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Using songs to teach English vocabulary at lower secondary schools

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci na téma Využití písní k výuce anglické slovní zásoby na 2. stupni základních škol vypracovala samostatně za použití uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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Contents

List of abbreviations

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

ELT   English Language Teaching

Abstract

The diploma thesis investigates the use of songs as a means of teaching vocabulary in English lessons at lower secondary schools. The goal of the research is to measure the learners' potential vocabulary growth after each of four song-based lessons, and to receive the learners' evaluation of such lessons. Furthermore, the research aims to determine how lower secondary English teachers use songs in their lessons. The analysis of the results from pre-tests and post-tests revealed that the average success rate from the vocabulary tests was significantly higher after the song-based lessons, indicating that songs can be efficiently used by English teachers as sources for teaching vocabulary. Moreover, the results of the questionnaire for learners confirmed that the four song-based lessons were mostly enjoyable and beneficial for the learners. The results of the questionnaire for teachers indicated that songs are generally used in English lessons and, supposedly, one of the most common purposes for their application is to teach vocabulary.

Introduction

The diploma thesis deals with the topic of songs and their usage as a means of teaching vocabulary in English lessons at lower secondary schools. Considering that music and songs play an important role in the lives of many people, the exploration of songs' application in the field of education seems reasonable. Especially, the incorporation of songs into English classes appears worthy of attention, as a significant group of songs people listen to are sung in English. The idea to investigate songs' potential to serve as sources for vocabulary teaching stems from the belief that knowledge of vocabulary is one of the most important aspects for communication in a foreign language.

The potential of songs as educational tools is quite frequently explored in the research area. Still, the specific focus on use of songs as a means of teaching English vocabulary seems to require further research. Therefore, the thesis aims to contribute to the field and determine whether songs can be efficiently applied as media for teaching English vocabulary, namely at lower secondary schools.

The theoretical part of the thesis introduces the reader to the importance of vocabulary for learners of English, providing basic information about possibilities for selecting, practicing and testing vocabulary. The goal of the following chapters is to highlight the benefits that songs' musical features and language content offer, and to discuss the practical aspects of using songs during English lessons.

The practical part of the thesis describes creation of song-based materials and their execution during four English lessons. Evidence of the lessons' efficiency is presented in the form of vocabulary test results and results of a questionnaire for learners. Additionally, results of a questionnaire for teachers register the attitudes of lower secondary English teachers towards using songs in English lessons. The variety of applied methods includes action research, observation and questionnaires, allowing a multiple view into the problematics.

Theoretical part

1 Teaching vocabulary

The question whether songs can serve as suitable media for teaching vocabulary requires exploration in both the musical domain and the area of vocabulary teaching. In order to determine the impact of applying songs in vocabulary teaching, the principles of vocabulary teaching and learning must be addressed first. As Webb and Nation (2017, p. 5–6) believe, the significance of vocabulary and its usage is apparent from early childhood, being the necessity for social interaction. For the purpose of this thesis, the first chapter points out the importance of vocabulary for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and introduces the possibilities of its presentation in the classroom.

1.1 Definition of vocabulary

The basis of assessing the importance of vocabulary is to define the term. The interpretation of the concept, though, differs depending on the author. According to Ur (2012, p. 60), 'vocabulary can be defined, roughly, as the words in the language.' Hubáček et al. (2002, p. 61) state that 'a word is commonly understood as a basic unit of vocabulary,'[1] which corresponds with the simplified definition. However, the understanding of the concept is more complex. Ur (2012, p. 60) remarks that, in many cases, two or more words represent a single concept. Therefore, it is advised not to perceive vocabulary strictly as individual words, but rather as units of a certain length. Additionally, Ur (2012, p. 61–62) enumerates further features characterizing the term, such as form, meaning, grammar, or context. This is in agreement with Betáková et al. (2017, p. 54), who emphasize that it is the task and responsibility of the teacher to include these aspects when conveying new vocabulary to learners.

1.2 Vocabulary and EFL learners

As mentioned above, one of the aims of English teachers should be imparting vocabulary knowledge to their learners. The fundamental issue lies in realizing why vocabulary is so essential for learners. To answer the question, clarification must be made in defining what it means for learners to 'know' vocabulary.

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[1] translation of the author

1.2.1 Productive and receptive knowledge of vocabulary

Similarly to the case of defining vocabulary, an explicit description of what the knowledge of vocabulary involves does not exist. Although each author provides a slightly different specification, the common tendency is to distinguish between productive and receptive knowledge. Thornbury (2002, p. 22) compares these two kinds of knowledge to the ability to either understand (in case of receptive knowledge) or produce (in case of productive knowledge) vocabulary. As McCarthy (1990, p. 45) summarizes, 'productive retrieval follows reverse paths to those of receptive retrieval: meanings have to be given forms.'

However, Thornbury (2002, p. 22) warns that it is not possible to draw a strict border between known and unknown vocabulary. Apparently, the essence of knowledge is in its many layers. For instance, the individual levels of knowledge could be compared to learners' abilities to either understand or both understand and produce vocabulary, including the correct use of its pronunciation and grammatical form. Furthermore, the author emphasizes the role of context in interpreting the meaning of words, indicating that learners might be able to understand selected vocabulary in specific situations only. To conclude, it is important to remember that learners might know certain words merely from restricted viewpoints, while their knowledge of other words might be more complex.

1.2.2. The importance of vocabulary for EFL learners

To assess the importance of vocabulary in English Language Teaching (ELT), information must be provided about its perception in the past. According to Taylor (1990, p. 1), sufficient attention was not paid to vocabulary for a long time. As the author claims, 'pride of place has been given to 'structures' or, latterly, 'functions'.' Gairns and Redman (1990, p. 1) agree with the former neglect of vocabulary and its value, although their interpretation does not refer to unsatisfactory number of vocabulary items. To explain, encounters with new lexical items have been frequent in English classes, the main issue has been their presentation by teachers, namely the teachers' ignorance to select suitable words or phrases for their lessons and prepare appropriate activities. In Taylor's (1990, p. 1) opinion, 'teachers still need to be aware of the methodologies available for introducing and consolidating new lexical items,' although the significance of vocabulary is no longer underestimated today.

The current situation can be described by Webb and Nation's (2017, p. 6) belief that 'in all stages of our education, vocabulary is central to learning content.' To specify, vocabulary is not handled incidentally during classes. On the contrary, teachers systematically and

purposefully choose vocabulary items and accompanying activities to best suit the intents of their lessons. Similarly, the value of vocabulary is noticed by learners, the proof being their efforts to write unknown words into their notebooks.

A study by Brooks et al. (2021) can serve as an example of a potential that vocabulary knowledge shows. In their research, a group of English as an additional language learners was examined in order to determine whether their level of reading comprehension is based on their range of vocabulary. The participants' knowledge of vocabulary was not the only investigated factor, other language aspects with the potential to influence reading comprehension were examined as well. From these, however, vocabulary knowledge proved to be the most significant, affirming the impact of vocabulary on reading comprehension. The results of the study clearly demonstrate the benefits that lexical area offers, such as its positive connection to other fields of English language.

Moreover, the advantages of vocabulary learning can be reflected in EFL learners' attitudes. To elaborate, Webb and Nation (2017, p. 6) appreciate the motivational aspect of learning vocabulary, stating that it supports the learners' will to further deepen their knowledge. To explain, a longer period of time is usually required for evaluating the advance in language areas such as grammar, while the progress in vocabulary learning is visible much sooner, which motivates the learners. And, as Harmer (2015, p. 89) proclaims, 'all teachers know that it is easier to teach students who are motivated than students who aren't.' To conclude, vocabulary is an essential component of ELT nowadays, being of importance for both English teachers and EFL learners.

1.3 The chief principles of vocabulary selection in ELT

Whether teachers intend to present vocabulary with the help of songs or other materials in their English classes, it is important to choose the items for the particular lessons carefully. As mentioned above, it should be the teacher's task to do a proper preparation. According to Gairns and Redman (1990, p. 57), 'it is stating the obvious to say that the selected lexical items should be useful, but how do we determine exactly what is useful?' To answer the question, the main criteria for vocabulary selection should be discussed.

1.3.1 Frequency

When assessing the degree of importance of countless vocabulary items, the key question to ask is how large the learners' range of vocabulary should be. Allen (p. 104–105) believes that although an approximate number of words required for daily communication is

considered to be around 30,000, English learners do not necessarily need to learn such a generous quantity of items. Evidently, it is quite sufficient for the learners to understand and be able to apply around 2,000 words, while possessing solely receptive knowledge of other words. The explanation is that, similarly like with native speakers, learners do not ordinarily say or write such a wide range of words to share information with others. The much more probable situation is to receive less common words by hearing or reading them somewhere. That is the reason why students should learn expressions that are most significant to them, meaning the expressions that are confronted the most. Webb and Nation (2017, p. 6–7) agree with this view, claiming that high-frequency words are encountered in numerous communicative situations (both oral and written), and are therefore much more valuable than low-frequency words.

As Ur (2012, p. 65) informs, words with the highest frequency, 'i. e. how often a word, or expression, is used in conversation or writing,' can be found either in dictionaries or online in various websites for teachers. McCarthy (1990, p. 79–80), however, warns that different sources may provide slightly divergent content. Consequently, expressions in the frequency lists should be interpreted with due caution.

1.3.2 Usefulness

According to Thornbury (2002, p. 34–35), usefulness of words can be compared to the possibilities of leaners to apply the words in ordinary, recurrent situations, such as at school during individual lessons. The author believes, however, that there are cases when the degree of usefulness can be estimated with difficulty, such situations being the reason for the existence of so-called core vocabulary. The term refers to expressions believed to have higher value than words or phrases not appearing in the list. For instance, superordinate words are frequently recorded in such registers. As Allen (1983, p. 108) warns though, 'no list should be used for deciding which words to teach our students.' Instead, teachers are advised to think about vocabulary items most suitable for their learners' application with regard to their surroundings, school environment, and their specific interests. Gairns and Redman (1990, p. 59–60) support the idea that the degree of vocabulary usefulness depends on the areas learners focus on the most. Moreover, the reader's attention is drawn to the motivational aspect of learning new items. According to the provided clarification, students tend to be more willing to learn new expressions when feeling personal need for the knowledge. In other words, the sense of usefulness in the process of vocabulary learning supports their motivation for further education.

1.3.3 Other criteria

Criteria for the selection of vocabulary for classroom purposes are numerous, given different authors emphasize different aspects. For instance, Ur (2012, p. 65) enumerates factors such as the words' learnability, their potential to catch the learners' attention or their relevance for the culture of the specific place. In relation to the items' learnability, Thornbury (2002, p. 35) adds a similar viewpoint, though not exactly the same, namely teachability. The term describes the ability of the teacher to present the meaning with little effort, for example with the help of objects or images. This aspect, however, is far from being the last. As a study by Al-Seady (1998) demonstrates, criteria for vocabulary selection are countless, among them features like range, availability, coverage, gradation and many more.

1.3.4 The number of vocabulary items to teach

In addition to the suitable choice of vocabulary items for their lessons, teachers should pay attention to the appropriate number of words to teach their learners. As Gairns and Redman (1990, p. 66) notify, the exact number of new expressions to teach cannot be explicitly given. Generally, the authors consider the appropriate amount of vocabulary items taught in one sixty-minute lesson to be between eight and twelve, depending on the learners' age and level. The presupposition is that such range is quite adequate for learners, who should be able to use it productively after the lesson.

Moreover, Webb and Nation (2017, p. 231) raise an interesting question, whether it is more efficient to learn a certain amount of vocabulary in one set or divided into smaller parts. The idea that the study of vocabulary in smaller sets of items is more suitable for learners can be supported, for instance, by the study by Joseph et al. (2009), whose results indicated that there are benefits in learning smaller number of vocabulary items at once. In a study by Nakata and Webb (2016), however, it was found that it was not truly underlying whether students learned defined content in parts or as a whole, as long as the spacing between the encounters with the given words was equal in both cases. Still, the study highlighted the significance of spacing during the process of learning new vocabulary items. Thornbury (2002, p. 24) agrees with this observation, stating that teachers should give the learners' brains opportunities to process the knowledge continuously, not immediately in a full extent. Presumably, learners are much more inclined to store the knowledge in their memory if the concepts are encountered repeatedly, which entails the necessity to return to them after certain periods of time.

As may seem, therefore, proper assessment of the number of vocabulary items to teach in one lesson requires teachers not to pond exclusively over the items' quantity, but over their quality as well. The whole discussion of how many words and phrases learners should learn can be summarized by Thornbury's (2002, p. 23) notion that 'the learner needs not only to learn a lot of words, but to remember them.'

1.4 Vocabulary practicing

In order to successfully store the chosen expressions into the learners' memory, EFL teachers need to practice the vocabulary with the learners. The first step appears to be the decision about the type of vocabulary-focused activity.

As Webb and Nation (2017, p. 77–78) inform, the basic principles for selecting such activities include, for instance, the focus on a particular language skill, the specific aim of the activity or the learning conditions. Moreover, McCarthy (1990, p. 115) draws attention to the form in which new vocabulary can be introduced. Supposedly, the common approach towards presenting an unfamiliar expression is through its written form. Still, such demonstration is usually supported by its audio version, which might be provided through the teacher or various listening activities.

To practice the vocabulary during English lessons, Thornbury (2002) points out several methods such as the Direct Method, exploiting the direct connection between the word and its meaning, the Total Physical Response, aiming for imitation of the learning conditions of native speakers, or suggestopedia, a method benefiting from suggestion and relaxed learning environment. Furthermore, a range of activities is offered, such as various games, writing activities focused on applying given words, or activities based on searching for specific expressions in texts, dividing items into specific categories, completing omitted words from texts or matching related expressions. Gairns and Redman (1990) suggest using pictures or authentic reading materials, and supply the readers with speaking activities, such as role plays or narratives.

Obviously, the range of activities centred on practicing vocabulary is wide, allowing EFL teachers to make selections appropriate for specific purposes of their lessons.

1.5 Vocabulary testing

In the above sections, some of the major criteria essential for successful teaching of vocabulary have been introduced. Usually, vocabulary teaching is considered successful if the

teachers manage to convey the chosen words or phrases effectively and their learners are able to learn them. To determine the learners' knowledge and skills in school conditions, tests are usually exploited.

According to Harmer (2015, p. 408), the initiative to test students may come from many causes, but its regular occurrence in class is fundamental. The author's conviction is that testing serves students as a key feedback to direct the course of their further development. Allen (1983, p. 109) draws attention to another benefit of testing the students, namely evidence of their advance, which might be requested, for example, for evaluating the efficiency of some language courses. Furthermore, the relevance of assessing learners' overall vocabulary knowledge is stressed, especially when dealing with new students. The author trusts that such knowledge can help teachers differentiate between students and their individual needs. Ur (2012, p. 71–72) agrees with the usefulness of knowing students' general lexical range, enumerating activities appliable for getting such information, such as translation, sentence completion, gap-fills or multiple-choice exercises.

Nevertheless, there may be countless more techniques for assessing vocabulary. One of the more unusual alternatives is to apply songs. As Murphey (1992, p. 142) presents, songs can be used as a material for evaluation of students' progress in several ways. One of the accentuated possibilities is asking the leaners to write down the previously unknown words from the song that are now understood, followed by the whole-class discussion about the items. However, other methods are recommended as well, for instance definitions, using the expressions from the songs as a basis for creation of a story, or various gap-filling activities. To sum up, the author trusts that 'songs, like any texts, can be used to evaluate and test.' To further explore the usability of songs not only as options for testing, but as regular teaching materials, is the aim of the following chapter.

2 Songs as a source for teaching vocabulary

Music and songs play an inseparable part in many people's lives, accompanying them throughout their daily routines, such as travelling or shopping, helping them relax, or being their source of entertainment. It should be safe to assume that many learners listen to songs outside of school. To what extent are, however, songs usable in school environment and, more precisely, in English lessons? As Murphey (1992, p. 6) declares, 'the use of music and song in the classroom can stimulate very positive associations to the study of a language, which otherwise may only be seen as a laborious task, entailing exams, frustration, and corrections.' Hence, this chapter aims to investigate the benefits that songs and their musical features offer, as well as the potential of songs to become efficient means of teaching vocabulary.

2.1 Definition of songs

To examine the effects of incorporating songs into English lessons in order to improve learners' vocabulary range, a definition of songs must firstly be provided to illustrate the relationship between songs and music in general.

Generally, authors of English songbooks (see Paul, 1996; Hancock, 1998; Puchta et al., 2012) employ the term 'song' in relation to lyrics, which are the words of a particular song. Such interpretation can be supported by a dictionary definition, asserting that 'a song is words sung to a tune.' (Collins English Dictionary, © 2022) As Hancock (1998, p. 11) clarifies, a tune is a 'series of musical notes; the music, not the words.' Making a connection between the previous two statements should clearly illuminate that the term 'song' embraces both language and music in its instrumental form. Such assumption can be encouraged, for instance, by Patel (2008, p. 3), who affirms that 'music and language...both involve complex and meaningful sound sequences.'

Considering the above information, the review in the following chapters is not focused solely on the language input that songs can offer, but also on the advantages of their purely musical features.

2.2 Mnemonic value of songs

Different authors may observe mnemonic quality of songs in different aspects. The following list represents a mere selection of domains that can be affected by songs. The goal of the enumeration is to explore the impact that songs and their musical features might have on

language acquisition, in order to determine the level of songs' efficiency in vocabulary teaching.

2.2.1 Songs and memory

The first chapter of the thesis emphasized the magnitude of vocabulary knowledge for EFL learners. Thornbury (2002, p. 23) points out, however, that the crucial matter in vocabulary learning is not to acquire the highest number of vocabulary items, but to store the particular expressions into memory. As the author further explains, three different types of memory can be distinguished. The first type, so called short-term store is supposed to hold newly learned vocabulary items for negligible time periods, a few seconds at most. As the author demonstrates, such time limit is absolutely insufficient for English learners and their educational purposes. Instead, it is advised to aim for storage of the chosen words and phrases into long-term memory. To further explain, the knowledge kept in short-term store can transfer to this type of memory by various procedures and word operations performed in so called working memory. Thornbury (2002, p. 24) warns, though, that long-term memory can maintain vocabulary items for significantly different periods of time, depending on the involvement of mnemonics supporting the storage. Thus, even expressions preserved in long-term memory might not stay there long enough to be of appropriate use for EFL learners. Therefore, the author suggests not to underestimate the process of memorizing new vocabulary, recommending adequate techniques for such objectives.

The idea that songs can be a perfect solution for such a goal can be supported by Murphy (1992, p. 3), who is convinced that people have natural tendency to remember songs. Presumably, the memorability of songs might be given, for example, due to their rhythmical features, repetitive nature or their ability to affect human emotions. As Murphey (1992, p. 6) further displays, learners quickly forget the information language teachers impose on them, the songs brought to class often being the only exception. According to Paul (1996, p. 6) it is the enjoyable way of learning unknown expressions from songs that increases the probability of saving the knowledge into memory.

To give an example, a study by Calvert and Tart (1993) explored the ability of the research's participants to store the Preamble to the Constitution into both their short-term and long-term memory, depending on the spoken or sung presentation of the text. The final score proved that it was easier to remember the words in their musical form, however, this conclusion applied only in case the participants heard the text repeatedly. Still, the study highlighted the

benefits of songs' musical elements. Similar outcome was provided in a study by McElhinney and Annett (1996), investigating the impact of sung and spoken texts on verbal retention. To determine the effects of musical features on the ability to recall previously granted words, the participants of the study were divided into two groups. In one group, the subjects were plainly told a chosen text, whereas in the other group, the text was sung. The results of the experiment revealed that the participants were able to recall more words if the text's presentation was accompanied by musical features. Such findings indicate that use of songs in language teaching might have positive impact on learners' vocabulary growth. However, the texts in the study did not comprise words unknown to the participants, which is the case for EFL learners.

The mnemonic value of songs in the process of language teaching is showed, for instance, in a thesis by Tegge (2015). The thesis' practical part consists of three studies, the last one exploring the incorporation of songs as possible aids for text retention into language lessons. The results of the study established that lessons exploiting songs led to higher scores in text retention than in case of lessons using prose. However, it is necessary to state that poem-based lessons proved to be similarly effective as their song-based alternatives. Nevertheless, the whole thesis drew attention to the advantages of songs and promoted their suitability as materials for lexical learning.

