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Application of Activities for Speaking Skills
Development at Lower Secondary School

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Prohlášení

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

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, pupils at school and people in general use their mobile phones to communicate and therefore they may find it difficult to communicate in person. Pupils at school may experience lower communicative abilities or even absence of the ability to communicate and therefore struggle with speaking. The pupils experience this mainly in their mother tongue. However, they may struggle with speaking in their foreign language as well.

I have chosen the topic Application of activities for speaking skills development at lower secondary school as I have noticed, during my years of teaching English in a language club as well as at the lower secondary school, that pupils often struggle with speaking in English for multiple reasons. Therefore, I wanted to explore ways to teach them to speak in English and help the pupils develop their speaking skills as well as look into any possible problems that the pupils may struggle with when learning to speak in English.

The aim of the theoretical part of this diploma thesis is to introduce specific activities that develop speaking skills of the pupils. The theoretical part is divided into three chapters which explore the topics of speaking skills and communicative competence, teaching speaking skills and speaking activities as well as the speaking skills assessment. The topics of speaking activities and the assessment of the speaking skills are further explored in the practical part.

The practical part focuses on the application of activities developing speaking skills at a specific lower secondary school. The primary aim of the practical part is to analyse the current state of speaking activities application at the specific lower secondary school. The secondary aim is to examine the feelings of the pupils during the application of specific speaking activities.

THEORETICAL PART

1. SPEAKING SKILLS

This chapter deals with the ability to speak, with characteristics of spoken language and with the communicative competence. First, the chapter describes what it means to be able to speak in a foreign language. Further, it focuses on describing the individual characteristics of spoken language. Lastly, the chapter addresses the concept of the communicative competence.

Speaking skills belong within the group of productive language skills as it is necessary that the pupils learning the language produce the language themselves (Harmer, 2015, p. 297).

The ability to speak makes up a great part of the daily life of every individual. Thornbury claims that an average person produces tens of thousands of words every day and some may produce even more than this depending on their career. He also says that people may forget the struggle to achieve the ability to speak until they learn this ability in a foreign language (Thornbury, 2005, p. 1).

The capability to speak is often viewed as the equivalent of knowing the specific language itself (Lazaraton, 2014, pp. 103; Ur, 2012 p. 117). However, at the same time, speaking in a foreign language as a language skill is often considered the most challenging of the four language skills (Bailey & Savage, 1994, p. vii).

Even though being advanced in speaking skills is perceived as knowing the language well, the speaking skills development and training were not the focus in foreign language learning. There are different methods and approaches for teaching a foreign language but even in approaches focused on production, the spoken production was often controlled. However, with Hymes introducing his theory of communicative competence and development of the communicative language teaching approach, speaking skills have become a focus in the foreign language teaching (Savignon, 2002, p. 17; Bygate, 2018, pp. 153-155).

1.1. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Communicative competence is described as an ability to use language that is appropriate and accurate as well as an ability to be flexible while using the language (Yule, 2006, p. 169). According to Canale and Swain (1980), who adapted the theory of communicative

competence, there are four elements that create the ability to communicate in a foreign language. Within these elements there are grammatical competence, which focuses for example on accurate usage of vocabulary, sentence structure or word formation, sociolinguistic competence, which deals with appropriate social meanings or grammar in different contexts and focuses on choosing the suitable language in different social contexts, discourse competence, which deals with coherence and cohesion and strategic competence, which deals with constructing effective spoken production and also focuses on communicative strategies that help with communicative difficulties. The communicative strategies can help the learner express the meaning of their spoken production when using them. There are many different communicative strategies such as circumlocution, which essentially means that the learner uses description of the word rather than the word itself to convey the meaning, language switching, which means that the learner uses their first language to express the word, paralinguistics, which means that the learner uses gestures and miming to share the meaning with the audience and many more. (Hymes, 1971; Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 27, 29 – 31; Lazaraton, 2014, p. 104; Thornbury, 2005, pp. 29-30; Yule, 2006, pp. 169-170).

1.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE

The difficulty of being able to speak in a foreign language lies in several characteristics of the spoken language, according to Brown (2001). However, he also mentions that as these features can cause some difficulties for the learners of a foreign language, they can make the spoken production easy as well. Within the list of these characteristics, he mentions clustering as fluent spoken production is phrasal, not literal, and therefore the learners can use clustering for organizing their spoken production and making it in more fluent. Fluency can be increased by using the reduced forms, but it can make speaking for the learners more difficult at the same time. Brown also mentions colloquial language, stress, rhythm, and intonation as the examples of the features of spoken language which can make speaking hard for the learners (Brown, 2001, pp. 270-271; Brown & Lee, 2015, pp. 350-351). Huang, Acero, and Hon also mention the characteristics of spoken language and compare them with the characteristics of written language. They first speak about the *style* of spoken language and claim that spoken language can be distinguished from written language through typical grammatical and stylistic features. To give an example, they mention that number of passives

and pronouns in spoken production and the usage of noun forms and contractions can be characteristic for the spoken language (Huang et al., 2001 pp. 838-839). Richards (2008) also comments on the *style of speaking*. He mentions that the style of speaking depends for example on the role, age, or on the status of the speaker. The style used during one's speech can also reflect politeness (Richards, 2008, p. 21). Huang, Acero, and Hon further comment on other features of spoken language, the first being disfluency. Spoken production can be distinguished through a number of difficulties, which the learners have to deal with, and which may cause disfluency. These are, for instance, repetitions, corrections or filled pauses. These features are typical for spoken production, mainly for the spontaneous one (Huang et al., 2001 pp. 838-839; Richards, 2008, p. 19). As the last spoken language characteristic, the authors mention communicative prosody. Prosody deals with pauses, pitch, timing, rhythm, or the volume (Huang et al., 2001, p. 728, 840). The features of disfluency and prosody in spoken language are distinct from the features of the written and further read speech. Therefore, the spoken production is usually referred to as spontaneous speech (Huang et al., 2001, p. 840).

Spoken production occurs in real time and therefore, Thornbury calls it linear as the order of the words, phrases, and utterances (equivalent of a sentence in written language) in the speech goes one after another (Thornbury, 2005, p 2; Brown, 2001, pp. 270 – 271). Since the spoken language occurs in real time errors and mistakes can appear in spoken production. The reason for that is, that the person speaking has to process the speech in real time, 'online', as Richards calls it (Richards, 2008, p. 19). Since the individual utterances and their meanings are dependent on the meaning of the previous utterances, the spoken production is not necessarily planned. In other words, the utterance is planned in very limited time. Therefore, spoken language is spontaneous (Thornbury, 2005, p. 2). Richards (2008) agrees with Thornbury on the fact that spoken language can be unplanned. However, there are some instances where the spoken language is planned, for instance a lecture can be a case of planned spoken language (Richards, 2008, p. 19). According to Richards, spoken language also shows the roles of the speakers, the context of the speech as well as the purpose of the speech (Richards, 2008, p. 19).

2. TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS

In this chapter, the focus is on teaching the speaking skill to the learners. First, this chapter introduces principles of teaching speaking, the main goals of teaching the speaking skills as well as the problems that can occur while teaching speaking. This chapter also presents the specific activities that are often used for the speaking skills development.

It is fundamental to first distinguish between the second language teaching and the foreign language teaching as there is significant difference in these two terms and the approach to language teaching depends on whether a teacher teaches language as a foreign or a second language (Bailey, 2003, p. 54).

The term *foreign language* is understood as a language which people in the learner's country do not use for communication, for example learning English in the Czech Republic (Bailey, 2003, p. 54).

On the other hand, the term *second language* describes a language that is used for communication in the learner's country even though the learner does not communicate in that language themselves. Second language learners are usually immigrants or refugees, or students who study abroad (Bailey, 2003, p. 54).

The principles of teaching speaking mentioned in the subchapter below are first and foremost focused on the context of foreign language teaching.

2.1. APPROACHES TO TEACHING SPEAKING

According to Bailey (2004) there are 4 main approaches to teaching speaking – Grammar-translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-lingual Method, and Communicative Language Teaching Approach (Bailey, 2004, pp. 16-18). For the purpose of this diploma thesis, the terms *method* and *approach* are used interchangeably (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 85).

Grammar-translation method

Grammar-translation method aims mainly at the ability to read a literary text in a foreign language and therefore it focuses on reading and writing (Bailey, 2004, p. 16; Richards & Rogers, 2014, p. 6; Haas, 1970, p. 61). Speaking is not emphasized, and it is conducted through reading and practising grammar aloud (Bailey, 2004, pp. 16-17; Ur, 2012, p. 7;

Richards & Rogers, 2014, p. 6; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 40; Murphy, 1991, p. 52).

Direct method

Direct Method focuses on teaching speaking and listening which are practised in question-answer form. During speaking, the correct pronunciation is emphasized. The lessons are conducted in the foreign language as the method forbids the use of the mother tongue (Ur, 2012, p. 7; Bailey, 2004, p. 17; Richards & Rogers, 2014, pp. 11-12; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 51; Cordero, 1984, p. 351; Gionet, 1974, p. 18).

Audio-Lingual method

The audio-lingual method, further ALM, focuses mainly on oral skills and it aims to teach spoken language. With ALM it is believed that the foreign language has to be overlearned in order to achieve automatization in that language. Drills and repetition are important features of the ALM as well as learning by heart. (Ur, 2012, p. 6; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 70; Bailey, 2004, p. 17; Frey, 1968, p. 350; Haas, 1970, p. 61; Kirch, 1967, p. 384; Valdman, 1970, p. 314).

Communicative Language Teaching

The Communicative Language Teaching, further CLT, focuses on interacting with others (Bailey, 2004, p. 19; Harmer, 2015, p. 57; Agbatogun, 2014, p. 258; Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 61). The CLT activities usually involve an information-gap situations and therefore realistic, meaningful communication as the learners convey an information that is only known to them and not to the people they are speaking with (Harmer, 2015, p. 57-58; Bailey, 2004, p. 19; Norland & Pruet-Said, 2006, p. 18; Hendrickson, 1991, p. 197). Nunan says that the CLT focuses on fluency rather than accuracy and the meaning is more important than the form that the utterance is shared in (Nunan, 2003, p. 6-7). Norland and Pruet-Said agree and add that the focus on accuracy should be only if the errors made would prevent the speaker from conveying the meaning properly (Norland & Pruet-Said, 2006, p. 18). However, Patel and Jain say that CLT focuses on both fluency as well as accuracy from the beginning of learning a foreign language (Patel & Jain, 2008, p. 95). Finally, Harmer (2015) says that it is difficult to define the CLT approach as different people can understand it

differently and adds that CLT has been understood as an approach that highlights the communicative nature of a language (Harmer, 2015, p. 57-58).

2.2. PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING SPEAKING

Even though it is said that the ability to speak is the most challenging language skill of the four language skills, it seems that many learners aim to learn this specific language skill the most (Ur, 2012, p. 117; Richards, 2008, p. 19; Bailey, 2003, p. 64).

Fortunately, there are ways to make the speaking skills more accessible to the pupils. Penny Ur (2012) and Kathleen Bailey (2003) both introduce a set of principles which can be implemented in planning a speaking task.

It is important to set a clear purpose for a speaking activity and in addition, it is important to explain to the pupils the purpose of learning English itself (Ur, 2012, pp. 118-119; Lazaraton, 2014, p. 112).

Further, it is essential that the pupils are given an opportunity to speak in the English language lessons. According to Bailey (2003), 50 to 80 percent of the talking time in English language lessons is done by the teachers. Therefore, it is necessary for the teachers to be aware of their talking time and let the pupils talk as well. Bailey (2003) as well as Ur (2012) suggest that a suitable way to increase the pupils' talking time is to let them work in pairs or groups (Bailey, 2003, p. 55; Ur, 2012, p. 118 – 119; Lazaraton, 2014, p. 112). Penny Ur (2012) adds that pair or group work can at the same time positively affect those learners who do not want to speak in front of the whole class (Ur, 2012, p. 118-119).

Furthermore, it is useful to prepare speaking tasks which introduce an opportunity of negotiation for meaning for the pupils. The negotiation for meaning is a process in which the pupils try to understand someone else's speech as well as try to make themselves understood when they speak in a foreign language. The negotiation for meaning involves clarifying and confirming the understanding as well as checking for understanding of the meaning (Bailey, 2003, p. 55).

The teacher should also provide emphasis on fluency as well as accuracy. Bailey (2003) mentions that it is important for the teacher to emphasize that mistakes are a natural element of the learning process and therefore they should not interrupt the pupils' speaking too much only to correct their accuracy mistakes. It is essential to create tasks that practise both fields (Bailey, 2003, p. 55; Hinkel, 2006, p. 114; Eskey, 1983, p. 319).

Ur (2012) also suggests that the language used during the speaking activity should be of a lower level than the language practised in the class and the topic of the speaking activity should be a topic that is interesting for them and furthermore, the topic should motivate the pupils to speak (Ur, 2012, pp. 118 – 119; Ediger, 1975, p. 419).

Finally, Bailey mentions that the foreign language teacher should plan speaking activities to include focus on transactional and interactional speaking. These two terms are mentioned by Brown and Yule prior to Bailey, and they introduce these terms as transactional function, which focuses on an information exchange, and the interactional function, which focuses on supporting social connections, in other words communicating to achieve a social goal (Brown & Yule, 1999, pp. 10-16; Richards, 2008, p. 21; Bailey, 2003, p. 56).

Furthermore, Richards elaborates on the idea of Brown and Yule. According to Richards, there are three key aspects of speaking skills which he defines as functions of speaking. These are talk as interaction, talk as transaction, and talk as performance (Richards, 2008, p. 21).

Talk as interaction focuses on interactions that have mainly a social function, for instance a small talk or greetings. Features of talk as interaction are usage of generic words, conversational conventions, being formal or informal or showing a degree of politeness as well as giving feedback. In the context of teaching, talk as interaction is difficult skill to teach as it is complicated, multi-faceted ability to be able to interact in a conversation. According to Richards, it is best to teach this skill through real-life situations to demonstrate the important features of interacting, for instance opening and closing a conversation or reacting to other speakers (Richards, 2008, p. 29).

Talk as transaction focuses on sharing information and not on the participants who share it. The speakers who engage in the conversation focus on making themselves understood by the listeners and therefore use communicative strategies, repetitions, and comprehension checks. It is essential to focus on fluency and not accuracy. Typical classroom activities suitable for talk as transaction are discussions or problem-solving tasks (Richards, 2008, p. 24-26). Other activities can be group work tasks, information-gap tasks, or role-plays as these provide room for practising sharing and receiving information. (Richards, 2008, p. 30-31).

Talk as performance focuses on speaking in public and sharing the information in front of an audience, for instance public announcements. In the context of language teaching, an example would be a classroom presentation. Teaching performing requires a different

approach then interactional and transactional functions. It is necessary to prepare for the talk as performance and strategies used for understanding written text can be used here (Jones, 1996, p. 17). The important features of the talk as performance are focus on the listeners as well as on conveying the information, concentrating on the form of the speech and on accuracy. The speech is usually a monologue and it uses language that is usually presented in written texts. In the school environment, this approach is presented and taught through model situations, storytelling, presentations, written texts, or recordings. The learners further analyse these materials and based on those, they later plan their own texts which are presented in the classroom afterwards (Richards, 2008, p. 35-36).

2.3. MAIN GOALS

According to Penny Ur (2012) there are two main goals in teaching the ability to speak in foreign language. The first goal is to lead the learners to actual speaking. It is important that the learners spend as much time speaking in the foreign or second language as possible. The problem with reaching this goal could be that there would be too much of the teacher talking time, time spent with classroom organization or pauses throughout the learners' spoken production (Ur, 2012, p. 117).

The second goal is that the learners use acceptable level of the language. This means that the learners are able to produce language that is understandable and relevant, and the level of accuracy of the spoken production is high enough that the meaning is shared and understood by the listeners. This means that the speech does not have to be mistake-free (Ur, 2012, pp. 117-118).

2.4. PROBLEMS

On the other hand, it is important to mention, that some problems may appear throughout the speaking skill teaching and learning.

The ability to speak is connected to the fact that speaking is an activity that requires the learners to deal with an audience of other learners in the classroom and also the teacher. Some learners can experience shyness or even anxiety due to fear of being criticised for their mistakes, lack of practise and automaticity or fear of the attention that is connected to speaking in front of the class (Ur, 2012, p. 118; Thornbury, 2005, p. 28).

To help the pupils with their shyness, possibly anxiety, the teacher should prepare speaking activities that can be completed in smaller groups or even in pairs. Therefore, the attention brought to the speaker is smaller (Ur, 2012, pp. 118-119).

Learners of the foreign language may sometimes struggle with finding the correct vocabulary to use while speaking in a foreign language, as the knowledge of the foreign language is often not as wide as their knowledge of their mother tongue. The learners may also struggle to speak in the foreign language because they share their first language with the class. Therefore, it can feel strange and not easy for them to communicate together in a different language than their mother tongue. There can be occasions when the use of their first language can be beneficial for dealing with a specific vocabulary problem. However, it is important for the learners to use the foreign language as much as possible and not use their mother tongue in the class as often to be able to practise the foreign language enough. Lastly, on the topic of having words to say, learners can also experience difficulties with adding something meaningful to the conversation. Therefore, it is needed to choose an interesting topic that the learners will feel they can contribute to with their opinion (Ur, 2012, p. 118).

To resolve the problem of what to say and how to say it, the teacher should plan the speaking activity in a way that the learners do not need to use difficult language. Preferably, the speaking activity should be based on a lower level of the foreign language vocabulary and the knowledge of the foreign language in general. Therefore, the learners can be fluent, and they can easily recollect the vocabulary and grammar that is needed. The teacher should also carefully choose the topic of the speaking activity. The topic should be interesting for the participants, and it should make them motivated to speak about it. It is also recommended that the teacher shares the purpose of the speaking activity as the learners need to understand that it is important to speak a lot in the foreign language and it is advisable that the teacher informs the learners about a success criteria of a particular speaking activity as well (Ur, 2012, p. 119; Lazaraton, 2014, p. 112).

Another problem that can occur during the speaking skills teaching is that some of the learners participate less in the speaking activities. It is possible that there are learners in the class, who are more dominant and therefore they speak more than other learners. Additionally, the learners need time to share their opinion. However, if there is a big group of learners, not all the learners have enough talking time to be able to share their ideas and opinions (Ur, 2012, p. 118).

To solve this problem, the learners could be divided into smaller groups or into pairs. Therefore, the talking time of each learner would increase (Ur, 2012, pp. 118-119).

