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**PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY CZECH
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH IN LISTENING
EXERCISES**

Diplomová práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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Vlastnoruční podpis

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Abstract

Research results of this theses have shown that students make mistakes more often in listening exercises with production responses than in exercises with recognition responses. Furthermore, on the basis of questionnaire replies it was found that the most common difficulties encountered by Czech students in listening exercises are: unknown expressions, fast speech of the speaker, lack of concentration, information mentioned implicitly and too complex text of the recording. The interview wit English teacher have showed that students also struggle with the following aspects of spoken English: the difference between spoken and written form of words, reduced forms of function words, the rythm of English and pronunciation of some phonemes.

Introduction

“We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.”

— Epictetus

As this quote has shown listening plays a vital role in our lives. There are also many purposes for listening, as stated by Wilson (2009, p. 16). For instance, we use our listening skills to gather information about the world around us, for entertainment, for the purpose of a social interaction or to learn a new language. Furthermore, since English is nowadays used as an international language for communication, many sources of listening are available only in this language. Consequently, listening skills, besides speaking skills, are the key element in language learning.

However, as stated by Rixon (1986, p. 36), learners consider listening probably the most difficult of all four language skills. Thus, the goal of every good teacher should be to eliminate students' fear of listening and help them to improve their listening skills. However, before they can do so, it is necessary to identify mistakes that students make in listening exercises, possible causes of these mistakes as well as the causes of their listening difficulties. Consequently, this is precisely the reason why I am interested in the topic. Nevertheless, as I study to be upper secondary school teacher, the research field is narrowed to these students only.

The main aims of this thesis are therefore to determine the following:

- 1) What are the most common mistakes in listening exercises completed by Czech upper primary school students of English?
- 2) What are the listening comprehension problems encountered by Czech upper primary school students of English?

Furthermore, it should be also noted that, because it was not possible to carry out such research on all pupils of upper primary school, a sample of 172 students who attend the elementary school in Plumlov was selected. The elementary school in Plumlov was chosen because of the fact, that I was teaching at this school during my practice and my mentor teacher was willing to participate in this research.

This thesis is divided into two parts. The theoretical part focuses on the general aspects of listening and the importance of listening. It also provides an overview of different types of listening, listening sources and listening texts. Finally it also deals with the possible learners' listening comprehension difficulties.

The practical part of this thesis is based on three different methods. In order to determine the most common mistakes in listening exercises and their possible causes, the semi-annual tests completed by above mentioned students were analysed. The second instrument was questionnaire, which was employed in this research to determine students' problems in listening comprehension. Finally, a semi-structured interview with English teacher was conducted in order to know which features of spoken English may also affect students' listening comprehension, as the students themselves are probably not aware of these features and their effect on their listening comprehension.

The practical part then contains description of the chosen methods, the subjects as well as the whole process of the research. Finally the research results and their analysis and interpretation are introduced.

1 Listening and its importance

Since the practical part of this thesis is focused on the problems of students in listening exercises, it is necessary to mention some basic issues that are related to listening. This chapter should also convince the reader of the importance of listening in foreign language teaching.

1.1 Language skills

As Julian Edge (1993, p. 104) writes, listening is one of four language skills. Except the one already mentioned it also includes speaking, reading and writing. These skills, according to Edge, are approached from two different perspectives in terms of language teaching. They can be either means of language learning or language can be used in order to develop these skills. As the practical part of this thesis is focused on pupils' comprehension problems in listening exercises, the second approach to this issue will be followed.

Language skills, as mentioned by Edge (1993, p. 104), can be grouped into two pairs according to the way they are used. The first way of doing so is to group listening and speaking together, as these skills are used in face-to-face communication, whereas reading and writing are used in written communication. Edge also states the division into receptive and productive skills. Listening in this case, as well as reading, belongs to the receptive skills as these skills are used to receive language. The other two skills are used to produce language and thus they are referred to as productive skills (*ibid*).

Lindsay and Knight (2006, p. 47) add to this, that even though listening is about receiving information listeners do not have to be passive. While listening actively, which means that listeners are able to control what they are listening to, people can ask for repetition, clarification or they can interrupt the speech. This is however not possible while listening to a recording and thus listening in lessons is rather passive.

1.2 Importance of listening

For instance, Doff (1988, p. 198) argues the need to teach listening as “we cannot develop speaking skills unless we also develop listening skills”. Both of these skills are however, how Doff believes, very important not only for successful conversation or listening to the radio but also for acquiring the language itself. Therefore, pupils should practice listening to the same extent as speaking.

Harmer (2009, p. 133) is also aware of the importance of listening exercises. According to Harmer, listening should not be neglected in English lessons mainly because there is a difference in “how people speak and the way they write”. As Harmer further adds, listening is also good for practicing pronunciation as pupils will be more aware of suprasegmental features of English. Furthermore, there is also link between successful communication and “effectiveness of the way we listen” (ibid).

In addition to this, Lindsay and Knight (2006, p. 47) are convinced, that listening is also very demanding skill that requires a lot of practice. Lindsay and Knight (ibid) demonstrate this by listing everything that has to be done in order to interpret the message. First listeners have to decode individual sounds, then syllables, words, clauses, sentences and also longer units of spoken English. Moreover, listeners also have to deal with intonation or sentence stress. Finally, all this has to be done as fast as the speaker speaks.

1.3 Different kinds of listening

With regard to listening, it should be also clarified that there are different kinds of listening.

1.3.1 Extensive and intensive listening

Harmer (2009, p. 134) distinguishes between intensive and extensive listening. Extensive listening differs from the other, according to Harmer, mainly as it is done outside of the classroom and it serves for pleasure, to obtain information or for some other reasons. The biggest difference, however, is that this kind of listening is done voluntarily and without the presence of a teacher. Such kind of listening include, as mentioned by Harmer, listening to music, watching videos on the Internet or watching movies.

In this thesis, however, we will deal only with the intensive listening. This type of listening, as described by Harmer (2009, p. 134), is usually done in the classrooms in order to practice listening or pronunciation.

Rixon (1986, p. 9) also mentions these terms in her book, however, she describes them in slightly different way. Intensive listening, according to Rixon (ibid), is done when listeners do not have to concentrate on every word and they just enjoy what they are listening to. This can be for instance the case when listening to some easy stories. Intensive listening, on the other hand, is done with great attention and in order to remember series of information (ibid). This type of listening is probably used more often in English lessons and it is also the type of listening to which the practical part of this thesis is dedicated to. Rixon (1986, p. 10) however further adds, that extensive type of listening should not be overlooked as it is important source of learners' motivation for improving listening skills.

1.3.2 Listening for enjoyment and for information

The above mentioned division partly corresponds to that mentioned in Edge's book. Julian Edge (1993, p. 106) divides the types of listening according to listener's motivation into listening for enjoyment and for information. While listening for enjoyment, pupils are not required to complete any exercise or task. Nevertheless, listening for information is used more frequently in English lessons. Provided that this type of listening is chosen for a lesson, Edge (ibid) reminds to keep in mind that "We do not use listening to teach texts, we use texts to teach listening". The aim of a listening activity therefore should not be understanding every word, but to become better listener.

1.3.3 Casual and focussed listening

Doff (1988, p. 199), on the other hand, differentiate between casual and focussed listening. Both types of listening differ with regard to the level of listener concentration. Casual listening, as described by Doff, is done without any particular purpose and thus even without concentration. The type of listening that is dealt with in the practical part is however focused listening, as it is done with purpose. It does not mean, however, that the listener concentrates on every word equally. As pointed out by Doff (ibid), “we listen for the most important points or for particular information”. Therefore it is very crucial for pupils to know what they are going to hear and what they should focus on.

2 Listening in the classroom

According to Rixon (1986, p.8), there are two main reasons for using a listening recording in English lesson. Firstly, it can be used as a model of spoken language which pupils should subsequently imitate. This is however, as Rixon mentions, not the ideal way to train listening comprehension as such types of recordings usually contain only trivial information, limited variety of language forms as well as the pronunciation of the speaker is fairly slow and careful. These models of the spoken language are thus very different from what learners will have to face in real life (ibid). Secondly, as Rixon (ibid) further mentions, recordings can be also used in order to improve learners' listening skills. The usage of listening recordings for this purpose is also the subject of the theoretical part of this thesis. Recordings which are intended to support students' listening comprehension improvement then should contain more information and the delivery of the speaker should be reasonably fast and natural (ibid).

2.1 Listening sources

Rixon (1986, p.11) states, that there are basically two types of listening sources used in English lessons. Very common and practical is the usage of recorded materials, however, students can also benefit from listening to their teacher or even to each other. This is called live listening (ibid). Such type of listening, as believed by Rixon (ibid), encompasses many benefits for listeners. As they are in contact with the speakers they can use expressions or gestures to let the speakers know whether they understand or not as well as they can ask for repetition or clarification. On the other hand, speakers' gestures can help listeners to better understand the content of their message. However, there are also some drawbacks of live listening. As it follows from the essence of a live listening, it cannot be paused or replayed as recorded materials. Furthermore, some of the non-native teachers may not be sufficiently good models of the language (ibid).

In most cases, as Harmer (2009, p. 133) admits, very important and also the most common source of spoken English for learners is their teacher. Nevertheless, Harmer also emphasizes that other sources of listening should be used in English lessons so that pupils can encounter even other types of accents and other differences.

In addition to teachers, other sources of listening, as presented by Harmer (2009, p. 134), can be recorded extracts. As the practical part of this thesis is precisely based on these sources of listening, they should be presented in more detail. As stated by Harmer (2007, p. 304), these listening sources have a lot of advantages, as well as disadvantages. As for the advantages, Harmer mentions their availability, accessibility, affordability, diversity and also the fact that they are source of different voices and accents. On the other hand, listening to recorded speech is quite unnatural, it does not provide visual clues and listeners are not able to interact with the speaker.

2.2 Listening texts

As there are many different listening sources, there are also many types of listening texts. As it is presented by Nunan (1991, p. 20), every utterance has its communicative and functional purpose and this purpose in turn affects the form of the utterance itself. Nunan (ibid) then also presents the division of the listening texts according to several criteria. First of all, texts differ according to the number of speakers. Thus they can be divided into monologues and dialogues, both requiring different listening skills. Monologues further vary depending on whether they are prepared in advance or not. More carefully structured monologues are then easier to comprehend than the unplanned ones (ibid).

Nunan (ibid) also assumes that dialogues are generally speaking more difficult to comprehend whether the listener is involved in the dialogue or not. Rixon (1986, p.3) confirms this claim as he states that listeners taking part in a dialogue, besides their listening skills they also need to think about their reply while listening to the speaker. Dialogues are also challenging even in the case that listeners are only passive, as the topic of the discussion can change with each speaker's contribution to the topic (ibid).

Dialogues can be also further divided. According to Nunan (1991, p. 21), there are basically two main reasons to start a conversation and each of them will play important role in the choice of language. Either it is to obtain or provide information, secondly the conversation may be initiated for the purpose of a social interaction. These two reasons are, however, mutually interconnected in the majority of cases. Finally, considering the social oriented talk, the degree of intimacy between speakers is also a feature that affects the text, mainly the level of its formality (ibid).

2.3 Phases of listening lesson

While preparing a listening activity, as pointed out by Julian Edge (1993, p.109), it is important to think about how the listening is carried out in the real life. Firstly, as stated by Edge (ibid), listeners usually have some previous knowledge about the topic they are going to hear about and they understand newly acquired information just in terms of these previous knowledge, feelings or thoughts about this topic. Secondly, if they listen to something they are doing it with some purpose or interest. Finally, the listening process should have some outcome. According to Edge (ibid), listeners should either gain some knowledge, change their thoughts or feel differently than before.

This also implies that listening activities or a whole lesson devoted to listening practice, as pointed out by Lindsay and Knight (2006, p. 49), should be carried out in three stages. The first stage, or pre-listening stage, as Lindsay and Knight call it, should prepare students for the listening, make them think about what they already know about the topic and establish the reason for the listening. Then, while-listening stage should practice listening skills through some activities. Finally, post-listening stage should summarize the new information and give feedback to students. Since the practical part of this thesis deals with listening exercises that were part of tests, only the while-listening stage will be discussed in more detail as tests contains usually only this stage.

2.4 The while-listening stage

As Underwood (1989, p. 45) says, while-listening activities are done by students “during the time they are listening to the text” and they should help students to decode the messages from the listening texts. Wilson (2009, p. 81) further adds that the other purpose for while-listening is to gain evidence of “student’s understanding or non-understanding” as well as it allows teachers to recognize passages that require more practice.

In terms of while-listening activities, as mentioned by Underwood (1989, p. 48), there are some possible difficulties which should be taken into account. Firstly, writing and listening at the same time is especially for foreign language students very demanding. For this reason, questions that requires written response should be easy to handle or they should not require responses longer than three words.