To conclude, one of the vital advantages of songs and their musical features is their ability to be easily remembered. English teachers can effectively profit from such characteristics because, as Murphy (1992, p. 6) informs, the memorability of songs enables their easy incorporation into English lessons. The frequent inclusion of songs into language classes is also mentioned by Cranmer and Laroy (1992, p. 1), who state that 'as long as people have learnt languages, songs have played an important role in the learning process, not only in the classroom but in the world outside.'

2.2.2 Musical features of songs and their benefits

As was demonstrated above, songs own some important characteristics that might benefit the process of vocabulary teaching. The following sub-chapters briefly explore some of these specific features.

2.2.2.1 Rhythm

A dictionary definition announces that 'a rhythm is a regular series of sounds or movements.' (Collins English Dictionary, © 2022) Sedlák's (2013, p. 137) interpretation of rhythm corresponds with such formulation, however, his point of view distinguishes between

rhythm in general, which can be characterized purely by rhythmical movements, and musical rhythm, which describes the temporal arrangement of various musical elements.

Puchta et al. (2012, p. 5) draw attention to the common ability of learners to remember sung language better than spoken language. Supposedly, rhythm in songs is one of the key factors responsible for the quite effortless storage of new lexical items into the learners' long-term memory. Hancock (1998, p. 7) agrees with this opinion, stating that 'words are much more memorable in combination with rhythm and melody.'

Positive effects of rhythm are approved by research in the field as well. For instance, Purnell-Webb and Speelman (2008) conducted research, which required the participants to memorize a short ballad. The learning process was performed under several conditions, concerning the sung or spoken presentation of the words, and the participants' familiarity with the specific rhythm and melody. The final numbers of recalled expressions indicated that rhythm, both in its general and musical meaning, assists in the process of remembering given words. Moreover, the participants' knowledge of the concrete rhythm turned out to have facilitating effects. With regard to songs and their use in English classes, these findings suggest that selection of a song that students are familiar with might stimulate their remembrance of the song's lyrics. Such idea can be supported by Murphey (1992, p. 14), who believes that despite the possible applicability of any materials in song-based lessons, songs with the highest value are those of learners' own choice, meaning those that are already known and favoured by the learners.

To conclude, rhythm is one of the crucial aspects causing the typical memorability of song lyrics. Hence, by suitable selection of songs for English lessons, EFL teachers may facilitate their learners' efforts to learn new vocabulary.

2.2.2.2 Melody

One of the definitions provided in Dictionary by Merriam-Webster (© 2022) announces that melody is 'a sweet or agreeable succession or arrangement of sounds.' Although Sedlák (2013, p. 129) agrees that melody consists of different tones ordered in time, his formulation does not emphasize the 'sweetness' mentioned in the above statement. Instead, the author mentions a general definition referring to the necessity of the particular sounds to create meaningful units. Furthermore, it is explained that to call a sequence of tones a melody, some basic musical criteria, such as musical phrases' symmetry, must be fulfilled.

The research in the field seems to suggest that melody can truly benefit certain processes of memorization. To provide an example, Rainey and Larsen (2002) explored the ability of their subjects to remember selected words in both short and long-term time scale. In the study, two types of familiar melodies were used as an accompaniment of the words' conveyance to the listeners. To determine the effects of familiar melodies on lexical retention, a control group of participants was established. The aim of this group was to learn the given expressions simply from hearing their spoken version. The results of the experiment showed that familiar melodies did indeed have positive impact on the subjects' ability to recall the items, although such finding applied only to the long-term condition. To be specific, after a one week's pause, the group with the previous sung introduction of the words was able to relearn the items more easily than the control group.

Another experiment revealing promising results in this area was carried out by Wolfe and Hom (1993). The study in question intended to find out the participants' abilities to memorize certain telephones numbers depending once again either on their spoken or sung form of presentation. The relevant numbers of attempts necessary for the telephone numbers' acquisition indicated that melodical background facilitates such efforts. One more time, however, the conclusion applies exclusively to familiar melodies. The fact that melody can simplify text retention only under certain conditions was demonstrated in a study by Wallace (1994) as well. The experiment determined that positive impact of songs can come into force solely on the assumption that the sung version is repeated, provided the same melody is applied.

To summarize, research in the field of music contains hints that melody can enhance the process of lexical learning. As it seems, though, some underlaying conditions must be fulfilled for such presuppositions to take effect. One of these prerequisites is learners' familiarity with the specific melodies. Thus, it would make sense if English teachers let their learners bring their favourite songs to the classroom, as was pointed out in the previous subchapter discussing the mnemonic value of rhythm.

2.2.3 Songs as stimuli for learners' motivation

Apart from the direct effects that songs and their musical features, such as melody or rhythm, might have on learners' abilities to memorize vocabulary, the pure willingness of teachers to involve songs into their lessons might be a way of arousing the learners' interest for the topic. To further explore the given idea, the term motivation must be clarified.

In Cambridge Dictionary (© 2022), motivation is described as an 'enthusiasm for doing something.' However, such definition is quite general. Authors usually differentiate between various types of motivation, one of these divisions being on motivation extrinsic and intrinsic. As Harmer (2015, p. 90) explains, extrinsic motivation is characterized by being induced by external factors such as learners' surroundings, while motivation intrinsic is rooted in learners' own inner motives, such as their curiosity for the subject. Ur (2012, p. 10–11) formulates the interpretations in a slightly divergent manner, highlighting the essentiality of the learning process alone in case of intrinsic motivation. Considering extrinsic motivation, the emphasis is on the role of learners' visions of both positive and negative aftermath regarding the learning procedure. Nevertheless, the author argues that although different in nature, these two kinds of motivation can actually share some common features. The relevance of making distinction between the above types of motivation can be justified by Harmer's (2015, p. 90) conviction that 'teachers have considerably more power to influence intrinsic motivation than its extrinsic cousin.'

Taking into account the above, the positive consequences of incorporating songs into language classroom are well described by Hancock (1998, p.7), who explains that music and songs are generally enjoyed, and can serve as means of making a lesson special. To support such a view, the reader's attention is drawn to the fact that teachers' awareness of songs' potential is not solely recent phenomenon. Furthermore, the author praises the stimulating effects that songs have especially on young learners, who often tend to find themselves in need of such support. The recommendation for teachers dealing with students of such age is to use activities related to pop songs, which have a higher probability of being appreciated by such learners. Murphey (1992, p. 3) supports the notion of the motivational effects that music and song fuel, but puts a stronger emphasis on the fact, that their positive stimulation can reach people of all age categories. Moreover, the author highlights the idea that such motivating impact on learners is not the concern of mainstream music alone, but musical genres of various kinds.

As was mentioned before, 'all teachers know that it is easier to teach students who are motivated than students who aren't.' (Harmer 2015, p. 89) An assumption could therefore be made, that in order to learn new vocabulary effectively, learners have to be motivated for such task. However, Thornbury (2002, p. 25) warns that motivation itself is not an automatic warranty of success in acquiring a given word. More likely, the benefits of motivation originate in concomitant circumstances, such as learners' increased dedication to the topic.

The research in the area was conducted, for instance, by Zheng (2012), who explored the effects of motivation on the growth of EFL learners' vocabulary. The study was focused on four university students applying English as a second language. The long-term experiment was based on observing the learners' development in the area of their productive vocabulary knowledge, depending on their educational motives. Beyond finding out that the students preferred to apply simpler expressions in language production, the results indicated that motivation was indeed connected to the students' abilities to expand their vocabulary range. Notwithstanding, results registered in a study by Fontecha and Gallego (2012) were less uniform. The study in question was aimed at EFL learners in the secondary education phase. The target observation was the development of the subjects' receptive vocabulary in the course of two grades. As was detected, while the motivation of 9th graders proved to have positive impact on their progress in receptive vocabulary range, the motivation of 8th graders seemed to have no significant effects. However, it was pointed out that the link between the students' motivation and the growth of their receptive vocabulary may be influenced by several other factors.

In conclusion, many authors agree that songs can serve as suitable media for engaging learners into the learning process. Their usage in a classroom can be the cause for learners' personal interest in the subject, which is a crucial requirement for extending learners' lexical knowledge. In other words, the incorporation of songs into English lessons might lead to learners' natural efforts to learn vocabulary items presented by the teacher.

2.3 Song lyrics in relation to some important aspects of teaching vocabulary

The previous subchapter regarding the mnemonic value of songs was focused primarily on the benefits that musical features of songs can offer. Opposed to purely instrumental music, however, the great advantage of songs as materials employable in English lessons is their language content. According to Harmer (2015, p. 358), 'one of the most useful kinds of text for students to work with, of course, is song lyrics, especially where the song in question is one which the students are very keen on.' Therefore, the goal of the following chapters is to explore the ways of song lyrics' application in relation to some enriching principles of vocabulary teaching.

2.3.1 Authentic materials

One of the profitable features of song lyrics is their authenticity. As Thornbury (2002, p. 53) proclaims, an authentic text 'has not been especially written or doctored for the language classroom.' The fact that such description includes song lyrics can be promoted by Peacock (1997, p. 146), whose understanding of textual authenticity corresponds with the above definition. Thus, the author enumerates songs as one type of authentic sources, additionally mentioning materials such as articles, advertisements or poems. The authenticity of song lyrics is also approached by Eddy (2007, p. 142) who highlights its cultural aspect. The claim is that 'through the music and lyrics, students learn about other cultures, their influence on musical genres, and the products, practices, and perspectives of the cultures that influenced the artists and their work.'

Gairns and Redman (1990, p. 115) confront the issue of using authentic sources in language classrooms and, more specifically, in vocabulary teaching, praising the written texts' contextuality. Despite such great advantage, teachers are warned against some of the problematic aspects of using authentic texts during language lessons. For instance, it might be difficult sometimes to select a text both appropriately long and engaging. Another problem is the frequent absence of attached exercises focused on development of productive skills. However, teachers can solve this problem by suitable preparation of the materials, as Gairns and Redman (1990, p. 115–124) prove in their list of vocabulary activities exploiting authentic texts. Similarly, it should be safe to suggest that the aforementioned length issue is not of tremendous significance when discussing songs in particular. In addition, teachers can correlate this eventual complication by a more appropriate choice of song or by giving the learners merely a part of the song.

Contribution of authentic materials to vocabulary development of EFL learners was explored by Ghanbari et al. (2015) as well. The researchers divided their subjects into two groups, control and experimental. The control group was intended to increase their vocabulary range by working with a textbook, while the experimental group was supposed to reach this goal by exposure to authentic texts. After comparing the subjects' vocabulary tests before and after the one-month long procedure, it was found that the vocabulary progress was much more notable in the experimental group. These results correspond with findings in a study by Guo (2012), who clearly observed that using authentic texts for extensive reading positively impacted the participants' vocabulary expansion.

To sum up, several authors confirmed that using authentic materials in language classroom has certain benefits. As was further demonstrated, authentic texts encompass, among others, song lyrics. Songs' authenticity should therefore be perceived as one of the factors facilitating the process of EFL learning, including vocabulary.

2.3.2 Context

It was mentioned above that authentic texts, such as songs, have a great advantage of providing context to the readers. Its significance is highlighted by Webb and Nation (2017, p. 169), who acquaint their readers with a strategy built on guessing word meanings from context. In their opinion, 'it is a particularly important strategy for language learners, because it can be used to learn any unknown words that are encountered and so has the potential to have a large impact on lexical development.' Hancock (1998) puts this idea to practice by recommending English teachers a song-based activity, which requires the learners to fill in omitted words using the lyrics' context.

The research in the field shows promising signs as well. According to Çetinavcı (2014), who examined EFL students and their tendencies to learn new vocabulary from context, it was much easier for the students to deduce the meanings when equipped with generous contextual hints. These results correspond with findings registered in a study by Webb (2008). The experiment was focused on university EFL learners too. The objective of the research was to determine the relationship between the quality of the provided context and the subjects' abilities to learn the forms and meanings of previously unknown words. As it turned out, the richer the context the better the knowledge of the meanings. On the other hand, the number of contextual clues did not prove to have effect on the acquisition of the words' form. To learn the items' forms, multiple encounters with them had to be secured.

Overall, though, teaching EFL learners through context seems to foster their abilities to derive meanings of unknown expressions. Such effect appears to be truly favourable for EFL teachers, especially in the area of vocabulary development. Exploiting songs, as contextual sources, in English lessons might therefore enhance the efficiency of the whole teaching process.

2.3.3 Repetition

Another example of a typical property of songs is the recurring occurrence of the contained expressions. Choruses, which frequently appear in songs, can undoubtedly be a proof of that. According to Paul (1996, p. 7), repetition is a good means of strengthening learners'

freshly gained lexical knowledge. Nevertheless, it is not recommended to demand it from learners as an additional drill, as it might not appeal to some learners and could even worsen their learning attitudes. On the contrary, repetition accomplished during song-based activities is approved, believed to be positively emotionally perceived by learners. The affective side of songs is also highlighted by Murphey (1992, p. 7), who, furthermore, trusts that the simplicity of songs and their repetitive nature are the major temptations for language teachers.

The benefits of repetition in relation to vocabulary learning are addressed by Thornbury (2002, p. 24) as well. Still, it must be mentioned that the author praises mainly the multiplicity of encounters with the given expressions, not the mere procedure of repeating the items by the learners. Additionally, Webb and Nation (2017, p. 65) point out the need to distinguish between incidental and deliberate learning of new lexical items, bringing up the fact that the latter usually requires less confrontation.

Research encourages the magnitude of repetition, too, an example being a study by Webb (2007). As it seems, thus, songs as repetitive materials have a great potential to help EFL learners with widening their vocabulary range.

2.3.4 Vocabulary grouping

The problematics of choosing a suitable set of vocabulary items for a language lesson was addressed, for instance, by Webb and Nation (2017, p. 233). The authors believe in the facilitating effects of learning related lexical sets, provided the items are different parts of speech. To explain, 'semantic fields, or, as they are commonly called in pedagogical terms, lexical sets, are made up of sets of semantically similar items.' (Gairns and Redman 1990, p. 69)

The above theory can be supported by Ur (2012, p. 67–68), who draws attention to an experiment requiring its subjects to separately learn two divergent lists of words within a given time frame. As it turns out, it is usually much easier to remember the list containing items linked by varied associations. Once again, though, readers are alerted to the danger of confusion when teaching lexical sets of the same category, such as animals. Thornbury (2002, p. 37) points out, however, that textbooks used at schools usually do provide vocabulary in closely related lexical sets. Hence, teachers are advised to solve this problem by stressing the distinction between the individual items.

As Murphey (1992, p. 136–138) demonstrates, there is a number of songs with thematically related content, giving EFL teachers opportunities for suitable selection of the

included vocabulary items. For instance, a generous enumeration of songs is listed under categories such as work, love and friendship, war and peace, education or city life.

It could be summarized that the best way to select a song for a particular class is to find a song thematically consistent. Nonetheless, attention should be paid to the specific items planned to be passed to the learners, with the intention to avoid their inconvenient relatedness.

3 Using songs in classroom

The previous chapter explored the multiple benefits that both musical features of songs and their lexical content can offer, especially in relation to vocabulary teaching. The following sub-chapters aim to investigate the practical aspects of incorporating songs into EFL lessons, taking into consideration the specific group of learners.

3.1 Criteria for song selection

Before discussing the possible ways of using songs in ELT, criteria for a proper selection of songs must be introduced. The following sub-chapters discuss aspects of learners' age, level of English and personal preferences, although this enumeration is not all-encompassing.

3.1.1 Age

According to Harmer (2015, p. 80), people and their needs change in the course of life. In a language classroom, interaction with children ordinarily requires very different methods and approaches than dealing with adults. Therefore, it is considered the necessity of teachers to take into account their learners' age when preparing a lesson. With respect to the thesis' focus on lower secondary learners, this age group, ranging approximately from eleven to fifteen, should be described more closely.

As Harmer (2015, p. 81) clarifies, it is not possible to characterize young learners in universal conditions, as the term refers to learners aged roughly between three and twelve years. Apart from the obvious contrast in the level of their development at different age stages, each learner has a unique personality, which excludes any generalization. In spite of that, Harmer (2015, p. 82) attempts to record some basic notions about children over the age of five and children over the age of ten. Regarding the latter group, examples such as the learners' curiosity or advance in their abstract perception are mentioned. In addition, teachers are recommended some helpful tips for handling young learners in general. For example, it is advised to support the learners' work with diverse sources and observe their interests and preferences during the individual lessons. Helpful recommendations are also granted by Ur (2012, p. 259), who stresses the importance of implicit learning and suggests language teachers to include a number of engaging activities into their lessons. Furthermore, Ur (2012, p. 263) provides specific ideas such as application of chants, rhymes or songs, stating that 'the most obvious of these uses is songs. Like stories, songs are enjoyed by younger learners and are a rich source of language.'

With respect to teenagers, Harmer (2015, p. 83) draws attention to the significant changes taking place in the brains of this age group and leading to their natural emotionality. Although some of the teenagers' typical negative traits are referred to, the author has faith in the expedient cooperation between these children and their teachers. Among the depicted characteristics, causing the enjoyability of working with such learners, are the learners' energy, creativity or their sense of humour. However, Ur (2012, p. 264–265) seems to be a bit more sceptical when introducing the problematics of teaching adolescents. Warning teachers of their possible inattentiveness or their reluctance to learn, the author advises to care about the learners' opinions when figuring out a suitable teaching approach. Despite the aforementioned negative attributes, however, Ur (2012, p. 264) believes that 'the learning potential of adolescents is greater than that of young children.'

In the above, the age group of lower secondary learners was described in general terms. Focusing on song-based English lessons, though, it might be reasonable to ask what the musical development of children at such age is. Concerning children of middle school age, meaning approximately between eleven and fifteen years old, Sedlák (2013, p. 366) emphasizes the considerable changes occurring not only in the children's voice, but in their musical perception as well. A common sign of this period of life is the aforementioned voice change, causing the typical transformations of the voice's natural position, strength, colour and so on. All these processes, accompanying the maturation of voice, may result in the children's unwillingness to participate in singing the given lyrics. As regards the learners' musical perception, it is notably deepened during this phase. To highlight the differences between musical tastes of young children and adolescents, Murphey's (1992, p. 17) words can be used, expressing that 'there is a wealth of song material that has worked with young children for a number of years. With adolescents and adults, however, material used successfully one year may become dry and irrelevant the next.'

Overall, age is a non-negligible criterium for deciding not only the type of song, but the manner of its application in classroom. Factors such as learners' voice capabilities and their musical preferences should be assessed with respect to the age composition of the particular class.

3.1.2 Level of English

Knowledge of the learners' level of English should be substantive for preparing an English lesson, whether the teacher intends to base it on songs or not. According to Harmer

(2015, p. 94), when observing the properties of the learners' usage of English, very advanced students can easily be recognized, as well as learners at the beginning of their education. Nevertheless, a more subtle division requires much more effort. Hence, Harmer (2015, p. 94–95) introduces representatives of commonly applied frameworks determining the levels of learners' English. The Common European Framework of Reference, dividing learners into six categories from A1 to C2 by defined requirements, can serve as an example.

The role of language level in ELT is discussed, for example, by Betáková et al. (2017, p. 54), who classify it (together with age) as one of the criteria for choosing an appropriate method for transferring new vocabulary to learners. An assumption might be made that songs, as sources of unknown words, should be selected for English lessons mindfully of the above factor. Indeed, Paul (1996, p. 2) warns that once the songs' content is too easy for the learners, it is no longer prosperous for their language advancement. The practical implementation of such theorem may be seen in Murphey's (1992) song-based activities, containing information about their suitability for particular English levels as the first item in their descriptions.

3.1.3 Learners' preferences

Apart from assessing the songs' adequacy for learners' age and level of English, the personal preferences of learners should not be forgotten about. Although Harmer (2015, p. 358) warns about the difficulty to opt for a song which would sufficiently catch the learners' attention, a simple solution is suggested. To elaborate, the learners should be given the possibility of choice. This is in accordance with Murphy (1992, p. 14), who strongly encourages using songs in conformity with the learners' musical tastes, praising the enriching impact of such songs on both the learners and their teachers. For instance, the ability of such songs to arouse the learners' sense of responsibility is highlighted.

However, Hancock (p. 7) draws attention to an interesting idea, whether it is truly necessary for EFL teachers to only apply songs that are actively listened to by their learners. As the author explains, 'just because a student might not choose to listen to a certain song outside the classroom, it does not mean that the student would not enjoy it as part of a learning activity.' Moreover, Puchta et al. (2012, p. 5) point to the danger of the lyrics' inappropriateness, reminding teachers about the large number of songs containing dubious content or swear words.