2.5. ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILL

This chapter describes the individual speaking activities that can be applied in English language classrooms to develop speaking skill of the pupils.

2.5.1. ROLE-PLAYS

Role-plays are activities where the pupils are given a specific role that they are supposed to act out (Bailey, 2003, p. 57; Ur, 2012, p. 123). This speaking activity is usually acted out in pairs. However, more pupils can participate in a role-play activity too (Ur, 2012, p. 126). Role-plays are suitable means of connecting real-life language of real-life situations with the classroom environment (Thornbury, 2005, p. 96; Ur, 2012, p. 126; Harmer, 2015, p. 392; Bailey, 2003, p. 57). Further, role-plays give the pupils space to be creative in their speaking (Ching, 2019, p. 173). For role-play activities, it is useful to have the roles prepared prior to the lesson. The role descriptions can be provided in a form of handouts or role cards which are distributed in the class. These materials describe the individual characters in the role-play, for example their gender, age, appearance, their task, their feelings, personality traits etc. (Ching, 2019, p. 173; Harmer, 2015, p. 392). It is necessary to provide the pupils with a detailed description of the situation that the activity is focused on. Otherwise, the pupils could find the role-play activity rather complicated (Harmer, 2015, p. 392).

According to Jeremy Harmer (2015) there are three advantages of role-play. The first one is that role-plays can be engaging for the pupils and therefore motivating. Further, role-plays can be beneficial for shy pupils who can sort of 'hide' behind their character during speaking. Lastly, pupils can find themselves using broader range of language due to the connection with the real-life situations (Harmer, 2015, p. 393). Thornbury (2005) and Ching (2019) agree that some pupils may not feel confident in English lessons being themselves, therefore role-play can be suitable for them. (Thornbury, 2005, p. 97-98; Ching, 2019, p. 173). On the contrary, Thornbury (2005) also argues that there can be pupils who find it difficult to perform or improvise in front of their classmates (Thornbury, 2005, p. 97-98).

Penny Ur (2012) mentions that there are factors which may affect the role-play activity being successful. The success of the role-play activity can be affected by the teacher's instructions, which should be clear and thorough, by the language required for the activity, which should be unproblematic to produce, by the teacher's contribution to practising and rehearsing the activity with the pupils and lastly, by the teacher being passionate about the activity (Ur, 2012, p. 126).

2.5.2. SIMULATIONS

Simulations are speaking activities similar to role-plays. However, an important feature of simulations is the omission of specific roles (Ur, 2012, p. 126). In a simulation activity, the pupils perform as themselves even though the situation is simulated. The situations used in simulation are those which could potentially happen to the pupils, for instance being stuck in an elevator, making a various range of phone calls, going shopping etc. (Thornbury, 2005, p. 98; Bailey, 2003, p. 57). Ching (2019) mentions that a simulation speaking activity is a practise for real life (Ching, 2019, p. 173). During the simulation activity, the teacher can provide props and different materials that help simulate the real-life situations (Bailey, 2003, p. 57).

2.5.3. DIALOGUES

A dialogue is an activity that may seem outdated as the pupils are supposed to learn a dialogue by heart. However, this activity is based on one essential feature of spoken language which is being dialogical and conversational, and it is very effective in developing fluency in speaking (Ur, 2012, p. 125; Thornbury, 2005, p. 72). Dialogue is a type of an activity which is conducted in pairs. It can either be led by the teacher and their pupil to demonstrate a model dialogue for the rest of the class or by two pupils. There are two types of pupils' pair work. First one is closed pair work. During closed pair work, two pupils lead dialogue while the rest of the pupils are divided into pairs and perform their dialogues at the same time. In this case, the teacher observes the speaking activity as well as corrects if necessary and overall monitors the activity (Thornbury, 2005, p. 72-73). On the other hand, there is open pair work. In this case, two pupils lead a dialogue, and the rest of their classmates observe. According to Thornbury (2005), open pair work can be beneficial to the pupils as a

step between the model dialogue between the teacher and a pupil and the closed pair work (Thornbury, 2005, p. 73).

Application of a dialogue in the classroom is an efficient way to experience and obtain newly learnt features of a foreign language (Thornbury, 2005, p. 73). With the usage of a dialogue, it is beneficial to create learning conditions that are challenging for the pupils as well as safety providing. This means that the dialogue should not be too easy nor too difficult as both of these situations could lead to the loss of motivation in the pupils. A dialogue that would be too complicated could lead to too much stress for the pupils (Thornbury, 2005, p. 73).

As the dialogue activity requires the pupils to learn the dialogue by heart, it is useful to help the pupils remember and know the utterances through different strategies, for instance having useful phrases written on the board, providing essential terms in a form of cards, or using visuals to help the pupils remember the dialogue (Thornbury, 2005, p. 73-75). To make the dialogue activity more pleasing for the pupils, the teacher can ask the pupils to practise the dialogue in different ways, for instance to practise it while whispering or while shouting, to practise it while acting happy or angry etc. (Ur, 2012, p. 122; Harmer, 2015, p. 389).

Dialogues are usually scripted, and the script can be provided for example by the authors of a coursebook or even by the pupils themselves. Due to them being scripted, dialogues are also usually performed by the pupils and therefore it is necessary to provide the pupils with sufficient time to practise given dialogue (Harmer, 2015, p. 388; Thornbury, 2005, p. 73). Thornbury (2005) mentions that giving the pupils enough time to practise the dialogue has positive effect on the amount of stress that they are in (Thornbury, 2005, p. 73). To further lessen the stress, the teacher should carefully consider who should be the first one to perform the dialogue in front of the whole class. Harmer (2015) suggests that choosing a pair of pupils who are shy can create nervous and not supportive atmosphere in the classroom (Harmer, 2015, p. 388-389).

2.5.4. CONVERSATIONS

Conversation, in different words casual talk or casual chat, is the most fundamental feature of spoken language. Even so, there were times, specifically during the Audio-Lingual Method era, when it was believed that casual conversation has no benefit for the learners of

a foreign language as the learners may not be ready for it. It was believed that it is important to first learn the language patterns during speaking drills and only after that, the learner is able to speak. On the other hand, there is an opinion, that a conversation is an environment for learning and not a result of learning a foreign language (Thornbury, 2005, p. 105).

The learners view the ability to carry a conversation as the main need when learning a foreign language. Due to this fact, there is focus on specialised conversation classes. These classes are also supposed to balance out the number of more traditional classes which are focused more on grammar (Thornbury, 2005, p. 105 – 106).

Planning a lesson with the application of a conversation as the speaking activity can be complicated as the conversation activity itself is a spontaneous task. This can be resolved by setting a topic for the lesson and therefore for the speaking activity itself. It can be helpful to create a classroom environment where the pupils want to share and talk about their experience and opinions as well. Further, prior to the casual conversation activity, the teacher can plan activities which focus on individualization to each of the pupils and at the same time they are organized and structured and can be a source of an inspiration for the conversation (Thornbury, 2005, p. 106).

2.5.5. DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES

For the purposes of this diploma thesis, debates and discussions are discussed in one chapter based on the categorization in *The practise of English Language Teaching* written by Jeremy Harmer (2015). Harmer categorizes discussions and debates into one category which he summarizes as the category of discussions. Therefore, this diploma thesis will discuss these two types of speaking activities as discussions when describing them in general (Harmer, 2015, p. 389 – 391).

According to Anne Lazaraton (2014), discussion is an activity that is currently one of the more popular speaking activities in the English Language classrooms and if the discussion is well organized, it can be an effective activity developing pupils' speaking skill (Lazaraton, 2014, p. 112; Ching, 2019, p. 171).

Discussion is an activity which can show a wide variety of forms that it can be held in. It can be organized as a whole-class activity or a group or pair work activity. It can be formal as well as informal (Harmer, 2015, p. 389). Due to its variability, it is necessary to cautiously plan and organize the activity. When planning a discussion activity, the teacher should be

aware of their pupils' ability to interact in their discussion groups, they should provide the pupils with language that is required for communicating opinions, agreement and disagreement or clarification of the pupils' point of view. Further, the teacher should carefully plan the groups for a discussion, and they should consider for example the talkativeness or the language level of the pupils (Lazaraton, 2014, p. 112).

A discussion is based on a specific topic. The topic of a specific discussion should be engaging and interesting for the pupils and it should trigger the pupils to discuss the topic easily (Thornbury, 2005, p. 102; Ching, 2019, p. 171). The pupils should be told what issue they are supposed to discuss, the reason for discussing it and possible result they should expect (Lazaraton, 2014, p. 112; Ching, 2019, p. 171). Another feature of a successful discussion is that there is enough of talking time provided for every pupil. Therefore, it is important that the teacher carefully observes the discussion and does not allow only the stronger, more talkative pupils to contribute to the topic (Ching, 2019, p. 171).

The pupils who are supposed to engage in a discussion should first familiarize themselves with the topic of the discussion. That can be accomplished through reading or listening to a passage that is focused on the topic that is going to be discussed by the pupils (Lazaraton, 2014, p. 112). The pupils should be given some time to carefully prepare for the discussion and they should be allowed to research useful vocabulary needed for the activity (Ching, 2019, p. 171).

Pyramid discussion is a variation of a discussion. During a pyramid discussion, there are multiple discussions happening at the same time. The pupils are given a topic to discuss and at first, they work in pairs. They are supposed to agree on an outcome and be able to comment on their choice. Further, two pairs work together, and they discuss their outcomes from the first round and their task is to agree on one shared outcome and be able to explain their choice. In the next round, two groups of four work together and their task is the same as in the previous rounds. Lastly, the main goal of this activity is to have the whole class agree on one shared opinion and be able to explain the reasons for that opinion (Ching, 2019, p. 172; Thornbury, 2005, p. 103).

Another variation of a discussion is a Balloon debate. This is a game where there is a hot-air balloon overloaded with people. The passengers are in danger as the balloon could fall, unless one of the people on board leaves the balloon. The pupils take on roles of famous people and they try to figure out who should be the one to leave the balloon and who, on the

other hand, should survive. They should be able to justify their opinions (Harmer, 2015, p. 390; Thornbury, 2005, p. 103).

Another form of a discussion is based on discussion cards. The pupils are divided into groups, and they are given a set of cards with various statements from the teacher. All the statements are connected to a topic that is chosen prior to the activity. One pupil from the group picks up a card and reads the statement out loud. Afterwards, the pupils in the group discuss the statement on the card. They are given as much time as they need. Once they finish the discussion over the first statement, they can select the next card. They are able to move on from a specific statement if they find it not interesting for them. If there are any fast finishers, they can create a summary of their opinions. However, it is not necessary to discuss all the cards to be successful in this activity (Thornbury, 2005, p. 102).

Brainstorming is also considered a variation of a discussion activity. It is a usually short as well as informal activity and it can be used for many reasons. It is an activity where the pupils are supposed to generate as many ideas as possible. It is useful for example as a preparation task for a whole-class discussion on a specific topic (Harmer, 2015, p. 390; Bailey, 2003, p. 329).

2.5.6. PRESENTATIONS

Presentation is a type of prepared speech activity (Harmer, 2015, p. 391). The activity is a suitable way for the pupils to prepare for speaking in real-life situations (Thornbury, 2005, p. 94). A variation of a presentation activity is a group presentation. There is a benefit in organizing group presentations. It is an opportunity to let all of the pupils in the class have their talking time (Lazaraton, 2014, p. 113).

Presentation activity has many typical features. The pupils prepare their speech before presenting it. It is useful for the pupils to create notes or useful phrases that can help them during their presentation. Penny Ur (2012) even suggests that the pupils may learn the notes by heart (Ur, 2012, p. 127; Harmer, 2015, p. 391). However, it is important for the pupils not to learn the whole presentation as a script. It is not the goal of presenting something to know the full presentation by heart. Further, a text learnt by heart could seem uninteresting to the listeners (Harmer, 2015, p. 391; Ur, 2012, p. 128).

It is also suitable for the pupils to practise the presentation in front of a small group of classmates prior to presenting it in front of the whole class. The teacher should be able to

help their pupils during the process of preparing and rehearsing their presentations as well as helping them with the multimedia part of the presentation such as PowerPoint, video, or audio elements (Harmer, 2015, p. 391; Lazaraton, 2014, p. 113).

Using a presentation as a speaking activity in a language class can serve as a good opportunity for the pupils to evaluate their classmates. Peer evaluation during a presentation is also a suitable way to make the pupils listen to the presentation carefully. It is important to agree on the criteria that the feedback will be based on. The feedback can be provided by the pupils as well as by the teacher. Nonetheless, it is important that the presenters are provided with feedback and therefore, they are able to reflect on and analyse their performance (Harmer, 2015, p. 391; Lazaraton, 2014, p. 113).

Penny Ur categorizes presentations into three categories based on length (Ur, 2012, p. 126-127). The first category is a short presentation. It is suitable for pupils who are beginners in the field of presenting. The short presentation does not have to be longer than three minutes and, according to Ur, even a one-minute-long presentation is a sufficient one for the pupils who are not experienced in presenting anything (Ur, 2012, p. 126-127). Suitable short presentation type of activity can be for instance *Show and tell*. This presentation activity is focused on pupils talking about an object that is important to them. It can be conducted through answering questions or letting the pupils talk by themselves. The pupils can use their notes. However, the speech should not be scripted (Ur, 2012, p. 127; Thornbury, 2005, p. 94). A variation of *Show and tell* is *Did you read about...?* which is a presentation activity where the pupils talk about something that interested them in media. Other short presentation activities are *Describe* which is focused on pupils describing a person in a photograph and, *About me* where the pupils talk about themselves and their hobbies, interests, family etc. (Thornbury, 2005, p. 94; Ur, 2012, p. 127).

Next category is medium-length presentation. This type should be five to ten minutes long and the pupils can provide visuals to support their speech. The activities that can be viewed as medium-length presentations are narratives, instructions, and recommendations. Narratives are focused on telling a joke, an urban legend, an anecdote etc. The pupils can support their speech with visuals. During presenting instructions, the pupils present to the pupils how to accomplish a specific task that they are good at. They can also support their instructions with visuals. Lastly, during recommending something, the pupils choose, for example, a book, or a film and focus on giving reasons why they enjoyed it. Further they can also mention the reasons why their classmates would like it (Ur, 2012, p. 127).

Last category mentioned by Ur (2012) is the long presentation field. This type is advanced, and the presentation is usually 15 minutes long at minimum. In this type of presentation, there has to be a structure which consists of the introduction, the main part and the concluding part which includes a summary. An information-focused presentation is a type of long presentation which focuses on providing an information to the listeners. It is usually based on research and the pupils who present it may provide visuals to support the presentation. Presenting an argument can be another purpose of a long presentation. In this case, the pupils focus on various areas of interest, for instance politics, education etc. They are supposed to present a case with arguments for and against the claim of their presentation and also provide their point of view (Ur, 2012, p. 127). Other examples of long presentation are an academic presentation and a business presentation (Thornbury, 2005, p. 94).

2.5.7. COMMUNICATIVE TASKS

Communicative tasks are based on the idea that regular practise of a language feature helps the pupils to automatize the feature. However, for the practise to be effective, it is necessary to distract the pupils from focusing too much on accuracy and number of grammar rules and instead, focus on fluency. Furthermore, the focus on fluency prepares the pupils for real-life communication (Thornbury, 2005, p. 79). Therefore, the goal of communicative tasks is to have the pupils speak as fluently as possible (Harmer, 2015, p. 389). There are features that describe a communicative task. The tasks happen in real time, the pupils achieve an outcome through the language, the outcome is not easily predictable as the speaking interaction is unpredictable, the pupils are not forbidden to use any language and the pupils need to listen to the speaker in order to communicate (Thornbury, 2005, p. 79).

As the aim is developing fluency and not focusing mainly on accuracy, it is essential to shift the pupils' attention from factual knowledge to sharing information (Thornbury, 2005, p. 79). There are certain ways to shift the attention of the pupils from focusing on being accurate, for instance limiting the time that is set for the task, adding an element of competition or setting a goal outside of the speaking process itself, for instance buying something, winning an argument etc. (Thornbury, 2005, p. 79, 82).

An essential communicative task is the information-gap activity. A characteristic feature of the information-gap activity is that there is a certain gap in the knowledge of the pupils, a missing information that they need to acquire during the speaking activity (Thornbury, 2005,

p. 80; Ching, 2019, p. 414). To give an example, one of the pupils needs to describe a picture in detail in order to have their partner draw it (*Describe and draw*), pupils have to communicate in order to spot differences between two pictures, one of the pupils has directions and has to communicate to navigate their classmate or they have to communicate in order to solve a puzzle etc. (Harmer, 2015, p. 389; Bailey, 2003, p. 56).

An advanced variation of the information-gap activity is a jigsaw activity. The jigsaw activity involves two and more pupils who have the knowledge of a piece of information that someone else needs. An example of a jigsaw activity is that there are two pupils who need to plan a trip via train to a foreign country, but only one of them has the train timetable and the other one has the map of the country (Bailey, 2003, p. 56; Thornbury, 2005, p. 81).

Television and radio games can be a successful way to introduce a communicative game in the lesson and can provide fluency in the pupils' speaking. The games that are suitable for a classroom environment can be *Twenty questions* where the class is divided into teams. There is a chairperson who thinks of an object and the goal is for the team to figure out what the object is using only yes/no questions. Another television-based activity can be an improvisation game where the pupils are secretly given different roles that their classmates have to uncover through the conversation (Harmer, 2015, p. 389).

Lastly, there is the information-gap race which adds a competing element to the task. It is based on the information-gap activity. However, the pupils are divided into teams that compete in acquiring the information that they lack. For this type of activity, the Describe and draw activity is suitable. The pupils are divided into teams and each team chooses a classmate who will be drawing. The pupils chosen step to the board, and they should not be able to see a visual that the teacher shows to the rest of the pupils in the teams. The pupils are then supposed to describe the visual to their classmate at the board who is supposed to draw it as fast as possible (Thornbury, 2005, p. 82-83).

2.5.8. DRILLS AND CHANTS

Drilling activities are focused on repeating and imitating phrases and utterances. Drills are mainly focused on practising gaining control over one's speaking. Practising the control of speaking is a necessary part of achieving it. The main benefit of these activities is that it can emphasize elements of the speech that pupils would not notice on their own. However, it is not suitable nor beneficial to have the whole speech drilled. Drilling activities can be

also used to memorize new information and to move the information into long-term memory as the information is repeated multiple times and therefore it can be effectively memorized. Learners can also increase their fluency through repeating the utterances (Thornbury, 2005, p. 64).