Furthermore, as pointed out by Underwood (ibid), questions that require students to just choose the correct answer should not be underestimated only because they are easier to answer. As Underwood (ibid) emphasize, the purpose of these activities is to “guide the listeners through the text” and not to test their ability to create grammatically correct sentences. Other possible difficulties mentioned by Underwood (ibid) are related to true/false or multiple-choice questions. In order to avoid any frustration, these kinds of questions should be designed in the way that students have enough time to complete them while listening as well as they should be organized in the same way as the corresponding information appear in the text.

2.5 Listening exercises

As noticed by Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 78), in the recent years there is a large number of different kinds of exercises available for teachers. As shown below, there are also several different ways to sort these exercises as well.

Wilson (2009, p. 82) distinguishes between two kinds of responses, namely those which “involves production and those that involves recognition only”. Examples of productive responses are, according to Wilson (ibid), note-taking, writing answers to questions, correcting errors as well as completing tables, charts, diagrams and sentences. On the other hand, recognition responses include answering true/ false multiple-choice questions, ticking words and phrases and also matching and choosing pictures (ibid). As pointed out by Wilson (2009, p. 82), with recognition responses “students have less to do” and therefore they can focus more on the listening. Productive responses, on the other hand, require more time as well as good knowledge of grammar, spelling and other features of language. Therefore it is also difficult, as stated by Wilson (2009, p. 82), to recognize whether “students’ problems lie in their comprehension or in something else”.

Types of listening exercises also differ according to the aim of the listening As Lindsay and Knight (2006, p. 45) writes, listening is often done with some purpose and this purpose vary according to the situation. Listeners can either listen for specific details, for general meaning or gist (ibid). Lindsay and Knight (2006, p. 46) demonstrate this difference on the following examples: if students are listening to instructions on how to make something, they will be probably focusing on every word whereas when they are listening to a story, they will listen to general meaning.

As Lindsay and Knight (2006, p. 51) further mention, listening exercises also vary depending on whether they acquire answers to questions or rather interaction.

The best comprehensive overview of the listening exercises is nevertheless provided by Penny Ur (1996, p. 113). Ur sorts listening exercises by the type of responses they require to exercises with no overt responses, short responses, longer responses and exercises with extended responses.

As Ur (ibid) explains, exercises with no overt responses do not require any action, however listeners' facial expressions as well as their body language will show whether they understand the text or not. Such an activity should be, according to Ur (ibid), entertaining and chosen well in order to motivate students to listen. Examples of such activities can be storytelling, playing recorded songs or videos. Examples of short response exercises, as stated by Ur (ibid), can be true/false questions, mistakes detection or following instructions. Longer response exercises, as described by Ur (1996, p. 114), are then those which require answers in full sentences, summary of the listening passage or note-taking. Finally, Ur (ibid) states that listening is for exercises with the extended responses only "jump-off stage" and it is then followed by other exercises like problem-solving or interpretation. Since the tests analysed in the practical part of this thesis contained only listening exercises with true/false statements, multiple-choice questions and gap-filing tasks and open questions, only these types of exercises are described in more detail below.

2.5.1 True/false

As Frost (2015) writes in his web article *Test question types*, while completing such types of exercises, learners should decide whether the given statement is true or false on the basis of information gained from the recording. As pointed out by Doff (1988, p. 261), since there is no writing involved these questions test only listening comprehension. Frost (ibid) however warns that the correct answers in these exercises can be easily guessed precisely because they do not require any written response. Underwood (1989, p. 63) also adds that it is important to check these activities before they are used in a lesson in order to make sure that all statements are unambiguous.

2.5.2 Multiple choice questions

As described by Harmer (2009, p.168), in these types of exercises students are supposed to choose correct or the most suitable answer. Multiple-choice questions are in some ways similar to the previous type of questions, however, as stated by Frost (2015), there are more options to choose from. Thanks to this fact, in this type of exercises the possibility to guess the correct answer is reduced, nevertheless, it is not entirely eliminated (ibid).

2.5.3 Gap filling / Open questions

Since both of these types of exercises are similar, they are described in one subchapter.

Underwood (1989, p. 65) describes these types of activities as “variety of information transfer exercise”. In terms of gap-filling, Underwood (ibid) recommends to provide students with enough time to go through the text before the listening begins and also encourage them to guess the possible answer which could increase the chances of their success. Furthermore, Frost (2015) adds, that sometimes there can be more than one possible correct answers.

3 Learners listening comprehension difficulties

Rixon (1986, p. 36) supposes, that majority of learners consider listening to be the most difficult of all four language skills. According to Rixon (ibid), the blame can be attributed mainly to their belief that they have to understand every word in order to understand the text. Difficulties encountered by learners while listening to foreign language is, however, very broad and complex topic which is also reflected in a number of different approaches of each author. For instance Rixon (1986, p. 56) focuses only on difficulties associated with a listening material.

Underwood (1989, p. 16), on the other hand, takes into account only potential problems of learners. Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 35 and 46) in turn divide this issue into aspects that make listening difficult and those which cause comprehension problems. Wilson (2009, p. 12) also addresses factors that make listening difficult, however, they differ from those stated by Anderson and Lynch.

Other authors dealing with this issue are Nunan (1991, p. 24) who introduces factors that influence the process of successful listening and Harmer (2001, p. 203) dealing with possible problems encountered while teaching and learning receptive skills. Finally, Penny Ur's (1996, p. 111) center of interest are features of listening to foreign language that can be problematic especially for foreign learners.

As was already mentioned, the individual approaches of the authors are dissimilar, nevertheless, it is possible to find some identical ideas among them. All difficulties mentioned by authors are either related to a listening material, the listener or features of spoken English. These categories are subsequently dealt with in the following subchapters.

3.1 The difficulties connected with listening material

Rixon (1990, p. 11) in his book presents the differences between recorded materials and live listening. As he pointed out, *inter alia*, recorded materials allow students to hear variety of voices and accents, they do not provide visual clues and their quality may not always be high.

Taking all this into consideration, it is not surprising that listening materials may themselves be a source of difficulties.

3.1.1 The speed of delivery

As Underwood (1989, p. 16) points out, many students consider the fact that they do not have any control over the speed the speaker speaks to be the hardest on listening exercises. In face-to-face interaction a listener can, in most cases, adjust the pace of the speech to be able to understand by asking the speaker to slow down. This is, however, not possible when listening to recorded materials which are usually used in lessons.

Rixon (1986, p. 58) adds to this that even when the content of the recording is not problematic a learner simply “needs more time than a native speaker to process each piece of information”. Thus fast speed of recording puts pressure on a listener which can, as reported by Underwood (1989, p. 16), result in failure. Listeners either miss part of the recording as they cannot keep up or they ignore it because they were not able to process it quickly enough. Moreover, the fast speech, as Rixon (1986, p. 58) claims, has reduced clarity and therefore is more difficult.

Nevertheless, even when the increased speed of speech can be demanding for learners, Penny Ur (1996, p. 112) urges teachers to expose learners to fast natural speech as much as possible, provided the learners are qualified enough. Only then they will be able to understand native speakers without any difficulties.

3.1.2 The mode of delivery

Not only can listeners in real life communication ask speaker to slow down his speech but they can also ask for repetition or clarification. When it comes to recording materials they can be also played again in order to hear any information again. However, as Underwood (1989, p. 17) emphasizes, in common teaching situation it is the teacher who has a control over the recording not learners.

Wilson (2009, p. 13) describes this as nonreciprocal listening that does not allow listeners as well as speakers to use repair strategies as for example backtracking or starting an utterance from the beginning. Such listening is consequently much more demanding than real life interaction. To reduce the drawbacks of nonreciprocal listening, Underwood (1989, p. 17) suggests to work in language laboratory where every student has the possibility to play over the parts they need.

However, Penny Ur (1996, p. 112) has a different opinion. She is convinced that in real life there will be also situations when learners will not have an opportunity to hear the information once more. Therefore she considers it a better solution to use recordings with redundant parts where the information is presented again.

Nevertheless, this may not work for everyone. Research presented by Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 51) shows that for less advanced listeners it is better to use “short, simple messages with the minimum amount of necessary information” as redundant passages with extra information would be too demanding for them to process. On the other hand, more proficient listeners will profit from additional information as it will help them to better understand the message.

Eventually, Penny Ur (1996, p. 112) recommends not to slow down the speech nor play it multiple times and proposes the following suggestions:

“Encourage learners to relax.”

“Tell them to stop trying to understand everything.”

“Learn them to pick up what is essential.”

“Tell them to allow themselves to ignore the rest.”

3.1.3 The number of speakers

As Wilson (2009, p. 13) puts it, the more speakers are involved in the conversation, the more demanding it is to follow the recording. Rixon (1986, p. 61) also agrees with this statement and further elaborates on this idea. In contrast with monologues where the topic usually changes only gradually, a listener of a dialogue has to process every contribution to the topic and carefully monitor the development of the discussion. Furthermore, Rixon also points out that some learners may also have problem with distinguishing one speaker's voice from another.

3.1.4 Accent of the speaker

Rixon (1986, p. 58) is the only author who includes the speaker's accent to the list of potential sources of difficulties for listeners, though it is a justified choice. Nowadays, students are able to understand English or American accents without major difficulties since they have access to foreign movies, songs and other resources of native speaker accent examples.

Nonetheless, as English is now a lingua franca, there are far more non-native speakers of English than native speakers. Some of them, especially those whose language comes from different language family, can have accents that are difficult to understand and thus cause problems for listeners.

However, according Rixon (1986, p. 59), this does not mean that we should avoid listening materials with different accents. On the contrary, students should experience several different accents, except some extreme ones, as they are likely to come into contact with them in real life.

3.1.5 Choice of the topic

The choice of the topic of a recording material may also have a great impact on a students' success, as mentioned for example by Harmer (2001, p. 205). Students' mistakes can stem from their inability to fully concentrate on the text either because they are not familiar with the topic, text genre or they are simply not interested in the topic. Rixon (1986, p. 62) also says that even for the less proficient listeners can be easy to follow an utterance with familiar topic as they can guess the meaning of unknown or misheard words.

On the other hand, experienced listeners can fail while listening to recording or conversation with completely new, complicated or unusual topic. Problems with interpretation of the message can also occur according to Underwood (1989, p. 19) when speakers do not share the same background or culture, as they can misinterpret non-verbal clues of a speaker such as gestures, tone of voice or facial expressions.

To prevent learners' comprehension problems Harmer (2001, p. 205) suggests to include variety of topics that learners are interested in and also those they are likely to encounter. Sometimes, however, less entertaining topics also have to be dealt with. In this case Harmer recommends to familiarize students with the topic before listening using short videos, showing them some pictures connected with the topic or provoke discussion on it.

3.1.6 Complexity of text

Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 48) present in their book a research result which has shown that a listening content is better understood and correctly memorized provided that the content is presented in chronological order.

Rixon (1986, p. 60) describes three types of text organisation and he also ranks them according to their difficulty for a listener. According to Rixon the easiest texts to follow are those which develop step by step as for example a narrative, a set of instructions or description of a process. Texts with so-called cross references as for example a classification or a comparison of several things where speaker makes many references to different parts of a text are moderately difficult.

Those which cause the most difficulties are then complexly-organised texts with many references forward as well as backward to the text. As an example of such texts we can mention discussion of a problem with many possible solutions.

The research mentioned by Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 48) has also shown that the presence of informative title of the text plays a significant role in helping listeners to understand and remember more information from the text. Thus Anderson and Lynch suggest to provide learners with informative title to text they are about to hear to help them to orientate in the text.

3.1.7 Explicitness of information

The degree of explicitness, as described by Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 50), indicates to how extent the message is stated clearly, in detail and leaving no room for confusion or doubt. For these authors, the explicitness of the text is mainly influenced by the fact whether a speaker provides only necessary information and no other. Moreover, it is important that listeners are able to correctly identify the expressions to which the speaker refers to.

Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 52) also present research from which it is evident that it is more difficult, especially for younger learners, to processed information reached on the basis of reasoning, than information that are explicitly mentioned in the text. Thus it can seem advisable to provide learners with explicit texts, nevertheless, it is important to make sure that this does not result in simplification of intellectual content, which Anderson and Lynch do not recommend.

Another aspect of explicitness, as was already mentioned, are the way in which speakers refer to subjects of their utterance. Problem can occur, for example, when speaker refers to one object or person using variety of different expressions which is, as reported by Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 53), problematic even for competent listeners.

3.1.8 Type of input

Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 54) divide different sorts of input into three categories, namely, static, dynamic and abstract. Individual categories differ from each other mainly by “the potential complexity of relationship between the things, people, events and ideas referred to by a speaker”.