Taking into consideration the above, a question arises whether it is indeed underlying to follow the learners' wishes unconditionally. Most probably, the decision depends on the specific song and the existing classroom situation.

3.2 Song activities focused on vocabulary

Proposals for a thorough song selection for a language lesson were made above. By bringing a song into classroom with no other purpose except listening to it and singing the song, however, its potential is not fully exploited (Murphey 1992, p. 6). Such application may lead to the learners' remembrance of the lyrics or their acquisition of the sounds, but their communicative skills are not developed. Preferably, thus, incorporation of songs into lessons should be accompanied by related activities.

Examples of such activities are presented, among others, by Hancock (1998, p. 8), who recommends using song lyrics for practicing lexical categories, such as synonyms and antonyms, or for guessing omitted words on the basis of context or the song's recording. Vocabulary-focused activities intertwined with listening skills are mentioned by York (2011, p. 64) as well. For instance, the author suggests giving the learners a true/false test after listening to the particular song. Furthermore, attention is drawn to supplementation of songs with movement, as in the well-known song Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes. As for speaking skills, York (2011, p. 65) offers exercises based on various reconstructions of the lyrics with the help of suitable vocabulary.

In addition, inspiration can be found in purely vocabulary books, which do not primarily deal with songs. For instance, Taylor (1990) depicts a variety of vocabulary-focused activities, such as numerous matching exercises, crosswords or games. Bearing in mind Murphey's (1992) conviction that songs can be worked with as any other texts, it should be possible to adapt the aforementioned activities to songs prepared for concrete classes. However, an important observation was made by Paul (1996, p. 8), who cautions teachers against unnecessary overuse of the activities, which might result in the learners' restlessness. Therefore, it is advised to do fewer activities into more depth rather than overstimulate the learners.

3.3 Advantages and disadvantages of using songs in EFL classroom

Advantages of using songs in EFL classroom are numerous, some of the basic ones being gradually described in the above chapters. As a reminder, characteristics such as songs' authenticity, motivational effects or simple memorization may be repeated. Of course, the

features discussed in the thesis are just representatives. To provide an example, Murphey (1992, p. 5) praises, beyond the aforementioned motivational aspect, the easy access to such sources.

According to Hancock (1998, p. 9), the ordinary concerns of teachers include items such as time issues, worries about the learners' unwillingness to take the activity seriously, to sing or, on the contrary, to react to the song in an overly energetic way. Murphey (1992, p. 8) presents the first two items as being the most debated, adding another factor, namely the teachers' insecurities about the objectives of songs in the lessons.

Apparently, usage of songs in ELT bears some problematic aspects. Nonetheless, such statement could presumably be made about any activity implemented during English lessons. Therefore, it sounds reasonable to put the main focus on the numerous benefits that the incorporation of songs into language classroom brings, making the most profit of them.

To summarize, the theoretical part of the thesis highlighted the significance of vocabulary in learning a foreign language. To introduce selected vocabulary items to learners, EFL teachers can use various kinds of activities. In order to check the learners' knowledge, several types of tests may be assigned, one of the main intentions being provision of feedback to the learners. Preferably, the newly learned expressions should be stored into the learners' long-term memory. Musical features of songs, such as rhythm or melody, might contribute to the process. Moreover, the language content of songs may offer many benefits convenient for ELT, such as authenticity, contextuality or frequent repetitions. To conclude, songs may be incorporated into English lessons as suitable sources for vocabulary teaching, taking into account the needs of specific groups of learners.

Practical part

4 Description of the research

The following sub-chapters describe the conducted research in general terms, introducing the reader to the aims of the research and the chosen methods. The specific description of the individual parts of the research, including the research results, is provided in the subsequent chapters.

4.1 Aims of the research

The theoretical part of the thesis introduced the reader to the field of songs and their usage in ELT classroom with a primary focus on their applicability as a means of teaching vocabulary. As was shown, vocabulary plays a crucial role in ELT, and songs can serve as convenient media for its presentation in classes, considering certain benefits of both their musical features and language content. Based on the theoretical knowledge, the aim of the practical part is to create song materials that would be suitable for ELT lessons, the target group being lower secondary learners. The major goal is to verify the functionality of the materials in classroom environment, specifically in terms of their potential as sources for vocabulary teaching. Consequently, the basis of the research is to measure the possible growth of the learners' vocabulary range after the song-based lessons. Apart from determining the learners' responses to the particular lessons, the research aims to investigate the attitudes of lower secondary English teachers towards the application of songs in teaching practice, in order to obtain a more comprehensive view of the problematics.

4.2 Research questions

The main aim of the research is to investigate the effects of applying songs as a means of teaching vocabulary. To fulfil the individual tasks mentioned above, the following research questions were formulated:

1) What are the effects of using songs in English lessons on lower secondary learners' vocabulary growth?

2) How do learners evaluate song-based English lessons in terms of the lessons' enjoyability and usefulness?

3) How do lower secondary English teachers use songs in their lessons?

To answer the above questions, the research exploits a combination of methods, which are described in more detail in the following section.

4.3 Research methods and procedure

The whole research procedure consists of several fundamental parts. In accordance with the research aims, the first step is creation of song-based materials suitable for lower secondary learners. Apart from worksheets, such materials include tests intended to determine the learners' potential vocabulary growth. Secondly, the materials are tested during English lessons. The experiment involves observation of the learners, examining their vocabulary knowledge and revealing their opinions about the respective lessons. Finally, the research investigates the attitudes of lower secondary English teachers towards the application of songs during their lessons.

To fulfil the individual steps of the practical part, a combination of research methods is exploited. In part, the nature of the research is qualitative, with regard to the observation of learners during the song-based lessons. The preparation and execution of the lessons is based on action research, as well as the testing of the learners. The evaluations of the lessons by learners are gathered by tools of quantitative research, namely questionnaires. The exploration of teachers' experience with songs is performed analogously.

The following chapters depict the particular parts of the research in more detail, describing the specific procedures including the research subjects and further aspects of the research, such as the time course, given conditions or occurring problems. The research was conducted based on pedagogical works by McNiff and Whitehead (2002), Gavora (2000) and Skutil (2011).

5 Creation of the materials

Before creating the song-based materials, the location of the research had to be determined. In order to perform the prepared song-based lessons, arrangements were made with a grammar school, where the teaching practice of the researcher took place. Permission was given to teach the lessons in two classes at the lower stage of the grammar school. Specifically, it was allowed to teach two lessons in class 2.P and two lessons in class 4.P. The classes correspond with 7th graders and 9th graders at lower secondary schools respectively. From organization and other reasons, it was not possible to exploit more lessons to carry out the research.

After the target groups of the research were known, the preparation of the song-based lessons started. The materials for each of the four lessons consisted of a worksheet, a pre-test and a post-test for each learner. The worksheets including song lyrics with accompanying activities were the basic materials the learners used during the lessons, and which they were able to keep afterwards. The tests, collected after each lesson, were used to determine the possible growth of the learners' vocabulary range after the individual lessons. The testing process was essential for answering the first research question (see sub-chapter 4.2).

For this purpose, each pre-test, given to the learners and collected before the start of the song-based lesson, consisted of a set of pre-selected vocabulary items. The post-test for the same lesson was identical, merely assigned after the lesson. This arrangement was made to clearly determine the potential vocabulary increase after the particular lesson. Thus, it could be established whether the learners had certain vocabulary knowledge even before the lesson, or whether the items were learned in the course of the lesson. To determine the individual vocabulary development of each learner during a particular lesson, the printed tests were numbered. While handing out the tests, each learner was given a pre-test and a post-test with the same number.

Due to the age difference of the two target groups, the tests for 2.P contained less items than those for 4.P. Specifically, each test for 2.P consisted of eight vocabulary items, while each test for 4.P consisted of ten items. This decision was made on the basis of information from the theoretical part of the thesis, regarding learners' age and level of English in connection to the learners' ability to learn a certain number of new expressions in a given time scale (see sub-chapter 1.3.4).

The tests were designed to determine both receptive and productive knowledge of the vocabulary (see sub-chapter 1.2.1). Therefore, various types of tasks were contained, including translation, description or explanation, usage in sentences, provision of antonyms or synonyms, and answering related questions. The selection was inspired by the ideas in sub-chapter 1.5.

The first step before creating the worksheets was determining the target vocabulary for testing. Based on the theory (see sub-chapter 2.3.4), it was attempted to select vocabulary that would be thematically similar, though not overly interchangeable. Therefore, a combination of word classes was chosen for each of the tests.

To introduce the vocabulary to the learners, song-based worksheets were prepared. Each worksheet consists of a variety of activities. One of them is completing the omitted words from the lyrics based on the context / rhymes. The learners are supposed to write the words on the dotted lines. The specific activity was designed due to the notions from the theoretical part of the thesis (see sub-chapter 2.3.2), emphasizing the benefits of contextual materials. Another activity is completing the omitted words from the lyrics based on listening comprehension. The learners are supposed to write the words on the full lines. The activity was chosen with regard to the theoretical knowledge about musical features of songs and their benefits (see sub-chapter 2.2.2). In both of the above activities, the omissions were attempted to be made in reasonable intervals, mostly being aimed at the target vocabulary or its vicinity. Additionally, the worksheets include writing additional verses and different crosswords. The activities were inspired by the ideas in sub-chapter 3.2.

The following sub-chapters describe the creation of the materials for each lesson in detail, explaining the choices for the specific content of both the worksheets and the tests. Oral activities used during the lessons are described in chapter 6, dealing with the individual lessons.

5.1 Money, Money, Money (ABBA), 2.P

The first lesson in 2.P was based on the song Money, Money, Money by ABBA. The choice was made mainly due to the convenient content related to money, frequent repetitions and a catchy tune. The worksheet for the lesson can be found in Appendix 1a, the test in Appendix 1b.

The final eight expressions chosen for the tests were the following: *fortune*, *a bill*, *to bet*, *a dream*, *rich*, *to pay*, *a penny* and *wealthy*. Thus, the target vocabulary focusing on money contained nouns, adjectives and verbs.

The worksheet consists of three activities. The first activity is completing the omitted words from the lyrics based on the context / rhymes. Given the younger age of the learners, the words are presented in a box below the song's lyrics. The activity is focused on helping the learners understand the meaning of the words. The second activity is completing the omitted words from the lyrics based on listening comprehension. One of the aims is to introduce the learners to the pronunciation of the expressions. The last activity is a crossword. The learners are expected to solve it using the instruction. The expressions that should be filled in were intentionally chosen from the song's lyrics. Thus, the learners may search for them in case the activity is too difficult for them. The secret message of the crossword is the nationality of the song's creators. The activity is supposed to help the learners practice the new vocabulary.

The test inquiring the potential vocabulary development of the learners is divided into three parts. The individual parts include translation, using the words in sentences and answering questions related to the meaning of the words.

5.2 Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head (B. J. Thomas), 2.P

The second lesson in 2.P exploited the song Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head by B. J. Thomas. The aspects underlying the choice of the song were chiefly its frequent repetitions, thematic content regarding emotions, and the use of present continuous tense, which the class was dealing with at the time. The worksheet for the lesson can be found in Appendix 2a, the test in Appendix 2b.

The target vocabulary items for the lesson were the following: *a defeat*, *a complaint*, *to drop*, *to worry*, *to seem*, *to fall*, *to feel blue* and *a step*. The mostly negative expressions were supposed to thematically connect the vocabulary. Again, a combination of word classes was applied, namely verbs and nouns.

The worksheet includes three activities. The first two activities correspond with the previous worksheet, focusing on completing the omitted words based on the context / rhymes or listening comprehension. For the activity based on the context / rhymes, the learners are once again provided a box with the intended words at the bottom of the worksheet. The final activity is writing additional verses for the song on the dashed lines below the lyrics. The aim is the stimulation of the learners' creativity and practicing their writing skills.

The test for the lesson is created analogously to Test 1, the three sections containing translation, using the words in sentences and answering questions related to the meaning of the words.

5.3 Jailhouse Rock (Elvis Presley), 4.P

The first song-based lesson in 4.P was designed upon the song Jailhouse Rock by Elvis Presley. The particular selection was done mainly due to the song's thematic content related to prison and the number of vocabulary items perceived as challenging for the learners. The latter was especially important, given the learners' advanced language skills and interest in the subject, which were observed during the experience with the class in the previous teaching practice. The worksheet for the lesson can be found in Appendix 3a, the test in Appendix 3b.

The aforementioned vocabulary selection contained the following expressions: *sake*, *to wail*, *to blow*, *a county*, *a warden*, *to weep*, *a jailhouse*, *a joint (about body)*, *shifty* and *a sack*. Again, the focus was mostly on thematically related words and various word classes.

The worksheet consists of four types of different activities. Once more, the first two activities are completing the omitted words based on the context / rhymes and listening comprehension. Considering the learners' age and skills, however, no word supply is provided. For the next activity, the final line and a half is erased from the lyrics. Instead, the learners are expected to write their own ending of the song on the dashed lines, in order to practice their writing skills and enhance their creativity. The last activity is a crossword, aimed at applying the newly learned vocabulary. The majority of the expressions can be found in the lyrics, serving the learners as a hint. The secret message is the name of the song's singer.

The test for the lesson is divided into four sections, based on using the words in sentences, translation, writing the commonly known synonyms and explaining or describing the words.

5.4 Chiquitita (ABBA), 4.P

The source for the second song-based lesson in 4.P was the song Chiquitita by ABBA. The vocabulary seemed appropriate for the learners, containing a number of supposedly challenging expressions. Moreover, the song had a pleasant melody and the topic appeared suitable for 9th graders. The worksheet for the lesson can be found in Appendix 4a, the test in Appendix 4b.

Thematically, the vocabulary items were centred around dealing with a heartache. Thus, the following expressions were contained in the test: *a patch*, *to enchain*, *sorrow*, *hate*, *to deny*, *a scar*, *to handle (something)*, *to rely on (someone)*, *to tumble* and *to grieve*. The selection included both nouns and verbs.

The worksheet consists of three different activities. The introductory tasks are focused on completing the omitted words from the lyrics based on the context /rhymes and listening comprehension. Again, the learners are not supplied with the specific words, to make the task more demanding. The following crossword hides many of the tested expressions, in order to practice their meaning and usage. A certain form of the expressions may be found in the lyrics of the song. Thus, the learners may use a hint if necessary. After crossing all of the items out, the remaining letters read line by line form the secret message, revealing the meaning of the song's title.

To check their vocabulary range, the test requires the learners to translate, write the words' antonyms, create meaningful sentences and explain or describe the words.

6 Song-based lessons

As was mentioned above, the created materials were tested at a grammar school in two different classes, namely 2.P (7th graders) and 4.P (9th graders). In each class, two song-based lessons were implemented. The experiment took place in the course of a four-week teaching practice, occurring in September and October 2022.

6.1 Procedure

The following sections describe the individual lessons and the subjects of the research in more detail. The results of the aforementioned pre-tests and post-tests, which were a part of the procedure, are presented in the results section (sub-chapter 6.3.2). In each lesson, writing the tests lasted around five minutes both before and after the lesson.

6.1.1 Money, Money, Money (ABBA), 2.P

As mentioned above, the class 2.P corresponds with lower secondary 7th graders, meaning learners of approximately 12–13 years of age. The total number of learners present during the lesson was thirteen. Generally, the learners' level of English seemed consistent with their age. Mostly, the learners appeared to rather enjoy English lessons.

The first song-based lesson with the learners proceeded roughly according to the plan. The beginning of the lesson was spent on writing the pre-test. Thereafter, the learners were given the worksheet. As it turned out, the song was mostly well-known and favoured among the learners. Therefore, the introductory activity was relatively quick. To elaborate, the learners were asked to name the common theme of the song and find related expressions in the lyrics. Some of these items were meanwhile written on the board. Next, the learners were asked to complete the omitted words based on the context /rhymes. Mostly, the learners correctly placed the word *game*. Presumably, the rhymes were helpful. On the contrary, the words *mind* and *dreams* were often swapped, likely due to their interchangeable nature. The following listening activity appeared to be quite difficult for the learners. Therefore, the vocabulary was written on the board in a changed order, which proved to be helpful. Afterwards, the recording was played again and the learners were given a chance to sing. The majority of the learners joined the singing and appeared to enjoy it. The subsequent crossword gave a similar impression, the learners seemed to be rather competitive and interested in the secret message. Due to time issues, the following discussion in pairs or groups of three lasted approximately 2–3 minutes. The learners pretended to be rich and talked about things they wanted to buy with the money.

The topic was observed to be rather interesting for the learners. The lesson was ended with writing the post-test.

In general, the learners cooperated during the lesson and asked related questions. The most appealing activities seemed to be the crossword and singing. The individual activities were managed during the time frame, although the discussion had to be rather short. Overall, the lesson is evaluated as successful.

6.1.2 Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head (B. J. Thomas), 2.P

The second song-based lesson in 2.P was performed with the same group of learners (see sub-chapter 6.1.1).

After writing the pre-test during the first five minutes of the lesson, the learners were given the worksheet. To raise the learners' awareness of the song's content, the learners were asked to search for expressions evoking both positive and negative feelings. Subsequently, the expressions were written into two respective columns on the board. The warm-up activity seemed efficient, the learners were able to classify many expressions. The following completion of the omitted words based on the context / rhymes generally made no major problems as well. The listening activity, however, seemed rather difficult for the learners. Therefore, the learners were again provided with the intended words before playing the recording for the second time. Afterwards, the learners were offered to sing the song, which turned out to be welcome. The learners even created a circle and were holding their hands while singing. Apparently, the melody of the song was known among the learners and generally enjoyed. The writing activity appeared rather demanding for the learners, although eventually they were able to write at least two additional verses, one of the learners even four. A planned discussion regarding the feelings of the singer was not performed due to time issues, which was not overly disturbing as the learners discussed during the previous song-based lesson. Instead, the end of the lesson was reserved for writing the post-test.

Overall, the learners were cooperative and apparently interested in the lesson. The most popular activity was obviously singing. The listening and writing activity seemed rather demanding. Still, the lesson is considered successful.

6.1.3 Jailhouse Rock (Elvis Presley), 4.P

The class 4.P is analogous with lower secondary 9th graders. Thus, the learners were roughly of 14–15 years of age. The total number of learners present during the song-based

lesson was thirteen. As was mentioned before, the group of learners was quite advanced compared to their age, and emitted a desire for knowledge in the subject.

After writing the pre-test, each learner was given the worksheet. Firstly, the learners were asked about the song's main theme and the key words from the lyrics. After the quick introduction, the completion of the dotted lines followed. Although the learners' suggestions did not exclusively match the original lyrics, the learners proved their ability to exploit the song's context and rhymes, as the answers made sense and fitted in. The learners were mostly able to do the listening activity, although the recording had to be played twice. The major problem was completing the first item (*warden*), probably due to its unfamiliarity. The following crossword was observed as enjoyable for the learners, considering their interest in revealing the secret message. The writing activity was not perceived as too interesting, as few learners wanted to share their ideas. However, the final singing was rather energetic. The time issues caused that discussion regarding the learners' knowledge about the singer was not accomplished. Instead, the rest of the time was spent writing the post-test.

To conclude, the lesson was evaluated as successful, proceeding roughly according to the plan. For a major part of the lesson, the learners seemed interested, working on the tasks and asking many related questions.

6.1.4 Chiquitita (ABBA), 4.P

Because of organization reasons, the original group of learners from 4.P had to join the rest of the class, ordinarily taught by a different teacher. Therefore, apart from the thirteen learners from the previous song-based lesson, the fourth lesson was performed with thirteen more 9th graders, the total number of learners being twenty-six. Reportedly, the additional learners were not as advanced as the original group.

After writing the pre-test and receiving the worksheet, the learners were asked about the main theme of the song and the key words in the lyrics. Generally, answers like friendship or a broken heart appeared. The learners seemed able to complete at least a few of the dotted lines with fitting expressions, though not always analogous with the original lyrics. When completing the full lines, the learners requested to listen to the recording twice. Overall, the gap-filling activities appeared to be more demanding for the additional thirteen learners. The following crossword, however, seemed appropriate for everyone, and quite enjoyable. Next, the learners had a chance to sing the song, as they wished. The lesson was ended with a group discussion

concerning the role of friendship and dealing with a heartbreak, which was observed as very engaging for the learners. The remaining time was devoted to the post-test.