Repetition can be implemented into a lesson through multiple techniques. Drilling is one of them and it is based on listening to a recording of a spoken production, usually a dialogue. The pupils listen to the recording, they try to understand it and afterwards, they are given the speech in a written form. Teacher plays the recording again, but this time, they also stop it multiple times for the pupils to repeat the specific utterances (Thornbury, 2005, p. 64).

Another technique to achieve control through repetition is practising through chants. This technique is focused on utterances within a specific context. The pupils are supposed to repeat short utterances and follow a specific rhythm. The chunks of speech may rhyme and therefore may be memorized better (Thornbury, 2005, p. 66).

Lastly, there are milling activities. These activities are focused on practise through repetition in the communicative context. Milling activities are often based on a questionnaire-like materials. The pupils are given a pre-planned set of questions, and they try to complete them through asking their classmates. The pupils repeat the questions throughout the milling activity. The questions are not the same, but there is always a specific pattern repeated and therefore practised in the activity. Suitable question can be *Would you ever...?*, suitable activity can be *Find Someone Who...* (Thornbury, 2005, p. 67; Harmer, 2015, p. 392).

2.5.9. STORYTELLING

The ability to tell a story is viewed as an essential part of language use and people often use storytelling in their everyday lives. The benefit of storytelling in the classroom is the focus on repetition. Pupils can have their favourite story and they can re-tell it multiple times. With repetition, they can improve their speaking skills and every time they tell the story, they can tell it better and better (Harmer, 2015, p. 393).

Storytelling has been often used in the language classroom for practising speaking. However, it was based on fictional storytelling or telling a story based on a set of visuals. Nowadays, the storytelling is more focused on the pupils' personal stories, rather than the fictional ones (Thornbury, 2005, p. 96).

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE SPEAKING SKILLS

This chapter focuses on the assessment of the speaking skills. It describes the specific activities that are suitable for assessing the spoken production of the learners as well as the principles that the assessment of the speaking skill should be based on.

Assessment of the spoken production of the learners can be quite difficult (Ur, 2012, p.180; Brown & Yule, 1999, p. 102; Thornbury, 2005, pp. 124-125). The reason for that is, that often the foreign language tests are not focused on the speaking skills and contain only those components that assess writing, listening, and reading skills. It is due to the fact that those three skills mentioned above can be assessed through written exercises, therefore the full assessment can be conducted via a written test. Written test that includes no speaking cannot sufficiently serve as a type of speaking skill assessment tool. In the written tests, there can be exercises focused on speaking. However, these are mainly focused on the pronunciation of certain words and deal with sound recognition. This type of a speaking exercise may be useful in specific situations. However, it is not that often that a learner experiences a situation where the understanding of the individual words without any context is needed (Brown & Yule, 1999, p. 102).

The assessment of speaking skills in a form of written test is not sufficient. It is important to test speaking skill through speaking (Thornbury, 2005, p. 125). However, the issue with the assessment of speaking skills is that the procedure can be quite time-consuming. In addition, it is difficult to set unified criteria for the spoken language assessment (Thornbury, 2005, pp. 124-125; Brown & Yule, 1999, p. 103, Ur, 2012, p. 180; Lazaraton, 2014, p. 111). Nonetheless, it is wise to include specialised speaking skill testing activities as these activities are quite similar to the speaking activities used for practise. For that reason, the testing activities do not have to disorganize the speaking skills practise in the classroom (Thornbury, 2005, p. 125).

3.1. ACTIVITIES FOR SPEAKING SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Further, there are possible speaking skills activities suitable for speaking skill assessment introduced and described.

3.1.1. INTERVIEWS

The first activity, that can be used for testing speaking skills in the school environment is an interview. An interview is a type of conversation that is held between two people. In the case of assessment activity, the conversation is usually conducted between the learner and the teacher. However, it is necessary that the teacher is the interviewer and assessor at the same time which can be difficult for the teacher.

An interview can be easy to prepare. While the interview is happening, it is possible to give the rest of the class an individual task focused on a different skill. An interview is a suitable assessment activity for daily life communication and therefore it can be a reliable proof of learners' speaking ability. In addition, the interview as an activity for speaking skills assessment can serve to test listening comprehension as well (Ur, 2012, p. 180; Thornbury, 2005, p. 125; Harmer, 2015, 415; Ching, 2019, 157).

3.1.2. GROUP AND PAIR DISCUSSIONS

Another activity that can be used for a speaking skills assessment is a discussion. Discussions can be held in pairs or in small or large groups. Therefore, this particular activity can be used to assess more learners at the same time. It is also easier for the teacher as their purpose in this activity is to listen and assess the speaking. Even though the benefit of this activity is timesaving, there can be a problem with the learner talking time. The more dominant learners can talk more while the less communicative, yet skilful learners can have shorter talking time. It is necessary that the teacher leads the discussion and therefore the learners can participate equally in the discussion. During a discussion, the learners express their own opinions to a topic that is chosen prior to the discussion being held (Ur, 2012, p. 181; Thornbury, 2005, p. 126; Ching, 2019, 157).

3.1.3. ROLE-PLAY

Role-play can also be applied as a way to assess the speaking skills of the learners. The role-play topic should be focused on everyday life situations, and it should not require any advanced acting skills. There can be written data provided to the learners and the learners

can base their speaking parts on the data given. However, in this case, the test is no longer focused only on speaking, but it becomes partly a reading test (Thornbury, 2005, p. 126).

3.1.4. DESCRIPTION

Describing something, for instance a picture, is a type of assessment suitable especially for younger learners or for learners who just started learning a foreign language. The learner is given a picture that they did not see prior to the speaking skill assessment, and they are supposed to describe it in detail. The learner can be given a set of pictures as well. In this case, the learner is supposed to find any similarities in the pictures as well as possible differences and speak about them. This type of assessment is easier for the teacher as they do not have to participate in any conversation, and they can focus only on the learner's performance (Ur, 2012, p. 181; Harmer, 2015, p. 415).

3.1.5. PRESENTATIONS

A presentation is another type of activity which is suitable for speaking skill assessment. IN this case, the learner prepares a longer speech focused on a topic that was chosen prior to presenting. It can be presented in a form of advanced description or an explanation. However, there is a possibility that the learner learns the speech by heart and therefore it is difficult to assess their ability to deliver an unplanned improvised speech. There may be a way to prevent the learners from learning a presentation by heart by choosing a topic and giving the learner a limited time to prepare, for instance 5 minutes. Further, once prepared, the learner delivers a short presentation of the topic, and the teacher is able to assess the ability to form a spontaneous speech. This activity is not that difficult for the teacher, as they do not have to engage in the conversation. They simply listen to the learner and can fully focus on their speech and further assess it (Ur, 2012, p. 181).

PRACTICAL PART

1. RESEARCH METHODS

The data in the practical part of this diploma thesis is based on three research methods – an observation, an interview, and a questionnaire. These 3 research methods were chosen to provide objective and broad set of data.

1.1. OBSERVATION

An observation is a method used for data collection in the pedagogy research. It is viewed as a tool for observing meaningful situations or people's behaviour (Průcha et al., 2001; Chráska, 2007, p. 151). The observation can be classified as long or short-term. While the short-term observation usually lasts for 1 teaching unit, the long-term observation can last for multiple years. Further, the observer can observe the observed item directly in direct observation or they can work with people testimonies about the observed item (Chráska, 2007, p. 151).

1.2. INTERVIEW

An interview is a research method that is based on a set of prepared questions which the interviewer asks the respondent. The respondent provides their answers in spoken form. There are three categories of interviews – structured, semi-structured and unstructured. The structured interview consists of carefully prepared questions which are asked in a pre-planned order. It is similar to a questionnaire. The unstructured interview is based on prepared questions, but the order of the questions or their formulation depends on the interviewer. The semi-structured interview is a combination of both previous types and in this case, the interviewer provides possible answers for the questions, but also expects the respondent to provide their own opinion (Chráska, 2007, p. 182-183).

1.3. QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire is a research method that is focused on providing written questions and receiving answers in written form (Gavora, 2000, p. 99). The questions in the questionnaire are planned and carefully formulated and the respondents answer them in written form.

There can be an issue with questionnaires as they usually provide data about the way respondents view themselves and not the way they really are (Chráska, 2007, p. 165).

2. AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

2.1. AIMS

The main goal of this diploma thesis is to analyse the current state of the application of activities that develop speaking skill of the pupils in English language lessons at lower secondary school.

In addition, the secondary goal is to examine the feelings of the pupils during the application of specific speaking activities.

2.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For the purpose of this diploma thesis, research questions that the research is based on were created.

The main research question is focused on discovering the specific activities developing speaking skill which are applied in English lessons at specific lower secondary school. Further, the secondary research question focuses on the effect of a speaking activity on the pupils' usage of English language during the speaking activity and their overall feeling during speaking.

3. OBSERVATION ANALYSIS

The first part of the research is an observation of the speaking activities applied by experienced teachers. The observation part of the research was conducted during the first teaching practise and there were three teachers observed in 6 lessons.

Teacher 1 – ninth grade

During the observation in the ninth grade, the topic was London and the present perfect tense. The lesson was 45-minute-long. There were two activities which required pupils to produce speech. The first activity was focused on their plans for the weekend. The pupils were working in pairs, and they had to tell their partner about their plans for the weekend. They had to use one positive sentence, one negative sentence and then they had to create one question that would be answered by their partner. The second activity was focused on the vocabulary for the topic of London. The teacher was giving the pupils different words and the pupils had to create questions that would work with the vocabulary.

The first activity showed features of storytelling as well as a casual talk. The other activity was focused on creating questions and therefore could be considered a type of an interview activity.

Teacher 2 – ninth grade

Another observation also happened in the ninth grade. The lesson was focused on revision of the topic London. During the English lesson the pupils engaged in one speaking activity. The pupils were working in pairs, and they were supposed to read a dialogue in their student's books. After that they were supposed to create a similar dialogue that would copy the structure in their books.

The speaking activity showed features of dialogue as well as drilling activity. Even though the pupils were speaking out loud, they were not creating their own speech.

In the ninth grade, there were also two observed lessons which did not include any speaking activities.

Teacher 3 – seventh grade

Another observation happened in the seventh grade. The lesson was focused on the topic My pet. During the lesson, the pupils were producing speech mainly in the form of answering teacher's questions. The main speaking activity was conducted in groups. The pupils divided

themselves into groups of four and they were given a picture of an animal. The teacher also wrote a number of questions on the white board and the pupils were supposed to have a conversation about the specific animal and discuss the questions given. To give an example of those questions, there was one focused on the needs of an animal or a question that dealt with the appearance of an animal. Once the groups were finished with the questions, the teacher gave them new animal pictures and the pupils were supposed to have a new discussion about the animals they were given. Throughout the speaking activity the groups were given 4 different animal pictures. The speaking activity took about 20 minutes and after that the teacher took all the animal pictures back and showed some of them to the whole class and asked some of the questions as a revision of the activity.

The speaking activity showed features of a dialogue and a conversation. It showed features of the information-gap as well.

The next lesson in this class was focused on the topic My pet again. The lesson was focused on revision. The teacher prepared speaking activity on the topic of animals. The pupils were divided into pairs and each pair was given a picture of an animal. The teacher then asked the question and the pupils had to discuss an answer in pairs. The questions given by the teacher were focused on description and comparison of different animals and on the needs of the specific animals. The teacher also asked the pupils which animal they like, and they had to give reasons for their opinion. Throughout the activity the pairs were changing, and the pairs were also exchanging the pictures. The speaking activity took approximately 25 minutes. Another speaking activity was focused on finishing sentences about animals, and it was done as a whole-class activity.

The main speaking activity of this English lesson showed features of dialogue, conversation as well as an information-gap activity. The speaking activity was focused on the topic of the lesson, and it was the teacher who created the questions for the speaking activity. Therefore, the pupils could not fully control their spoken production.

Summary of the observations

During the observations, the teachers used multiple speaking activities. However, mostly they used question-answer focused activities. They implemented drilling activities, dialogues, and interviews as well as casual talk. They mostly organized the pupils into pairs or small groups. There were lessons with no speaking activities too. However, that happened only in the lessons of one teacher.

4. INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

Teacher 1 (see Appendix n. 1 for the interview transcription)

First question was focused on the frequency of using a speaking activity in her English language lessons. The teacher very clearly stated that she includes a speaking activity in every lesson as she believes that it is impossible to teach language without speaking. She described that her and her pupils explore and cover a specific language part, after that, they practise the topic and after that, the pupils always speak about the topic that was covered in the lesson.

In the lessons, the pupils are usually organized into pairs for speaking. The reason for that is, according to the teacher, that speaking in pairs is the easiest way of speaking for the pupils. Sometimes the whole class speaks out loud in front of everyone as they play a sort of sentence-building game where a pupil creates a sentence and the next pupil takes one word from that sentence, creates their sentence with the chosen word in it. These two types of organizing the pupils are used in every lesson. Sometimes, the pupils are divided into groups in which they communicate to achieve a specific goal. However, these activities are not used in every lesson.

The teacher said that her pupils must always speak only in English. She specified that she forbids talking in Czech as she believes that speaking in Czech in an English lesson while learning English lacks purpose. However, she admitted that as she walks around the classroom during a speaking activity and monitors her pupils, she often hears some Czech during their speaking. She continued that in these situations, she usually stops the speakers, corrects them, and tells them that they have to speak in English. She believes due to her observations, that the pupils work better in pairs, and they manage to use English more successfully as they simply have to speak, they have to react to their speaking partner. In groups, she finds that only two or three people speak and the rest of them are silent throughout the activity.

The teacher said that it is necessary to focus on activities that will be interesting for the pupils to have them speak only in English. She often uses interview as an activity for her pupils and in the activity the pupils focus on talking about themselves, about their friends or about their family. She finds that an interview is a good speaking activity as her pupils want to elaborate on the topics. However, she also claims that there are pupils who are not interested in anything and therefore they can be difficult to motivate. She monitors the

speaking by walking among the pupils and listening. She often asks them additional questions to monitor their speaking. She also mentions that she does not always correct them as the pupils might get nervous and stuck in their speech.

The teacher very clearly stated that she noticed that some of her pupils might get nervous during speaking. She believes that it is very difficult for the pupils to speak in front of the whole class. She also noticed that many pupils are afraid of making mistakes while speaking in a foreign language. The teacher mentioned that she created an after-school activity focused on speaking which is called English Café. She asked the pupils why they attend the English Café, and they said that the main reason is to learn to speak without being afraid. The pupils in the English Café specified that they are mostly afraid of making a grammatical mistake. The pupils also said to her that it is better for them to say nothing rather than making a mistake.

Afterwards, the focus of the interview moved to the topic of assessment of the speaking skill. The teacher said that she does not assess the speaking of her pupils in any way. She does not believe that it would be fair to assess the speaking. She specified that she is aware of the pupils whose speaking skill reaches very high level. However, there are also pupils who do not have that high level of speaking skills and they have problems with expressing themselves properly in the foreign language. However, these pupils can still be of a very high level in other language skills, the teacher claimed. She further stated that the pupils are assessed via vocabulary tests, projects, and cooperative activities and that the speaking skill is the only one that she does not assess.

Teacher 2 (see Appendix n. 1 for the interview transcription)

In the interview, the teacher said that her pupils do not engage in a speaking activity every lesson. She also mentioned that she follows the student's book with the speaking activities that she chooses for her English lessons. She specified that these activities vary from speaking activities focusing on questions and answers, interview activities to a *Bingo/Find Someone Who* activity.

She mostly organizes the pupils into pairs, or she lets them walk around the classroom on their own and speak to their classmates. Sometimes the pupils work in bigger groups and have different questions prepared to ask their classmates in the group. She specified that she likes to use headphones for the speaking activities. The pupils speaking in pairs have the headphones on and therefore they hear just themselves and their partner. In that way, pupils

do not interrupt each other as they speak. She also finds the headphones beneficial for pupils who are introverts and who find it difficult to speak in a classroom full of their classmates. The teacher can also listen to the pupils speaking through the headphones and does not have to walk around the classroom.

When asked about the language that the pupils use during a speaking activity, she stated that not every pupil is able to speak English throughout the speaking activities. The pupils, who are less skilled in English struggle with using English-only while speaking. The teacher also mentioned that she is not able to make every pupil in her classes speak 100% English in the speaking activities. Even though, she thinks that it is not possible to have every pupil speaking only in English throughout every speaking activity, she still tries to motivate her pupils to do so. In the interview, she mentioned that before the speaking activity takes place in her lessons, she speaks to her pupils and explains to them, that speaking English during the specific speaking activity is important for them and that they can benefit from speaking English during the activities. She pointed out that she tells her pupils that they have to want to speak themselves. However, she adds that she is not able to watch over everyone and monitor that they speak during the speaking activity.

Further, the teacher was asked about pupils being nervous during a speaking activity. She very clearly stated that she did notice pupils being uncomfortable and nervous during speaking. She mentioned that some of the pupils are not very assured nor confident in their vocabulary or sentence structure and therefore can become nervous while speaking in English. She said that the pupils struggle with their confidence as they are very focused on accuracy while speaking and they are afraid of making mistakes in their speech production. If the pupil is an introvert, it is even more difficult for them to not be nervous while speaking in English. She urges the introverted pupils into speaking as she wants them to at least try. In the case of pupils who are introverted, she finds the usage of headphones very beneficial. It is also helpful, in her opinion, to have at least the shy pupils paired with someone they find comfortable to communicate with.

Last topic of the interview was focused on speaking skills assessment. She claims that she does not assess the speaking skill of her pupils. She also acknowledges that she does not know how she could assess their speaking skill. The speaking skill is the only skill that she does not assess. During the interview she also started wondering about the proper way to assess the speaking skills and continued that it could be possible with the traditional frontal way of teaching, during a discussion. She said that she could have given small A to those

pupils who were speaking the most. However, later in the interview she also mentioned that the proper way of assessing the speaking skills should be the way of pupils choosing a topic and then talking about that topic.

She also added that the pupils are not used to being examined orally in front of the whole class anymore as they would be unnecessarily stressed out. She then also mentioned that the only way of examining the pupils in front of the whole class is when the pupils practise a specific interview structure given by the teacher, they then modify the interview to their own situation, learn it by heart and act it out for the teacher. She specified that in this case, the pupils know exactly what they are going to say.

Teacher 3 (see Appendix n. 1 for the interview transcription)

The interview started with the focus on the frequency of using a speaking activity in English lessons. The teacher said that she uses a speaking activity in every English lesson that she teaches.