So for example (Anderson and Lynch, *ibid*) in static input, as is for instance description or instruction, the relationship between items will be mostly fixed. Whereas the storytelling which belongs to dynamic category reacquires dynamic use of language, shift of the scene and time. Furthermore, the relationship between the objects of the story can change as well as the characters can “drift in and out of the story”. Texts from abstract category are generally considered as the most difficult ones for listeners’ comprehension as they rather focus on ideas or beliefs than concrete objects.

Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 55) also add that the difficulty of comprehension also increase with the number of “important and potentially confusable elements it contains”. Thus story with one main character will be much easier to process for learners than, for example, a passage from the novel.

3.2 Difficulties connected with listeners

The listening comprehension is also certainly affected by listeners themselves as well as by their characteristics. Wilson (2009, p. 14) points out, that apart from a learners' individual predisposition, the age factor also plays a significant role in the listeners' comprehension.

Young learners by which we specifically mean those from age of seven to twelve differ significantly from adult learners in terms of their needs and abilities as listeners. It is because young learners are not able to pay attention for a longer period of time, they have fewer cognitive abilities and they require visual stimuli.

On the other hand, older learners can experience listening difficulties mainly due to psychological factors such as "declining abilities in hearing or problems with short-term memory". Other general listening comprehension problems are discussed in the following part.

3.2.1 The need to understand every word

As mentioned by Penny Ur (1996, p. 111), very common problem that students encounter while listening to some text is their belief that they have to understand every word to understand the meaning of a recording. This belief, unfortunately, is very often subconsciously encouraged by teachers or some listening tasks. Nevertheless, it is ineffective and sometimes even counterproductive effort as it can result in "feeling of fatigue or failure". On the contrary, students should learn to recognize important information in relation to the listening task and memorize them as well as learn to ignore irrelevant pieces of information.

3.2.2 The feeling of fatigue

Tiredness is, as believed by Penny Ur (1996, p. 112), also often the cause of failure whether it stems from the above mentioned effort or other reasons. In order to avoid learners' fatigue Penny Ur advises not to use too long recordings and also recommends to divide the recording into shorter chunks either by pauses or by a change of a speaker.

3.2.3 Inability to concentrate

Inability to concentrate is also related to the previous point though it can be caused by several other factors. According to Underwood (1989, p. 19), the fact that students are unable to keep their attention throughout the whole lesson is quite common. However, as he points out “even the shortest break in attention can seriously impair comprehension”.

Underwood (ibid) suggests that these short breaks in attention can be suppressed by appropriate selection of listening materials as it will be easier for learners to concentrate provided they find the recording interesting. Underwood considers the appropriate difficulty of the recording also very important as if learners have to make great effort to process the message they will probably get tired soon. The last factor that affects learners’ ability to concentrate, mentioned by Underwood, is a noise and it does not matter if it comes from the recording itself or from the surroundings.

3.2.4 The listener’s limited vocabulary

As was previously mentioned, while listening to recording learners cannot use repair strategies, as for example to ask for an explanation or clarification, if they did not understand something. This can be problematic in case when learners do not understand more than a few of words. In such case they will probably not be able to deduce the meaning of the word from the context.

Moreover, if there are more unknown words in the text, Underwood (1989, p. 17) is convinced, that it will prevent listeners from continuing listening as they will concentrate on guessing the meaning of the words. Underwood further claims, that this inefficient strategy is gained by students that are taught in the way that “gives more emphasis to accuracy than fluency” thus they are more concerned with the form of language rather than its usage. Underwood (ibid) assumes, however, that listeners that are able to ignore the parts that they do not understand are usually more successful than listeners who insist on understanding each passage.

3.2.5 Negative expectations

As Harmer (2001, p. 208) states, bad listening strategy not only influences successful listening comprehension but it can also discourage learners from trying to become a better listeners. He also adds, that provided that learners often experience failure in listening exercises they can after some time feel frustrated and de-motivated. Due to their previous failure they can also have “low expectations of listening” and a priori consider the listening exercises difficult and impossible to complete, which can according to Harmer (ibid) result in their failure even if they can potentially succeed.

3.3 Listening difficulties steaming from the features of spoken English

Rixon (1986, p. 37) considers features of spoken English to be one of the most obvious sources of difficulties for learners. Subsequently Rixon introduces four main features of native speakers’ pronunciation that frequently cause problems in recognition and thus also in comprehension.

3.3.1 The weak relationship between spelling and pronunciation

One of these features is a weak relationship between spoken and written form of English words. Therefore even when learners are well aware of English in its written form they may fail to recognize the spoken language. According to Wilson (2009, p. 11), in speech in contrast to writing there are also no noticeable gaps between words. Therefore recognising word boundaries in the flow of speech is very problematic for listeners as well.

3.3.2 Sound changes in connected speech

Another feature of spoken language, mentioned by Penny Ur (2012, p. 102), that can impede understanding are changes of sounds provided they occur in connected natural speech. According to Ur (ibid), in situations such as conversation or shopping we usually encounter speech that is colloquial and informal whereas the language of listening tasks is mostly formal and clearly pronounced. This means that it can be difficult for learners to understand common spoken English as they are not familiar with it. Rixon (1986, p. 39) and Wilson (2009, p. 11) state the main types of sound changes in spoken language. As mentioned by Wilson (2009, p. 11) these are features like elision, assimilation or intrusion. These features appear in every language, however, whereas they are natural part in our native language, they may be problematic when learning a foreign language (ibid).

a) Elision

As stated by Rixon (1986, p. 39), elision, which is the omission of sounds, can be found for example in the sentence: *She sat next to the wall*. There are two letters *t* next to each other which would be difficult to pronounce, thus one phoneme /t/ will be omitted while the sentence is pronounced. However, as Rixon (ibid) adds, sounds can be also omitted within one word. As an example, Rixon gives the word *probably*, that can be pronounced as /'prɒbli/ in rapid speech.

b) Assimilation

Another way which facilitates pronunciation to native speakers is assimilation. This phenomenon, as reported by Wilson (2009, p. 11), occurs when the tongue cannot get into the right place of articulation quickly enough to articulate the sound properly. So for example the sentence: *Tony's a heart breaker*. The word *heart* is pronounced as /hɑ:p/ because the phoneme /p/ is articulated closer to the phoneme /b/.

c) Intrusion

Rixon (ibid) further mentions, that apart from omitting and altering, phonemes can be also added as it is the case in the phrase: *idea in his head*. Speakers of British English would add /r/ sound between *idea* and *in*, to link these two words in order to be more easily pronounced as /aɪdɪərɪn/ (ibid). This is called intrusion.

d) Weakening of vowels

Rixon (1986, p. 39) also includes reduced form of function words in this summary. Many words can, in fact, have two versions of pronunciation in spoken language. These words are called function words and they are fully pronounced only in isolation or provided they are stressed in a sentence. However, in connected speech while they occur in unstressed syllables their vowel sound is reduced to schwa sound /ə/. These words can be subsequently barely recognizable for learners. As an example Rixon (ibid) presents the pronoun *you* which is pronounced as /ju:/ in isolation but the sentence *Will you come?* will be pronounced as /wɪl jə 'kʌm/.

3.3.3 The rhythm of English

The rhythm pattern of English is also considered by Rixon (1986, p. 40) as source of difficulty for English learners. As described by Brown (1990, p. 43) “The rhythm of English is based on the contrast of stressed and unstressed syllables”. It means that English belongs to the group of stress timed languages. Brown further explains that as some syllables are pronounced with greater emphasis, they are also called stressed, and the rest of syllables are unstressed. In spoken English these stressed syllables are pronounced at regular intervals whereas unstressed syllables are pronounced between these intervals. So evidently, time to pronounce unstressed syllables can vary considerably (ibid).

As demonstrated by Rixon (1986, p. 41), both following sentences have the same number of stressed syllables and thus they should be pronounced for the same length of time, no matter how many words there are.

We bought a book.

We ought to have bought you another book.

This in particular, as Rixon (ibid) points out, can be very confusing for learners who are speakers of syllable timed languages as they pronounce both stressed and unstressed syllables in roughly same interval. Firstly, learners may not be ready to hear so many syllables in such a short time and they can fail to identify them. Secondly, the fact that the speaker have to pronounce more syllables in a relatively short period of time will probably reflect in the clarity of individual words (ibid).

3.3.4 Different pronunciation of the same sound

Another characteristic of spoken English that can, according to Rixon (1986, p. 41), cause difficulties is the fact that one phoneme has different ways of pronunciation, so-called allophones. Rixon demonstrates this by an example from her own teaching practice. Her students experienced difficulties for instance with the sound /t/ that has several variation in English. As stated by Rixon (1986, p. 42), one variation of the /t/ sound is in Received Pronunciation, provided it occurs at the beginning of the syllable, pronounced with slight hissing noise as /t^h/. This caused, as noticed by Rixon (ibid), that even well-known word like *teacher* was difficult to be recognized by students as they interpreted it as /'sti:tʃə/.

3.3.5 Unknown or unusual sounds

The last feature of spoken language that can, according to Underwood (1989, p. 9), affect students' comprehension and thus should also be mentioned are unusual or unknown phonemes. As mentioned for example by Ivanová and Kořínková (2013, p. 35), phonemes are divided into consonants, which are phonemes that are pronounced with the obstruction to the air flow, and vowels, which are pronounced with no obstruction to the air flow. However, every language has different types and amount of vowels as well as consonants (ibid).

With regard to vowels, as reported by Ivanová and Kořínková (2013, p.43) English language has 20 vowels in contrast with Czech which has only 13 of them. Not counting diphthongs, that are combinations of two vowel sounds, there are two vowels in English that are not used in Czech and these are /ə/ and /æ/. The difference is even more apparent with consonants. The consonants /ð/, /θ/ and /w/ do not occur in Czech and thus cause problems to Czech students not only in listening but also in pronunciation.

Furthermore, the way of pronunciation the consonants /h/ and /r/ also differs as /h/ is unvoiced in English but voiced in Czech and /r/ is in Czech produced with tongue tip touching the alveolar ridge whereas when pronouncing the English /r/ the tongue tip only approaches the alveolar ridge (ibid).

3.4 An overview of researches dealing with students' listening comprehension problems

If the author of this thesis is not mistaken, there are no researches dealing with the topic of listening comprehension difficulties that would focus only on difficulties faced by Czech students. Nevertheless, at least the results of foreign researches that are aimed at students of different schools are listed in this paragraph.

3.4.1 Prastiyowati's research

One of the authors dealing with listening comprehension problems of students of English is Prastiyowati. In the research Prastiyowati (p. 1) focuses on listening problems of first year students of The State University of Malang. Prastiyowati (p. 3) classifies these problems into four groups according to the source of these problems, namely problems related to students, listening materials, students' physical problems and supporting equipment. The questionnaire with close and open-ended questions was used as a method for obtaining the necessary data.

The main difficulties relating to students themselves were, according to Prastiyowati (ibid), their failure to make prediction about the text as well as to guess the meaning of unknown words. As the most serious problems related to the listening materials, Prastiyowati (p. 4) mentions different accent of the speaker. The fact that the students' native language has a different phonetic system than English is also considered to be a common source of problems by many students.

As Prastiyowati (ibid) states, students' physical problems as for example fatigue do not considerably affect their listening comprehension. Prastiyowati (ibid) further states that students also did not have many problems that would be caused by the use of supporting equipment.

3.4.2 Khamprated's research

The topic of listening comprehension problems of students of English is also discussed by Khamprated, who focuses on students of private vocational school in Bangkok. In order to investigate students' listening problems five point Likert scale questionnaire was used in this case.

The results of Khamprated's (p. 40) research showed that 8 out of 20 items mentioned in the questionnaire were considered as serious sources of problems for students. The items that were rated at a high level of difficulty were regional accents as for example British or Australian or fast speech of the speaker. Then, as demonstrated by the research, it is also difficult for these students to understand the recording if they can hear it only once.

Furthermore, to understand the speaker with poor pronunciation is also considered to be very difficult. Mainly because of cultural differences, it is also hard for these students to understand jokes. In addition, they reported that listening comprehension is also sometimes problematic because of their limited vocabulary or insufficient knowledge of grammar. Finally, as stated by Khamprated (p. 62), a feeling of fear and nervousness when students fail to understand some words also affect their listening comprehension.

3.4.3 Hamouda's research

Another author who investigates the listening problems encountered by learners of English is Hamouda. For this research, Hamouda selected 60 first year major students of English studying at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. The data necessary for this research was then gathered by means of four point Likert scale questionnaires and interviews.

Before the possible causes of listening comprehension difficulties are discussed in detail, they are categorized into seven groups according to their sources. Students' listening problems thus, according to Hamouda (p. 124), can relate to listening materials, linguistic features, failure to concentrate, listeners or their psychological characteristics, speaker and also to physical settings. These categories then include individual student's problems.