Overall, the lesson was more demanding in terms of managing the learners' discipline and, mainly, the time frame of the individual activities and the whole lesson. However, such notions seem predictable given the high number of learners in the classroom. Still, the lesson was perceived as interesting for the learners, though presumably quite difficult for some of them.

6.1.5 General evaluation

To summarize, the lessons proceeded roughly according to the plan, and the majority of the learners seemed to enjoy them. The learners in both classes were cooperative and asked relevant questions, supporting the lessons' efficiency. The noticeable divergence from the usual course was registered in the last lesson with the whole class 4.P. The cause is believed to be the additional number of mixed-ability learners.

From the variety of activities, both the 7th graders and the 9th graders appeared to favour the crosswords and singing. Regarding the vocabulary content, the learners in both classes proved their familiarity with a certain number of expressions from the lyrics. However, many items were obviously unknown, affirming that the selection of target vocabulary was mostly appropriate. Still, the difficultness of choosing suitable lyrics indicates that it might be problematic to find a sufficient number of songs for teaching vocabulary, especially for more advanced classes. For lower secondary learners, though, the preparation is considered manageable.

6.2 Questionnaire for learners

To obtain a more objective evaluation of the song-based lessons, the learners were given a questionnaire inquiring their view of the lessons. The tool was chosen because of its anonymous and time-saving nature along with an easy distribution among the learners. The questions were focused on finding out whether the learners considered the lessons enjoyable and useful. Together with the observation of the learners, the method serves for answering the second research question (see sub-chapter 4.2).

The questionnaire consists of six questions. Questions 1, 2 and 6 are closed with the possibility of choosing 1 answer only. These questions find out the general enjoyability and usefulness of the lessons from the learners' point of view, and their desire for similar lessons in

the future. Questions 3–5 are semi-closed with the possibility of choosing one or more answers. The questions aim to detect the most enjoyable and beneficial activities, and the aspects of songs that helped the learners remember new vocabulary.

The questionnaires were given to the learners after the end of the experiment in course of a day or two in a printed form. In both classes, only learners present during both lessons received the questionnaire, as their presence was crucial in order to answer some of the questions. Consequently, the completed questionnaire was received by thirteen learners from 2.P and eleven learners from 4.P, as another two learners from 4.P were not present at the school later. The questionnaire was given to the learners in Czech, to avoid any misunderstandings (see Appendix 5a). The translation of the questionnaire may be found in Appendix 5b. The results of the questionnaire are presented in sub-chapter 6.3.1.

6.3 Research results

This sub-chapter presents the results of the research implemented in relation to the song-based lessons, namely the results of the questionnaire for learners, pre-tests and post-tests.

6.3.1 Questionnaire for learners

The following sections provide and analyse the results of the questionnaire for learners. After the presentation of separate results from 2.P and 4.P, the overall summary and comparison is provided.

6.3.1.1 The results of 2.P

The results of the questionnaire are presented in Figure 1–6 in Appendix 5c.

Question 1: Did you enjoy our English lessons with songs?

Answers to Question 1 are presented in Figure 1. Generally, the majority of the learners (12) enjoyed the lessons, to a greater or lesser extent. Only one person from the class did not enjoy the lessons at all.

Question 2: Were the English lessons with songs beneficial for you?

The reaction to the second question was similar, showing that most of the learners (11) considered the lessons beneficial (see Figure 2). Again, merely one learner did not regard the lessons beneficial at all, and one more learner expressed rather negative stance against the lessons' benefits.

Question 3: Which of the following options helped you remember new vocabulary during the lessons with songs?

As Figure 3 presents, none of the answers was dominant for the majority of the learners. Nevertheless, the most frequent answer was the story in the songs (5 respondents), followed by the melody and rhymes in the songs (4 respondents for each). The repetition in the songs and singing the songs were picked by two respondents each. One learner expressed that none of the options was helpful for learning the new vocabulary. The results seem to indicate that the potential of songs for teaching vocabulary might not reside in one main aspect, but a combination of their musical features and language content, which corresponds with the information from the theoretical part of the thesis.

Question 4: Which types of activities did you enjoy the most?

The most popular activity was singing the song, favoured by nine respondents (see Figure 4). Almost half of the respondents (6) expressed the enjoyability of the crossword, putting it among the two most popular activities. On the contrary, finding the common theme / key words in the song was selected by no respondent. One learner enjoyed none of the activities.

Question 5: Which types of activities were the most beneficial for you?

While the most popular activities were clearly singing and the crossword, the usefulness of the activities revealed no such trend. Interestingly, in spite of its seeming unpopularity, finding the common theme / key words in the song was considered beneficial by five respondents (see Figure 5). Moreover, the perceived usefulness was higher for activities regarding completing the omitted words from the song, both based on the context / rhymes and on listening comprehension. Conversely, the benefits of singing and the crossword were considered noticeably lower compared to their popularity. The results might indicate that popularity of activities does not necessarily correspond with their benefits for learners.

Question 6: Would you like to have similar lessons with songs in the future?

Figure 6 presents that the majority of the respondents, with the exception of one learner, would appreciate similar lessons with songs in the future. The promising reaction was probably caused by the lessons' enjoyability and usefulness for most of the learners, as obvious from the previous questions. To summarize, the evaluation of the lessons by the class 2.P was mostly positive, both in terms of the lessons' enjoyability and usefulness.

6.3.1.2 The results of 4.P

The results of the questionnaire are presented in Figure 7–12 in Appendix 5d.

Question 1: Did you enjoy our English lessons with songs?

As Figure 7 demonstrates, the majority of the learners (10) enjoyed or rather enjoyed the song-based lessons, while one learner did not enjoy the lessons at all. The findings correspond with the results from 2.P, suggesting that popularity of song-based lessons might not be determined by the age or language level of the learners.

Question 2: Were the English lessons with songs beneficial for you?

The lessons were very beneficial for two respondents and rather beneficial for seven respondents (see Figure 8), supporting the idea of the positive impact of song-based lessons on the learners' language level. For two learners, however, the lessons were not beneficial at all. Presumably, the lessons were either too demanding or too easy for the learners.

Question 3: Which of the following options helped you remember new vocabulary during the lessons with songs?

The most frequent answers were the melody of the songs and the rhymes in the songs, each selected by four respondents (see Figure 9). However, the remaining aspects were marked as well, and none of the options was selected by half of the respondents at least. Again, the results appear to encourage the idea that it is the combination of aspects that makes songs such beneficial sources for ELT. Furthermore, the results revealed that one of the learners supposedly new all the words from the songs even before the lessons, and was thus not enabled to learn any new vocabulary. The finding appears to explain the uselessness of the lessons for at least one of the learners from the previous question.

Question 4: Which types of activities did you enjoy the most?

There was no significant trend in the distribution of responses to the above question, the most frequent answers being singing the song, the crossword and discussion, each selected by three respondents (see Figure 10). Unlike the results from 2.P, where the favouritism of singing and the crossword was quite distinct, the learners from 4.P did not show any significant preference. The phenomenon may stem from the older age of the learners or their more advanced language level.

Question 5: Which types of activities were the most beneficial for you?

Similarly, the learners were not uniform in marking the activities they considered the most beneficial. Again, no major trend was noticeable, as shown in Figure 11. The three most common answers were completing the omitted words from the song based on listening comprehension, singing the song and the crossword, each selected by three respondents. In this case, the popularity of activities mostly seemed to correspond with the activities' benefits for the learners. Still, a slight difference between answers to Question 4 and 5 can be registered. The divergence appears to support the idea that popularity of activities and their usefulness might not depend on each other, as was indicated in the results section of 2.P.

Question 6: Would you like to have similar lessons with songs in the future?

As Figure 12 reveals, merely one learner from the class would rather not have similar lessons with songs in the future, while the rest of the learners would be quite positive about such future lessons. The findings once again correspond with the evaluation provided by 2.P, indicating that any class might have a small number of learners not keen on song-based lessons. However, the positive appreciation by the majority of the learners is predominant, and strongly encourages the concept of incorporating songs into English lessons.

6.3.1.3 Summary of the results

Overall, the results of the questionnaire were similar in both classes. The most distinct difference was arguably in the popularity of individual activities, as a clear favouritism of singing and the crossword was registered in 2.P. Concerning the lessons' enjoyability and usefulness, a minimal number of learners in 2.P expressed their negative attitude. The results were similar in 4.P, indicating that the lessons' potential does not necessarily depend on the age or language level of the learners. The small number of negative responses suggests that, apparently, song-based lessons are not suitable for everyone, in spite of the variety of activities applied. On the other hand, the particular learners might not like English lessons in general. Additionally, the fact that some learners did not consider the lessons beneficial might be caused because of the learners' previous knowledge of the vocabulary. Nevertheless, the majority of the learners in both classes appeared to be satisfied with the lessons, which is very supportive. The mostly positive evaluation of the lessons was perceived during the lessons' observations as well (see sub-chapter 6.1.5), corresponding with the results of the questionnaire.

6.3.2. Pre-tests and post-tests

The tests were evaluated after the end of all lessons. Each clear knowledge of a certain vocabulary was awarded by one point, meaning that the number of points given to each learner

corresponds with the number of known vocabulary items. The results were analysed by two criteria. Firstly, the results are registered according to the knowledge of individual vocabulary items. Therefore, it can be seen which kinds of expressions were mostly known or unknown before and after the lessons. Secondly, the results are gathered according to the scores of individual learners. For such purpose, each learner was given a pre-test and a post-test with the same number, as was mentioned before. The results of the tests are presented in Table 1–9 in Appendix 6.

6.3.2.1 Test 1: Money, Money, Money (ABBA), 2.P

As Table 1 presents, out of the eight vocabulary items, the majority was rather unfamiliar to the learners before the lesson. Specifically, the less known words were *fortune*, *a bill*, *to bet*, *a penny* and *wealthy*. On the contrary, three words, namely *a dream*, *rich* and *to pay*, were already well-known by the learners. Nonetheless, the testing of these words was proved worthy as well. As evident from the table, none of the more familiar words was known by each of the learners, and for each of these words, there was an increase in knowledge after the lesson. Overall, the numerical data affirm that the vocabulary selection was quite appropriate and allowed the learners to enhance their vocabulary range. With regard to the success rate of individual learners, the results are promising. The obvious positive is that the vocabulary range of each learner was expanded at least by one new expression, proving the lesson's benefits for the whole group of learners (see Table 2). The highest vocabulary growth per learner was five words, achieved by two of the learners. The average success rate from the pre-test was 40.4%, and 75% from the post-test, confirming the efficiency of the song-based lesson.

6.3.2.2 Test 2: Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head (B. J. Thomas), 2.P

Table 3 records the knowledge of individual vocabulary items from Test 2. Similar to the previous case, most of the vocabulary was rather unfamiliar for the majority of the learners, namely the following expressions: *a defeat*, *a complaint*, *to seem*, *to feel blue* and *a step*. Again, three vocabulary items were well-known even before the lesson, specifically *to drop*, *to worry* and *to fall*. Still, except for the middle expression, the knowledge of the rest of the vocabulary items increased after the lesson, once again indicating a relatively appropriate selection. The only word that might have been too difficult for the learners is the word *complaint*, considering the expression was known by one learner before the lessons and only one more learner after the lesson. Conversely, the highest increase in knowledge was registered for the idiomatic expression *to feel blue*, suggesting that expressions of idiomatic nature might be better

remembered by learners. As visible from Table 4, the vocabulary range of each of the learners was once again expanded at least by one new expression. The average success rate from the pre-test was 40.4%, and 69.2% from the post-test. Compared to Test 1, whose average success rate from the pre-test was equivalent, the average success rate from Test 2 after the lesson was slightly lower. In part, the cause could be the excessive difficultness of the word *complaint*, as mentioned above. Still, the improvement of the learners' vocabulary knowledge is distinct and encourages the idea of using songs as a means of teaching vocabulary.

6.3.2.3 Test 3: Jailhouse Rock (Elvis Presley), 4.P

The data from Table 5 demonstrate that merely one word, e. g. *a jailhouse*, was known by the majority of the learners before the lesson. The rest of the expressions proved to be rather unknown in most cases. However, the increase in the knowledge for each of the words, often quite magnificent, confirms that the selection was appropriate for the particular group of learners. As registered, each vocabulary was known at least by eight learners after the lesson. In general, the results of individual learners from the post-test were outstanding, more than half of the learners gaining the full score (see Table 6). Furthermore, the development of vocabulary range was noted for each of the learners. The least number of points received from the post-test was four, however, the vocabulary range of the particular learner still improved by three expressions. Overall, the average success rate from the pre-test was 30.8%. The average success rate from the post-test was significantly higher, concretely 87.7%. In comparison with the results from 2.P, the increase in vocabulary range of 4.P was considerably higher, in spite of the lower success rate from the pre-test. The findings suggest that the more demanding expressions were suitably chosen for the older group of learners. Partly, the class's success might stem from their older age, although the learners' advanced skills and general favouritism of the subject is perceived as the main cause.

6.3.2.4 Test 4: Chiquitita (ABBA), 4.P

Table 7 presents that three words from the vocabulary selection were rather familiar for the majority of the learners before the song-based lesson. The specific words were as follows: *hate*, *a scar* and *to handle (something)*. In fact, the first from these items turned out to be well-known by each of the learners, eliminating the learners' chances to enlarge their vocabulary range by this specific item. Apparently, the particular choice was unlucky. However, the selection of the rest of the vocabulary seems very suitable. As the data affirm, the increase in knowledge of the individual vocabulary items (except for the aforementioned word *hate*) is distinct. The most pronounced development was registered for two of the items, namely *to*

enchain and *sorrow*. Each of these expressions was learned by seventeen learners after the lesson. From the point of view of success rate of individual learners, the findings are positive as well. As evident from Table 8, merely one learner's result from the post-test was not improved compared to the result from the pre-test. Overall, the average success rate from the pre-test was 33.5%, while the average success rate from the post-test was 68.5%. Nevertheless, although many learners managed to get the full score from the post-test, the results were still considerably worse than the results from Test 3, in spite of the roughly similar average success rates from the respective pre-tests. The cause is believed to be the provisional union of the original group of thirteen learners with the rest of the class, whose level of English and interest in the subject might not be analogous.

6.3.2.5 Summary of the results

The results show that the selection of vocabulary was appropriate for the particular groups of learners in general, considering the vocabulary range of individual learners was on various levels. Nonetheless, each class seemed to contain a small number of learners who were already very familiar with the intended vocabulary items. These findings indicate that it might be demanding to find songs that would serve more advanced classes as sources of new vocabulary items. Still, for lower secondary learners, the selection was proved manageable.

With regard to the vocabulary development of individual learners, the song-based lessons turned out to be quite efficient. The overview of the results may be found in Table 9, summarizing the total number of points and average success rate from all pre-tests and post-tests. Overall, the average success rate from all of the four pre-tests was 36.3%, while the average success rate from all of the four post-tests was 75.1%. The significant increase affirms that songs can serve as suitable sources for teaching English vocabulary, at least at lower secondary schools. Moreover, the vocabulary growth obvious in both classes encourages the idea that song-based lessons focused on vocabulary are suitable for both younger and older lower secondary learners. Comparing the four lessons, the improvement in average success rate appears to be roughly similar, except for Test 3, where the difference between the average success rate from the pre-test and the post-test is much more pronounced. The reason seems to be the aforementioned skills and interest of the particular group of learners. To conclude, song-based lessons appear generally efficient for teaching vocabulary to lower secondary learners, as shown by the results of the four tests.

7 Questionnaire for teachers

After the implementation of song-based lessons, including the learners' feedback and test results, a questionnaire for EFL teachers was prepared. The questionnaire was supposed to provide a deeper view into the practice of lower secondary English teachers, with regard to their attitude towards using songs in their lessons. The aim of the questionnaire is to answer the third research question (see sub-chapter 4.2). The whole process was also performed in order to determine, whether it is the primary goal of EFL teachers to use songs to teach vocabulary.

7.1 Procedure

A questionnaire was chosen as a research tool, due to the quantitative nature of the research. The questionnaire was prepared with the use of Google Forms, a software provided by Google LLC company. The instrument was selected because it enabled comprehensible creation of individual questionnaire items, as well as an easy distribution of the prepared questionnaire via a link generated for the respondents.

The total number of questions in the questionnaire is eight. The first question asks the respondents about the frequency of applying songs in their English lessons. Moreover, the question serves as a sorting point. In case a respondent chooses the last option, indicating not using songs in English lessons at all, the particular respondent is directly transferred to Questions 7–8, inquiring the teachers' opinions about efficiency of song-based lessons and their enjoyability for the learners. Thanks to this transition, the teachers not exploiting songs in their lessons avoid answering Questions 2–6, which are only meant for teachers who apply such materials. Specifically, Question 2 searches for the teachers' intents for incorporating songs into their English lessons, while Question 3 concentrates on the reasons determining the selection of songs. Questions 4–5 are focused on usage of song-based activities, and Question 6 investigates the level of difficulty of the lessons' preparation.

The questions common for all the respondents, namely Questions 1, 7 and 8 are closed with the possibility of choosing one answer only. The same applies for Questions 4 and 6. The remaining questions are semi-closed with the possibility of choosing either one or one or more answers.

The questionnaire was distributed to schools of the Pardubice Region, considering the experiment with the song-based lessons took place at a school in the area. The distribution was done via email communication and the generated link referring the respondents to the

questionnaire. To enhance the teachers' willingness to cooperate, the questionnaire was sent in its Czech version (see Appendix 7a). The English translation can be found in Appendix 7b.

The collection of the answers lasted two weeks. After this period, the reception of responses was terminated, the total number of responses being fifty-two. Afterwards, the results were analysed. The presentation and discussion of these results continues in the following sub-chapter.

7.2 Research results

The results of the questionnaire for teachers are presented in Figure 13–20 in Appendix 7c.

Question 1: How often do you use songs in English lessons?

As Figure 13 presents, the majority of the respondents claim they use songs in their English lessons, with the exception of one respondent. Regarding the frequency of the usage, however, a considerable part of the respondents (46.2%) declare to merely apply songs a few times a year. The percentage shows that although English teachers are familiar with the possibility of using songs in their lessons, the actual application might not happen on regular basis. The cause might possibly stem from the teachers' persuasion that song-based lessons bring no benefits, or from various practical reasons, such as time issues or the teachers' short teaching practice. On the other hand, a significant number of respondents claim to incorporate songs into their lessons a few times a month (40.4%) and 11.5% even claim to apply them a few times a week. Thus, in spite of the non-negligible number of respondents who expressed using songs rather rarely, the number of teachers declaring their regular exploitation of songs appears to support the idea that songs are suitable media for improving learners' language level.

Question 2: What do you intend to achieve by using songs during your lessons?

Figure 14 acknowledges that the most common reason for including songs into English lessons is to motivate the learners or to make the lessons more interesting or enjoyable (chosen by 90.2% of the respondents). Supposedly, the next major goals are improving the learners' listening skills (76.5%) and vocabulary (72.5%), followed by improving the learners' pronunciation (49%). With regard to the topic of the diploma thesis, these results clearly suggest that songs may serve as appropriate sources for teaching English vocabulary, considering such purpose was marked by nearly three quarters of the respondents. Overall, it was indicated that

songs are perceived by EFL teachers as media with the potential of enhancing learners' language level in various language areas, and their application might therefore be multipurpose.

Question 3: Which aspect is the most important for you when choosing a suitable song for your lesson?

The most frequent answer to the above question was the content (lyrics) of the song. The option was selected by 60.8% of the respondents, as documented in Figure 15. Among other aspects worth of attention belong the melody of the song and the preference of the learners, chosen respectively by 15.7% and 13.7% of the respondents. The percentage demonstrates that the most important aspect when choosing songs for English lessons is the language content of the song, at least for the participants of the research. Apparently, the primary criterion for song selection is the lyrics of the song, not the musical features of the song. Additionally, the choice seems to be dependent mainly on the teachers' decision, not the learners'. The explanation might be connected to the teachers' necessity for a particular content of the song. Partly, the focus on the lyrics of the song may be caused by the attempts to teach vocabulary through songs, as registered in the previous question.

Question 4: When using songs during your lessons, do you prepare accompanying activities for the learners (apart from mere listening to the songs or singing)?