Regarding the question of organizing the pupils for the speaking activity, the teacher first mentioned that often there is a model situation happening. In that model situation, there is the teacher and a chosen pupil, who is often someone with higher level of English, they show what is going to happen and the instructions for the speaking activity are explained in that way. After that, the pupils work in pairs or groups of three. The teacher also specified that the pupils engage in the same conversation structure multiple times as they are supposed to switch their partners throughout the activity. The teacher said that her goal is to not let the pupils talk to only one person. She also said that she knows that this type of activity is a drill-focused one. However, she mentioned that it works for her and her pupils. She does not like to organize the pupils into bigger groups as there can be pupils who do not contribute to the conversation. She stated that sometimes she lets the pupils work in smaller groups and then she uses the whole-class organization to do the revision of an activity, asks some of the pupils to summarize their conversations and lets the rest of the class listen to the chosen pupils.

She claims that she is not sure if her pupils speak only in English throughout the speaking activities. During this question she also focused on the fact that there is a problem to get the pupils to communicate in English outside of the speaking activity – for instance they do not ask “Who is going to start?” in the group they are in, but once they start speaking, they are able to communicate in English.

She writes important words and phrases on the white board and therefore the pupils who may struggle to use only English language in the conversation, can look at the notes and it can help them. The teacher mentioned that she thinks that she can trust her pupils that they speak only in English during a speaking activity. According to her, using only English does not depend on the organization into pairs or small or bigger groups but on the specific pupils who are put together.

When asked about the way she makes sure that the pupils speak only in English during the speaking activity, she answered that she walks around the classroom, and she tries to listen to her pupils. Sometimes she corrects them or asks them to repeat something. However, she does not interrupt the pupils very often as she does not want them to feel uncomfortable.

The teacher mentioned that her pupils are sometimes nervous when speaking and according to her it is connected to the pair or group they are put in. As her speaking activities include switching of the speaking partners, the teacher noticed that the pupils become nervous when they are not comfortable with their speaking partner. She said that there is often an influence of the pupils' personal issues within the class relationship and class climate.

She also mentioned that she did a speaking activity with the ninth graders, and she called the pupils to the white board to speak to the whole class. In that case, she noticed the pupils being nervous. She also mentioned that she further discussed the activity with that class and the ninth graders shared that it would have been better to let them stay in their seats and speak from behind their desks. As she does not want to stress the pupils, she is looking for a solution to not make her pupils nervous. However, she also thinks that it is important to show the pupils the reality as they will not always communicate from the safe space of their desks.

She said that she gives a small 1 for conversation when she sees that the pupils work properly. She also mentioned that she got inspired by her colleague as the issue of an assessment of the speaking skill was dealt with at the language colloquium at the time of the interview. The colleague who she was inspired by assesses the speaking skill in the way that the teacher chooses a topic of speaking, the pupils can prepare the speech at home and then they talk only with their teacher as the rest of the class has other work.

Further, the teacher mentioned that accuracy in her pupils' speaking is not important to her. Her goal is to teach the pupils to be interested in communication. She also mentioned that she would want her pupils not to be afraid of correcting others while they speak in the English lessons.

Summary of the interviews

The interviews with experienced teachers of English show that the teachers try to implement a speaking activity in every lesson. The most used speaking activities are usually question-answer oriented, for instance an interview or a casual talk. The focus is also on drilling activities which the teachers find useful. The teachers said that they usually organize the pupils into pairs or small groups as they find these to be the most effective.

All 3 of the teachers agreed that pupils can be nervous during a speaking activity. The reasons for that, according to these teachers, are focusing too much on accuracy, being afraid of making a mistake as well as the personal issues and relationships in the class.

The teachers agreed that they do not assess the speaking skill in any way. However, other language skills are assessed.

5. QUESTIONNAIRE RESEARCH

The questionnaire research took place in two classes – the 6th grade and in the 9th grade. It was focused on the problems that may occur during a speaking activity which are mentioned in the theoretical part of the thesis. The questionnaire part includes three types of questionnaires. First, the pupils were given a pre-research questionnaire which was supposed to show the initial state of the pupils in relationship to speaking activities. Further, after each activity, the pupils were given a questionnaire focusing on the usage of English and their feeling during a particular activity. Lastly, after the research, the pupils were given a third type of questionnaire focusing on the summary of the questionnaire part of the research.

The questionnaire research occurred from October 2023 to March 2024. Activities used during the research are not the same in the two grades researched because the activities needed to be adjusted to a particular class. Further, not every activity mentioned in the theoretical part is applied in the practical part as the activities had to be adjusted to the topics and the thematic plan as well.

While the 9th grade was able to take part in activities that were focused on the pupils' ability to create a question and answer and provide real information, the activities in 6th grade had to be in general more drill oriented. Further, the teacher did not want to cause unnecessary stress for the pupils. Even though, the teacher was able to prepare activities that included real conversation for the 6th grade as well.

The questionnaires are enclosed in the Appendix n. 4.

6th grade characteristics

In the 6th grade, there are 17 pupils in the observed group. At the school where the research part was conducted in, there are two 6th grades which are further divided into three groups for the English language lessons. The pupils were divided into the groups based on their level of English. In the observed group, the English level ranges from A0 to A1 level. There are many pupils who struggle to produce any spoken English. There are 7 pupils who have special needs and there is an assistant in the class too.

9th grade characteristics

In the ninth C grade, there are 20 pupils who all attend the English lesson as one group. Due to the small number of pupils in the class, they are not divided into smaller groups for

language lessons. In the class, the pupils have multiple levels of English. The language levels range from A1 levels to B2 levels in specific language skills.

Overall, there are many pupils who are fluent in English. On the other hand, there are many pupils who struggle to understand English as well as produce speech in English language.

It should be acknowledged that the author of this diploma thesis is the English teacher in both classes at the time of the research being conducted.

5.1. PRE-RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE PART

The first questionnaire was a questionnaire done in the 6th and the 9th grades prior to any observed speaking activity. In this pre-research questionnaire, there were three questions focusing on the pupils' comfort during speaking, their goals in the area of developing their speaking skills and also the problems that they deal with during speaking in foreign language, specifically in English.

The first question of the pre-research questionnaire was about the general feeling of the pupils while speaking in English in the classroom. The pupils were supposed to indicate the level on a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being feeling very bad, 5 being neutral and 10 being feeling very well and confident.

The second question was focused on the issues that the pupils can encounter during a speaking activity, and which can further aggravate their effort to speak. The pupils were given four options, and they could add their own options of issues that they encounter during speaking.

The last question of the pre-research questionnaire was focused on the achievements that the pupils would want to accomplish throughout developing their speaking skill in the lessons of English at the lower secondary level. The pupils could choose multiple options and they could also add their own achievements and goals.

5.1.1. 6TH GRADE

The results indicate that there are 7 pupils who do not feel very comfortable during producing any speech in the classroom. On the other hand, there are also 6 pupils who stated that they feel comfortable during speaking and 3 pupils stated that they feel neutral.

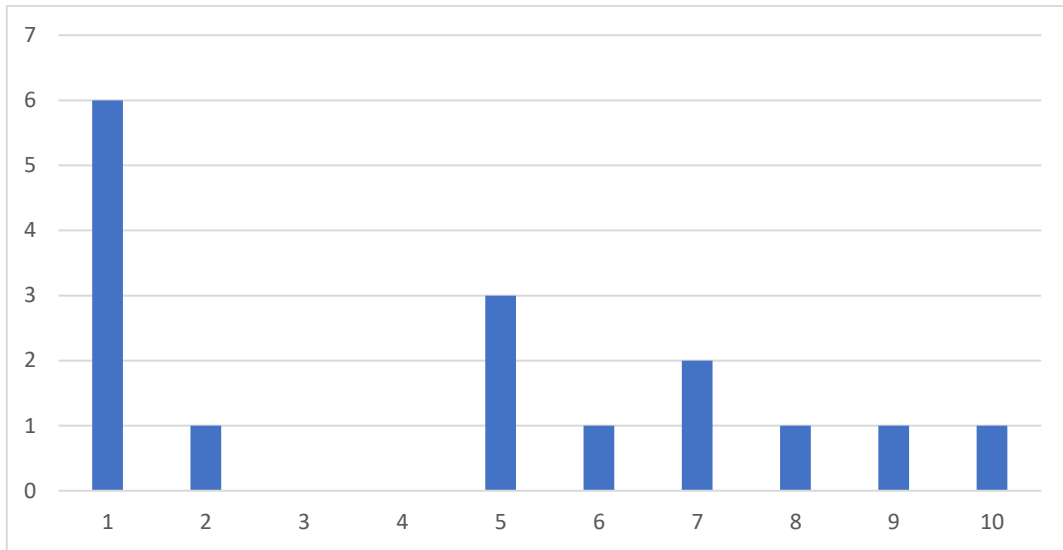


Figure 1: Feelings of the pupils during speaking prior to the research in the 6th grade.

The results show that in the sixth grade there are 11 pupils who struggle with the structure and formulation of their thoughts. 6 pupils stated that they struggle with feeling shy when speaking in front of their classmates. On the other hand, there were not many pupils who would say that they struggle with not knowing what to say nor feeling shy while talking in front of the teacher.

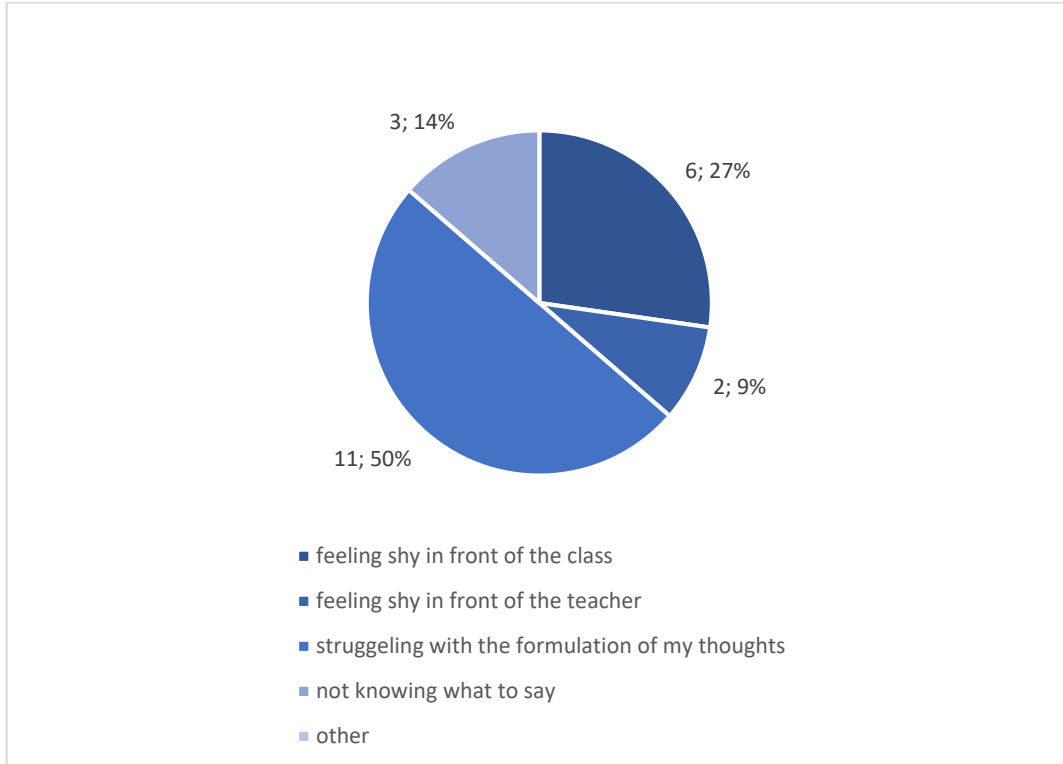


Figure 2: Issues preventing the pupils in the 6th grade from speaking prior to the research.

The findings in this case indicate that the pupils mostly want to be able to communicate in English fluently. There were 10 pupils who stated that in the questionnaire. Further, 8 pupils selected their goal to be communicating successfully abroad. In addition, 7 pupils stated that their goal is being more confident during their speaking in English. There was 1 pupil who added that they want to know the whole English.

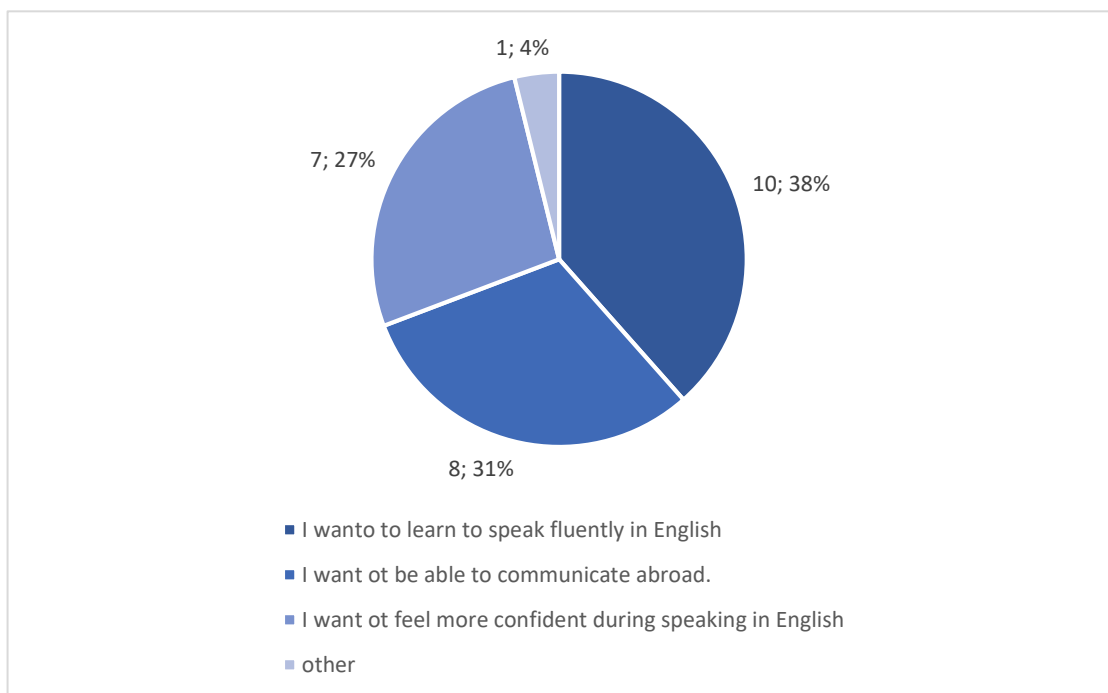


Figure 3: Pupils' goals prior to the research in the 6th grade.

5.1.2. 9TH GRADE

According to the results that were given through the first question, at the beginning of the research most of the 9th grade was feeling rather bad during their spoken production. The results show that only 6 pupils were feeling comfortable in the class during speaking. Most of these marked number 6 on the scale which points to the fact that the level of confidence during a speaking activity in the classroom is not very high. On the other hand, there are 12 pupils who said that they feel bad during any speaking activity.

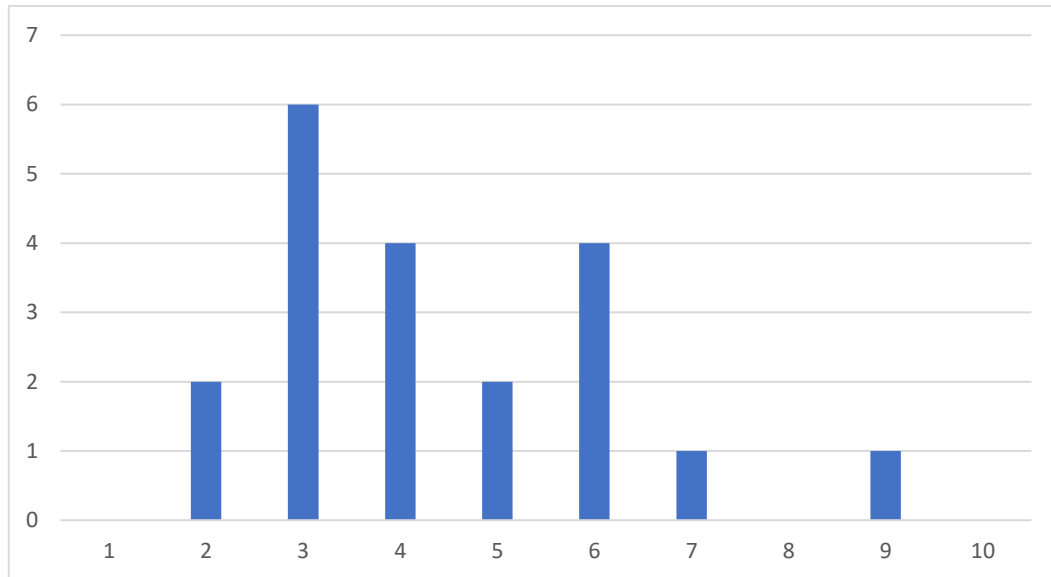


Figure 4: Feelings of the pupils during speaking prior to the research in the 9th grade.

Many pupils struggle with being shy and nervous about speaking in front of their classmates. The questionnaire has shown that 14 pupils feel that way. The second most marked answer was that the pupils, specifically 11 of them struggle with not knowing how to formulate their spoken production. Not knowing what to say nor talking in front of the teacher do not cause most of the pupils any issues that would prevent them from talking. Furthermore, some of the pupils added their own reasons that would cause them issues with speaking in English lessons. Two pupils mentioned that they struggle with their limited vocabulary, other two pupils specified that they struggle with the pronunciation of English words.