According to the research results (p. 138) listening is the most difficult for pupils in case when they cannot concentrate because of the noise around. Furthermore, it is also difficult for them to recognize reduced forms (p. 127) in a recording. Student's listening comprehension is also more difficult in the case when the recording contains colloquial language and slang expressions (p. 127) as well as too long and complex sentences (p. 127). Finally for many students it is also difficult to understand a speech if they have no visual contact with the speaker (p. 135) or if they are nervous and worried (p. 131).

As was already stated, these researches are aimed at different students from different countries, however, some features that can greatly affect the listening comprehension were mentioned in at least two of these three researches. These features were: the accent of the speaker, fast speech, unknown words contained in the listening text and also nervousness.

4 The analysis of listening exercises results

The first objective of this thesis is to determine what kinds of mistakes Czech students of an upper primary school make in listening exercises and try to determine the possible causes of these mistakes. Since it is not possible to analyse all listening exercises of an upper primary school students, the research was based on a sample of these students.

The analysis was thus carried out with the participation of 172 students of the upper primary school in Plumlov, as their English teacher was willing to participate in this research and provide students' listening tests for this analysis. The total number of 172 learners consists of 26 fifth graders, 32 sixth graders, 50 seventh graders, 34 eighth graders and 30 learners from the ninth grade, who are in the age range of 10 to 15 years.

In order to obtain sufficient number of samples of learners' mistakes for the following analysis, listening exercises included in semi-annual tests, completed by all learners mentioned above, were used. Furthermore, as these exercises were part of the semi-annual tests, it is guaranteed that all learners completed them under the same conditions and thus they are reliable source of information.

Since the tasks assignments of individual grades differed from each other, each listening exercise was analysed separately. The analysis then proceeded as follows: First, incorrect responses were identified in each individual test, after that they were divided into different categories according to their characteristics. Finally, the incorrect answers were analysed and their probable cause was determined where possible.

4.1 The fifth grade

The fifth grade is attended by learners whose ages range from ten to eleven. They have experienced lessons of English language already during their primary education and many of them also during kindergarten classes. Before they participated in this written examination they had completed the first three lessons from the Project 4th edition, Level 1 textbook. The listening exercise was completed by 26 learners, of which 14 were girls and 12 boys.


4.1.1 The description of the listening exercise

As was already mentioned, these listening exercises were part of a written semi-annual examination. Nevertheless, exercises of individual school grades varied in their length, number or type of responses. Therefore it is necessary to describe these exercises first, before the attention can be devoted to the analysis of learners' incorrect responses that occurred in them.

The listening exercise of the fifth grade is represented by figure 1 and the tapescript of the recording can be found in the appendices. As shown in figure 1 below, the exercise consists of five questions that are supposed to be answered in full sentences using the information mentioned in the recording. All these questions had been translated by the teacher before the recording was played in order to ensure that everyone understands the assignment. Learners were also reminded to respond in full sentences. The maximum number of points which could be obtained in this exercises was five.

With regard to the recording, its topic concerns family and friends and it is rather short as it contains 120 words. The recording is meant as a letter written by Mandy who introduces herself, her family and friends. The recording also contains only expressions that learners have already learned in the previous lessons.

Figure 1 – The listening exercise of the 5th grade

1  Listen and answer the questions.



- How old is Mandy?
She is twelve.
- 1 How many brothers has she got?

- 2 What pets have they got?

- 3 What's her brother's pet's name?

- 4 What's her best friend's name?

- 5 Who are The Colossal Oranges?

_____	5
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4.1.2 The analysis of fifth graders' mistakes in the listening exercise

As described above, the listening exercise completed by fifth graders consist of questions that were supposed to be answered in full sentences. One point was awarded for one correct answer, nevertheless, it was also possible to earn half a point for answer that was incomplete or partially correct. For this reason all answers that deviated in any way from the correct versions will be analysed, not only these in which students did not earn any points. The correct answers to the questions in the listening exercises were the following.

- 1) She has got one brother.
- 2) They have got a cat and a hamster.
- 3) Her brother's pet's name is Coco.
- 4) Her name is Jane Hill.
- 5) The Colossal Oranges is music group.

Before the individual mistakes can be analysed in further detail it is necessary to divide similar mistakes into the same categories. After brief analysis of the mistakes found in the tests it has become apparent that all mistakes fall under five main categories. The first category includes responses with grammatical mistakes. The responses with wrongly spelled words fall under the second category. Responses that contain wrong information are included in the third category. The fourth category consists of incomplete responses. And the last category comprises the answers that were left in blank.

a) Responses with grammatical mistakes

The largest source of error in this case was an incorrect use of articles or their omission. This type of error appeared in seven responses. Learners tended to use the indefinite article a in the first sentence so that their response was: *She has got a one brother*. On the other hand, some of them forgot to use articles in the second sentence and they answered the question: *They've got cat and hamster*. In these cases, however, these responses were considered correct and the learners gained one or at least half a point.

Learners also struggled with the formation of the first response. In most cases their answer was: *She is one brother, I have got one brother* or *She have one brother*. In one case plural form was misapplied: *I've got one brothers*. Except the last example all these responses were considered wrong and were not awarded any points.

The last type of grammatical mistake that occurred in this listening exercise was the omission of a verb, namely in the third sentence. In two cases learners responded as: *Her brother's pet's name Coco*. Nevertheless, they obtained a point for their answer.

b) Responses with wrong spelling

Furthermore, learners also made mistakes in spelling especially while writing proper nouns Coco and Jane Hill. The name Coco was written incorrectly in six cases. Learners often misspelled it as: *Koko, Koukou* or *Coucou*. The name Jane Hill was misspelled ten times as: *James Hild, Jein Hil* or *Jane Hilf*. In two cases learners also misspelled the word brother as: *brathr* and *broder*. The responses were, however, considered correct in all of these cases.

c) Responses with wrong information

Wrong responses were not as common as the previous types of errors. Learners stated an incorrect answer only in six cases. In half of these cases learners stated that: *Her brother's pet's name is Fluffy*. They probably confused the name of Mandy's brother's hamster Coco with Mandy's cat Fluffy. One student also stated that *The Colossal Oranges are favourite song*. This mistake may be also caused by confusion as the phrase *favourite song* is also mentioned in the text.

Other wrong response, in this case to the third question, was: *Brother has got two pets*. Since the question was *What's her brother's pet's name?*, it is quite possible that this mistake was caused by negligence as the author of the answer probably did not read the question properly. Since all these responses are considered wrong, they were not awarded any points.

d) Incomplete responses

There were together eight incomplete responses in all the tests, all of them were answers to the second question. Learner's frequent answer to this questions was: *They have got a cat*. However, this response is only partly true as this family also own a hamster.

Responses were also regarded as incomplete provided they are not written in the full sentence. Although these responses are correct learners obtained only half a point for them.

e) Missing responses

A total of twenty questions have been left unanswered in the listening exercise. The question number three was remained unanswered four times and the question number three was left in blank three times. The learners, however, most often did not answer the question number five, namely thirteen times. It can therefore be concluded that this question was the most challenging for the learners, even though it cannot be confidently determined why.

4.2 The sixth grade

The sixth grade students are about eleven to twelve years old. They have completed the first three lessons from the Project Fourth Edition, Level 2 textbook before they have participated in this written examination. The test was completed by 32 learners, namely 14 girls and 18 boys.

4.2.1 The description of the listening exercise


As can be seen in the figure 2 that represents the listening exercise of the sixth grade students, the task instructions are written in Czech language and therefore did not have to be translated. The rest of the task was translated together with learners in order to prevent any confusion. The exercise consist of five statements that are supposed to be completed by one of the four offered options. These are thus a multiple choice questions.

All the information needed to complete this task was included in the recording. Learners could earn a maximum of five points in this exercise.

The tapescript of the recording can be found in the appendices and it consist of 71 words. On the recording a girl named Lisa speaks about herself, her family and her hobbies. The language of the recording is relatively simple and all the expressions are already known to learners.

The only things that can be misleading in this exercise are questions two and four. In the question number two learners should choose the time when Lisa's parents go to work. The right answer is eight o'clock. Nevertheless, the time nine o'clock is also mentioned, namely in the sentence: *School starts at nine o'clock*. The fact that both possibilities appear in the recording can be confusing for learners, although the correct answer is indisputably eight o'clock. Similarly, the right answer to the question four is Maths as Lisa says: *My brother doesn't like sports. He likes Maths*. The sentence: *My brother doesn't like sports*, however, can be also misleading, especially if learners fail to hear the word *doesn't* correctly. This finding will be further analysed in *the analysis of sixth graders' mistakes in listening exercises*.

Figure 2 – *The listening exercise of the 6th grade*

- 1**  **1.05** Poslouchej a vyber správnou odpověď.
- 1 Lisa lives in
 - a Leeds.
 - b London.
 - c Liverpool.
 - d Lewisham.
 - 2 Her parents go to work at
 - a 7.30.
 - b 8.00.
 - c 8.30.
 - d 9.00.
 - 3 She plays
 - a tennis and floorball.
 - b table tennis and football.
 - c tennis and football
 - d tennis and basketball.
 - 4 Her brother likes
 - a Physics. b Maths. c Chemistry. d sports.
 - 5 She goes shopping with her friends on
 - a Sundays. b Tuesdays. c Thursdays.
 - d Saturdays.



4.2.2 The analysis of sixth graders' mistakes in the listening exercise

As was stated above, this exercise consists of multiple choice questions in contrast to the fifth graders' exercise consisting of questions requiring full sentence responses. In this case, therefore, the responses can only be correct or incorrect. Consequently only incorrect responses and their possible cause will be analysed.

Since there were only two incorrect answers in the fourth question and no wrong answers in the questions one and five, the attention will be paid only to the second and third questions and responses to them.

a) Second question

The correct version of the second sentence should read: *Her parents go to work at 8.00.* Therefore the correct answer is *b*. Nevertheless, learners also frequently chose answers *a* or *d*. The answer *a* was chosen in five cases as well as the answer *d*. It shows that learners did not know for certain whether the correct answer should be 7.30, 8.00 or 9.00.

In order to gain a better understanding of why these two wrong answers were chosen so frequently it is important to examine the text of the recording first. The part that is relevant to the second question is read as follows: *I get up at half past seven. My parents go to work at eight o'clock. My brother and I walk to school. School starts at nine o'clock.* As seen from the above, all three mentioned options actually appeared in the text.

It is therefore possible that learners were aware that they should add the indication of the time into the sentence and thus some of them did not pay attention to the whole text but only to the part where the time was mentioned. It is however also possible that some learners did not understand the meaning of the text and they just chose the option they were able to identify in the text.

b) Third question

In the third question only two options were considered by learners. The correct answer was *c* in this case and the whole sentence should read: *She plays tennis and football*. Besides this answer the option *a* also appeared repeatedly in the learners' responses, namely seven times. The option *a*, which is incorrect, is: *She plays tennis and floorball*.

The part of the text of the recording corresponding to this question reads as follows: *I like sports. I play tennis and football*. Taking into consideration that the word *floorball* is not mentioned anywhere in the text the possibility of mistake caused by confusion between these two words can be excluded. However, since these two words are pronounced similarly it is very likely that the word *football* was misheard by some learners and consequently the option with the word *floorball* was chosen by them.

4.3 The seventh grade


The seventh grade is composed of students who are about twelve to thirteen years old. The test was completed by learners after they have finished the first three lessons from the Project Fourth Edition, Level 3 textbook. A total of 50 learners completed the test. Eighteen of them were girls and the rest, which was 32, were boys.

4.3.1 The description of the listening exercise

The instructions of the listening exercise which was assigned to seventh graders were written in English. Even with the seventh graders the instructions were translated to assure that all the learners understood what they were supposed to do. The listening exercise represented by figure 3 was composed of five incomplete sentences. The learners were supposed to complete these sentences based on the information from the recording. In two sentences it was one word that should be added, then it was two words, a number and in the last sentence it was the second half of it. It was possible to earn one point for each correct sentence, thus learners could obtain a maximum of five points.

The recording designed for this exercise contains a conversation between two people, Millie and her brother Mickey. They are talking about a competition on a fashion page. There were quite a lot of expressions from the topic about clothes and shopping mentioned, however, learners should be already familiar with them. The recording is also relatively longer than the previous ones, as it contains approximately 142 words. The tapescript of the recording can be found in the appendices.

Figure 3 – *The listening exercise of the 7th grade*

1  **Listen. Millie wants to send a photo of Mickey to a competition. Complete the sentences.**

Mickey has got terrible clothes.

- 1 He goes to a shop and tries on _____.
- 2 The first trousers are _____.
- 3 He needs _____ shirt.
- 4 All the clothes cost _____.
- 5 The shop assistant is angry because they _____.

/5

4.3.2 The analysis of seventh graders' mistakes in the listening exercise

In this listening exercise learners were supposed to complete the sentences with word or phrase, unlike fifth graders who should answer in full sentence. Despite this difference it has become apparent that the same types of mistakes appear also in this kind of exercise. For this reason the same system will be used to categorize errors as it was used with the fifth graders' exercise.