The answers to the above question are presented in Figure 16. The majority of the respondents (76.5%) confirmed ordinary usage of one or two accompanying activities. 13.7% of the respondents claimed preparation of at least three different activities. The rest of the respondents (9.8%) declared they use no accompanying activities apart from listening to the songs or singing. The results seem to indicate that EFL teachers mostly use a small number of activities related to the songs applied in their lessons. The observation is quite supportive, considering only a minor part of the respondents do not enhance the songs' potential by preparing at least one or two related activities. Obviously, the teachers mostly realize the possibilities songs offer and try to increase their effectiveness in ELT by working with them more thoroughly.

Question 5: Which types of activities do you use when using songs in your lessons?

The high percentage of many answers establishes relatively good knowledge of various types of activities appliable by EFL teachers during English lessons with songs. As presented in Figure 17, the most common activity supposedly prepared by 84.3% of the teachers is

completing the omitted words from the songs' lyrics (e. g. on the basis of listening, context). According to the answers, listening to the songs is used by 78.4% of the teachers, followed by singing the songs (56.9%). The next relatively frequent activities are claimed to be questions concerning text comprehension (49%), ordering the shuffled parts of the song's lyrics (41.2%) and discussions (35.3%). Apart from listening to the song and singing, however, merely one accompanying activity is supposedly performed by the majority of the respondents. The fact seems to explain the trend in the previous question, indicating that the teachers mostly prepare only one or two accompanying activities. Therefore, it might be beneficial for EFL teachers to explore the numerous possibilities of creating song related activities in order to exploit the songs' full potential.

Question 6: What is the preparation of the lessons with songs like for you?

The results confirm that the majority of the respondents do not perceive the preparation of song-based lessons as demanding (see Figure 18). 54.9% of the teachers regard the preparation ordinary, 23.5% consider it rather easy and 11.8% very easy. Few of the teachers appear to have difficulties with arranging such lessons. The finding is rather positive, because increased demandingness of song-based lessons' preparation might discourage EFL teachers from further demonstration of such lessons.

Question 7: In your opinion, what is the impact of using songs during English lessons on the learners' language level?

As presented in Figure 19, none of the respondents considers the use of songs during English lessons to negatively influence the learners. On the contrary, 69.2% of the teachers is convinced that the impact is rather beneficial, and 23.1% even believes it is very beneficial for the learners, while the rest of the respondents do not know. The view of the teachers from practice is very reassuring and corresponds with the knowledge from the theoretical part of the thesis, emphasizing the benefits of songs' musical features and language content. Additionally, the findings resemble the results of the thesis' experiment with song-based lessons, specifically the results of the tests and the questionnaire for learners.

Question 8: In your opinion, do learners enjoy using songs in English lessons?

The opinions of lower secondary EFL teachers promote the idea that English lessons with songs are generally favoured among learners. According to the majority of the respondents (73.1%), learners usually enjoy using songs in English lessons (see Figure 20). 15.4% of the

respondents is even confident that learners enjoy such lessons always. Again, the findings are consistent with the observation of learners during the thesis' experiment with song-based lessons, and with the results of the questionnaire for learners.

7.3 Summary of the results

To summarize, the majority of the respondents claim to apply songs during English lessons, although the frequency seems to be rather rare for a considerable part of the teachers. Supposedly, the incorporation of songs into the lessons is usually accompanied by one or two related activities. Mostly, the teachers declare to select the songs on the basis of their language content, with the intention of motivating the learners or making the lessons more interesting or enjoyable. Still, the results demonstrate that a significant number of the teachers apparently use songs to teach vocabulary. Additionally, the last two questions indicate that EFL teachers are very positive about both the benefits of English lessons with songs and their popularity among learners, which is in agreement with the results of the thesis' experiment with song-based lessons, namely the questionnaire for learners and the vocabulary tests. Obviously, the idea that songs have great potential as sources for teaching English vocabulary at lower secondary schools is shared by a considerable number of relevant teachers.

8 Discussion

The theoretical part of the thesis emphasized the positive effects of using songs in ELT, stemming from their musical features, such as melody or rhythm, and their language content. The notions of various authors encourage the idea that songs may serve as efficient sources for teaching English vocabulary at lower secondary schools. The practical implementation of the ideas supports the belief that songs are valuable means of enlarging learners' vocabulary range. The assumption was confirmed by several aspects of the thesis' research.

The observation of lower secondary learners during four song-based lessons suggested that the learners mostly considered the lessons enjoyable and interesting. The impression was not deceptive, as the learners expressed their positive attitude towards the lessons in the ensuing questionnaire. Generally, the majority of the learners perceived the lessons as both enjoyable and beneficial.

In terms of vocabulary development, the lessons' efficiency was affirmed by the results of the assigned tests. As was demonstrated, the average success rate was much higher after the song-based lessons than before them. Nonetheless, the learners proved their considerable knowledge even in the pre-tests. The findings suggest that for more advanced learners, songs may not contain sufficient number of challenging vocabulary items. Still, a suitable selection seems manageable for lower secondary learners.

This presumption is encouraged by the results of the questionnaire for EFL teachers. Obviously, the respondents mostly apply songs in their English lessons, and their aim often includes improving the learners' vocabulary. Moreover, the respondents believe in the enjoyability and benefits of such lessons. To conclude, the efficiency of using songs as a means for teaching English vocabulary seems to be affirmed by three different points of view, namely the view of the researcher, learners and EFL teachers.

Conclusion

The diploma thesis aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using songs to teach English vocabulary at lower secondary schools. As the theoretical part demonstrated, knowledge of vocabulary is of essential importance for EFL learners. One of the possibilities for introducing vocabulary to learners is through songs, given the potential of their musical features and language content. The efficiency of songs' application was tested during four song-based lessons. The action research and observation underlaying the lessons' preparation and performance was described in the practical part. Each of the lessons included vocabulary pre-tests and post-tests, determining the increase in the learners' vocabulary range. The procedure was followed by a questionnaire survey, inquiring the learners' opinions about the lessons' usefulness and enjoyability. Thereafter, questionnaires were given to lower secondary EFL teachers, in order to find out their attitudes towards using songs in English lessons.

The findings enabled to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the effects of using songs in English lessons on lower secondary learners' vocabulary growth?

Based on the results of the vocabulary tests, it was proved that songs can serve as efficient sources for teaching English vocabulary. As the significant increase in average success rates from post-tests revealed, the learners generally expanded their vocabulary range after the song-based lessons. Merely one of the learners did not manage to improve the test's score during one of the lessons.

2) How do learners evaluate song-based English lessons in terms of the lessons' enjoyability and usefulness?

The results of the questionnaire for learners and the observation of the learners during the song-based lessons indicated, that the lessons were mostly enjoyable and useful for the learners. Only a minor part of the learners appeared sceptical towards the lessons' enjoyability and usefulness.

3) How do lower secondary English teachers use songs in their lessons?

The results of the questionnaire for teachers revealed the teachers' claim to mostly incorporate songs into their English lessons. Supposedly, songs are mainly applied to motivate the learners or make the lessons more enjoyable or interesting, and to improve the learners' listening skills and vocabulary. Apart from listening to the songs and singing, the teachers

declare their usual usage of 1–2 accompanying activities, especially gap-filling based on listening or context.

Overall, it can be concluded that songs can be applied as efficient media for teaching English vocabulary at lower secondary schools. Evidently, use of songs during English lessons seems to be perceived as beneficial and useful by both EFL learners and teachers. The findings correspond with the information mentioned in the theoretical part of the thesis, and are in agreement with PhD thesis by Tegge (2015).

However, the results of the diploma thesis' research cannot be interpreted generally, given the small number of respondents participating in the questionnaire surveys. Similarly, the four song-based lessons do not appear sufficient to determine whether songs are suitable for teaching English vocabulary to lower secondary learners in general. Moreover, the vocabulary increase after the song-based lessons was not compared to the possible vocabulary increase after lessons not exploiting songs. It seems reasonable to concentrate on such comparison in further research. Given the difficulty of choosing sufficiently challenging lyrics, it might also be beneficial to focus the research on more advanced learners.

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Appendices

Appendix 1a: *Worksheet for 2.P (Money, Money, Money by ABBA)*

Appendix 1b: *Test 1 for 2.P (Money, Money, Money by ABBA)*

Appendix 2a: *Worksheet for 2.P (Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head by B. J. Thomas)*

Appendix 2b: *Test 2 for 2.P (Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head by B. J. Thomas)*

Appendix 3a: *Worksheet for 4.P (Jailhouse Rock by Elvis Presley)*

Appendix 3b: *Test 3 for 4.P (Jailhouse Rock by Elvis Presley)*

Appendix 4a: *Worksheet for 4.P (Chiquitita by ABBA)*

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Appendix 5a: *Questionnaire for learners (in Czech)*

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Appendix 5c: *Results of the questionnaire for learners (2.P)*

Appendix 5d: *Results of the questionnaire for learners (4.P)*

Appendix 6: *Results of pre-tests and post-tests*

Appendix 7a: *Questionnaire for teachers (in Czech)*

Appendix 7b: *Questionnaire for teachers (in English)*

Appendix 7c: *Results of the questionnaire for teachers*

Appendix 1a: *Worksheet for 2.P (Money, Money, Money by ABBA)*

I work all night, I work all day to pay the ………………… I have to pay
Ain't it sad?
And still there never seems to be a single _____ left for me
That's too bad
In my ………………….. I have a plan
If I got me a _____ man
I wouldn't have to work at all, I'd fool around and have a ball

Money, money, money
Must be funny
In the rich man's world
Money, money, money
Always sunny
In the rich man's world
Aha
All the _____ I could do
If I had a little money
It's a rich man's world
It's a rich man's world

A man like that is hard to find but I can't get him off my ………………………
Ain't it sad?
And if he happens to be free I _____ he wouldn't fancy me
That's too bad
So I must _____, I'll have to go
To Las Vegas or Monaco
And win a fortune in a ………………., my life will never be the same

Money, money, money
Must be funny
In the rich man's world
Money, money, money
Always sunny
In the rich man's world
Aha
All the _____ I could do
If I had a little money
It's a rich man's world

Money, money, money
Must be funny
In the rich man's world
Money, money, money
Always sunny
In the rich man's world
Aha
All the _____ I could do
If I had a little money
It's a rich man's world
It's a rich man's world

GAME	BILLS	DREAMS	MIND
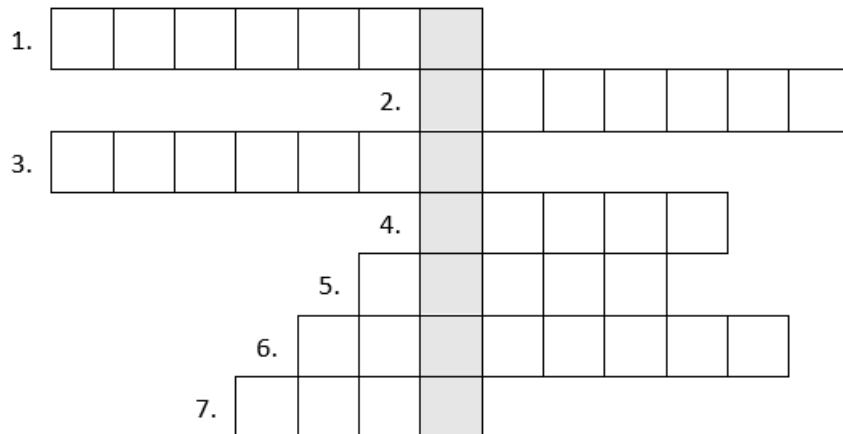
1. IN BRITAIN, ONE HUNDRED _____ MAKE ONE POUND.

2. VERY RICH

3. A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY OR THINGS

4. LAST NIGHT, I HAD A _____ ABOUT FLYING IN THE SKY.

5. MY PARENTS ALWAYS PAY THE _____ FOR ELECTRICITY AND WATER.

6. A CITY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WITH MANY CASINOS

7. MY BROTHER IS _____ BECAUSE HE HAS A LOF OF MONEY.

'Money, Money, Money' is a song recorded by a _____ pop group called ABBA.

Appendix 1b: *Test 1 for 2.P (Money, Money, Money by ABBA)*

1) Translate.

FORTUNE = _____

A BILL = _____

TO BET = _____

2) Use the following words in sentences to make their meaning clear.

A DREAM:

RICH:

TO PAY:

3) Answer the following questions.

What can you use A PENNY for?

What does it mean to be WEALTHY?

Appendix 2a: *Worksheet for 2.P (Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head by B. J. Thomas)*

Raindrops are falling on my …………….
And just like the guy whose feet are too big for his …………….
Nothing _____ to fit
Those raindrops are falling on my ………….., they keep falling

So I just did me some talking to the _____
And I said I didn't like the way he got things done
Sleeping on the job
Those raindrops are falling on my ………….., they keep falling

But there's one thing I know
The blues they send to meet me
Won't _____ me, it won't be long
Till happiness steps up to greet me

Raindrops keep falling on my ……………
But that doesn't mean my eyes will soon be turning ……………
Crying's not for me
'Cause I'm never gonna stop the rain by _____
Because I'm free
Nothing's worrying me

It won't be long till happiness steps up to greet me

Raindrops keep falling on my ……………
But that doesn't mean my eyes will soon be turning …………….
Crying's not for me
'Cause I'm never gonna stop the rain by _____
Because I'm free
Nothing's worrying me

_____

Raindrops are falling on my _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

But _

_ _

_ _

RED 2x	BED 1x	HEAD 5x

Appendix 2b: *Test 2 for 2.P (Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head by B. J. Thomas)*

1) Translate.

A DEFEAT = _____

A COMPLAINT = _____

TO DROP = _____

2) Use the following words in sentences to make their meaning clear.

TO WORRY:

TO SEEM:

TO FALL:

3) Answer the following questions.

What does it mean TO FEEL BLUE?

What does it mean to make A STEP?

Appendix 3a: *Worksheet for 4.P (Jailhouse Rock by Elvis Presley)*

The _____ threw a party in the county ………………
The prison band was there and they began to wail
The band was jumpin' and the joint began to …………………
You should've heard those knocked out jailbirds sing

Let's rock
Everybody, let's rock
Everybody in the whole cell block
Was dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock

Spider Murphy played the tenor ……………………
Little Joe was _____ on the slide trombone
The drummer boy from Illinois went crash, boom, bang
The whole rhythm section was a purple gang

Let's rock
Everybody, let's rock
Everybody in the whole cell block
Was dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock

Number 47 said to number …………………
"You're the cutest jailbird I ever did see
I sure would be _____ with your company
Come on and do the Jailhouse Rock with me"

Let's rock
Everybody, let's rock
Everybody in the whole cell block
Was dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock, Rock, Rock

_____ Sack was sittin' on a block of stone
Way over in the corner weepin' all ………………
The warden said, "Hey, buddy, don't you be no square
If you can't find a partner, use a wooden chair"

Let's rock
Everybody, let's rock
Everybody in the whole cell block
Was dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock

_____ Henry said to Bugs, "For Heaven's sake
No one's lookin', now's the chance to make a …………………"
Bugsy turned to Shifty and he said, _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

_ _

Let's rock
Everybody, let's rock
Everybody in the whole cell block
Was dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock

Dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock, dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock
Dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock, dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock
Dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock-
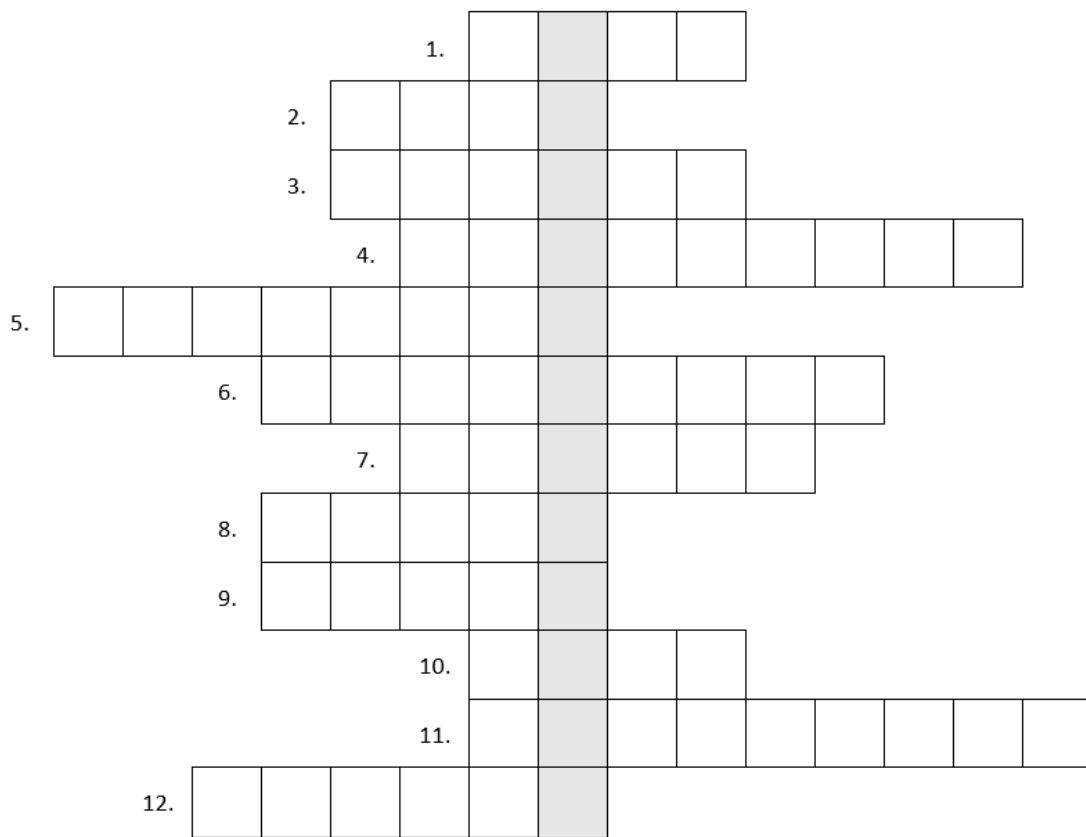
1. TO CRY

2. TO HOWL

3. IN SOME RELIGIONS, GOD OR THE GODS LIVE IN _____

4. PRISON

5. A STATE IN THE US

6. A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT THAT IS PLAYED BY BLOWING THROUGH A REED

7. SOMEONE WHO SUPERVISES PRISONERS

8. TO MOVE SMOOTHLY AND EASILY

9. A JOINT CONNECTS TWO _____

10. A STRONG WIND

11. PLEASED

12. DECEITFUL OR DISHONEST

Appendix 3b: *Test 3 for 4.P (Jailhouse Rock by Elvis Presley)*

1) Use the following words in sentences to make their meaning clear.

SAKE:

TO WAIL:

TO BLOW:

2) Translate.   3) Write the synonyms of these words.

A COUNTY = _____   TO WEEP – _____

A WARDEN = _____   A JAILHOUSE – _____

4) Explain or describe these words.

A JOINT (about body):

SHIFTY:

A SACK:

Appendix 4a: *Worksheet for 4.P (Chiquitita by ABBA)*

Chiquitita, tell me what's wrong?
You're enchained by your own …………………..
In your eyes there is no hope for tomorrow
How I _____ to see you like this
There is no way
you can deny it
I can see that you're oh so sad, so ………………..

Chiquitita, tell me the truth
I'm a ………………… you can cry on
Your best friend
I'm the one you must ………………… on
You were always sure of yourself
Now I see you've broken a feather
I hope we can _____ it up together

Chiquitita, you and I know
How the heartaches come and they go
and the _____ they're leaving
You'll be dancing once again and the pain will end
You will have no time for _____

Chiquitita, you and I cry
But the sun is still in the sky and _____ above you
Let me hear you sing once more
like you did before
Sing a new song, Chiquitita
Try once more like you did before
Sing a new song, Chiquitita

So the walls came tumbling down
And your love's a blown out candle
All is gone and it seems too hard to …………………..
Chiquitita, tell me the truth
There is no way
you can deny it
I see that you're oh so sad, so ……………………..

Chiquitita, you and I know
How the heartaches come and they go
and the _____ they're leaving
You'll be dancing once again and the pain will end
You will have no time for _____

Chiquitita, you and I cry
But the sun is still in the sky and _____ above you
Let me hear you sing once more
like you did before
Sing a new song, Chiquitita
Try once more like you did before
Sing a new song, Chiquitita
Try once more like you did before
Sing a new song, Chiquitita

H	O	P	E	H	C	A
T	D	E	N	Y	A	E
U	L	O	C	R	Y	T
M	I	S	H	R	T	A
B	T	P	A	T	C	H
L	L	C	I	D	E	G
E	S	I	N	O	R	L

1) I _____ that he will arrive tonight (I wish for it).

