. This was also confirmed by teacher interviews and the student questionnaire.

This research could support teachers' decision if select the newer edition of the 'Project' coursebook, which may introduce more attractive interactive elements not only for teaching listening skills but also for other language competencies. The study might also suggest teachers who still adhere to traditional teaching methods introducing interactive activities, tools and technologies that are more accessible to learners in the learning process in today's multimedia age and that can enrich learners' interest in learning a foreign language. This work could also simplify teachers' selection of coursebooks with regard to the listening exercises described in this study, which they could implement in teaching listening skills to their learners.

However, this study has some limitations that should be considered in future research. Primarily, the research was conducted in only four schools in the same region and included only eighth and ninth-grade learners. Therefore, future research should focus on a larger sample of lower secondary school learners. To make the study more comprehensive, it would be advisable to include more lower secondary schools in the research from different regions.

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List of tables

List of figures

List of appendices

Appendix A: Interview 1

Appendix B: Interview 2

Appendix C: Interview 3

Appendix D: Interview 4

Appendix E: Open questions for teachers

Appendix F: Survey questionnaire among learners

Appendix G: Rozhovory s učiteli

Appendix H: Otevřené otázky pro učitele

Appendix I: Průzkumový dotazník mezi žáky