Also in this exercise the learners had the opportunity to get half a point if their response was incomplete or only partly true. Consequently, all responses will be examined provided they differed from the following correct answers:

- 1) trousers and a shirt
- 2) too small
- 3) a bigger
- 4) £ 120
- 5) don't want to buy the clothes/ want to take a photo

a) Responses with grammatical mistakes

The grammatical mistakes appeared only in seven responses however all of them were found in the last sentence which required the longest response. Nevertheless, except for one response, all of them were awarded at least by half a point. These responses were: *not buy the clothes* (the auxiliary verb **do** is missing), *take a photos* (the verb **want to** is missing) and *only do photos* (the verb **take** should be used instead of **do**).

The responses that were considered correct despite the grammatical mistake were: *because they don't shop clothes* (the verb **buy** should be used instead of **shop**) and *is taking a photo* (the verb **are** should be used instead of **is**). On the other hand, the response *they fotografing* was considered incorrect.

b) Responses with wrong spelling

Mistakes caused by wrong spelling in responses to this listening exercise were quite infrequent. There were only four such cases: *pounts* (instead of **pounds**), *to* (**too**), *foto* (**photo**) and *short* (**shirt**). All of these responses were considered correct and learners earned one point for each except the last one which was awarded half a point only. This was probably due to the fact that this word was part of the previously discussed topic and learners should master its spelling.

c) Responses with wrong information

Responses containing wrong information were much more frequent than spelling mistakes. Most frequently learners wrongly answered questions two and three. Instead of correct answer *too small* learners often filled in adjectives *better* or *shorter*. As the word *better* is mentioned in connection with the second trousers, it is very likely that learners missed the correct answer and thought that the adjective *better* is the right answer.

The responses to the third question were even more diverse. Instead of *a bigger shirt*, which was the correct answer, learners often responded with adjectives like: *bad*, *new*, *long*, *better*, *small* and *worse*. These wrong answers may be caused by the fact that the information is not stated in the form of statement (I need a bigger shirt) but in the form of question (Have you got that shirt in a bigger size?) which could confuse the learners.

The response that contained a number was apparently also very challenging. Learners should complete the sentence with the number *120* however some of the learners reported different numbers such as: *125*, *1000*, *500*, *1250*, *149* and *185*. It is very difficult to detect the reason why they wrote these numbers, notably when none of these numbers occur in the text. Nevertheless, it may point to the fact that understanding numbers in listening exercises should be practiced more.

d) Incomplete responses

Incomplete answers occurred only in responses to the first sentence as it supposed to consist of two words *trousers* and *shirt*. It happened in eight cases in total. Learners often stated only the first part of the sentence. It was less frequent that they, on the contrary, stated the second part of the respond and forgot to mention the first part. As both these words were mentioned in one sentence it is possible that students could miss one of these words. They could also presume that what they wrote is enough for an answer and they did not expect that the answer should consist of one more word.

e) Missing responses

Provided that the question is left blank it cannot be determined what caused problems to students while answering this question. Nevertheless, according to the number of unanswered questions it is possible to determine the most challenging parts of the exercise. In accordance with this approach, it was found that the most challenging were the third and the fifth questions.

These questions might cause difficulties due to already mentioned reasons. The information needed to complete the third sentence was mentioned in the form of question, not in the form of the statement as it may be assumed. With regard to the fifth sentence, it can be completed in two different ways (*don't want to buy the clothes/ want to take a photo*) and both of them are correct, which may as a result cause confusion as well.

4.4 The eighth grade

The eighth grade is attended by learners who are approximately thirteen to fourteen years old. They have completed the first three lessons in the Project Fourth Edition, Level 4 textbook before they took part in the semi-annual written examination. The examination was completed by 34 of the eighth grade students. Namely it was 18 girls and 16 boys.


4.4.1 The description of the listening exercise

As it can be seen in figure 4 the instructions of the listening exercise are written in English, nevertheless, they were translated into Czech language either by students or a teacher to avoid any mistakes caused by misunderstanding. The purpose of this exercise is to complete the given sentences using the information from the recording. Learners were supposed to add one to three words to each sentence. Since there are seven incomplete sentences in the exercise it was possible to get a maximum of seven points.

Although the text of the recording is quite short, it consists of only 79 words, it is also relatively complicated as it represents a set of instructions on how to get from one point to another as well as it contains a great deal of information. Despite the fact that all expressions mentioned on the recording should be familiar to learners as they already encounter them in the previous lessons, such text may be difficult to understand. Furthermore the text of the recording is in imperative mood whereas the incomplete sentences are in indicative mood which also may have caused difficulties in understanding.

The tapescript of the recording is placed in the appendices.

Figure 4 – The listening exercise of the 8th grade

1  **Listen. Millie wants to send a photo of Mickey to a competition. Complete the sentences.**

Mickey has got *terrible* clothes.

1 He goes to a shop and tries on

_____.

2 The first trousers are _____.

3 He needs _____ shirt.

4 All the clothes cost _____.

5 The shop assistant is angry because they

_____.

/J

4.4.2 The analysis of eight graders' mistakes in the listening exercise

The eight grader's listening exercise also consisted of incomplete sentences that learners should complete using an appropriate word or phrase based on the information mentioned in the recording. Since this type of listening exercise is similar to the previous one, it is no surprise that the same types of mistakes to those found in previous exercise were found also in this case.

When completing these unfinished sentences learners occasionally made grammatical mistakes, mistook the spelling, their responds were only partially correct or incorrect and sometimes they did not respond at all. All these mistakes will be further analysed in these five categories. First, however, it is necessary to state the correct answers which are the following:

- 1) traffic lights
- 2) goes straight on
- 3) right
- 4) crossroads
- 5) crossing
- 6) next crossroads
- 7) on the corner
- 8) Responses with grammatical mistakes

Grammatical mistakes were not so common in this exercise, most likely because the majority of the sentences required only one-word responses. Learners thus made grammatical mistakes only in the second sentence which should be worded as: *At the traffic lights she goes straight on.* Some learners however wrote only *go straight on.* Presumably it has happened because learners mainly focused on the phrase *straight on*, as the majority of them had trouble with its spelling and did not pay much attention to the subject-verb agreement. Despite this mistake it was considered correct and learners did not lose a point for this response.

9) Responses with wrong spelling

Mistakes related to wrong spelling were more frequent in this case. The most spelling difficulties appeared in relation to the phrase *goes straight on.* Instead of the correct answer, responses like *street on*, *strait on* or *strate on* occurred. Expressions like *crossroads* and *crossing* were also sources of many mistakes. Some of learners' responses were: *crossroams*, *crousses* and *crossing*. Expressions *right* and *corner* were only exceptionally misspelled as: *raint* and *courner*.

Majority of these responses were awarded half a point though. However, it should be noted that each of these expressions was familiar to the learners from the previous lessons. It follows that, the learners were not sufficiently familiar with the written form of these expressions

10) Responses with wrong information

Responses containing wrong information were also quite common. It is however worth mentioning that even though these responses were wrong, all of them contained information that was mentioned in the recording.

It indicates that these mistakes may be caused by the fact that learners either did not read the task assignment properly or they did not fully understand the text and they at least tried to write down what they have understood.

Sentences one and seven have proven to be the most difficult ones since many mistakes occurred in the responses to them. To the first sentence learners often added expressions like *station road*, *downing station* or only *station*.

As the expression Station Road also appeared in the text, it may be possible that learners confused the phrase *walks to the* with the phrase *goes down the* and thus wrongly added the name of the street instead of the place she walked to.

Furthermore, instead of the correct second part of the seventh sentence, which was *on the corner*, learners often added phrases like *turning left*, *next turning left* or *on the left*. The expression *the next turning left* is also mentioned in the text, however as the addition to the sentence *Then she goes straight across and it's...* does not make any sense. In this case learners therefore probably did not sufficiently understand the text and they just wrote what they heard as the last thing.

11) Incomplete responses

Incomplete answers often appeared in responses containing more than one word that is to say in the sentence two, six and seven.

In the second sentence the verb *goes* was often missing in learners' responses presumably because they focused more on the following expression *straight on* which was very difficult for them particularly due to its spelling. Despite the missing verb, learners received a point for their answer, provided that they spelled the rest of the response correctly.

The sixth sentence should be completed with two words that are: *next crossroads*. However, learners often wrote only one part of the correct response either *next* or *crossroads*. In this case, such an answer was considered incomplete and was awarded only half a point. This equally applies to the seventh sentence. The correct response should be: *on the corner*, however, the response of some students was often only *corner*.

Furthermore, it should be also noted that function words are in learners' responses omitted more frequently than content words.

12) Missing responses

As well as in the previous exercise analysis, the omitted responses to certain questions do not help us to identify the reason why these questions were so difficult for learners. Nevertheless, even in this case we can determine the questions that have been most frequently left unanswered and therefore which of them were probably the most challenging.

The analysis has shown that the sentences two and six come first on the list of the most frequently omitted responses. The second sentence was not completed in five cases and the sixth sentence in four cases.

It implies therefore that these two sentences caused the major difficulties in the listening exercise. Since these two responses were also frequently misspelled it is possible that learners were insecure about the spelling and, consequently, they rather omitted the answer. Furthermore, as these words were from the latest unit in the textbook we can also assume that learners were not sufficiently familiar with the pronunciation of these words and thus they did not recognize them from the recording.

4.5 The ninth grade

The ninth grade is attended by students aged between fourteen and fifteen. They also took part in the examination after completing the first three lessons of their textbook Project Fourth Edition, Level 5. The total number of ninth grade students who participated in the test is 30, namely 9 girls and 21 boys.

4.5.1 The description of the listening exercise

As it can be seen from the figure 5, that represents the listening exercise completed by ninth graders, it consist of eight statements. There is also one completed task serving as an example. In order to successfully complete the exercise the learners were supposed to decide whether these statements are true or false on the basis of information from the recording. One point was given for each correct answer and in total the learners could earn eight points.

The text of the recording is relatively long as it consist of 274 words, nevertheless it is clear, well-structured and it contains only familiar words. The topic of the text is the organisation of a fundraising day and it is meant as a set of instruction given by a person to group of other participants. The tapescript of the recording can be found in the appendices.

Figure 5 – *The listening exercise of the 9th grade*

1.  **Listen. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?**

Example

Simon is going to sell raffle tickets. T

1 Greg will work with Jules. _____

2 The secretary is going to dress up as a clown. _____

3 Alec will take photographs. _____

4 Flora and Sandy will sell drinks and crisps. _____

5 All the students have to bring old clothes to sell. _____

6 The school will buy four computers with the money. _____

7 They hope to raise £1,200 pounds. _____

8 Mrs Williams will count the money. _____

4.5.2 The analysis of eight graders' mistakes in the listening exercise

The listening exercise of ninth graders consisted of eight statements which were supposed to be marked true or false depending on the information from the recording. This type of exercise is however not very suitable for an analysis of learners' mistakes in listening tests as the correct answer can be easily guessed. Furthermore, since this type of exercise does not require any written response it is very difficult to detect the source of problems which learners encounter in this exercise. Nevertheless, the most problematic questions can be identified and it is also possible to try to identify the reason why that is the case.

The analysis of the incorrect responses has proved that the greatest number of mistakes occurred in responses to the second, third and eighth questions. These questions were incorrectly answered up to thirteen times compared to the other questions that were answered incorrectly only twice on average. These questions can be therefore considered the most difficult ones and they are further analysed in the following subchapters.

a) Second question

The second sentence in the listening exercise was: *The secretary is going to dress up as a clown* and it should be marked as false since according to the recording the headmaster is going to wear a clown costume. Nevertheless this sentence was marked as true in seven cases.

The part of the recording that corresponds to the sentence is: *people will enjoy having their picture taken with the headmaster in his clown costume*. Furthermore, it should be noted that the word *secretary* does not appear anywhere in the text. It is therefore possible that learners paid attention mainly to the second part of the sentence so they focused on whether the secretary is going to dress up as a clown or as something else and they did not notice that the subject of the sentence is different.

b) Third question

The third question was even more problematic with regard to the number of incorrect responses. Within this question learners should decide if the sentence: *Alec will take photographs* is true or false. According to the relevant part of the text of the recording which is: *I think the photography stand will be a lot of fun ... Alec is in charge of this stall and he is going to bring his own camera, because he knows exactly how to use it*, this sentence is true. However, the sentence was marked as false thirteen times.

Taking into account the relevant part of the recording, the true/false statement apparently differs from the way how this fact is stated on the recording. Therefore it is possible that learners expected to hear the answer as it is written in the statement (*Alec will take photographs*) and they were not aware of the fact that the sentence from the recording (*Alec is in charge of this stall*) means the same.