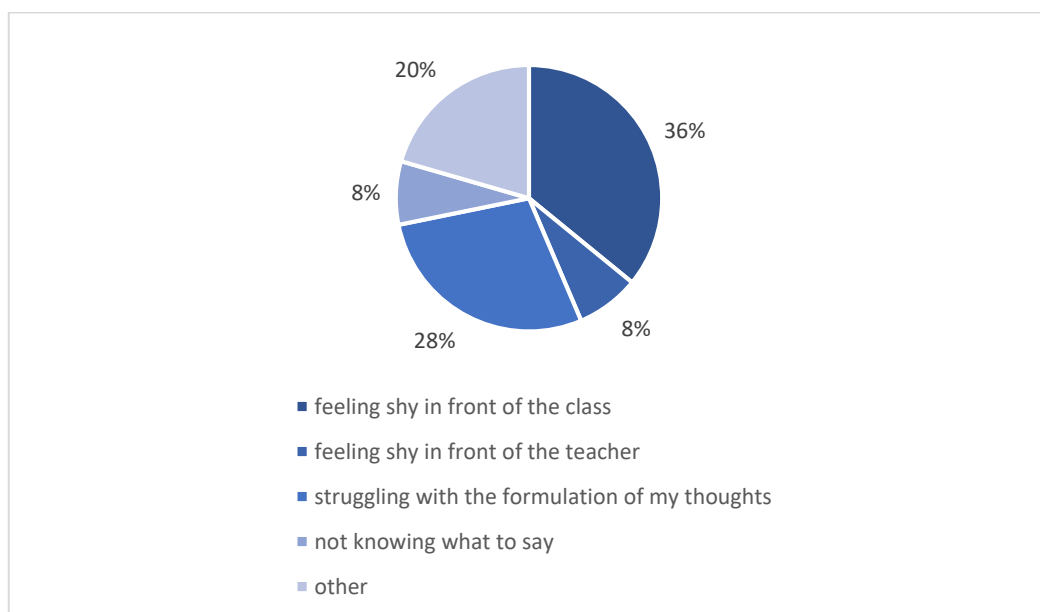


Figure 5: Issues preventing the pupils in the 9th grade from speaking prior to the research.

The findings show that the pupils chose multiple goals. There were 13 pupils who want to be more fluent as well as feel more comfortable in their speaking. 12 pupils want to be able to communicate in English abroad. One pupil stated that their goal is to not be afraid of talking in front of people. There was also a goal to be able to understand and speak English in general. Lastly, one pupil mentioned that they wanted to be able to translate a book.

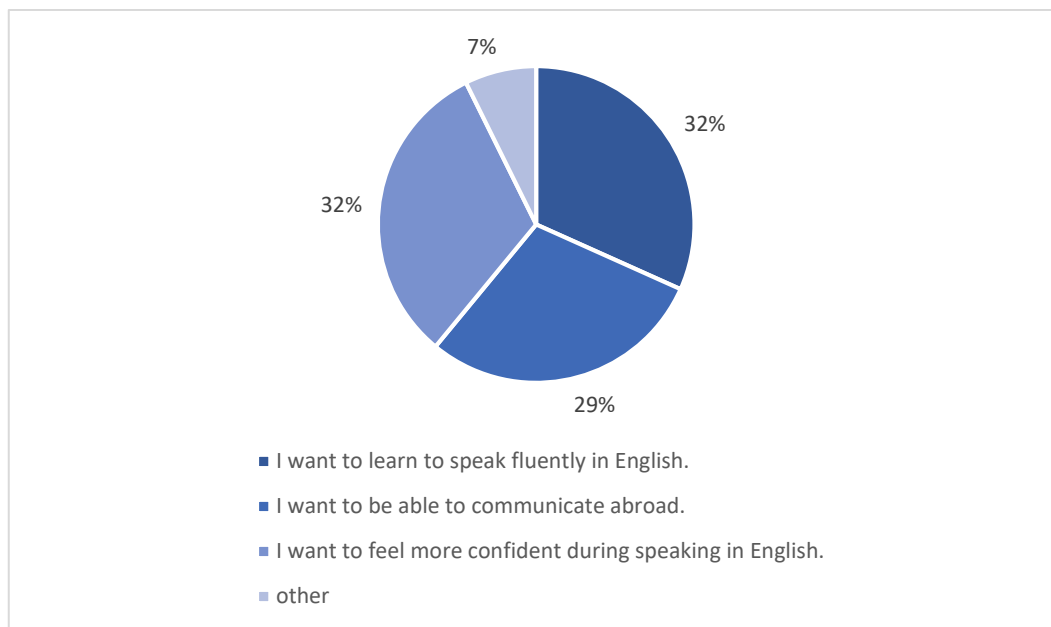


Figure 6: Pupils' goals in the 9th grade prior to the research.

5.1.3. SUMMARY

To summarize, in the 9th grade there were 12 pupils who felt uncomfortable during speaking. In the 6th grade, there were only 7 of those.

In the 6th grade, most pupils struggled with formulation of their thoughts and being shy during speaking. In the 9th grade, pupils selected being shy as their biggest problem during speaking. Another problem was formulating sentences.

In both grades, the pupils want to be able to speak fluently the most, further they want to feel more confident and lastly, they want to be able to communicate in English abroad.

5.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE PART

During the research part which occurred from October 2023 to March 2024, the pupils took part in several speaking activities. The activities were based on the activities discussed in the theoretical part of this diploma thesis as well as the thematic plan and the level of English in the 6th and 9th classes.

Every activity was first explained to the pupils, further they were organized as needed and after that, they participated in the speaking activity. During every activity, the teacher was observing the class, they were listening to the pupils' speaking as well as answering any questions that the pupils had.

After the pupils were finished with the activity, the teacher gave the pupils a questionnaire. The after-activity questionnaire was the same after every activity. The questionnaire consisted of three questions.

The first question was focused on the pupils' English talking time. The pupils were supposed to set a percentage of English used during their talking time. Further they were supposed to add a percentage of the Czech used during their talking time.

The second question was focused on the pupils' feeling during the speaking activity. There was a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being nervous and feeling uncomfortable, 5 feeling neutral and 10 being confident and feeling comfortable. The pupils were supposed to choose a number on the scale. Further, they were supposed to provide a reason for their choice.

Last question was focused on the pupils' feeling as well. The pupils were supposed to answer if they felt better, worse or the same during the particular activity rather than during the previous one. They did not have to provide any other comments to the question, but they could if they felt the need to.

The individual descriptions of every activity are enclosed in the appendices 2 and 3 of this diploma thesis due to the length of the descriptions.

5.2.1. 6TH GRADE

Activity 1 (see Appendix n. 2, activity 1 for the activity description)

Activity type: Drill/Picture description

Activity topic: Present Continuous

The results of the questionnaire show that the pupils were quite successful with speaking in English in this activity. The majority of the pupils used English in at least 50% of the activity. According to the results, there were 44% of the pupils who used English in more than 80% of their conversation during the speaking activity.

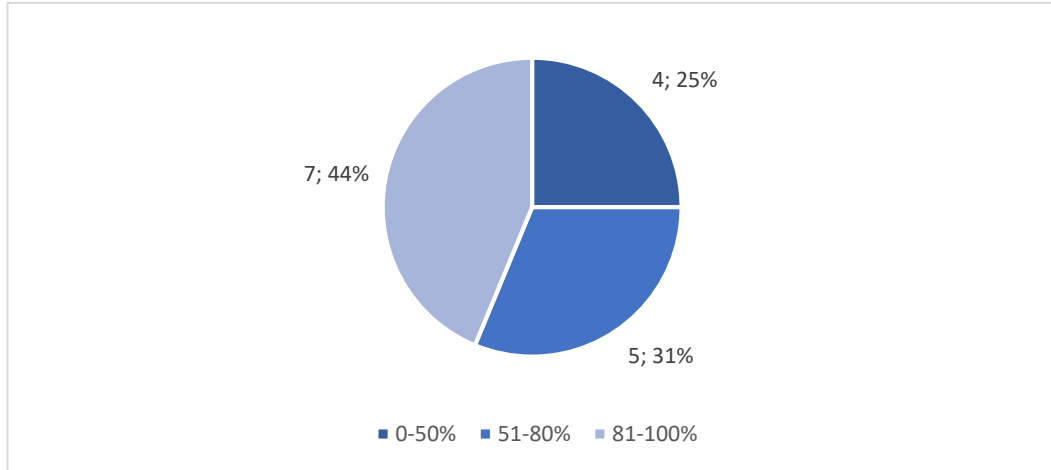


Figure 7: Using English to communicate in the 6th grade.

Overall, the pupils felt comfortable and confident during the speaking activity. In fact, there was not a pupil who would select numbers on the scale that would indicate feeling bad during the activity. During the activity, 63% of the pupils felt very comfortable and confident.

Some of the pupils commented on their feelings about the activity. All of the comments on this activity were positive and the pupils stated that they felt comfortable due to the activity being fun, due to having a good day or because they thought that they are starting to understand English properly.

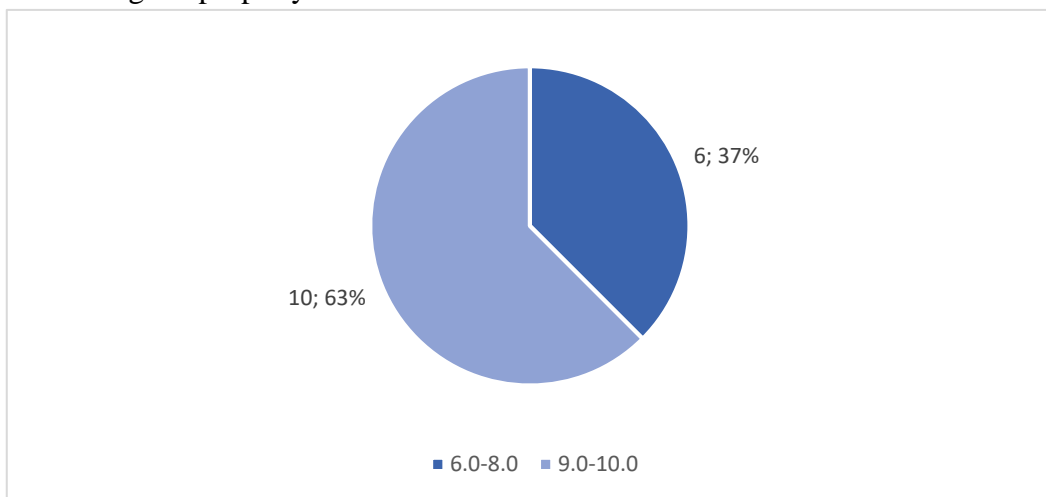


Figure 8: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale in the 6th grade.

Eightyone percent of the pupils also mentioned that they felt more confident than in the previous activity and there were only two pupils who stated that they did not feel better than in the previous occasion. However, this does not indicate that they did not feel comfortable during the activity.

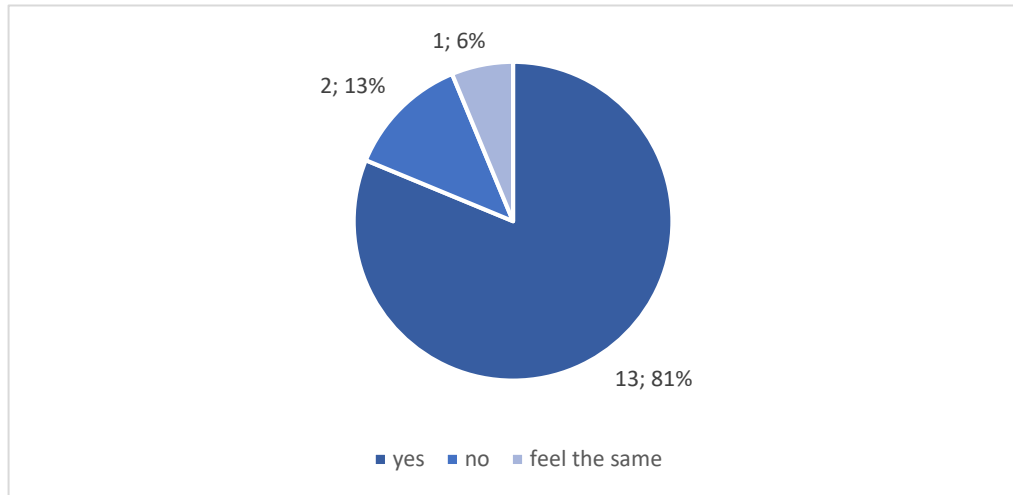


Figure 9: Pupils' feeling in comparison with a previous speaking activity in the 6th grade.

Activity 2 (see Appendix n. 2, activity 2 for the activity description)

Activity type: Drill/Picture Description

Activity Topic: Present continuous tense

The results of the questionnaire show that most of the pupils were speaking English in at least 50% of the activity. 64% of the pupils used English in at least 80% of their speech. Therefore, the pupils were very successful in using English during this activity.

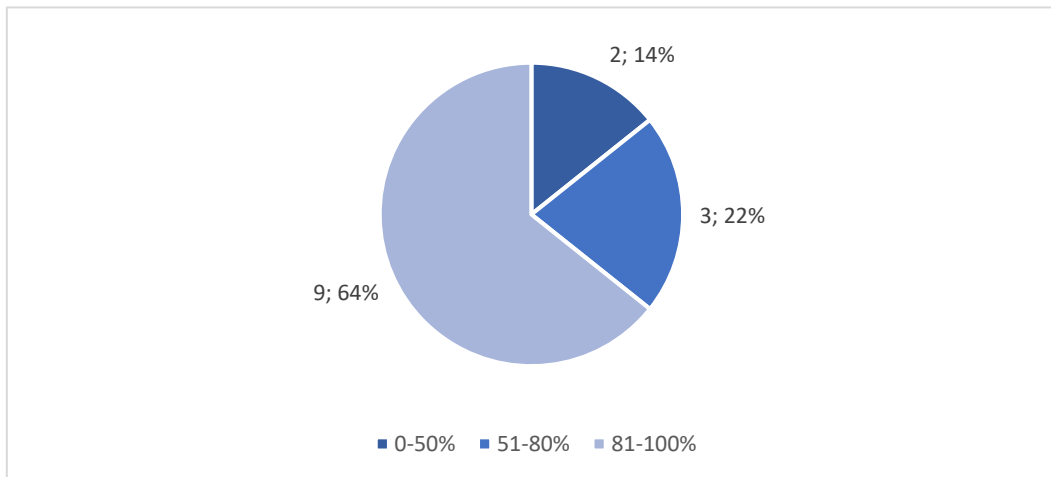


Figure 10: Using English to communicate in the 6th grade.

Further, it can be seen that most of the pupils, specifically 85%, stated that their feelings during the speaking were on the more confident side. When observing the 85% more carefully, the results show that 80% of the pupils who were on the confident side, chose numbers 9 and 10 on the scale. That means that they were feeling very confident during the activity. Two pupils commented on why they felt confident during the activity, and they mentioned that the activity was fun.

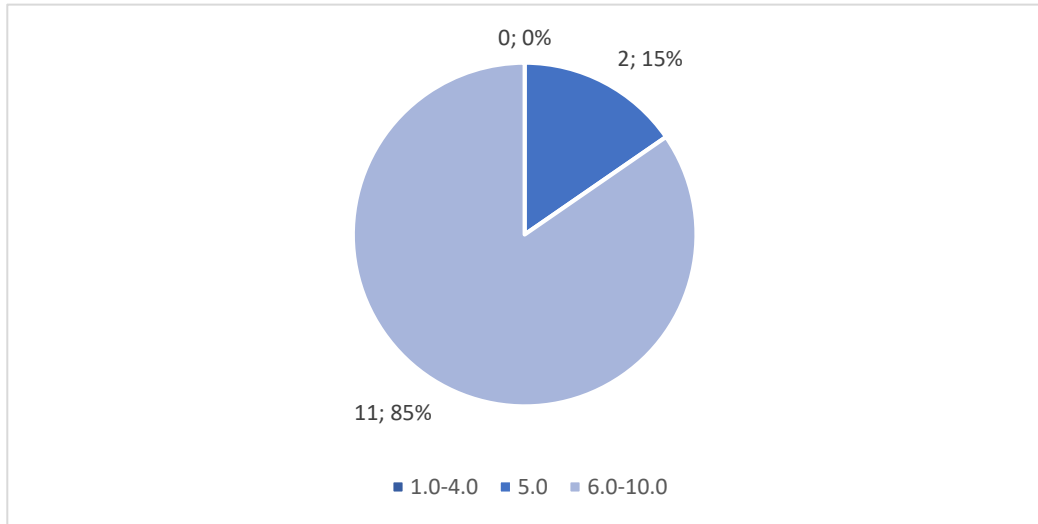


Figure 11: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale in the 6th grade.

Last question was focused again on the feeling of the pupils, this time in the context of the previous activity. There were 77% of the pupils who stated that they felt better this time than the previous time. 23% of the pupils which makes 3 pupils, stated that they did not feel better during this activity.

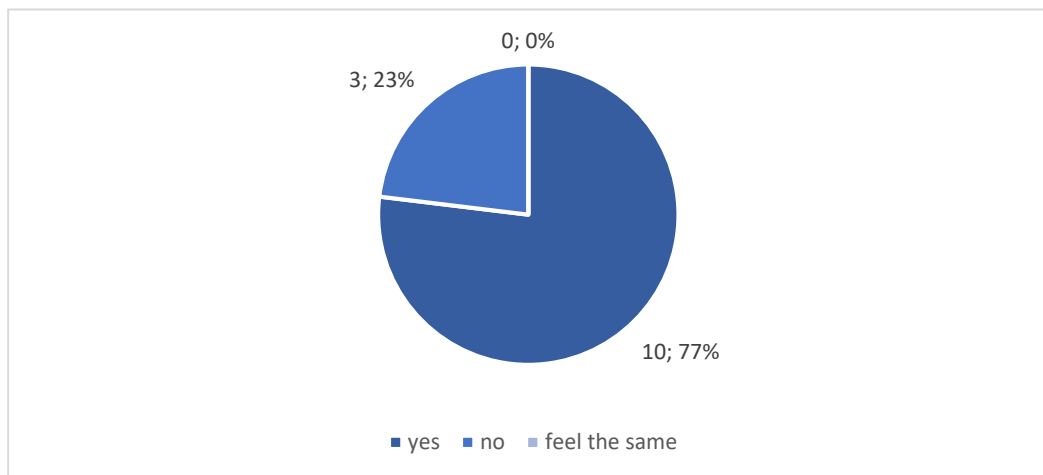


Figure 12: Pupils' feeling in comparison with a previous speaking activity in the 6th grade.

It is necessary to compare the first and the second time that this activity was conducted in the 6th grade. The number of pupils speaking English in at least 80% of the activity

increased from 44% to 64%. On the other hand, the first time all the pupils were on the confident side of the scale. The second time, there were 2 pupils who felt neutral and the rest of the class, specifically 85%, whose feeling was on the confident side. The 1st and 2nd attempt were done in subsequent lessons and therefore, the pupils referred specifically to the 1st attempt of this activity in the 3rd question of the questionnaire for the 2nd attempt of the activity. There can be seen, that 77% felt more confident during the 2nd attempt of the activity. However, there were 3 pupils who stated that they felt less confident during the 2nd attempt. However, they did not comment on their reasons for that.