2) To refuse / not admit something.

3) To weep / have tears in your eyes.

4) To bind with chains.

5) To rely _____ someone. **2x**

6) I cut my finger and put a _____ on the injury.

7) The opposite of love.

8) A sudden, clumsy fall.

9 The injury on my leg left a _____ on my skin.

10) The opposite of happy.

11) To hurt.

In Spanish, 'Chiquitita' means _____.

Appendix 4b: *Test 4 for 4.P (Chiquitita by ABBA)*

1) Translate.

A PATCH = _____

TO ENCHAIN = _____

SORROW = _____

2) Write the antonyms of these words.

   HATE – _____

   TO DENY – _____

3) Use the following words in sentences to make their meaning clear.

A SCAR:

TO HANDLE (SOMETHING):

TO RELY ON (SOMEONE):

4) Explain or describe these words.

TO TUMBLE:

TO GRIEVE:

Appendix 5a: *Questionnaire for learners (in Czech)*

Dotazník pro žáky po hodinách s písničkami

Milí žáci,

ráda bych vás poprosila o vyplnění krátkého dotazníku, který se týká našich společných hodin anglického jazyka s využitím písní. Dotazník je anonymní a jeho výsledky budou použity výhradně v mé diplomové práci.

Poznámka: Pojmem „písničky" jsou v dotazníku myšleny pouze písničky v angličtině, nikoli písničky české.

Moc děkuji za vaši zpětnou vazbu!

1. Bavily tě hodiny angličtiny s využitím písniček? (zakroužkuj 1 z možností)

a) Ano, velmi.

b) Docela ano.

c) Spíše ne.

d) Ne, vůbec.

2. Byly pro tebe hodiny angličtiny s využitím písniček přínosné? (zakroužkuj 1 z možností)

a) Ano, velmi.

b) Docela ano.

c) Spíše ne.

d) Ne, vůbec.

3. Které z následujících možností ti během hodin s písničkami pomohly pamatovat si novou slovní zásobu? (zakroužkuj 1 nebo více možností)

a) Melodie písniček.

b) Rýmy v písničkách.

c) Opakování v písničkách.

d) Příběh v písničkách.

e) Zpěv písniček.

f) Nic z výše uvedených.

g) Jiná možnost: _____

4. Které typy aktivit tě bavily nejvíce? (zakroužkuj 1 nebo více možností)

a) Hledání společného tématu / klíčových slov v písni.

b) Doplňování vynechaných slov v písni na základě kontextu / rýmů.

c) Doplňování vynechaných slov v písni na základě poslechu.

d) Zpěv písně.

e) Křížovka.

f) Diskuse.

g) Psaní dalších veršů.

h) Žádné z výše uvedených.

i) Jiná možnost: _____

5. Které typy aktivit pro tebe byly nejvíce přínosné? (zakroužkuj 1 nebo více možností)

a) Hledání společného tématu / klíčových slov v písni.

b) Doplňování vynechaných slov v písni na základě kontextu / rýmů.

c) Doplňování vynechaných slov v písni na základě poslechu.

d) Zpěv písně.

e) Křížovka.

f) Diskuse.

g) Psaní dalších veršů.

h) Žádné z výše uvedených.

i) Jiná možnost: _____

6. Chtěl/a bys mít v budoucnu podobné hodiny angličtiny s písničkami? (zakroužkuj 1 z možností)

a) Ano.

b) Spíše ano.

c) Spíše ne.

d) Ne.

Questionnaire for learners after the lessons with songs

Dear learners,

I would like to ask you to fill in a short questionnaire dealing with our English lessons with songs. The questionnaire is anonymous and its results will be used for the sole purpose of my diploma thesis.

Note: The questionnaire's term 'songs' refers to songs in English, not Czech songs.

Thank you for your feedback!

1. Did you enjoy our English lessons with songs? (circle 1 of the options)

a) Yes, a lot.

b) Rather yes.

c) Rather not.

d) Not at all.

2. Were the English lessons with songs beneficial for you? (circle 1 of the options)

a) Yes, a lot.

b) Rather yes.

c) Rather not.

d) Not at all.

3. Which of the following options helped you remember new vocabulary during the lessons with songs? (circle 1 or more options)

a) The melody of the songs.

b) The rhymes in the songs.

c) The repetition in the songs.

d) The story in the songs.

e) Singing the songs.

f) None of the above.

g) Other: _____

4. Which types of activities did you enjoy the most? (circle 1 or more options)

a) Finding the common theme / key words in the song.

b) Completing the omitted words from the song based on the context / rhymes.

c) Completing the omitted words from the song based on listening comprehension.

d) Singing the song.

e) Crossword.

f) Discussion.

g) Writing additional verses.

h) None of the above.

i) Other: _____

5. Which types of activities were the most beneficial for you? (circle 1 or more options)

a) Finding the common theme / key words in the song.

b) Completing the omitted words from the song based on the context / rhymes.

c) Completing the omitted words from the song based on listening comprehension.

d) Singing the song.

e) Crossword.

f) Discussion.

g) Writing additional verses.

h) None of the above.

i) Other: _____

6. Would you like to have similar lessons with songs in the future? (circle 1 of the options)

a) Yes.

b) Rather yes.

c) Rather not.

d) No.

Appendix 5c: *Results of the questionnaire for learners (2.P)*

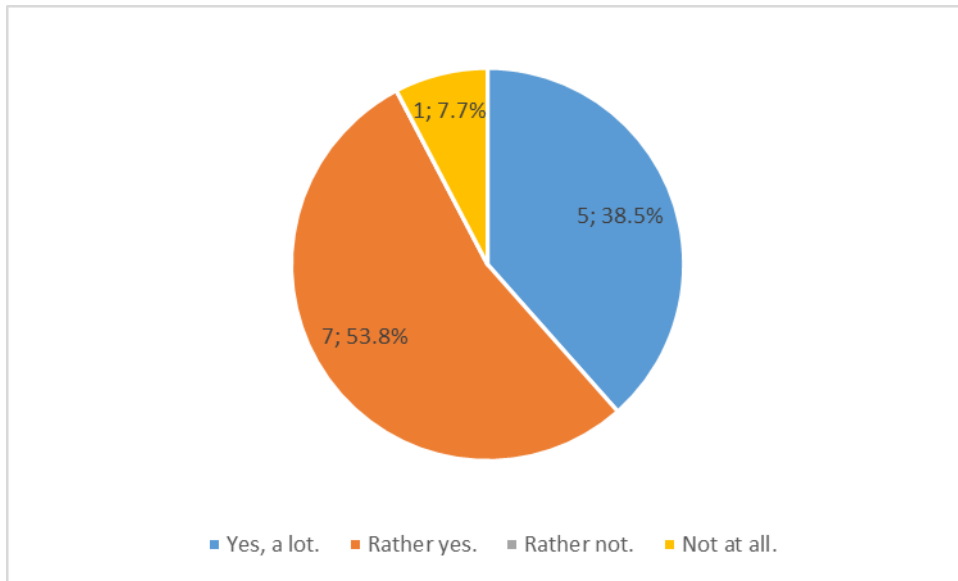Figure 1: Did you enjoy our English lessons with songs?

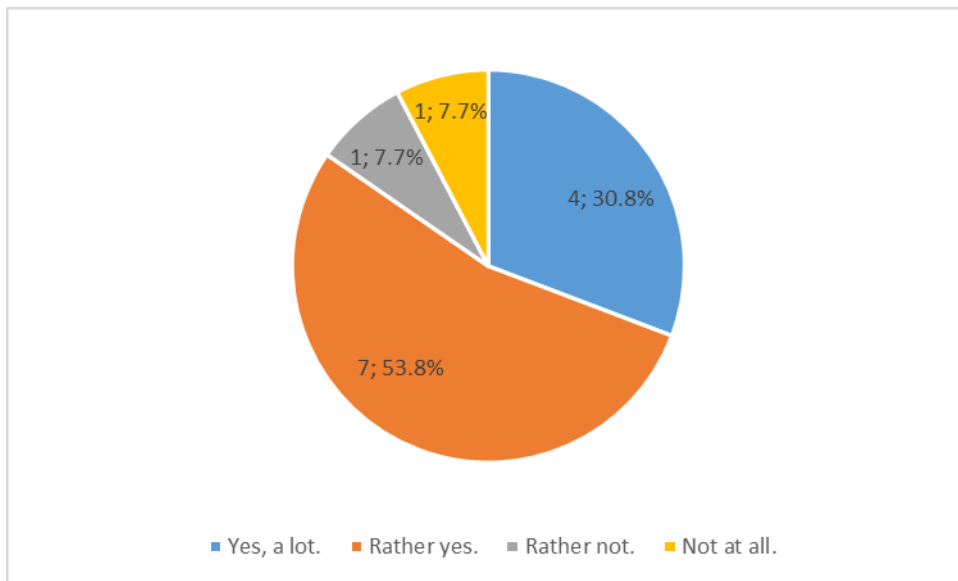Figure 2: Were the English lessons with songs beneficial for you?

Figure 3: Which of the following options helped you remember new vocabulary during the lessons with songs?
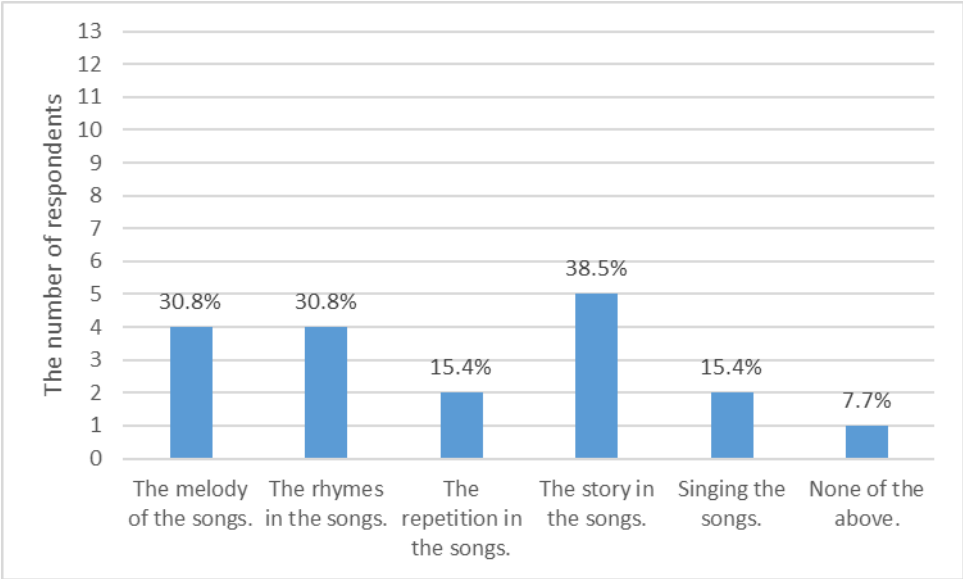

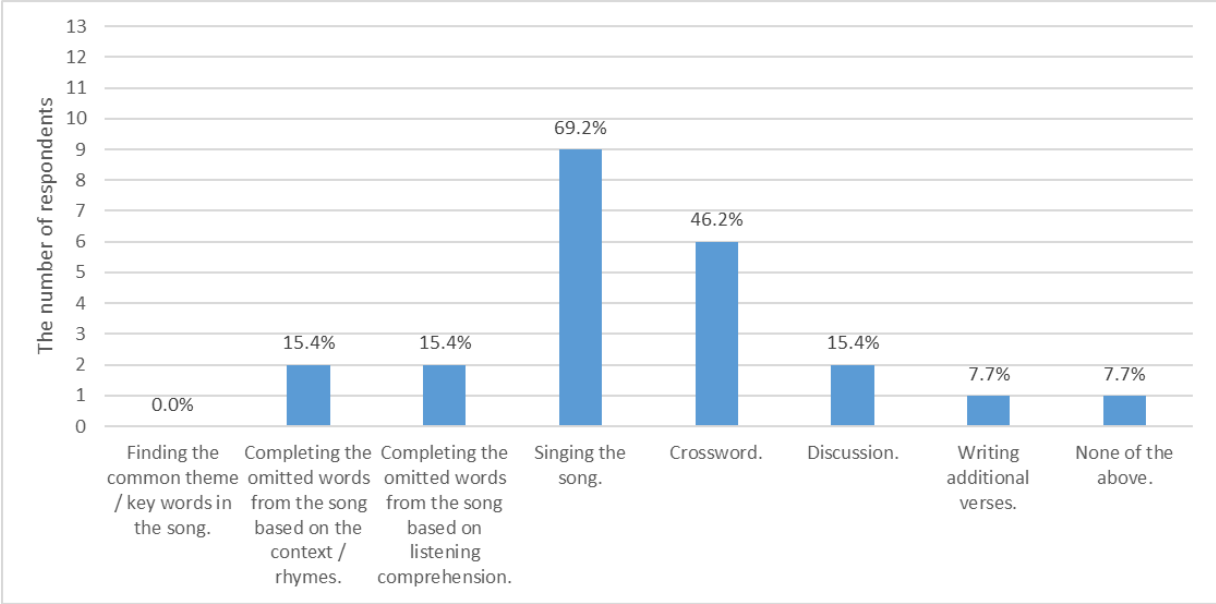Figure 4: Which types of activities did you enjoy the most?

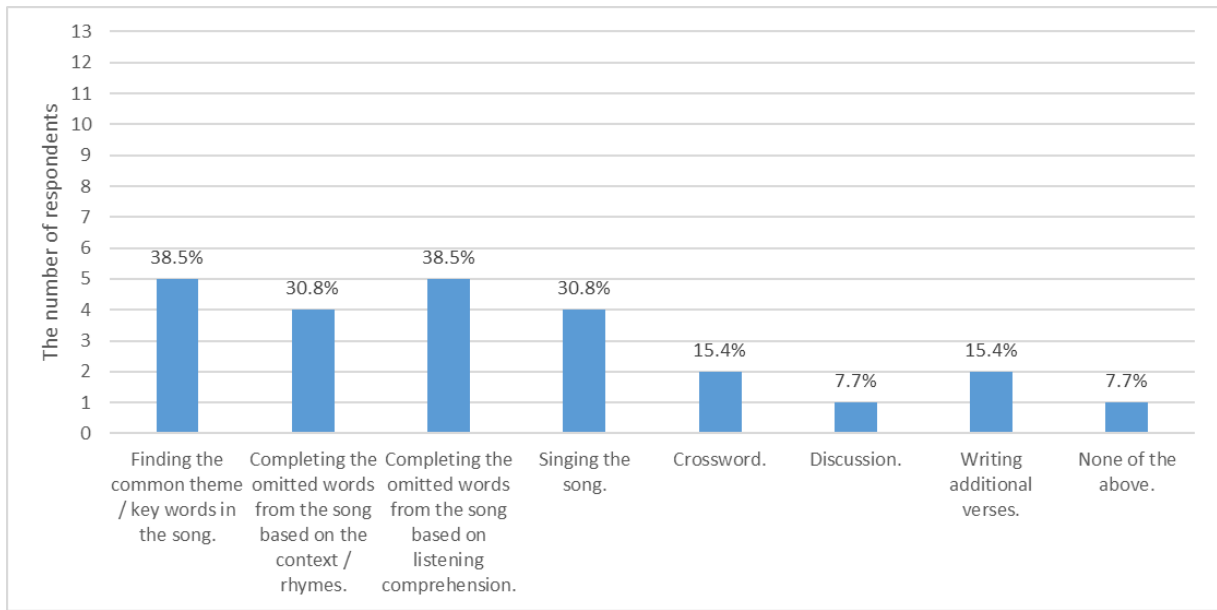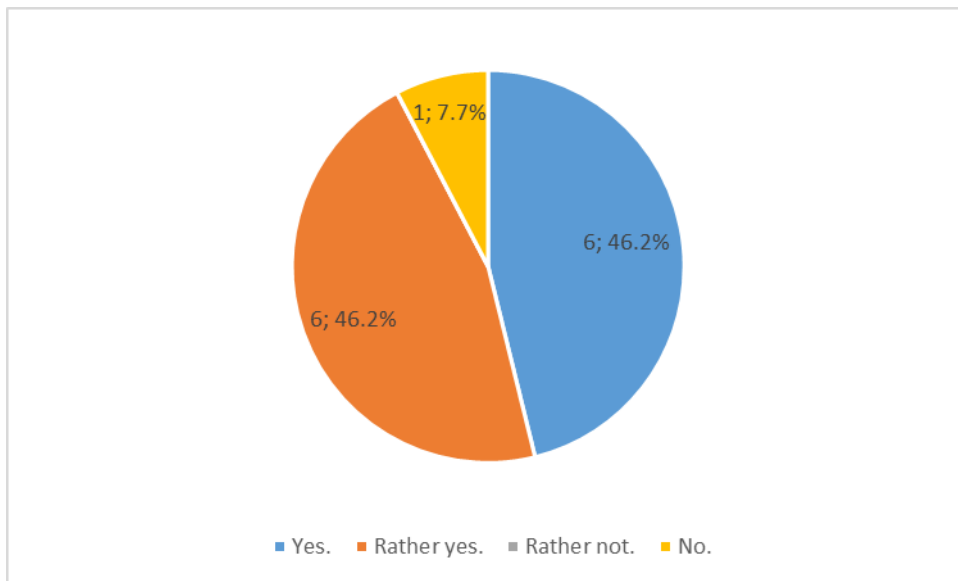Figure 5: Which types of activities were the most beneficial for you?

Figure 6: Would you like to have similar lessons with songs in the future?

Appendix 5d: *Results of the questionnaire for learners (4.P)*

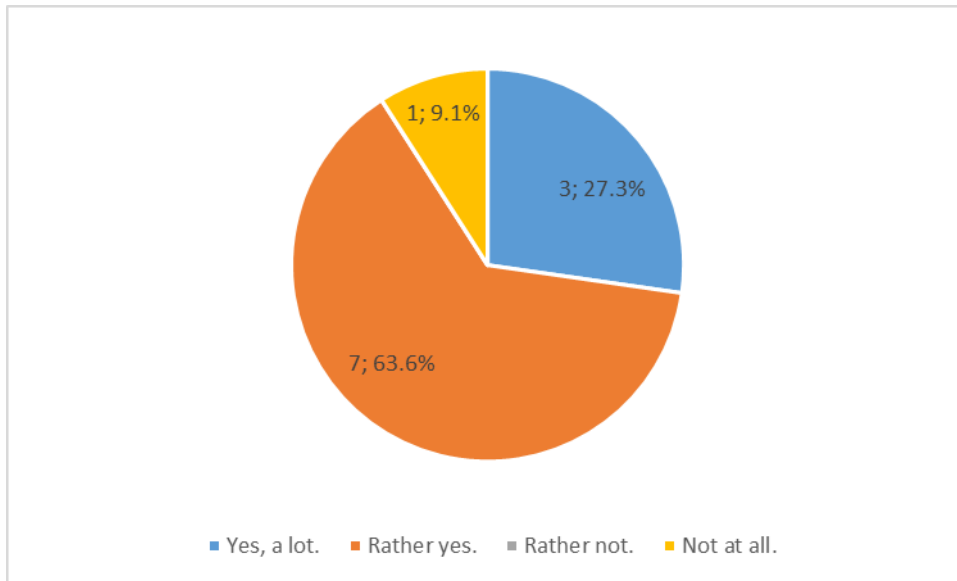Figure 7: Did you enjoy our English lessons with songs?

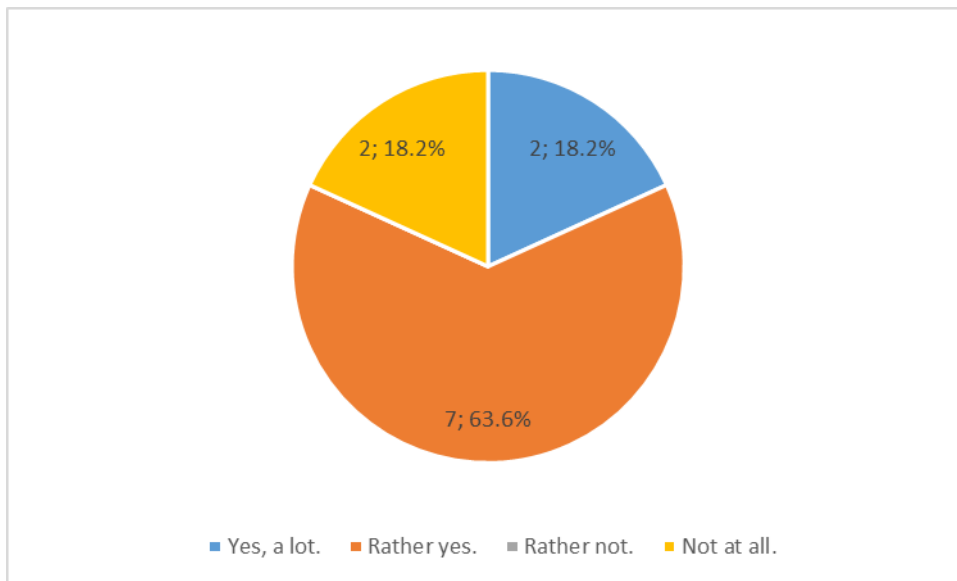Figure 8: Were the English lessons with songs beneficial for you?