Other possible source of difficulties may be the sentence: *he is going to bring his own camera*. This sentence may be understood as Alec's only duty is to bring his own camera which may lead learners to the decision that this statement is false.

c) Eighth question

In the eight question the statement was: *Mrs Williams will count the money*. This statement is according to the recording false as Mr Matthews will count the money not Mrs Williams. However, this statement was marked as true eight times. This is somewhat surprising because the sentence was stated clearly on the recording as: *So let's hope that when Mr Matthews counts the money we will have enough*.

The reason why the statement was marked as true several times may be the fact that the pronunciation of the names Mrs Williams and Mr Matthews may appeared to be similar and learners therefore did not notice the difference. Furthermore, it is also possible that learners focused more on the second part of the sentence, namely whether Mrs Williams will count the money or she will do something else and they did not realize that the subject of the sentence is different.

4.6 Summary

As was already stated, the types of listening exercises differ according to whether they involve production or recognition only. The first mentioned type of exercise needs to be completed by the whole sentence, a phrase or a single word. On the other hand, while completing exercises with recognition responses, everything that has to be done to achieve the task is to identify the correct answer. It therefore comes as no surprise that the types of mistakes identified in the production responses differ from those identified in the recognition responses.

a) Production responses

Regarding the production responses, the mistakes identified in them could be categorized into five groups. The responses were mainly considered incorrect because they contained grammatical mistakes or wrong spelling, they were incomplete and sometimes also answered incorrectly or not at all.

The most common grammatical mistakes included misuse or omission of articles as well as subject-verb agreement mistakes. The use of wrong verb was also common, as for example in the sentence: *They only do photos*. Furthermore, students also occasionally used incorrect verb forms or they omitted verbs completely in their answers.

Spelling errors occurred mainly in responses containing proper nouns or words that are also used in Czech language, in these case the English spelling was often modified under the influence of Czech spelling (photo → foto).

Responses containing incorrect information occurred quite frequently in cases where they should contain a number. It also happened frequently that the responses contained information mentioned on the recording, however this information does not correspond with the question.

Incomplete responses then occurred in cases when the responses should consist of two items as for example the answer: *trousers and a shirt*. In this case students often mentioned only one of these items in their responses. Responses that were supposed to be in form of a whole sentence but they contained only one word or phrase were also considered incomplete.

b) Recognition responses

In terms of recognition responses, the mistakes that were identified in them were mainly caused by the fact that students chose the option that was mentioned in the text, however it was not the correct one. Furthermore, it was also difficult for students to choose the correct option provided that the relevant information was mentioned differently on the recording than in the question. In the case of true/false questions students also very often focused on the second part of the text and they did not notice that the subject of the sentence mentioned on the recording differ from the one in the statement.

5 The questionnaire

The second objective of this thesis is to determine what are the listening comprehension problems encountered by Czech students of the upper primary school in Plumlov. In order to obtain such information objectively and accurately a Likert scale questionnaire completed by the learners themselves was used.

The questionnaire was completed by 160 students who attended the upper school in Plumlov, those same students whose listening tests were analysed in the previous chapter. This number of respondents consisted of 26 learners from the fifth grade, 29 sixth graders, 42 seventh graders, 34 eighth graders and 29 ninth graders. All of them have English language as a compulsory school subject and their ages range from 10 to 15.

Regarding the questionnaire, it consists of 14 questions which were derived from the findings in the theoretical part. The responses to these questions were then recorded on a four point Likert scale (Yes, Rather yes, Rather no, No). The original version of this questionnaire provided to learners was written in Czech language and as simply and unambiguously as possible, in order to avoid confusion. Both the original and the translated versions can be find in the appendices.

To be even more objective, the questionnaire was completed anonymously. Furthermore, the questionnaire was also completed in the presence of a teacher during the English lesson so learners had the opportunity to ask for additional information if they needed and also so they were not disturbed by anything.

5.1 The analysis of questionnaire responses

Questionnaire replies were processed into six tables, each table corresponding to responses of one grade plus one table containing a summary of all learners' answers. These tables, that are included in the list of tables, then served as a source of information for the following analysis

Since the questionnaires for individual grades were identical, the content of this analysis is organised according to individual questions that were included in the questionnaire and not by individual grades.

Each subchapter then begins with a short description of the comprehension problem then the results of the questionnaire are briefly commented on and finally the comparison of the answers of the individual grades is given.

5.1.1 Problems related to the speed of delivery

As was stated in the theoretical part of this theses, the fact that learners do not have any control over the speed of the delivery is particularly problematic for them and it has also been confirmed by the learners' responses in the questionnaire.

To the question whether it is difficult to understand the recording if the speaker speaks too fast 60 percent of all learners answered that it is rather difficult and 15 percent considered it as difficult. For the purposes of comparison, 21 percent of respondents stated that it is rather not difficult for them and only 4 percent of the total number of respondents did not consider it a problem.

With regard to the individual grades, the responses did not differ much. The total percentage of respondents who answered yes or rather yes in each grade ranges from 69 to 81 percent.

5.1.2 Problems related to the number of speakers

The number of speakers is another factor that can affect the understanding of the recording. However, according to learners' responses it does not have such significant impact on their comprehension.

Only 13 percent of the total number of respondents considered that if there are more than two speakers on the recording they have substantially more problems in understanding the recording. Moreover, the two most frequent responses to this question were rather yes (31 %) and rather no (41 %), therefore this factor can be classified as less relevant in terms of its impact on the understanding of a recording.

Again, the responses of learners from individual grades were divided in similar proportions, while the answer rather no was mostly prevailing.

5.1.3 Problems related to accent of the speaker

In addition to the number of speakers, an unusual accent of a speaker on the recording is also a reason why some recordings are particularly demanding in terms of understanding all necessary information.

Table 1 reveals that 17 percent of learners responded that it is difficult to understand the recording provided that the speaker speaks with an unusual accent. A further 42 percent of them stated that it is rather difficult. Since, however, 41 percent of all respondents either consider that a less influential factor or do not consider it as a problem at all, an unusual accent of a speaker is not a major factor that negatively affects the learners' comprehension in listening exercises.

In terms of individual grades, the frequency of individual responses varied, nevertheless only in two cases the answer rather yes was not the most chosen one. It is interesting, however, that the most common response (42 %) of fifth graders was that the unusual accent is rather not difficult to comprehend. Nevertheless, this may be due to the fact that they do not encounter it too much.

5.1.4 Problems related to choice of the topic

The purpose of the fourth question in the questionnaire was to determine whether there is a difference in the level of comprehension if the topic of the recording is either boring or unfamiliar.

In terms of frequency, the answers, except for one, were fairly balanced (31 % rather yes, 29 % rather no, 29 % no). As a result, even poor choice of topic cannot be considered a serious problem for learners.

Any major changes will not be seen even if we examine the learners' responses by individual grades. Even though in each school grade different responses are prevailing, it is never too significantly.

5.1.5 Problems related the mode of delivery

Another factor that can impede the learners' understanding of the recording is the fact that they cannot get things repeated whenever they need to, which can sometimes be really stressful.

It is therefore surprising that 49 percent of learners responded that they do not find it difficult if they are able to hear the necessary information only once or they consider it as only minor factor in listening comprehension. The other part of the respondents however admits that their level of understanding of the recording also more or less depends on whether they can hear the recording more than once.

The reason for this surprising finding may be the fact that in the vast majority of cases learners are able to hear things repeatedly whether it is during the lesson or the listening test and therefore they do not realize how difficult it is when they do not have this possibility.

5.1.6 Problems related to complexity of text

Problem that impedes students' listening comprehension can also occur in the case when the text of the recording is too complex. It means that there are many people or things mentioned in the recording as well as difficult grammatical structures are used.

The table 1 indicates that students mostly find it difficult to understand such texts (22 % yes, 39 % rather yes). Only nine per cent of all learners reported that their ability to understand the text of the recording is not affected by this factor. On the basis of these results, complex texts of recordings can be considered as considerably problematic for learners.

The responses of individual grades again differed only in percentage however their order, according to frequency, do not differ except for the ninth graders who mostly responded rather no (41 %).

5.1.7 Problems related to explicitness of information

Another source of difficulty related to the text of the recording can be the level of explicitness of the content. As was stated in the theoretical part of this thesis, it is far more difficult to notice the information that is mentioned implicitly than if it is directly expressed.

As the table 1 indicates, many learners (20 % yes, 46 % rather yes) find it is difficult to understand the listening text when the necessary information is not mentioned directly. As the sum of these two responses is 66 percent of all responses and as only eight percent of respondents stated that this feature of the text does not affect their comprehension, lower explicitness of the text can be one considerable factor that negatively affects the learners' comprehension.

Apart from the fifth graders, the total percentage of respondents from individual grades who answered yes to this questions ranges from 43 to 53 percent.

5.1.8 Problems related to type of input

As was previously mentioned, different sorts of input can be divided into three categories, namely static, dynamic and abstract. At the same time, the dynamic and abstract types of input are the most difficult ones for learners to comprehend. Eight and ninth questions were therefore asked to know which of these kinds of input is more challenging.

a) Dynamic type of input

To the question whether it is difficult for learners to understand the text if a storyline of an event is described on the recording, which corresponds to dynamic type of input, respondents mostly answered rather no (34 %). Other answers, as ordered by frequency of responses, were: rather yes (28 %), no (23 %) and yes (15 %).

b) Abstract type of input

The response to second question, which aim was to determine if texts containing abstract concepts are difficult to comprehend for learners, was again mostly the answer rather no. In this case, the percentage of this answer was even higher, namely 44 percent. The percentage of answers rather yes (27 %) and no (21 %) are then relatively comparable.

According to these responses, dynamic as well as abstract type of input does not significantly hinder the understanding of the text. The abstract types of input are, at the same time, considered to be more manageable for learners.

5.1.9 Problems related to the need to understand every word

There is a widespread belief among learners that in order to understand the meaning of the recording, it is necessary to understand every word of it. Consequently, if learners miss some words of the text, they can start panicking and it is hard for them to continue listening.

The responses to the tenth question therefore should determine whether it is difficult for learners to understand the recording if they do not understand some words. As can be seen from the table 1, 72 percent of respondents actually considered the comprehension under such conditions as more or less difficult. This finding thus confirmed the statement in the theoretical part of this thesis.

The responses of the learners from individual grades correspond to those reported in the overall summary.

5.1.10 Problems related to the feeling of fatigue

Due to fatigue learners can miss some words or even parts of a recording, thus this factor can also negatively influence the listener's comprehension.

However only approximately half of the respondents (52 %) stated that to some extent it is difficult for them to understand the recording when they feel tired. The results thus indicate that the fatigue does not appear to be the main source of listening comprehension problems.

It is also noteworthy, that the questionnaire results of individual grades differed significantly from each other. The ninth (34 %) and sixth (38 %) graders most often reported that the feeling of fatigue can greatly affect their comprehension. On the other hand, fifth graders (35 %) did not consider fatigue a major obstacle.

5.1.11 Problems related to inability to concentrate

As stated in the previous subchapter, momentary inattention, no matter if it is caused by fatigue or inability to concentrate, could prevent learners from hearing some important information which may even result in a misunderstanding of the entire recording.

Concentration problems therefore make listening more difficult, which was also confirmed by the questionnaire. Failure to concentrate can, according to 63 percent of respondents, to some extent affect a result of a listening exercise. Other 25 percent stated that it rather does not affect their performance in listening exercises.

The questionnaire results of individual grades again did not vary too much, the most frequent responses were either yes or rather yes except fifth grade, where the most common response was rather no (35 %).

5.1.12 Problems related to the listener's limited vocabulary

It is true that not all words from the text have to be understood by listeners in order to understand the meaning of the text. Provided, however, that these words are necessary in order to answer exercise questions or if there are too many unfamiliar expressions in the text, the comprehension can be considerably impaired.

This was also confirmed by respondents. If the number of yes and rather yes responses are summed the final percentage is 65 percent. Only eight percent of respondents then stated that their ability to understand the recording is not influenced by the number of unfamiliar words.

A percentage distribution of individual grades' responses was again dissimilar, but not enough to change the order of responses according to their frequency.

5.1.13 Problems related to negative expectations

As was stated in the theoretical part, it is quite common that learners fear that they will not be able to succeed in the listening exercise even before the recording starts playing. Considering listening exercise difficult and impossible to complete as well as feeling of anxiety can however itself impair learner's performance.

According to the questionnaire results, more than half of the respondents agree with this statement. To the question whether it is difficult to understand the recording if they feel afraid of failing, 31 percent of learners responded yes and 28 percent of them stated that it is rather difficult for them.

5.2 Comparison of the results

After each source of listening comprehension problem was discussed separately, an overall comparison of their relevance and possible level of influence on learners' comprehension should be made.