Activity 3 (see Appendix n. 2, activity 3 for the activity description)

Activity Type: Information-gap

Activity Topic: Present continuous

The results show that all of the pupils were speaking English in at least 50% of their speaking. Further, there were 46% of the pupils who used English in more than 80% of their speaking. This result makes the activity quite successful in the context of foreign language use.

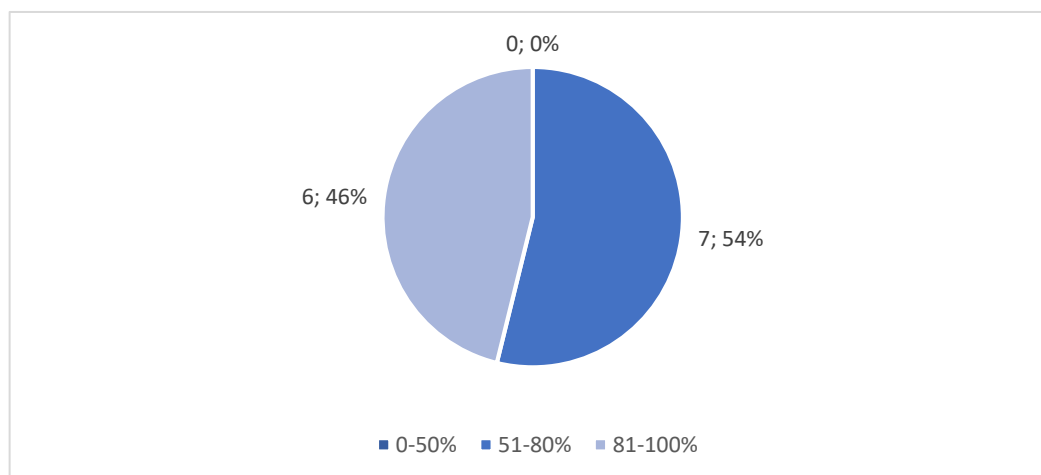


Figure 13: Using English to communicate in the 6th grade.

In the case of the feeling of the pupils during the activity, one person selected the neutral option, the rest of the class stated that they felt confident and well during the activity. Two people commented that the reason for feeling good during the activity was that the activity was fun for them.

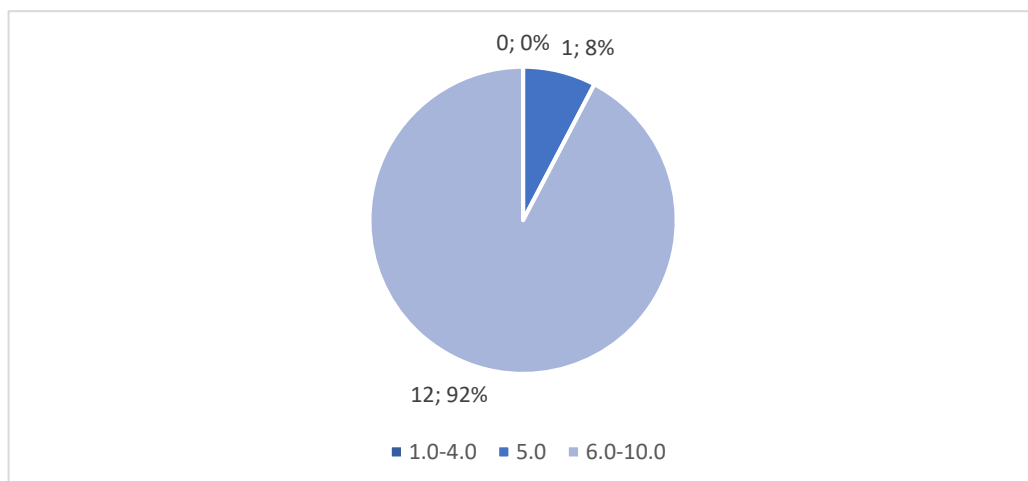


Figure 14: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale from 1 to 10 in the 6th grade.

There were 92% of the pupils who selected that they felt better than during the previous activity. There was only one pupil who stated that they felt worse during the activity.

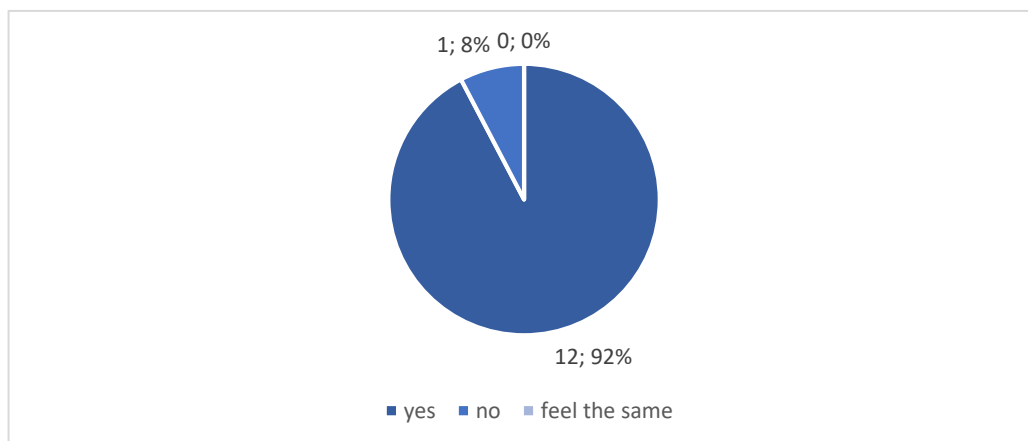


Figure 15: Pupils' feeling in comparison with a previous speaking activity in the 6th grade.

Activity 4 (see Appendix n. 2, activity 4 for the activity description)

Activity Type: Drill/Role-play

Activity Topic: Shopping

The results show that the whole class used English in more than 50% of their speaking. Half of the class stated that they used English in more than 80% of the activity.

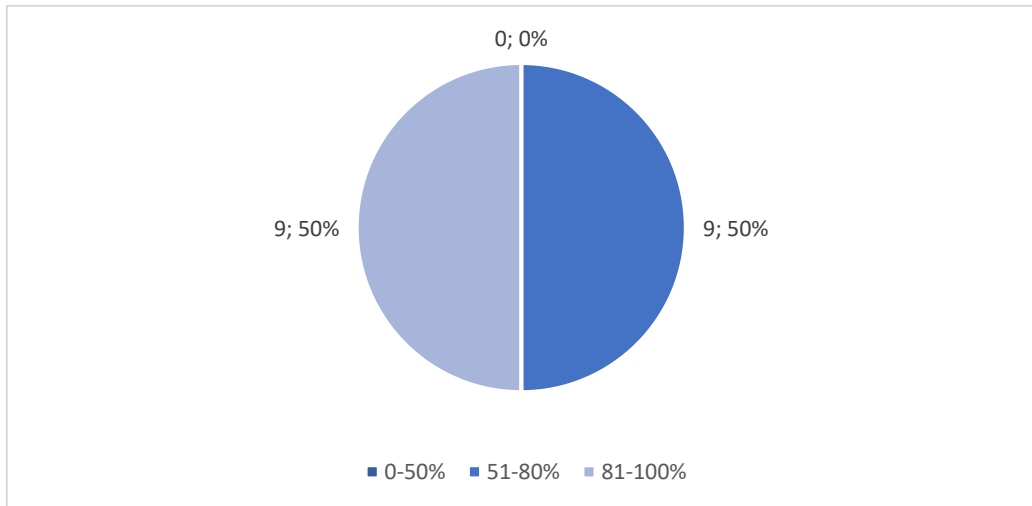


Figure 17: Using English to communicate in the 6th grade.

Most of the pupils were feeling confident during the speaking activity and many of them also commented on the activity. Two pupils said that they felt good because the activity was engaging. One of the pupils stated that they felt good because of the pair they were in. Another pupil said that they felt good because they like English. On the other hand, there was one pupil who selected number 2 on the scale, and they added that it was not a good day for them overall and therefore they felt bad during the activity. One pupil selected neutral on the scale.

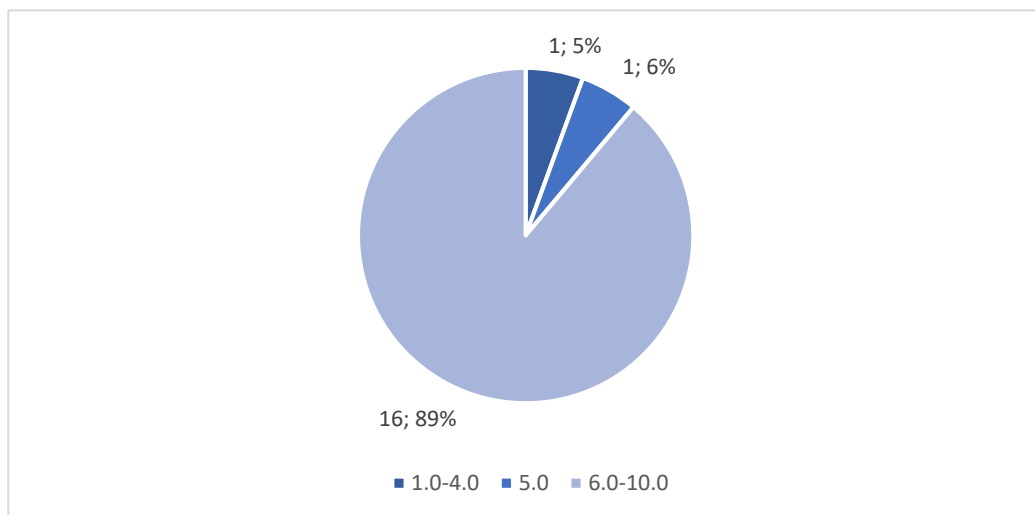


Figure 16: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale from 1 to 10 in the 6th grade.

Most of the pupils, 78%, stated that they felt better during this activity. There was one pupil who felt the same and there were 3 pupils who stated that they felt worse than during the previous activity.

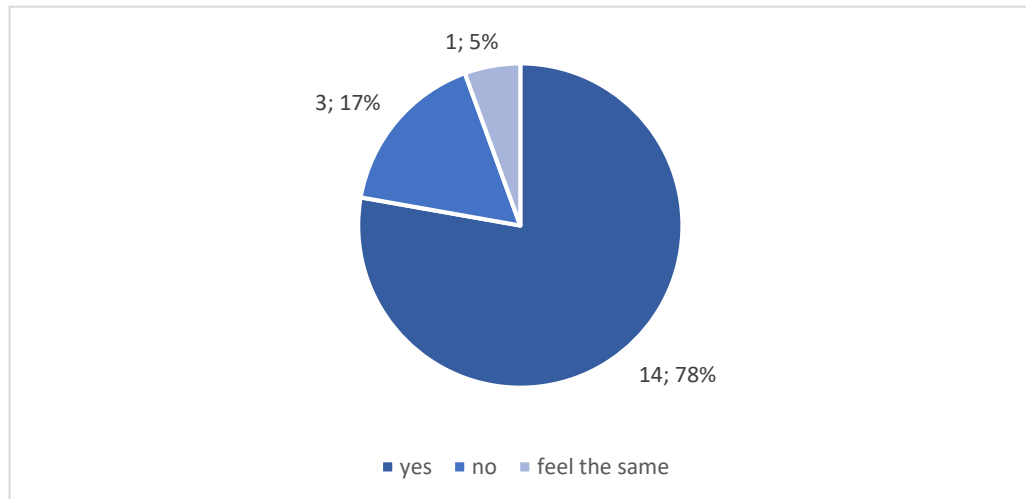


Figure 18: Pupils' feeling in comparison with a previous speaking activity in the 6th grade.

Activity 5 (see Appendix n. 2, activity 5 for the activity description)

Activity Type: Conversation

Activity Topic: have to, house chores

The results of this activity show that there were 80% of the pupils who were speaking English in more than 50% of their speech. There were even 6 pupils who used English in at least 80% of the activity. On the other hand, there were 20% of the class, which means 3 pupils, who used English in less than half of their speech.

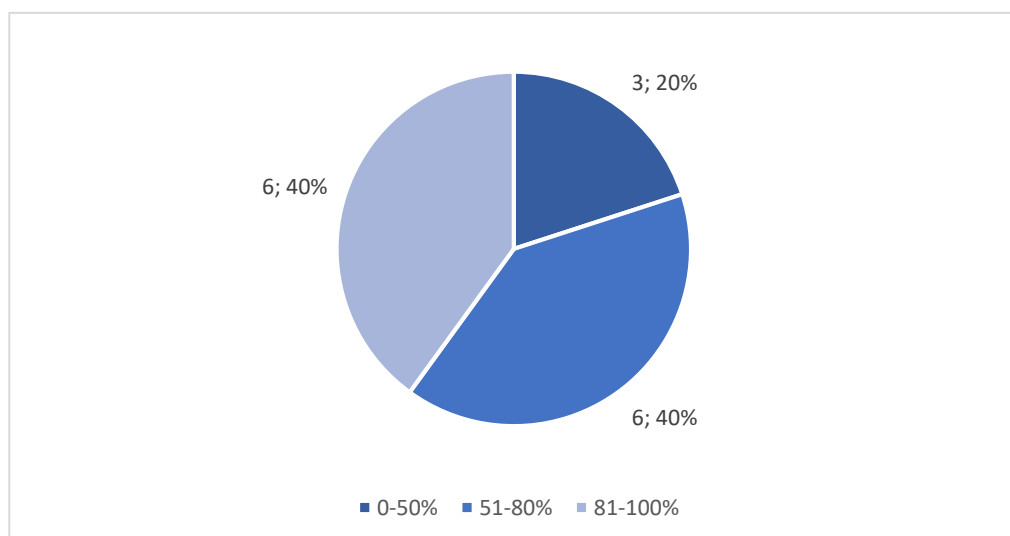


Figure 19: Using English to communicate in the 6th grade.

In the case of confidence and comfort, there were 67% of the pupils whose overall feeling was more on the confident side. There were 20% of the pupils who stated that they felt neutral. However, there were also 2 pupils which made 13% of the class, who stated that they did not feel confident nor comfortable during the activity. One pupil commented that they did not quite understand the activity and therefore they did not feel comfortable during speaking.

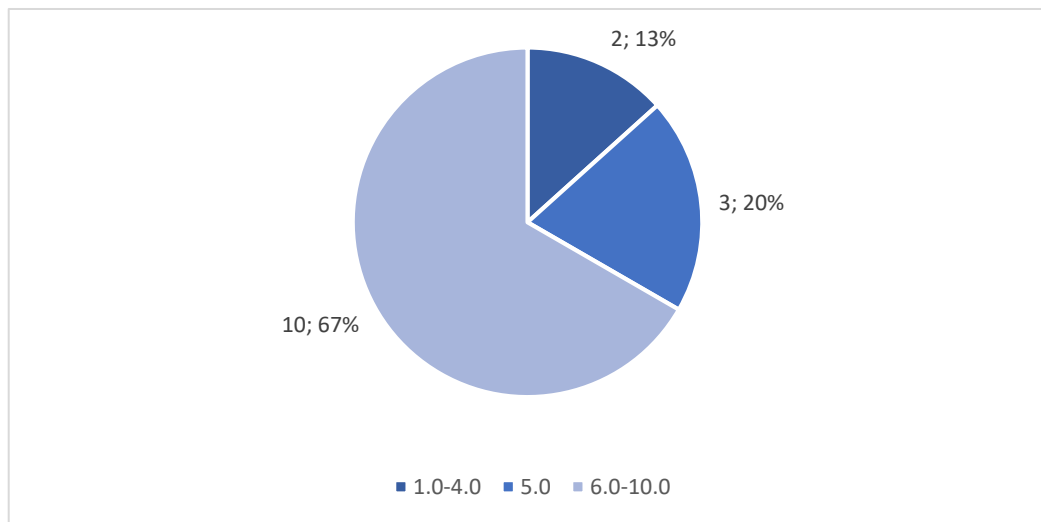


Figure 20: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale from 1 to 10 in the 6th grade.

Lastly, most of the pupils answered that they felt better than during the previous activity. However, there were two pupils who felt worse this time than during the previous activity. Unfortunately, they did not comment on the reasons for their feelings.

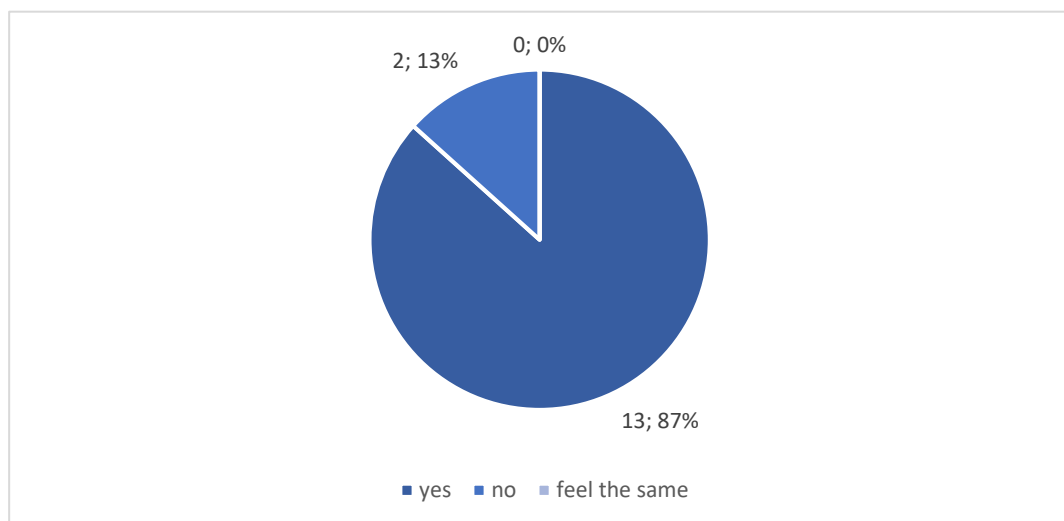


Figure 21: Pupils' feeling in comparison with a previous speaking activity in the 6th grade.

5.2.2. 9TH GRADE

In the ninth grade, there were conducted speaking activities, which all the pupils participated in. Further, there were conducted two assessments of the pupils' speaking skills which were executed in the form of a speaking activity.