Figure 9: Which of the following options helped you remember new vocabulary during the lessons with songs?
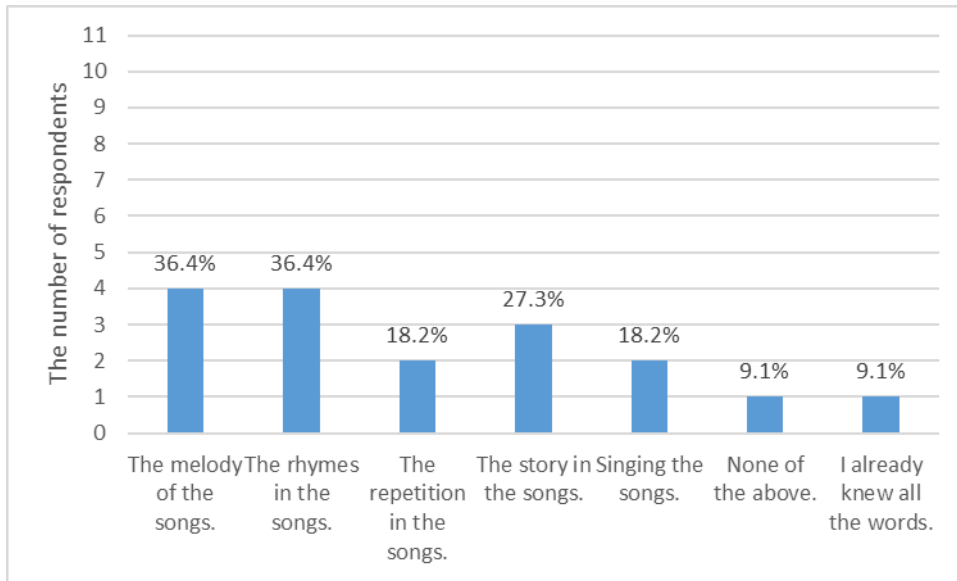

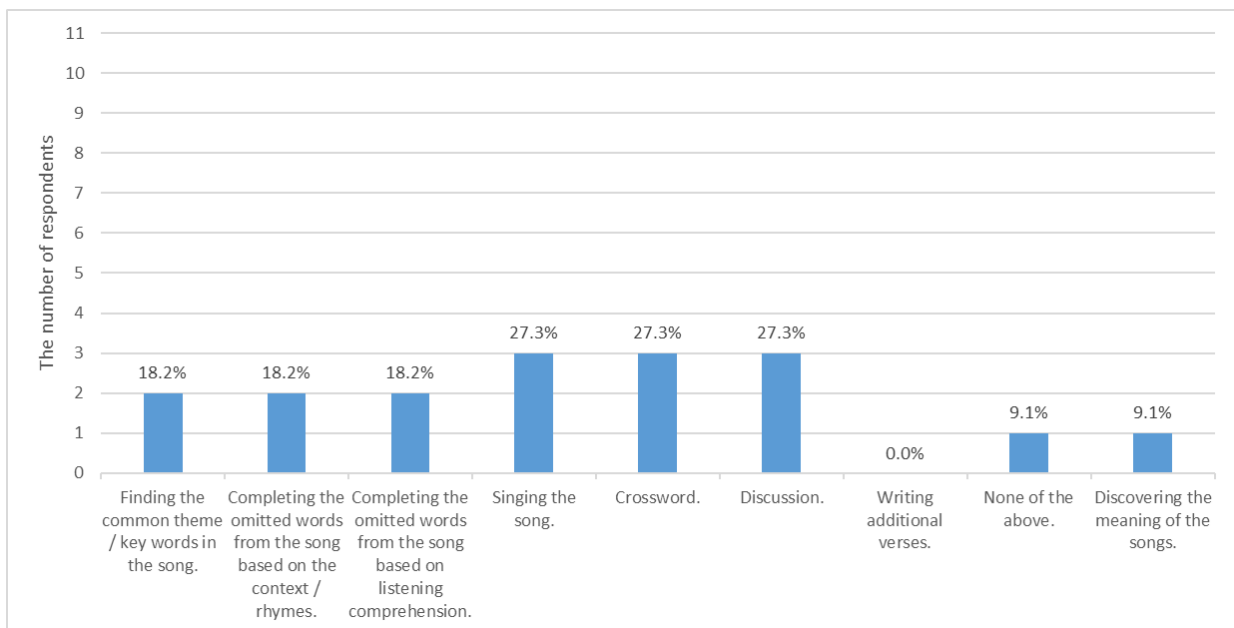Figure 10: Which types of activities did you enjoy the most?

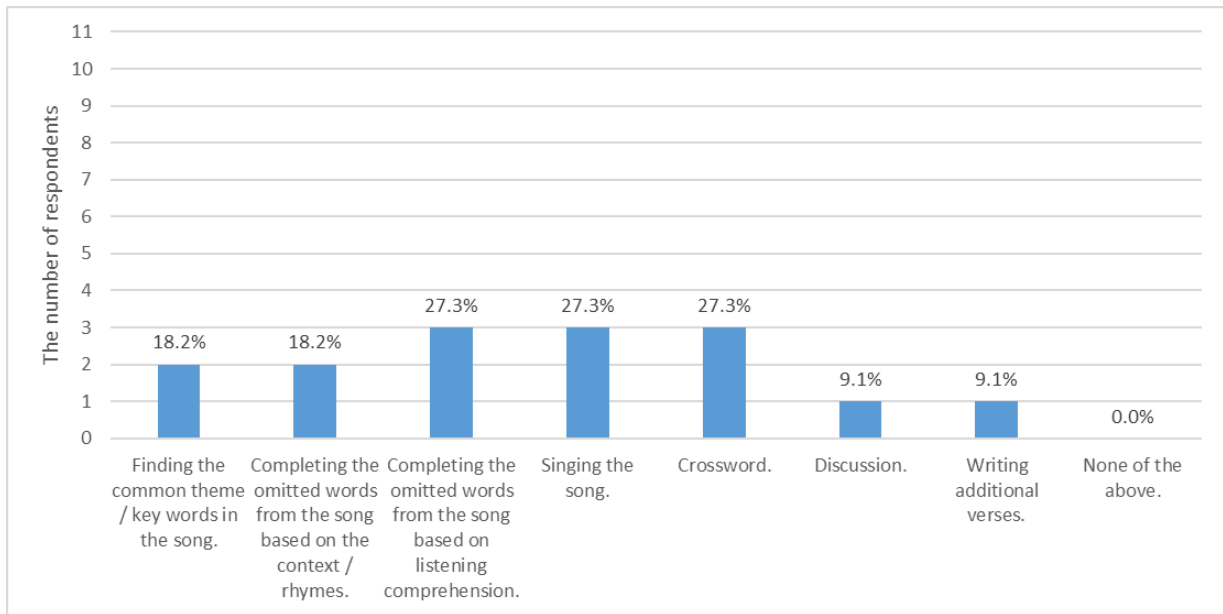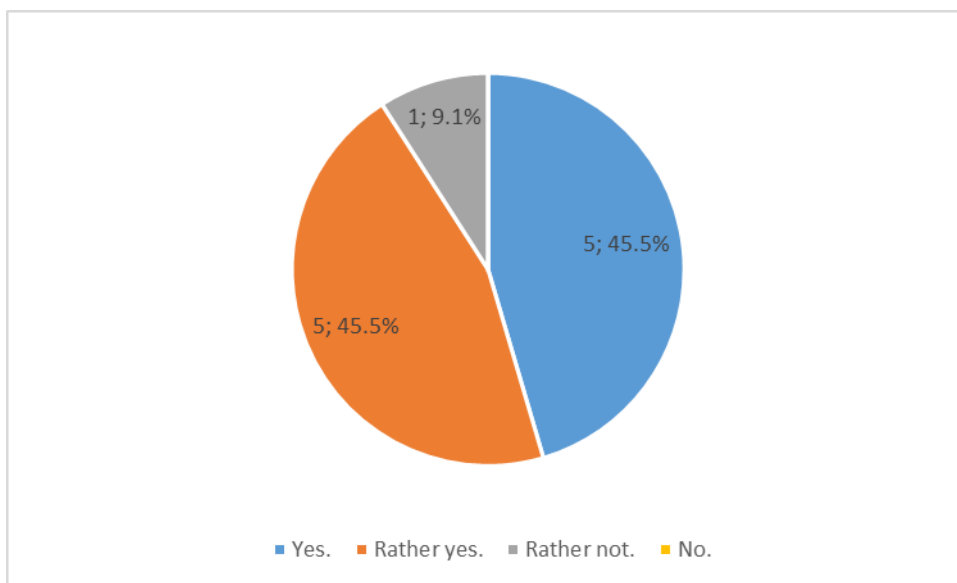Figure 11: Which types of activities were the most beneficial for you?

Figure 12: Would you like to have similar lessons with songs in the future?

Appendix 6: *Results of pre-tests and post-tests*

Table 1: Knowledge of individual vocabulary items from Test 1 (Money, Money, Money by ABBA, 2.P)

Vocabulary	The number of learners (maximum 13) with knowledge of the vocabulary before the lesson	Percentage	The number of learners (maximum 13) with knowledge of the vocabulary after the lesson	Percentage
fortune	2	15.4	11	84.6
a bill	5	38.5	10	76.9
to bet	2	15.4	4	30.8
a dream	8	61.5	10	76.9
rich	11	84.6	12	92.3
to pay	9	69.2	12	92.3
a penny	5	38.5	11	84.6
wealthy	0	0.0	8	61.5

Table 2: Points of individual learners from Test 1 (Money, Money, Money by ABBA, 2.P)

Learner number (i. e. pre-test/post-test number)	Points before the lesson (maximum 8)	Points after the lesson (maximum 8)
1	1	3
2	2	4
3	3	8
4	3	8
5	2	5
6	6	7
7	0	3
8	4	6
9	6	8
10	3	7
11	3	6
12	4	7
13	5	6
The total number of points (maximum 104)	**42**	**78**
Average success rate [%]	**40.4**	**75.0**

Table 3: Knowledge of individual vocabulary items from Test 2 (Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head by B. J. Thomas, 2.P)

Vocabulary	The number of learners (maximum 13) with knowledge of the vocabulary before the lesson	Percentage	The number of learners (maximum 13) with knowledge of the vocabulary after the lesson	Percentage
a defeat	4	30.8	8	61.5
a complaint	1	7.7	2	15.4
to drop	9	69.2	12	92.3
to worry	9	69.2	9	69.2
to seem	3	23.1	8	61.5
to fall	10	76.9	13	100.0
to feel blue	0	0.0	10	76.9
a step	6	46.2	10	76.9

Table 4: Points of individual learners from Test 2 (Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head by B. J. Thomas, 2.P)

Learner number (i. e. pre-test/post-test number)	Points before the lesson (maximum 8)	Points after the lesson (maximum 8)
1	2	4
2	5	6
3	1	2
4	1	3
5	6	7
6	3	4
7	4	6
8	6	7
9	3	8
10	3	6
11	0	4
12	6	8
13	2	7
The total number of points (maximum 104)	**42**	**72**
Average success rate [%]	**40.4**	**69.2**

Table 5: Knowledge of individual vocabulary items from Test 3 (Jailhouse Rock by Elvis Presley, 4.P)

Vocabulary	The number of learners (maximum 13) with knowledge of the vocabulary before the lesson	Percentage	The number of learners (maximum 13) with knowledge of the vocabulary after the lesson	Percentage
sake	6	46.2	10	76.9
to wail	0	0.0	8	61.5
to blow	5	38.5	10	76.9
a county	1	7.7	12	92.3
a warden	1	7.7	13	100.0
to weep	3	23.1	12	92.3
a jailhouse	12	92.3	13	100.0
a joint (about body)	5	38.5	13	100.0
shifty	2	15.4	12	92.3
a sack	5	38.5	11	84.6

Table 6: Points of individual learners from Test 3 (Jailhouse Rock by Elvis Presley, 4.P)

Learner number (i. e. pre-test/post-test number)	Points before the lesson (maximum 10)	Points after the lesson (maximum 10)
1	6	10
2	2	10
3	4	10
4	8	10
5	5	9
6	2	8
7	2	10
8	4	10
9	3	10
10	1	8
11	1	8
12	1	7
13	1	4
The total number of points (maximum 130)	40	114
Average success rate [%]	30.8	87.7

Table 7: Knowledge of individual vocabulary items from Test 4 (Chiquitita by ABBA, 4.P)

Vocabulary	The number of learners (maximum 26) with knowledge of the vocabulary before the lesson	Percentage	The number of learners (maximum 26) with knowledge of the vocabulary after the lesson	Percentage
a patch	3	11.5	16	61.5
to enchain	0	0.0	17	65.4
sorrow	4	15.4	21	80.8
hate	26	100.0	26	100.0
to deny	11	42.3	17	65.4
a scar	15	57.7	21	80.8
to handle (something)	15	57.7	19	73.1
to rely on (someone)	10	38.5	17	65.4
to tumble	1	3.8	13	50.0
to grieve	2	7.7	11	42.3

Table 8: Points of individual learners from Test 4 (Chiquitita by ABBA, 4.P)

Learner number (i. e. pre-test/post-test number)	Points before the lesson (maximum 10)	Points after the lesson (maximum 10)
1	2	4
2	6	10
3	4	10
4	2	5
5	4	9
6	4	8
7	5	9
8	5	10
9	2	8
10	1	3
11	5	10
12	6	10
13	3	10
14	2	8
15	8	10
16	6	8
17	2	7
18	2	7
19	2	3
20	5	9
21	2	3
22	1	5
23	4	5
24	2	4
25	1	2
26	1	1
The total number of points (maximum 260)	87	178
Average success rate [%]	33.5	68.5

Table 9: The overview of the total number of points and average success rate from the tests

Test number	The total number of points before the lesson	Average success rate [%]	The total number of points after the lesson	Average success rate [%]
1	42	40.4	78	75.0
2	42	40.4	72	69.2
3	40	30.8	114	87.7
4	87	33.5	178	68.5
Overall	**211**	**36.3**	**442**	**75.1**

Appendix 7a: *Questionnaire for teachers (in Czech)*

Dotazník pro učitele

Dobrý den,

jmenuji se Tereza Mikulecká a studuji 2. ročník navazujícího magisterského studia na pedagogické fakultě Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci. Ráda bych Vás požádala o vyplnění krátkého dotazníku, jehož výsledky budou použity v mé diplomové práci na téma využívání písní k výuce slovní zásoby v hodinách anglického jazyka. Dotazník je anonymní a jeho výsledky budou použity výhradně pro tuto práci.

Moc děkuji za Vaši spolupráci!

1. Jak často používáte písničky v hodinách angličtiny? (vyberte 1 z možností)

a) Každou hodinu.

b) Několikrát za týden.

c) Několikrát za měsíc.

d) Několikrát za rok.

e) Nikdy.

2. Jaký je Váš záměr při použití písniček ve výuce? (vyberte 1 nebo více možností)

a) Zlepšit poslechové dovednosti žáků.

b) Zlepšit u žáků porozumění čtenému textu.

c) Zlepšit mluvený projev žáků.

d) Zlepšit psaný projev žáků.

e) Zlepšit u žáků znalost gramatiky.

f) Zlepšit u žáků slovní zásobu.

g) Zlepšit u žáků výslovnost.

h) Motivovat žáky / udělat hodinu zajímavější či zábavnější.

i) Jiné – uveďte:

3. Který aspekt je pro Vás nejdůležitější při výběru vhodné písně do Vaší hodiny? (vyberte 1 z možností)

a) Obsah (text) písně.

b) Melodie písně.

c) Délka písně.

d) Preference žáků.

e) Jiné – uveďte:

4. Připravujete si při použití písní ve Vašich hodinách pro žáky doprovodné aktivity (kromě pouhého poslechu či zpěvu písní)? (vyberte 1 z možností)

a) Ano, obvykle alespoň 3 různé aktivity.

b) Ano, obvykle 1–2 aktivity.

c) Ne, jen rozdám žákům texty písní.

5. Jaké typy aktivit při použití písní ve Vašich hodinách používáte? (vyberte 1 nebo více možností)

a) Poslech písní.

b) Zpěv písní.

c) Vyplňování vynechaných slov v textech písní (např. na základě poslechu, kontextu).

d) Otázky spojené s porozuměním textu, např. otázky typu pravda/lež.

e) Seřazování přeházených částí písně.

f) Křížovky.

g) Diskuse.

h) Aktivity spojené s psaním, např. psaní dalších veršů.

i) Jiné – uveďte:

6. Jaká je pro Vás příprava hodin s písničkami? (vyberte 1 z možností)

a) Velice náročná.

b) Spíše náročná.

c) Průměrná.

d) Spíše snadná.

e) Velice snadná.

7. Jaký vliv na jazykovou úroveň žáků má podle Vás zapojování písniček do hodin angličtiny? (vyberte 1 z možností)

a) Velice příznivý.

b) Spíše příznivý.

c) Nevím.

d) Spíše nepříznivý.

e) Nepříznivý.

f) Žádný.

8. Baví podle Vás žáky využívání písní v hodinách angličtiny? (vyberte 1 z možností)

a) Ano, vždy.

b) Obvykle ano.

c) Někdy.

d) Obvykle ne.

e) Ne, nikdy.

Appendix 7b: *Questionnaire for teachers (in English)*

Questionnaire for teachers

Dear teachers,

my name is Tereza Mikulecká and I am studying the second year of a follow-up master's studies at the Faculty of Education at Palacký University Olomouc. I would like to ask you to fill in a short questionnaire, whose results will be used in my diploma thesis on the topic of using songs to teach vocabulary in English lessons. The questionnaire is anonymous and its results will be used for the sole purpose of the thesis.

Thank you for your cooperation.

1. How often do you use songs in English lessons? (choose 1 of the options)

a) Every lesson.

b) A few times a week.

c) A few times a month.

d) A few times a year.

e) Never.

2. What do you intend to achieve by using songs during your lessons? (choose 1 or more options)

a) To improve the learners' listening skills.

b) To improve the learners' reading skills.

c) To improve the learners' speaking skills.

d) To improve the learners' writing skills.

e) To improve the learners' grammar.

f) To improve the learners' vocabulary.

g) To improve the learners' pronunciation.

h) To motivate the learners / make the lesson more interesting or enjoyable.

i) Other – specify:

3. Which aspect is the most important for you when choosing a suitable song for your lesson? (choose 1 of the options)

a) The content (lyrics) of the song.

b) The melody of the song.

c) The length of the song.

d) The preference of the learners.

e) Other – specify:

4. When using songs during your lessons, do you prepare accompanying activities for the learners (apart from mere listening to the songs or singing)? (choose 1 of the options)

a) Yes, usually at least 3 different activities.

b) Yes, usually 1 or 2 activities.

c) No, I just give lyrics of the songs to the learners.

5. Which types of activities do you use when using songs in your lessons? (choose 1 or more options)

a) Listening to the songs.

b) Singing the songs.

c) Completing the omitted words from the songs' lyrics (e. g. on the basis of listening, context).

d) Questions concerning text comprehension, e. g. true/false types of questions.

e) Ordering the shuffled parts of the song's lyrics.

f) Crosswords.

g) Discussions.

h) Activities related to writing, e. g. writing additional verses.

i) Other – specify:

6. What is the preparation of the lessons with songs like for you? (choose 1 of the options)

a) Very difficult.

b) Rather difficult.

c) Ordinary.

d) Rather easy.

e) Very easy.

7. In your opinion, what is the impact of using songs during English lessons on the learners' language level? (choose 1 of the options)

a) Very beneficial.

b) Rather beneficial.

c) I don't know.

d) Rather negative.

e) Negative.

f) None.