In order to determine which of these problems are more significant, the responses to the individual questions were averaged. This was done by assigning a numeric value to each response, so that "Yes" response was assigned a value of five, whereas "No" a value of one. The number of respondents that selected corresponding response was then multiplied by this number. The resulting values were summed up individually for each question and then divided by 160, which is the number of all respondents. These averages were also entered in table 1. Any average with the greatest value then corresponds to a factor that causes the greatest listening comprehension difficulties.

From his comparison it can be assumed that it is very difficult for students to understand the recording if they do not understand some expressions from the text (2.88), if the speaker speaks too fast (2.86) or if they cannot concentrate on the exercise (2.83). Furthermore, it is difficult for learners to do so if the necessary information are mentioned in the text implicitly (2.78), if the text is too complex (2.74) or if it contains some unfamiliar expressions (2.74). On the contrary, the least impact on their listening comprehension, of all options offered, has a boring or unfamiliar topic of the recording (2.26) and abstract concept described on the recording (2.22).

6 Interview with English teacher

As was already stated, the second objective of this thesis is to determine the problems that Czech upper primary school students encounter in listening exercises. As established in the theoretical part of this thesis, features of spoken English can be also source of listening difficulties. However, necessary information on this issue could not be obtained by an analysis of listening exercises results, nor by a questionnaire, as learners are probably not fully aware of these features and their responses would therefore be less relevant.

In order to determine whether the features of spoken English may affect listening comprehension and which ones affect it the most, a semi-structured interview with experienced English teacher Eva V. teaching at the primary school in Plumlov was conducted. The semi-structured interview was used so the questions could be modified as necessary during the interview while the information obtained on this subject in the theoretical part served as an interview guide.

6.1 The interview results

The chosen method of interview allowed the interviewee to comment freely on individual features of spoken English and her practical experiences relating to this issue. The data obtained during the interview were then organized into four subchapters corresponding to the theoretical part. It should be also noted that the possible problems resulting from the different pronunciation of the same sound will not be listed here as the interviewee is not aware of the fact that this feature of the spoken language would affect learners' ability to understand the recording.

6.1.1 The weak relationship between spelling and pronunciation

The difference between written and spoken language according to the interviewee causes serious problems to Czech students not only in listening activities but also in other areas of the English learning. As stated by interviewee this is probably due to the fact that such a difference is not very common in Czech language.

The interviewee further mentioned, as it was also confirmed by the analysis of listening exercises results that learners often understand what is being said on the recording but they are not sure about the spelling or they are influenced by the spoken form and therefore they often fail to answer correctly.

On the other hand, learners can be familiar with the written form of the word, however they are not able to recognize it when this word is uttered as they are not sure about its pronunciation. Furthermore, it also happens, especially with words that also exist in the Czech language, that learners have learnt an incorrect pronunciation. An example of this can be the word *tornado*. Learners often pronounce this word as /tɔrna:dɒ/ and consequently they will not recognize this word when it is pronounced correctly as /tɔ:'neɪdəʊ/.

6.1.2 Sound changes in connected speech

As interviewee admits, learners do not encounter connected speech very often during the lessons, as recordings used for listening exercises usually do not contain such language and regarding her lessons she tries to speak in a way that is intelligible to the students.

Nevertheless, the most problematic feature of connected speech, as mentioned by interviewee, is vowel reduction, namely reduced forms of function words. It is very difficult for Czech learners to recognize these expressions as was also confirmed in the analysis of learners' mistakes. In fact, these expressions, especially auxiliary verbs, were often missing in their responses.

6.1.3 The rhythm of English

The interviewee also agrees with the statement that the learners' listening comprehension may be affected by the rhythm of English. As was stated in the theoretical part, there is a difference in the way how syllables are produced in each of these languages.

Czech students, as pointed out by the interviewee, thus may feel that some words were uttered carelessly and that they are not able to recognize them. Furthermore, as some syllables are pronounced in a very short period of time, learners do not expect the utterance to consist of so many words and they can therefore may fail to write a complete answer.

6.1.4 Unknown or unusual sounds

As reported by the interviewee, some phonemes, especially these that do not exist in Czech language such as /ə/, /æ/, /ð/ and /θ/, make difficulties to learners, despite the fact that their pronunciation is often practiced in lessons. As an example of common mistake caused by this feature the interviewee mentioned the words *man* and *men*. In the case of these words students are often not able to pronounce them properly as well as they are not able to distinguish one from another in spoken language.

However, not just these phonemes cause difficulties to students. As interviewee mentioned, it is also sometimes challenging for them to distinguish between vowels that differ in their length. One example of this can be numbers 15 and 50. As in the previous case, students are not always able to pronounce them correctly and they often confuse them in listening exercises.

6.2 Summary

As seen from the above, the features of spoken English may also affect listening comprehension. The most frequently encountered listening comprehension difficulties are then caused by the following: difference between spoken and written form of words, reduced forms of function words, the rhythm of English and by pronunciation of some phonemes.

7 Conclusion

This diploma thesis mainly focuses on the topic of listening comprehension difficulties encountered by Czech upper primary school students. The thesis consists of two parts, the practical and theoretical part. The main aim of the theoretical part was to provide necessary information about the topic of the thesis. The main goal of the theoretical part was then to answer the research questions.

The theoretical part informs readers about the importance of listening in English classes and different types of listening and listening exercises. It also includes the overview of possible sources of listening difficulties as well as the results of researches done by foreign authors on this topic.

The practical part then deals with following research questions: What are the most common mistakes in listening exercises completed by Czech upper primary school students of English? What are the listening comprehension problems encountered by Czech upper primary school students of English? In order to answer these questions, three different methods were used, namely the analysis of students' listening exercises, likert scale questionnaire and interview with English teacher.

The analysis of students' listening exercises showed, that there are differences between mistakes done in recognition and production responses. The recognition responses were incorrect mainly because of two reasons, namely because the students did not understand the relevant parts of the recording or because of their negligence. On the other hand, students that completed production responses had to master not only listening skills but also grammar and spelling.

In these types of responses mistakes such as wrong use of article, wrong spelling, the use of wrong verb or also wrong subject-verb agreement occurred. These responses are proof that the students were in most cases able to understand the recording, they were just not able to write the answer correctly.

The outcome of the questionnaire then has identified the most common problems encountered by Czech students during listening exercises. These problems are for instance caused by fast speech of the speaker, lack of concentration, unknown words, too complex texts or by the fact that the necessary information are provided implicitly.

Finally the interview with English teacher confirmed the presumption that students' listening problems may be also caused by some features of spoken English. Among the most common sources of the problems related to this category belong the difference between spoken and written form of words, reduced forms of function words, the rhythm of English and also pronunciation of some unusual phonemes.

Now that the possible causes of students' listening comprehension problems are already known, our goal should not be to avoid them in English lessons, on the contrary, we should teach students to overcome these difficulties. Furthermore, listening exercises with recognition responses should be valued more in English classes as these exercises test only the listening skills and nothing else.

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Appendices

a) Tapescript of listening exercise for 5th graders

Dear Courtney, My name's Mandy Taylor. I'm twelve years old and I'm from London. Here's a photo of me and my family. I've got one brother. His name's Ben. Have you got any brothers and sisters? Have you got a pet? I've got a cat. Her name is Fluffy. She's in the photo. Ben has got a pet, too. He's got a hamster. Its name is Coco. It isn't in the photo. My best friend is Jane Hill, and our favourite group is the Colossal Oranges. They're great. We've got all their CDs and Jane has got a poster of them in her bedroom, too. Have you got a favourite group? What's your favourite song? Bye for now. Love, Mandy.

b) Tapescript of listening exercise for 6th graders

Lisa Hi. My name's Lisa. I'm twelve years old. I live in Leeds. I get up at half past seven. My parents go to work at eight o'clock. My brother and I walk to school. School starts at nine o'clock. I like sports. I play tennis and football. My brother doesn't like sports. He likes Maths. I don't! My favourite lesson is History. On Saturdays I go shopping with my friends.

c) Tapescript of listening exercise for 7th graders

Best-dressed brother competition

- Narrator** Send us a photo of your brother for our fashion page.
- Millie** Look. Mickey. Let's send a photo of you.
Mickey Oh, come on, Millie. I've got the worst clothes in the world.
- Millie** Hmm. I've got a good idea.
Mickey Can I try these trousers and this shirt on, please?
Assistant Yes. The changing rooms are over there.
- Millie** How are they?
Mickey They're too small.
Millie Here. Try these.
Assistant Are they better?
Mickey Well, the trousers are better, but the shirt is worse than the first one.
Mickey Have you got that shirt in a bigger size?
Millie Oh, yes. That's better. Now we need some shoes.
Mickey I think these are the best shoes, Millie.
Assistant At last! That's £120 altogether then, please.
Millie We don't want to buy them. We just want to take a photo.
Mickey That was the worst idea in the world, Millie.

d) Tapescript of listening exercise for 8th graders

AUDIOSCRIPT

OK, Sally, come out of the station into Station Road and turn left. Carry on down Station Road until you get to the traffic lights and go straight on. The park is on your right. Turn right at the crossroads and go straight on. You'll come to a crossing. Cross over the road here and go on until you get to the next crossroads. Go straight across here and it's on the corner, just before the next turning left.

e) Tapescript of listening exercise for 9th graders

Now listen carefully, and make sure you all know what you have to do at tomorrow's fundraising day! Bill and Anna, you will be at the gate to take the entrance money, when people come in. Each adult has to pay 50p, but children get in free. Simon, you can go there too, to sell the tickets for the raffle, one pound for five. Now, the car washing! Jules, you are in charge of this and Greg will help you. I know Greg washes his Dad's car every week, so he's the best choice. I think the photography stand will be a lot of fun, because people will enjoy having their picture taken with the headmaster in his clown costume. Alec is in charge of this stall and he is going to bring his own camera, because he knows exactly how to use it. And Alec don't forget it-like you usually do with your homework! Like last year, snacks will be on sale but only soft drinks and crisps, nothing hot. I will bring these in my car and Flora and Sandy will sell them. One last thing! We still don't have enough second-hand books for the bookstall. So, tomorrow morning, I want all of you to bring me an old book that you don't want to read again. I'd like to thank you all for your hard work so far. We are hoping to buy three computers for the school in Africa, and we need one thousand two hundred pounds to do this. So let's hope that when Mr Matthews counts the money we will have enough. Now, does anyone have any questions?

f) The original version of the questionnaire

Dělá ti při poslechu nahrávky v angličtině obtíže, pokud...	1	2	3	4
osoby na nahrávce mluví příliš rychle ?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
na nahrávce mluví více osob (3 a více)?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
osoby na nahrávce mluví zvláštním přízvukem (jinak než jsi zvyklý/á)?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
se nahrávka týká nezajímavého nebo neznámého tématu (například politiky)?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
nahrávku slyšíš jen jednou? (bez opakování)	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
je text poslechu komplikovaný (je zmíněno hodně osob, věcí, atd.)?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
informace , kterou potřebuješ vědět, není řečena přímo (musíš ji vyvodit z textu)?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
je na nahrávce popisován děj nějaké události?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
se na nahrávce mluví o abstraktních věcech (nelze se jich dotknout, označují názvy dějů, činností a vlastností)?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
nerozumíš některým slovům?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
se cítíš unavený/á?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
se nemůžeš soustředit?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
neznáš některá slovíčka v textu?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.
se bojíš, že v testu neuspěješ?	Ano, velmi.	Trochu ano.	Spíše ne.	Vůbec ne.

g) The translated version of the questionnaire

Is it difficult for you to understand the recording if...	1	2	3	4
the speaker <u>speaks too fast</u> ?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
there are <u>more than two speakers</u> on the recording?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
the speaker speaks with <u>an unusual accent</u> ?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
the topic of the recording is <u>boring or unfamiliar</u> ?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
it is possible <u>to hear</u> the recording only <u>once</u> ?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
the text is <u>too complex</u> (there are many people or things mentioned in the recording)?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
the necessary information are mentioned <u>implicitly</u> ?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
a <u>storyline of an event</u> is described on the recording?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
<u>abstract concepts</u> are described on the recording?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
<u>you don't understand</u> some words?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
you <u>feel tired</u> ?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
you <u>can't concentrate</u> on the exercise?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
there are some <u>unfamiliar expressions</u> on the recording?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
you are <u>afraid of failing</u> the test?	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No

List of tables

Table 1: Questionnaire replies (summary)