The teacher announced a speaking skills assessment for an upcoming lesson and explained the topic. Further, the pupils were able to prepare themselves for the assessment at home. They were allowed to bring notes or even a text for the assessment. However, they were not allowed to read anything from their notes. The purpose of the notes was to look at it briefly in case they would not know what to say. The teacher always listened to their speech, asked additional questions, and made notes about possible mistakes in the pupils' speech. The teacher never interrupted the speech of the pupils to correct them. After finishing speaking, the teacher would summarize the pupil's speaking and possible mistakes and grade the pupil. Every pupil that was assessed was given the questionnaire to fill in.

Activity 1 (see Appendix n. 3, activity 1 for the activity description)

Activity Type: Dialogue/Interview

Activity Topic: Character Features

The results show that most of the pupils spoke English in at least 50% of the activity. More than half of the pupils used English in at least 80% of their speech. On the other hand, there were 2 pupils who did not speak English at all – this is the pair that did not talk to each other at that time.

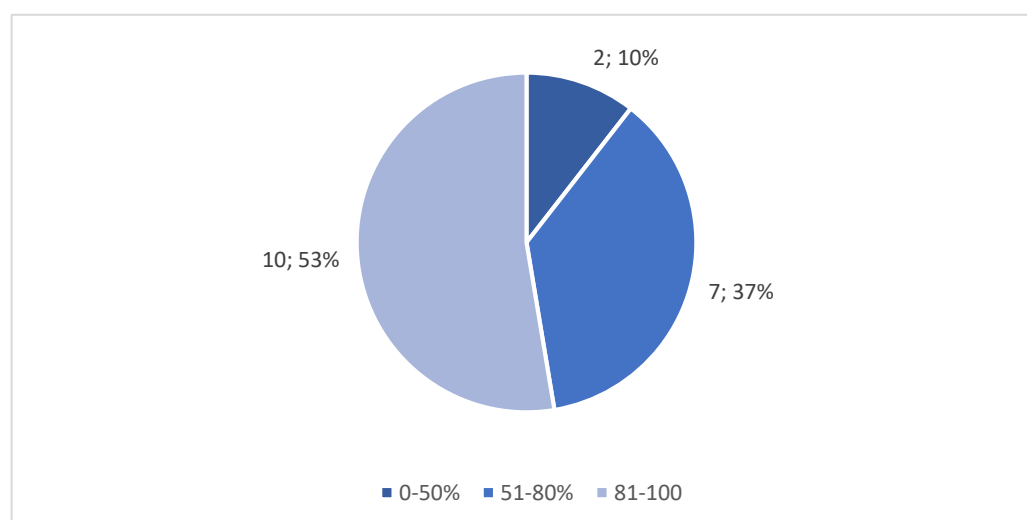


Figure 22: Usage of English to communicate in the 9th grade.

The pupils mostly selected scale numbers that suggest that they felt rather confident and good then nervous. However, there were two pupils who felt very uncomfortable during this activity. Both provided a commentary to the situation and explained that the pair was not selected well. However, there were seven pupils who commented that they felt comfortable due to having a suitable partner. Those who did not felt as comfortable said that it was because of the pair they were in and therefore they felt shy.

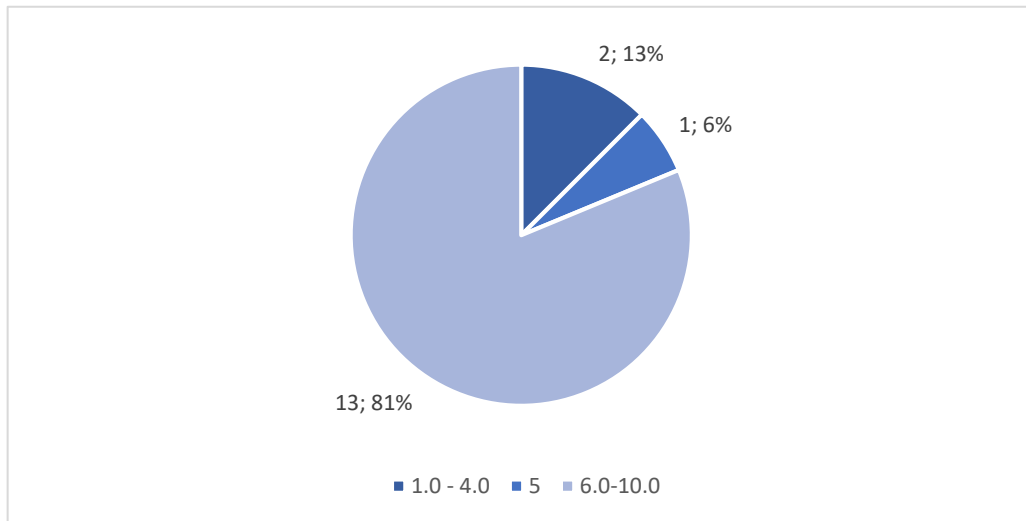


Figure 23: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale from 1 to 10 in the 9th grade.

There were more than 50% of the pupils who felt better than during the previous activity, there were 5 pupils who stated they felt the same. However, they were also 4 pupils who stated that they felt worse during this activity.

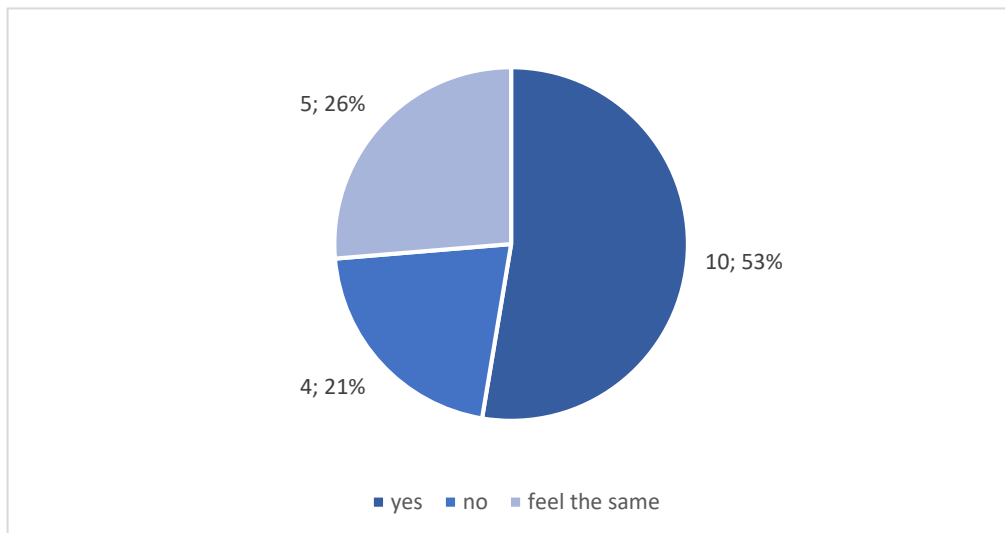


Figure 24: Pupils' feeling in comparison with a previous speaking activity in the 9th grade.

Activity 2 (see Appendix n. 3, activity 2 for the activity description)

Activity Type: Dialogue/Interview/Questionnaire

Activity Topic: can, cannot

The results show that most of the pupils were speaking English in at least 50% of the activity. Half of the class used English in more than 80% of their speech. However, there were 2 pupils who selected 41% to 50% as the amount of English they used.

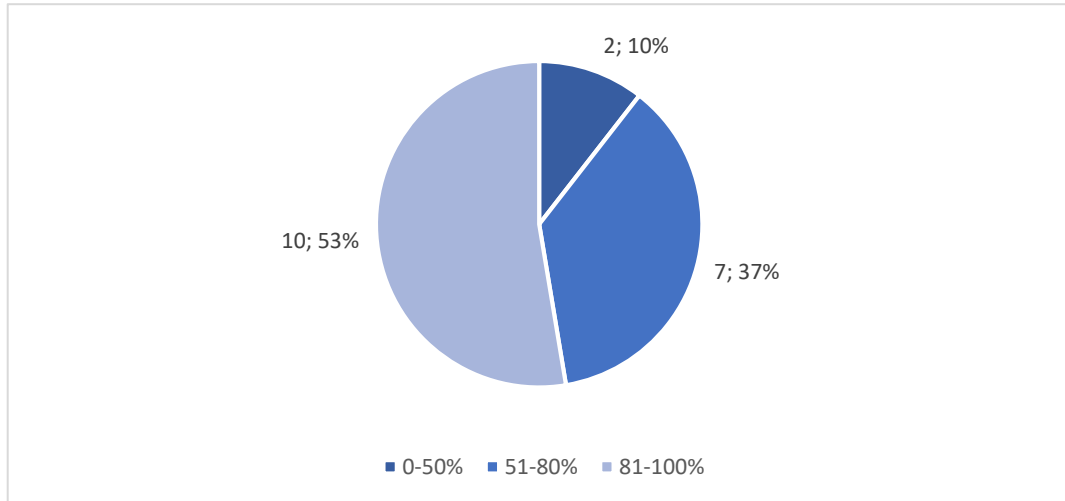


Figure 25: Usage of English to communicate in the 9th grade.

The majority of the class enjoyed the activity and they felt comfortable during their speaking. Often, the pupils commented that they would like to do this activity again as it was engaging and therefore, they felt comfortable. Other pupils commented that the groups were well created and due to that they felt comfortable during speaking. On the other hand, there was one pupil who explained that they had trouble with pronunciation and therefore, they felt uncomfortable. Another one said that they do not like group-work and that is why they did not feel confident nor comfortable.

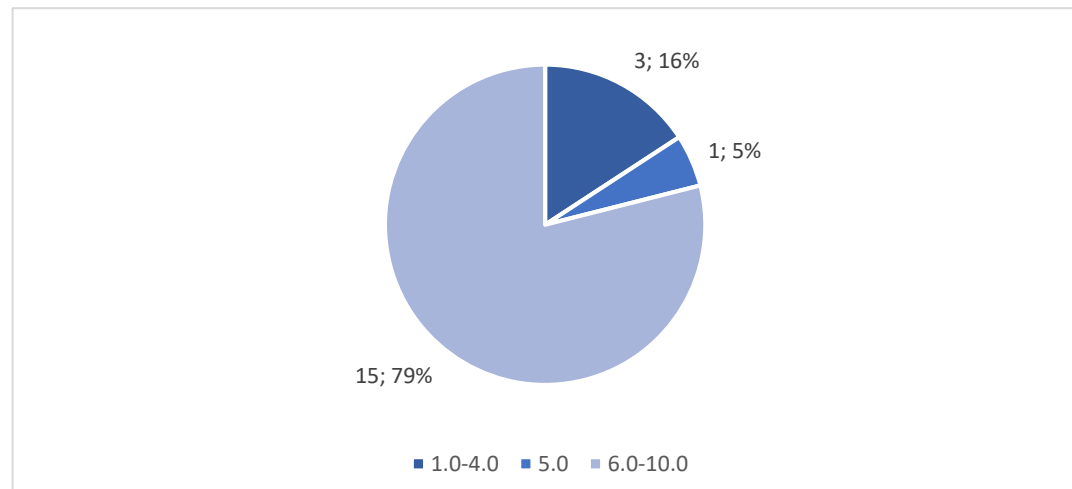


Figure 26: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale from 1 to 10 in the 9th grade.

Lastly, there were 13 pupils who stated that they felt better during the activity than the previous one, 2 of the pupils stated that they felt the same, but there were also 4 pupils who stated that they felt worse during the activity.

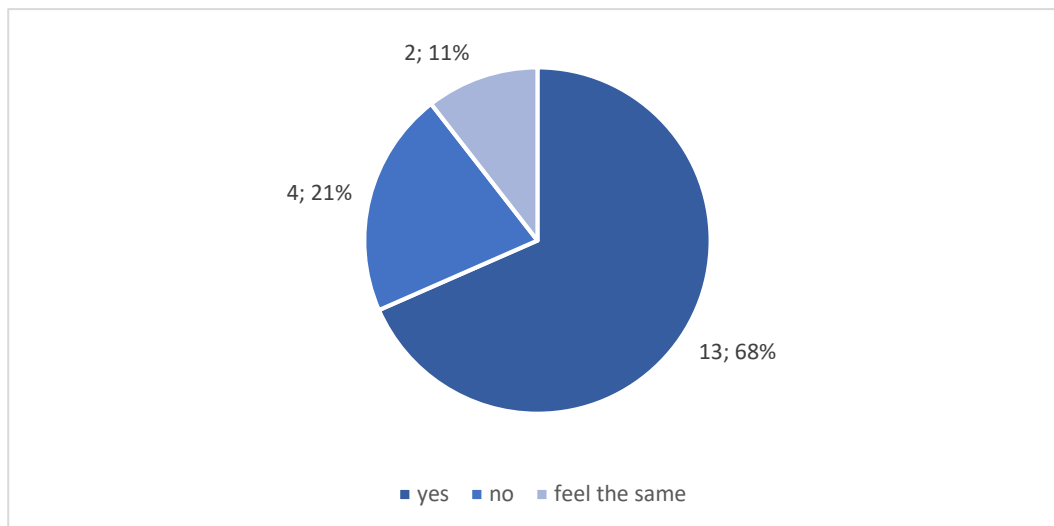


Figure 27: Pupils' feeling in comparison with a previous speaking activity in the 9th grade.

Activity 3 (see Appendix n. 3, activity 3 for the activity description)

Activity Type: Drill/Milling Activity

Activity Topic: Past simple tense

The results show that half of the class used English in more than 80% of their speaking. However, there were 39% of the pupils using English in less than 50% of their speaking.

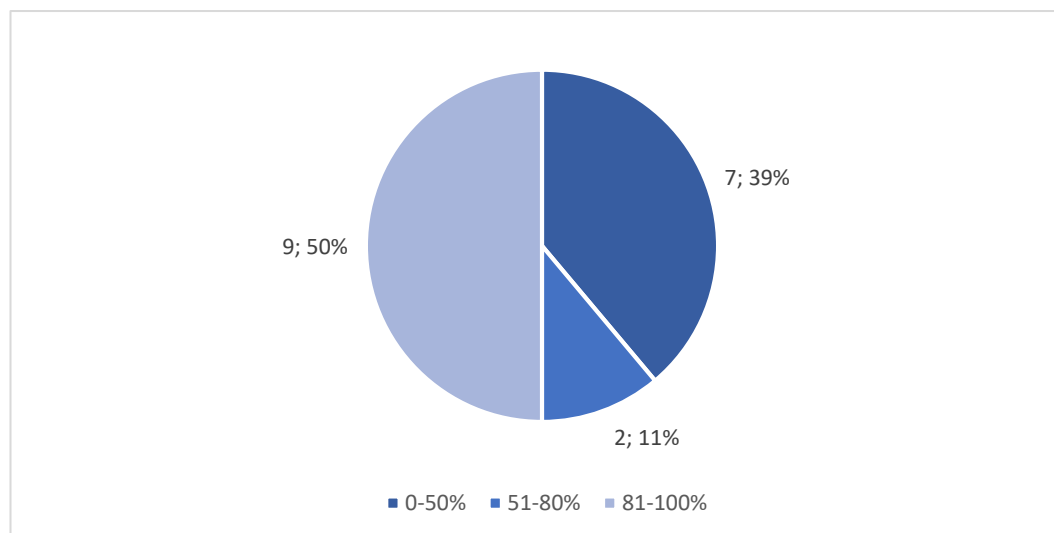


Figure 28: Usage of English to communicate in the 9th grade.

There were almost 80% of the pupils who felt comfortable during the speaking activity. Many pupils added a commentary to this topic, and they said that the activity was good and that they feel that their English is improving. However, there were 2 pupils who did not feel comfortable during the activity, and they said that the activity was chaotic and that they did not feel comfortable asking every classmate.

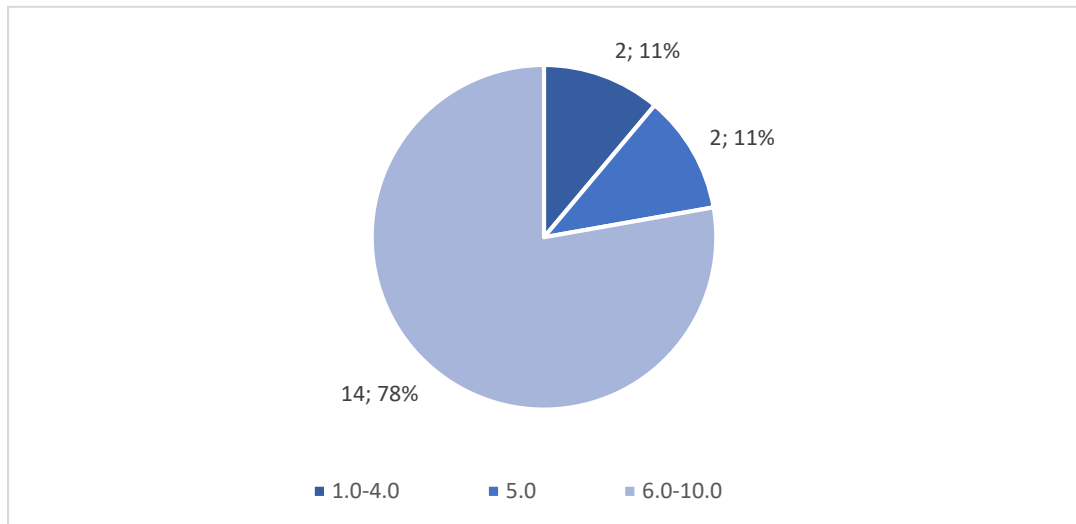


Figure 29: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale from 1 to 10 in the 6th grade.

Lastly, half of the class said that they felt better than during the previous activity. However, there were 28% of the pupils who felt worse during the activity.

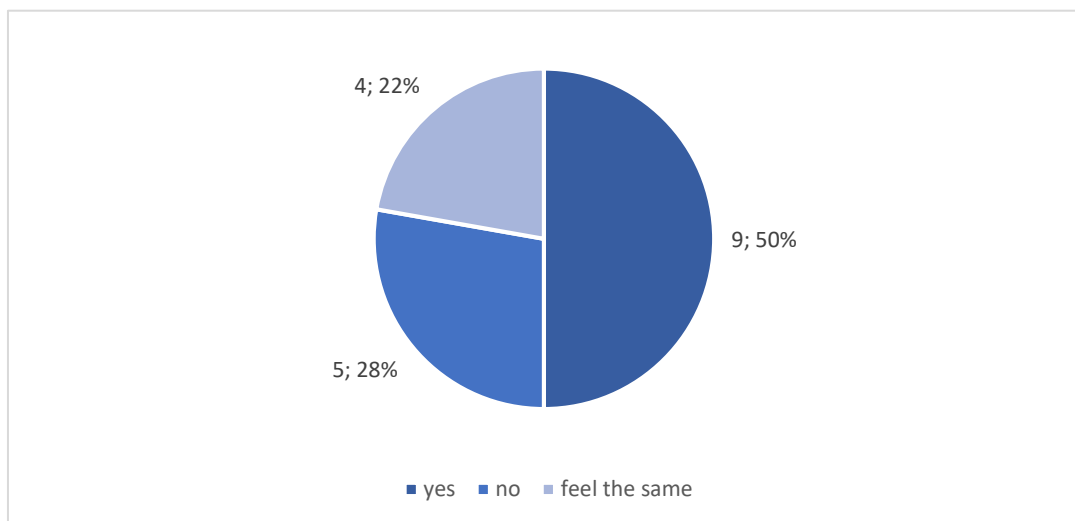


Figure 30: Pupils' feeling in comparison to a previous activity in the 9th grade.