8. In your opinion, do learners enjoy using songs in English lessons? (choose 1 of the options)

a) Yes, always.

b) Usually yes.

c) Sometimes.

d) Usually not.

e) No, never.

Appendix 7c: *Results of the questionnaire for teachers*

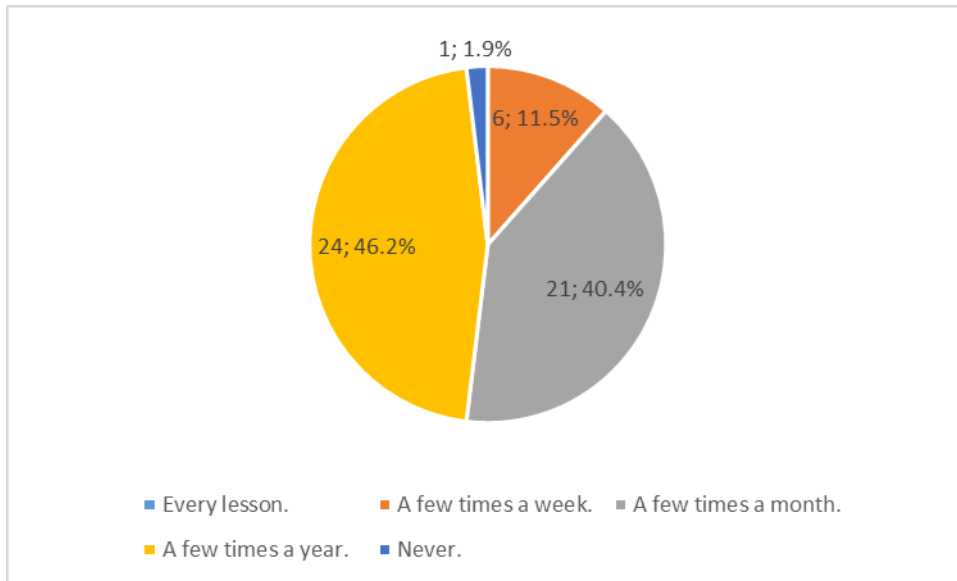Figure 13: How often do you use songs in English lessons?

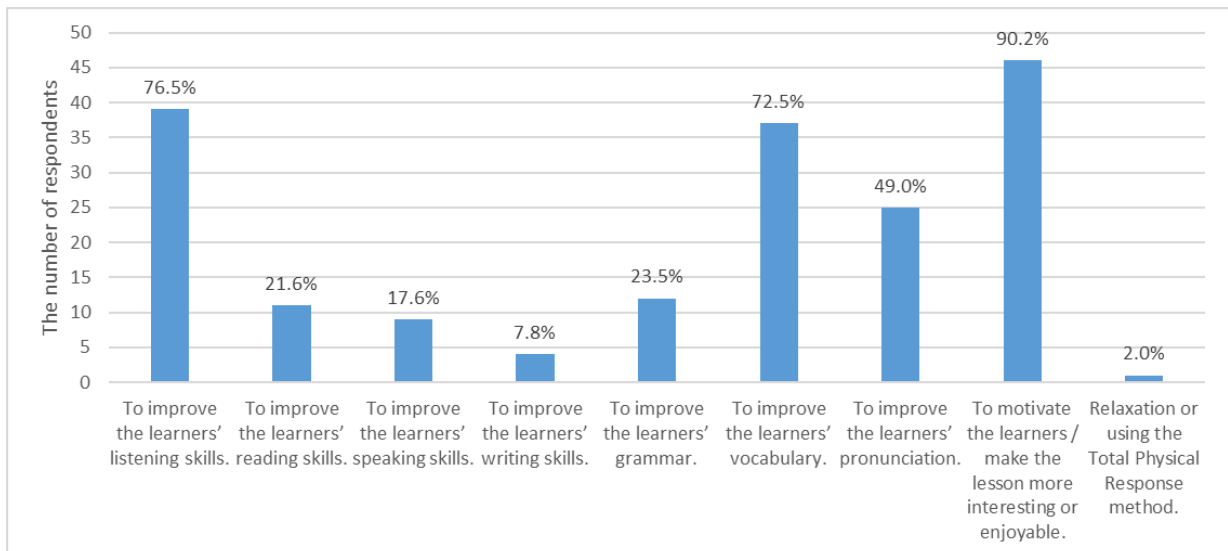Figure 14: What do you intend to achieve by using songs during your lessons?

Figure 15: Which aspect is the most important for you when choosing a suitable song for your lesson?
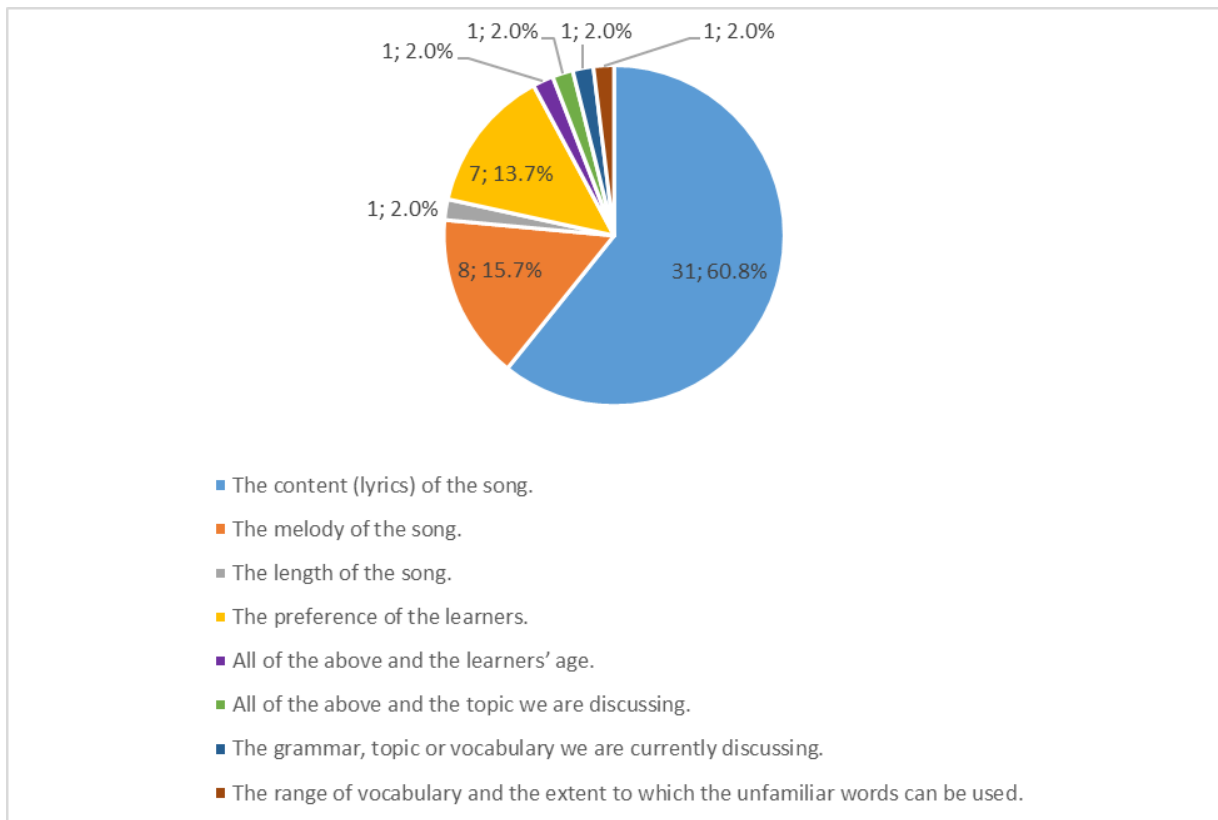

- The content (lyrics) of the song.
- The melody of the song.
- The length of the song.
- The preference of the learners.
- All of the above and the learners' age.
- All of the above and the topic we are discussing.
- The grammar, topic or vocabulary we are currently discussing.
- The range of vocabulary and the extent to which the unfamiliar words can be used.

Figure 16: When using songs during your lessons, do you prepare accompanying activities for the learners (apart from mere listening to the songs or singing)?

- Yes, usually at least 3 different activities.
- Yes, usually 1 or 2 activities.
- No, I just give lyrics of the songs to the learners.
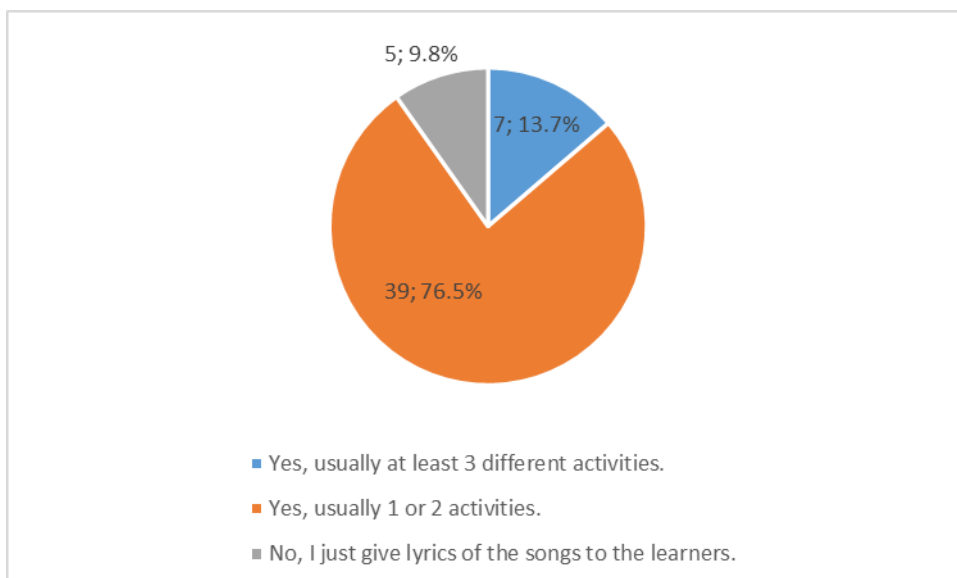
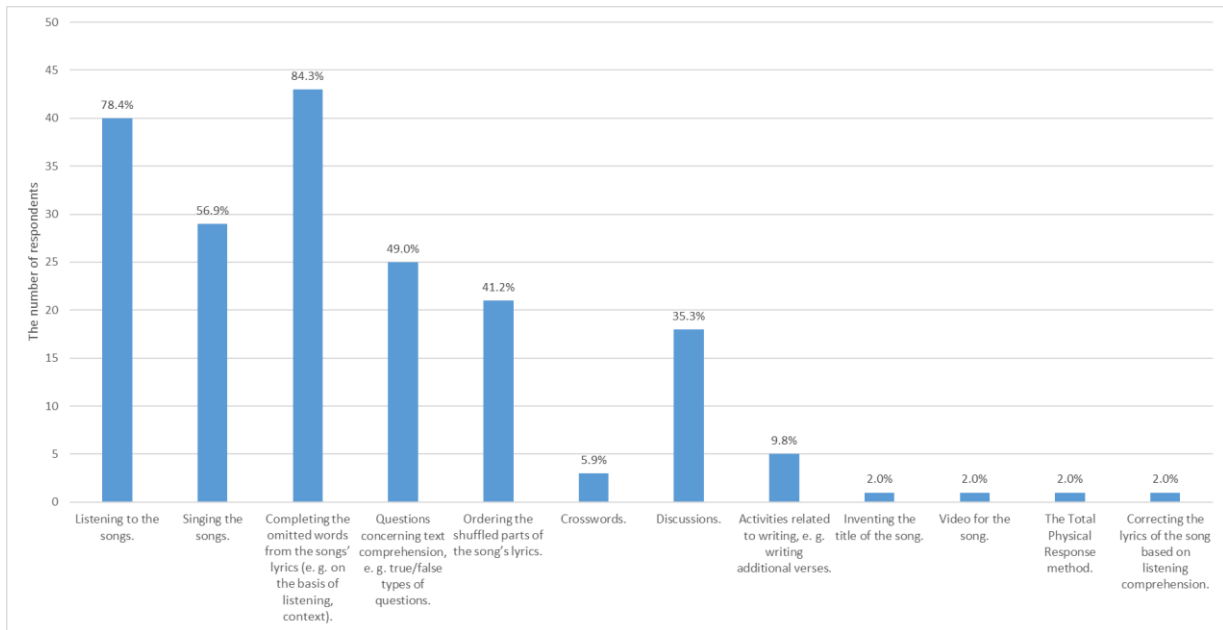Figure 17: Which types of activities do you use when using songs in your lessons?

Figure 18: What is the preparation of the lessons with songs like for you?
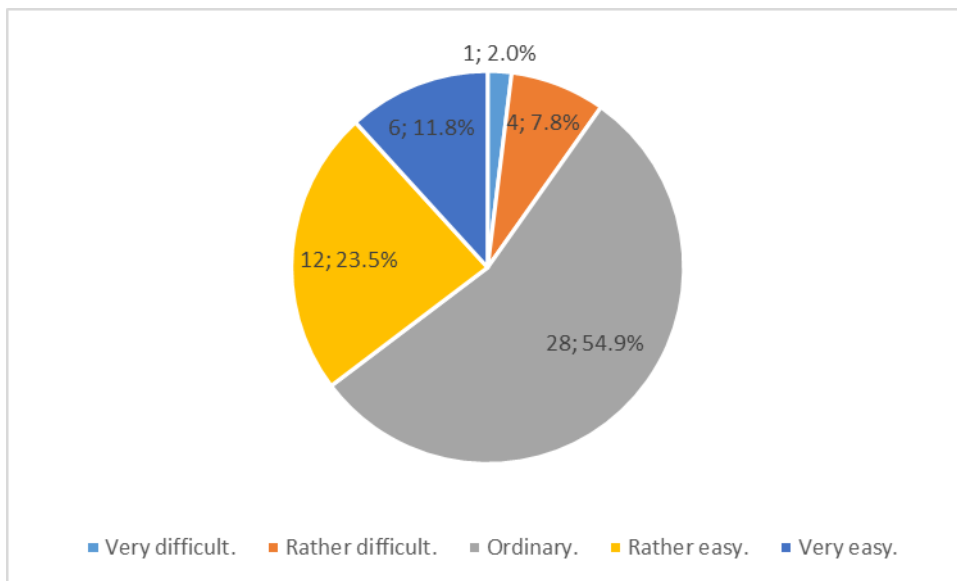
Figure 19: In your opinion, what is the impact of using songs during English lessons on the learners' language level?
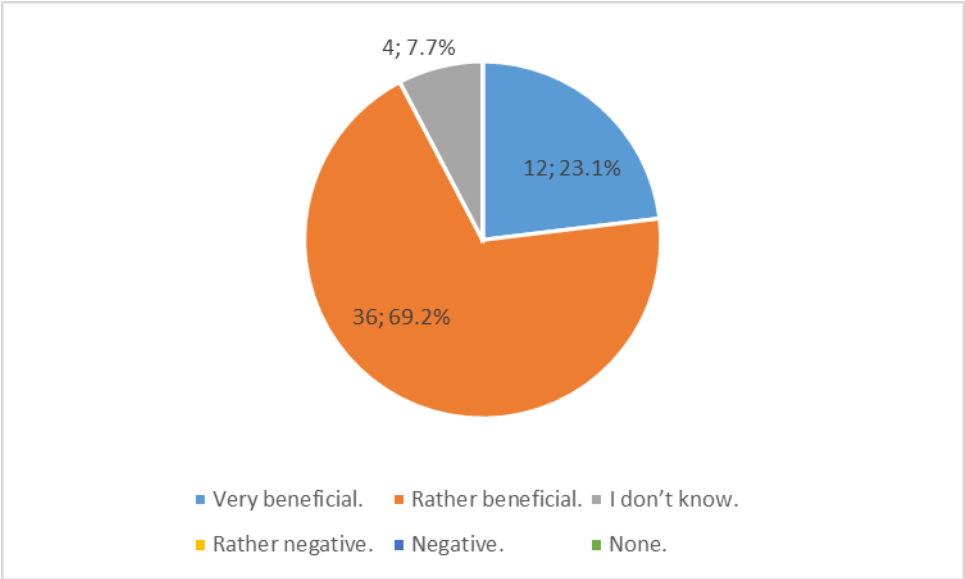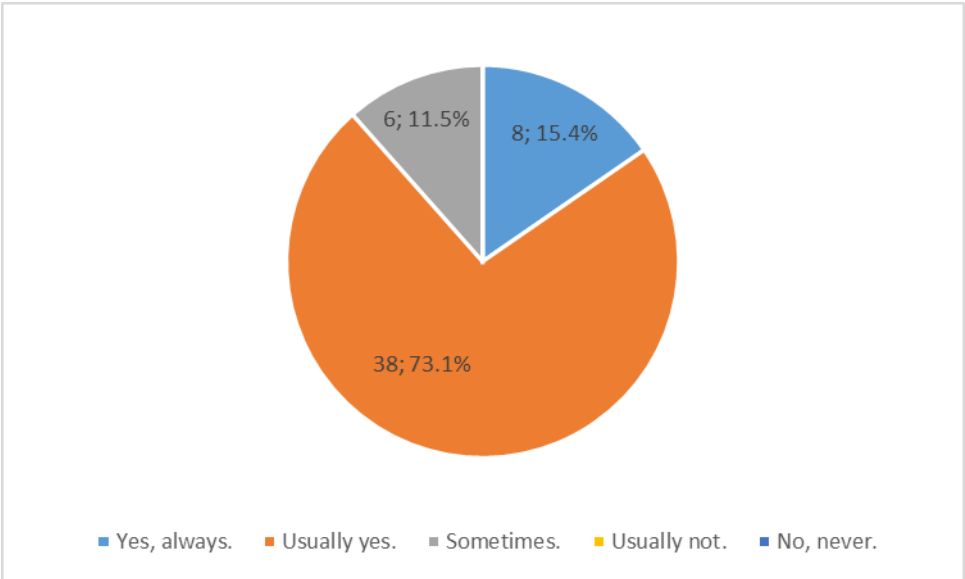

Figure 20: In your opinion, do learners enjoy using songs in English lessons?

Résumé

Diplomová práce se zabývá využitím písní jako prostředků k výuce slovní zásoby v hodinách anglického jazyka na druhém stupni základních škol. Cílem výzkumu je určit efektivitu písní při výuce anglické slovní zásoby a postoje žáků i učitelů k využívání písní v hodinách anglického jazyka. Jak bylo zjištěno analýzou testů na slovní zásobu, žáci vykazovali vyšší míru úspěšnosti po skončení hodin s písněmi než před jejich zahájením. Rovněž byl zaznamenán převážně kladný postoj žáků k těmto hodinám a jejich efektivitě. Výsledky dotazníků pro učitele anglického jazyka druhého stupně základních škol naznačily, že využívání písní je běžnou součástí přípravy hodin anglického jazyka a jednou z hlavních příčin je snaha o výuku slovní zásoby.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení	Tereza Mikulecká
Katedra nebo ústav	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce	Mgr. Blanka Babická, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby	2023

Název práce	Využití písní k výuce anglické slovní zásoby na 2. stupni základních škol
Název práce v angličtině	Using songs to teach English vocabulary at lower secondary schools
Anotace práce	Diplomová práce se zabývá písněmi a jejich využitím k výuce anglické slovní zásoby na 2. stupni základních škol. Teoretická část zkoumá význam slovní zásoby pro učení se cizímu jazyku a výhody, které v této oblasti mohou písně poskytnout. Praktická část je založena na provedení čtyř hodin s písněmi a jejich hodnocení žáky, spolu s průzkumem postojů učitelů anglického jazyka 2. stupně základních škol k využívání písní v hodinách anglického jazyka.
Klíčová slova	slovní zásoba, písně, výuka anglického jazyka, pracovní listy, testování
Anotace práce v angličtině	The diploma thesis deals with songs and their use for teaching English vocabulary at lower secondary schools. The theoretical part explores the importance of vocabulary for learning a foreign language, and the benefits that songs can offer in the area. The practical part is based on performance of four song-based lessons and their evaluation by learners, together with investigation of attitudes of lower secondary English teachers towards using songs in English lessons.
Klíčová slova v angličtině	vocabulary, songs, English language teaching, worksheets, testing
Přílohy vázané v práci	16 příloh
Rozsah práce	101 stran
Jazyk práce	Anglický jazyk