Is it difficult for you to understand the recording if...	Yes (4)	Rather yes (3)	Rather no (2)	No (1)	Average
the speaker speaks too fast ?	24	96	34	6	2,86
Expressed in percentage	15%	60%	21%	4%	
there are more than two speakers on the recording?	20	49	66	25	2,40
Expressed in percentage	13%	31%	41%	16%	
the speaker speaks with an unusual accent ?	27	67	48	18	2,64
Expressed in percentage	17%	42%	30%	11%	
the topic of the recording is boring or unfamiliar ?	19	49	46	46	2,26
Expressed in percentage	12%	31%	29%	29%	
it is possible to hear the recording only once ?	32	49	34	45	2,43
Expressed in percentage	20%	31%	21%	28%	
the text is too complex (there are many people or things mentioned in the recording)?	35	62	49	14	2,74
Expressed in percentage	22%	39%	31%	9%	
the necessary information are mentioned implicitly ?	32	73	43	12	2,78
Expressed in percentage	20%	46%	27%	8%	
a storyline of an event is described on the recording?	24	44	55	37	2,34
Expressed in percentage	15%	28%	34%	23%	
abstract concepts are described on the recording?	13	43	70	34	2,22
Expressed in percentage	8%	27%	44%	21%	
you don't understand some words?	39	76	31	14	2,88
Expressed in percentage	24%	48%	19%	9%	
you feel tired ?	38	45	46	31	2,56
Expressed in percentage	24%	28%	29%	19%	
you can't concentrate on the exercise?	51	50	40	19	2,83
Expressed in percentage	32%	31%	25%	12%	
there are some unfamiliar expressions on the recording?	27	77	43	13	2,74
Expressed in percentage	17%	48%	27%	8%	
you are afraid of failing the test?	49	44	28	39	2,64
Expressed in percentage	31%	28%	18%	24%	

Table 2: Questionnaire replies (5th grade)

Is it difficult for you to understand the recording if...	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
the speaker speaks too fast ?	2	18	6	0
Expressed in percentage	8%	69%	23%	0%
there are more than two speakers on the recording?	1	5	13	7
Expressed in percentage	4%	19%	50%	27%
the speaker speaks with an unusual accent ?	4	8	11	3
Expressed in percentage	15%	31%	42%	12%
the topic of the recording is boring or unfamiliar ?	1	5	10	10
Expressed in percentage	4%	19%	38%	38%
it is possible to hear the recording only once ?	5	9	6	6
Expressed in percentage	19%	35%	23%	23%
the text is too complex (there are many people or things mentioned in the recording)?	2	11	8	5
Expressed in percentage	8%	42%	31%	19%
the necessary information are mentioned implicitly ?	3	7	12	4
Expressed in percentage	12%	27%	46%	15%
a storyline of an event is described on the recording?	2	7	9	8
Expressed in percentage	8%	27%	35%	31%
abstract concepts are described on the recording?	2	8	12	4
Expressed in percentage	8%	31%	46%	15%
you don't understand some words?	4	13	6	3
Expressed in percentage	15%	50%	23%	12%
you feel tired ?	4	7	6	9
Expressed in percentage	15%	27%	23%	35%
you can't concentrate on the exercise?	7	5	9	5
Expressed in percentage	27%	19%	35%	19%
there are some unfamiliar expressions on the recording?	0	13	13	0
Expressed in percentage	0%	50%	50%	0%
you are afraid of failing the test?	8	13	3	2
Expressed in percentage	31%	50%	12%	8%

Table 3: Questionnaire replies (6th grade)

Is it difficult for you to understand the recording if...	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
the speaker speaks too fast ?	8	13	5	3
Expressed in percentage	28%	45%	17%	10%
there are more than two speakers on the recording?	5	11	8	5
Expressed in percentage	17%	38%	28%	17%
the speaker speaks with an unusual accent ?	6	15	6	2
Expressed in percentage	21%	52%	21%	7%
the topic of the recording is boring or unfamiliar ?	7	10	6	6
Expressed in percentage	24%	34%	21%	21%
it is possible to hear the recording only once ?	5	10	6	8
Expressed in percentage	17%	34%	21%	28%
the text is too complex (there are many people or things mentioned in the recording)?	6	11	10	2
Expressed in percentage	21%	38%	34%	7%
the necessary information are mentioned implicitly ?	7	15	7	0
Expressed in percentage	24%	52%	24%	0%
a storyline of an event is described on the recording?	5	9	8	7
Expressed in percentage	17%	31%	28%	24%
abstract concepts are described on the recording?	5	4	13	7
Expressed in percentage	17%	14%	45%	24%
you don't understand some words?	7	16	4	2
Expressed in percentage	24%	55%	14%	7%
you feel tired ?	11	5	10	3
Expressed in percentage	38%	17%	34%	10%
you can't concentrate on the exercise?	9	8	8	4
Expressed in percentage	31%	28%	28%	14%
there are some unfamiliar expressions on the recording?	5	13	8	3
Expressed in percentage	17%	45%	28%	10%
you are afraid of failing the test?	13	6	4	6
Expressed in percentage	45%	21%	14%	21%

Table 4: Questionnaire replies (7th grade)

Is it difficult for you to understand the recording if...	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
the speaker speaks too fast ?	7	27	7	1
Expressed in percentage	17%	64%	17%	2%
there are more than two speakers on the recording?	6	14	16	6
Expressed in percentage	14%	33%	38%	14%
the speaker speaks with an unusual accent ?	5	19	13	5
Expressed in percentage	12%	45%	31%	12%
the topic of the recording is boring or unfamiliar ?	3	13	12	14
Expressed in percentage	7%	31%	29%	33%
it is possible to hear the recording only once ?	6	11	11	14
Expressed in percentage	14%	26%	26%	33%
the text is too complex (there are many people or things mentioned in the recording)?	10	18	11	3
Expressed in percentage	24%	43%	26%	7%
the necessary information are mentioned implicitly ?	8	18	12	4
Expressed in percentage	19%	43%	29%	10%
a storyline of an event is described on the recording?	8	12	12	10
Expressed in percentage	19%	29%	29%	24%
abstract concepts are described on the recording?	2	15	17	8
Expressed in percentage	5%	36%	40%	19%
you don't understand some words?	11	22	6	3
Expressed in percentage	26%	52%	14%	7%
you feel tired ?	4	14	15	9
Expressed in percentage	10%	33%	36%	21%
you can't concentrate on the exercise?	13	13	10	6
Expressed in percentage	31%	31%	24%	14%
there are some unfamiliar expressions on the recording?	11	19	9	3
Expressed in percentage	26%	45%	21%	7%
you are afraid of failing the test?	13	11	8	10
Expressed in percentage	31%	26%	19%	24%

Table 4: Questionnaire replies (8th grade)

Is it difficult for you to understand the recording if...	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
the speaker <u>speaks too fast</u> ?	2	23	8	1
Expressed in percentage	6%	68%	24%	3%
there are <u>more than two speakers</u> on the recording?	3	13	15	3
Expressed in percentage	9%	38%	44%	9%
the speaker speaks with <u>an unusual accent</u> ?	3	18	10	3
Expressed in percentage	9%	53%	29%	9%
the topic of the recording is <u>boring or unfamiliar</u> ?	3	12	12	7
Expressed in percentage	9%	35%	35%	21%
it is possible <u>to hear</u> the recording only <u>once</u> ?	11	10	4	9
Expressed in percentage	32%	29%	12%	26%
the text is <u>too complex</u> (there are many people or things mentioned in the recording)?	6	19	8	1
Expressed in percentage	18%	56%	24%	3%
the necessary information are mentioned <u>implicitly</u> ?	7	18	8	1
Expressed in percentage	21%	53%	24%	3%
a <u>storyline of an event</u> is described on the recording?	4	11	14	5
Expressed in percentage	12%	32%	41%	15%
<u>abstract concepts</u> are described on the recording?	0	12	17	5
Expressed in percentage	0%	35%	50%	15%
<u>you don't understand</u> some words?	10	15	7	2
Expressed in percentage	29%	44%	21%	6%
you <u>feel tired</u> ?	9	12	8	5
Expressed in percentage	26%	35%	24%	15%
you <u>can't concentrate</u> on the exercise?	13	11	8	2
Expressed in percentage	38%	32%	24%	6%
there are some <u>unfamiliar expressions</u> on the recording?	7	18	6	3
Expressed in percentage	21%	53%	18%	9%
you are <u>afraid of failing</u> the test?	10	8	7	9
Expressed in percentage	29%	24%	21%	26%

Table 5: Questionnaire replies (9th grade)

Is it difficult for you to understand the recording if...	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
the speaker speaks too fast ?	5	15	8	1
Expressed in percentage	17%	52%	28%	3%
there are more than two speakers on the recording?	5	6	14	4
Expressed in percentage	17%	21%	48%	14%
the speaker speaks with an unusual accent ?	9	7	8	5
Expressed in percentage	31%	24%	28%	17%
the topic of the recording is boring or unfamiliar ?	5	9	6	9
Expressed in percentage	17%	31%	21%	31%
it is possible to hear the recording only once ?	5	9	7	8
Expressed in percentage	17%	31%	24%	28%
the text is too complex (there are many people or things mentioned in the recording)?	11	3	12	3
Expressed in percentage	38%	10%	41%	10%
the necessary information are mentioned implicitly ?	7	15	4	3
Expressed in percentage	24%	52%	14%	10%
a storyline of an event is described on the recording?	5	5	12	7
Expressed in percentage	17%	17%	41%	24%
abstract concepts are described on the recording?	4	4	11	10
Expressed in percentage	14%	14%	38%	34%
you don't understand some words?	7	10	8	4
Expressed in percentage	24%	34%	28%	14%
you feel tired ?	10	7	7	5
Expressed in percentage	34%	24%	24%	17%
you can't concentrate on the exercise?	9	13	5	2
Expressed in percentage	31%	45%	17%	7%
there are some unfamiliar expressions on the recording?	4	14	7	4
Expressed in percentage	14%	48%	24%	14%
you are afraid of failing the test?	5	6	6	12
Expressed in percentage	17%	21%	21%	41%

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Barbora Frimmelová
Katedra:	Ústav cizích jazyků PdF UP
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Josef Nevařil, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2019
Název práce:	Problémy českých studentů v anglických poslechových cvičeních
Název v angličtině:	Problems encountered by Czech students of English in listening exercises
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce se zabývá problémy českých studentů v anglických poslechových cvičeních. V teoretické části je uvedena základní problematika poslechu v hodinách anglického jazyka a seznam potenciálních problémů týkajících se poslechu. V praktické části je proveden výzkum na základě analýzy chyb v poslechových cvičeních, dotazníkového šetření a rozhovoru s učitelem anglického jazyka. Dále jsou zde popsány a analyzovány chyby českých studentů v poslechových cvičeních a také problémy, na které během poslechových cvičení naráží.
Klíčová slova:	výuka angličtiny, výuka poslechu, poslechová cvičení, problémy českých studentů angličtiny, poslechové texty, druhý stupeň základních škol
Anotace v angličtině:	The diploma thesis is focused on problems encountered by Czech students of English in listening exercises. The main aim of the theoretical part is to describe the main issues of listening in English lessons and provide list of possible listening difficulties. The practical part is devoted to research based on analysis of students' mistakes in listening exercises, questionnaire survey and interview with English teacher. Furthermore, the mistakes of Czech learners in listening exercises are introduced and analysed, as well as the listening difficulties encountered by these learners.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	teaching English, teaching listening, listening exercises, problems of Czech students of English, listening texts, upper primary school
Přílohy vázané v práci:	11 příloh
Rozsah práce:	87 stran
Jazyk práce:	Angličtina

Résumé

Diplomová práce se zabývá problémy, které mají čeští studenti při poslechových cvičeních v hodinách anglického jazyka na druhém stupni základních škol. Teoretická část práce shrnuje základní poznatky o poslechových cvičeních v anglickém jazyce a také obsahuje shrnutí možných problémů, na které mohou žáci při poslechu narazit. Praktická část poté zkoumá, jaké chyby dělají žáci v poslechových cvičeních v hodinách anglického jazyka a jaké z uvedených problémů jim dělají při poslechu největší potíže. Pro získání požadovaných informací byly v praktické části použity tři metody, a to analýza chyb žáků v poslechových cvičeních, dotazníkové šetření a dále rozhovor s učitelem anglického jazyka. Z analýzy chyb v poslechových cvičeních vyplynulo, že studenti častěji chybují ve cvičeních s otevřenými otázkami, než ve cvičeních s kroužovacími odpověďmi. Pomocí dotazníku bylo zjištěno, že největší potíže dělá žákům při poslechových cvičeních následující: pokud nerozumí některým slovům v textu, pokud osoba na nahrávce mluví příliš rychle, pokud se na poslech nemohou soustředit nebo pokud text obsahuje implicitní vyjádření či pokud je text příliš složitý. Z rozhovoru s anglickým učitelem dále vyplynulo, že studentům dále dělá potíže: rozdíl v psané a mluvené formě jazyka, redukované formy funkčních slov a výslovnost některých fonémů. Cílem této práce tedy bylo zjistit, co dělá českým studentům při poslechu největší problémy, aby následně mohli učitelé anglického jazyka pomoci žákům tyto problémy překonat a zdokonalit tak jejich poslechové dovednosti.