Activity 4 (see Appendix n. 3, activity 4 for the activity description)

Activity Type: Roleplay

Activity Topic: Past continuous tense

The results show, that during this activity, most of the pupils spoke in English in at least 50%. There were 12 pupils who used it in more than 80% of the activity. However, there was one person, who used it in 40% maximum.

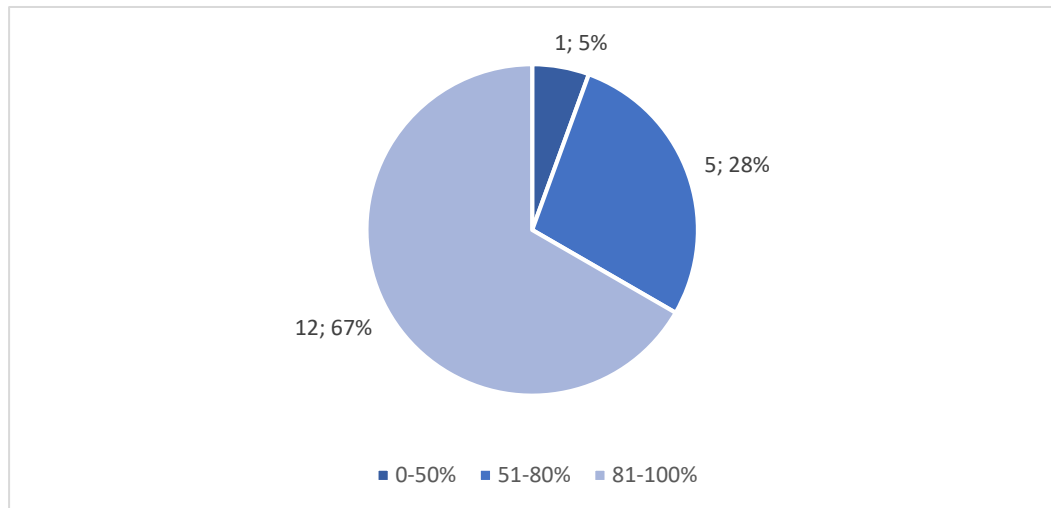


Figure 31: Usage of English to communicate in the 9th grade.

The results also suggest that more than half of the pupils felt comfortable during the activity and there were 4 pupils who said that they felt neutral. Those who felt comfortable, commented that it was due to the activity being engaging and there was space for creativity. On the other hand, there were 4 pupils who did not feel comfortable nor confident during the activity and they said that it was due to feeling bad in the group they were in.

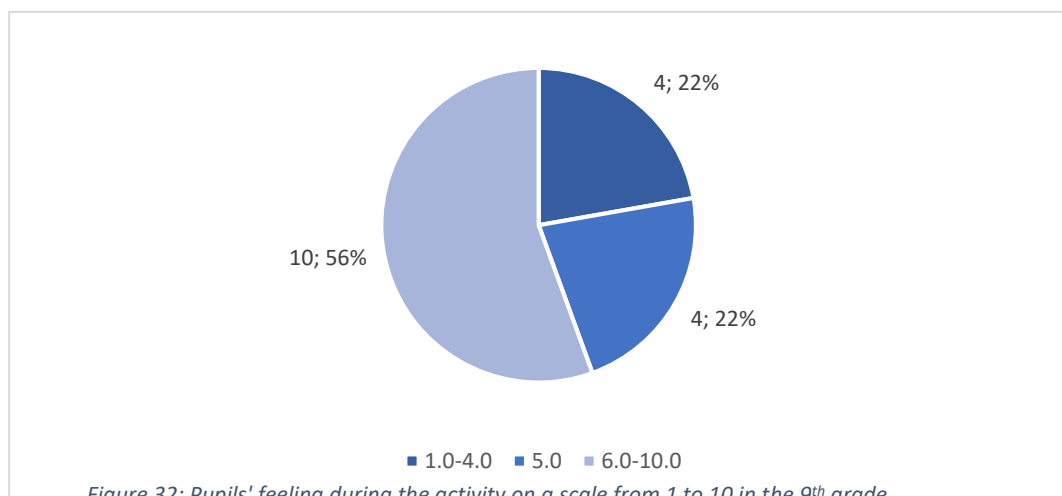


Figure 32: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale from 1 to 10 in the 9th grade.

Lastly, 8 pupils said that they felt better during the activity then during the previous one, there were 5 pupils who felt the same and all 5 of them added that it was in a good way and finally, there were 4 pupils who felt worse this time. Those were the four pupils who did not feel comfortable in their group.

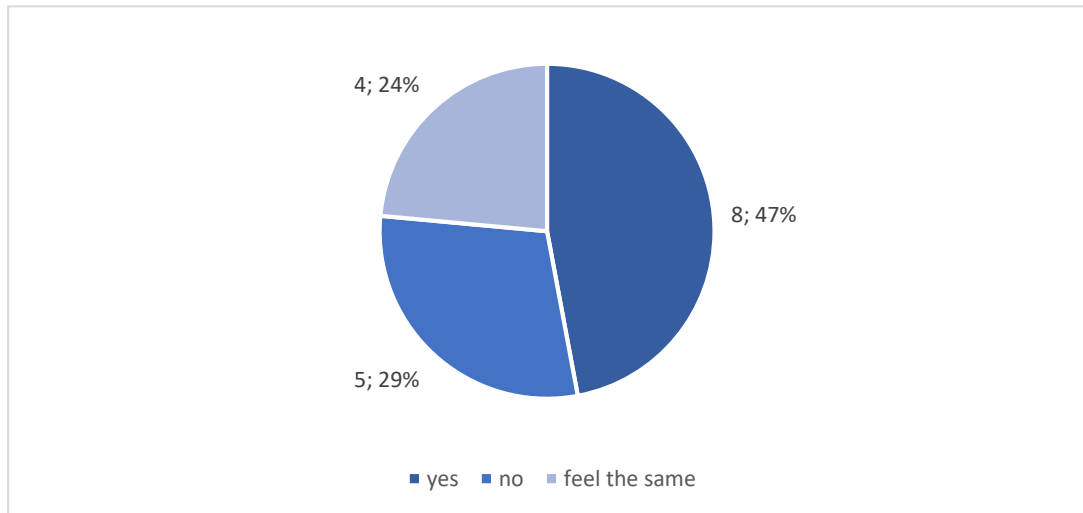


Figure 33: Pupils' feeling in comparison to a previous speaking activity in the 9th grade.

Activity 5 (see Appendix n. 3, activity 5 for the activity description)

Activity Type: Presentation

Activity Topic: Traditions

The results show that more than 60% of the pupils used English at 80% minimum. The rest of the pupils used English in at least 50% of their speaking. However, there were no pupils who would use Czech more than English language.

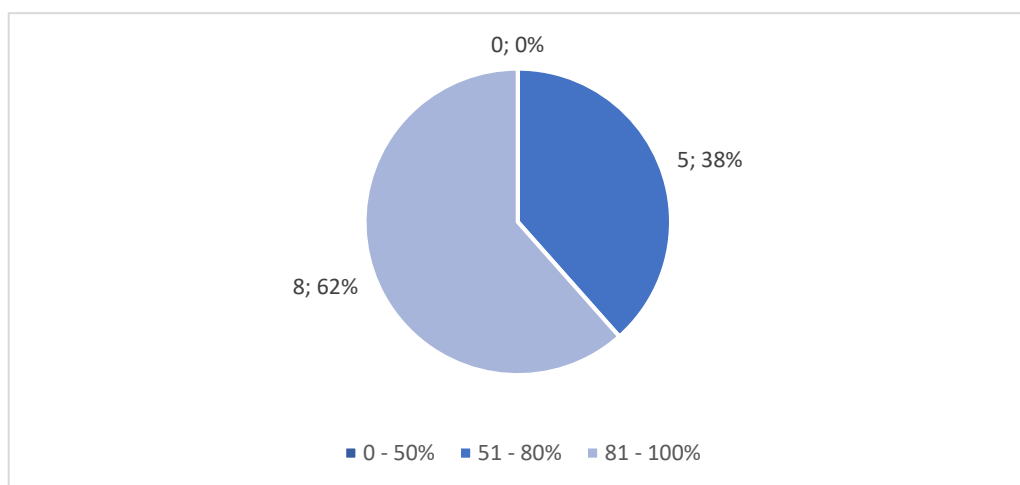


Figure 34: usage of English to communicate in the 9th grade.

There were more than 60% of the pupils whose feeling was on the more comfortable and confident side. Nobody stated that they would feel neutral during the activity. However, there were 5 pupils which make almost 40% of the class who stated that they felt rather uncomfortable during the speaking activity.

Some of the pupils even stated their reasons for their feelings. One pupil mentioned that they were having problems with pronunciation. Other pupils stated that they felt uncomfortable because they were nervous of speaking aloud in front of the whole class. Another pupil commented that they felt uncomfortable as they did not understand the instructions and they did not expect to present the project for the whole class but only to the teacher. Other comments were more on the positive side as one of the pupils commented that they felt comfortable because of the topic that they were presenting. Another pupil commented that they felt better because of the Erasmus trip they participated in.

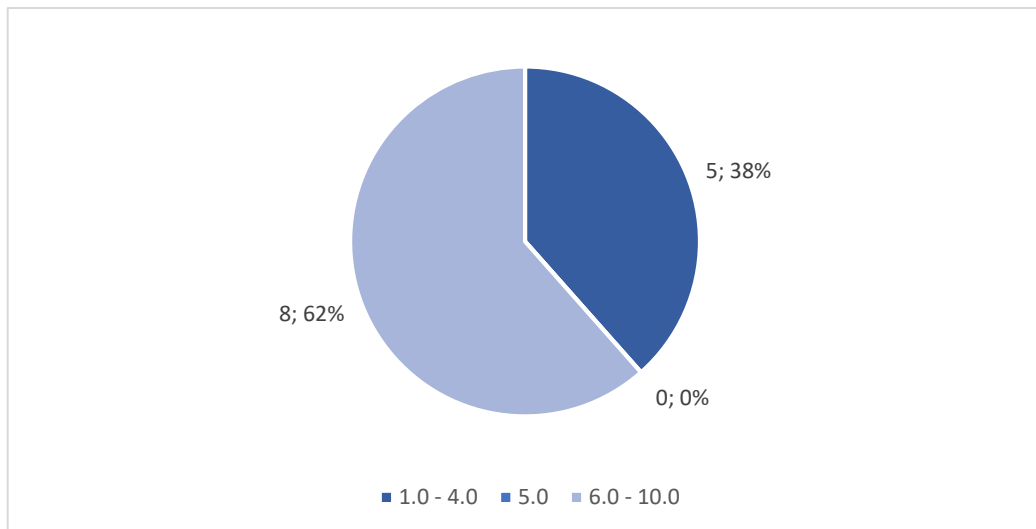


Figure 35: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale from 1 to 10 in the 9th grade.

Lastly, there were many pupils who mentioned that they did not feel better during the activity than during the previous one. 30% of the pupils stated that they felt the same as during the previous activity. However, they did not comment on whether it was positive or negative experience. Only 23% of the pupils said that they felt better during the speaking activity rather than during the previous one.

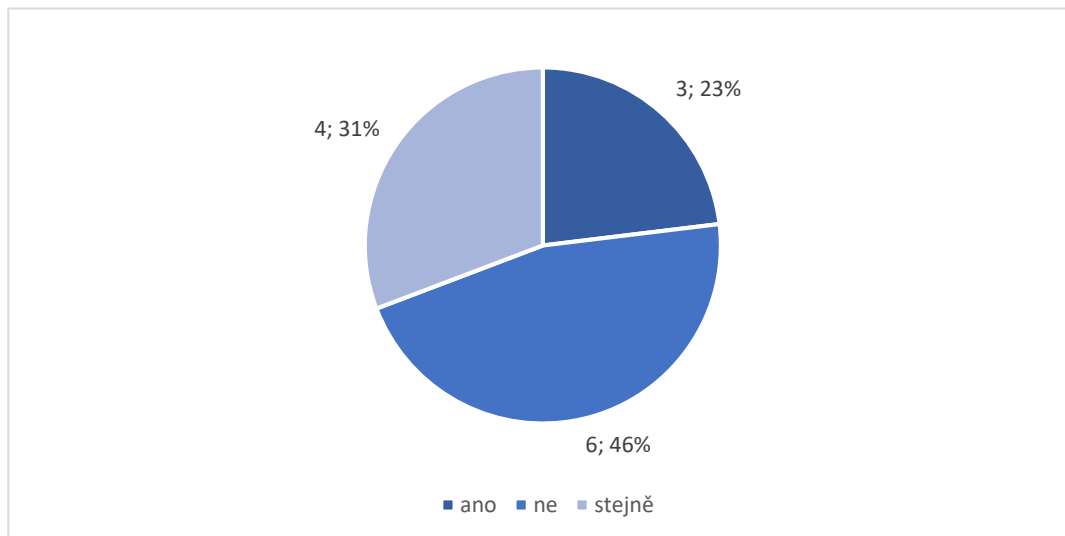


Figure 36: Pupils' feeling in comparison to a previous speaking activity in the 9th grade.

Assessment activity 1 (see Appendix n. 3, assessment activity 1 for the activity description)

Activity Type: Monologue/Interview

Activity Topic: Hobbies

The pupils who were assessed were given the questionnaires after speaking. The results show that almost 70% of the pupils used English in more than 80% of their speaking. The pupils also commented that they did not use English when they forgot a word, or they had to ask the teacher. Therefore, they used Czech only for the organization purposes connected to issues with vocabulary.

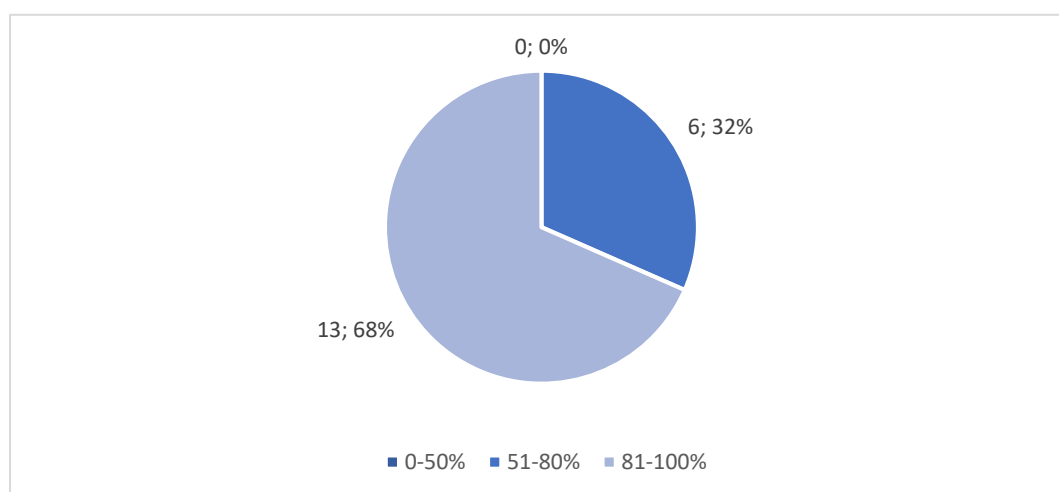


Figure 37: Usage of English to communicate in the 9th grade.

The pupils who were assessed and therefore took part in this speaking activity also answered the question about their feeling during the activity. The results indicate that there were pupils who did not feel very comfortable during the activity. Specifically, 21% of the pupils stated that they did not feel comfortable. There were 16% of the pupils who felt neutral and 63% percent of the pupils who stated that they felt comfortable during their speaking.

Some of the pupils commented on this issue and said that they were nervous a little bit at the beginning. However, during the speaking activity they started to feel comfortable.

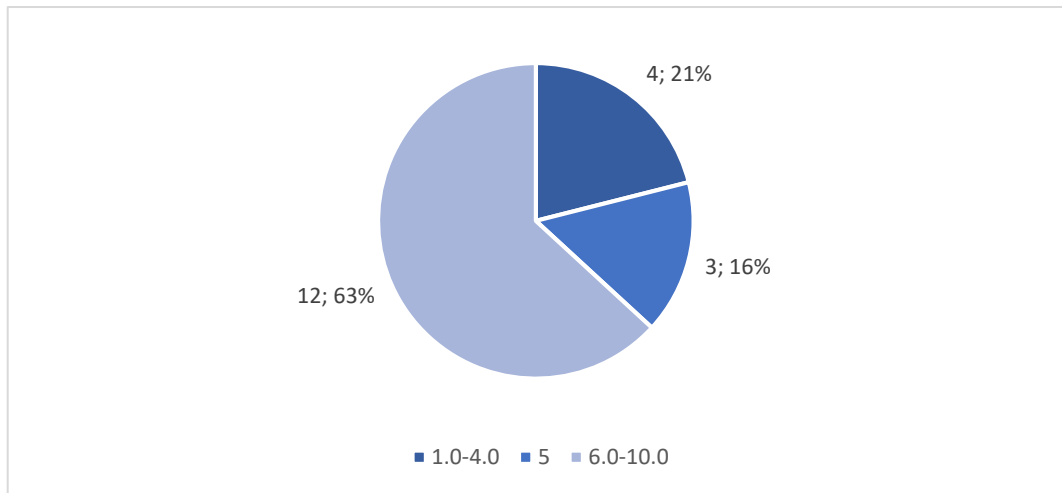


Figure 38: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale from 1 to 10 in the 9th grade.

Lastly, most of the pupils, 74% of them, stated that they felt better than during the previous activity. There were more than 20% feeling the same. However, there was also one pupil who felt worse during this speaking activity than during the previous one. This could be due to this activity being an assessment of their speaking skills.

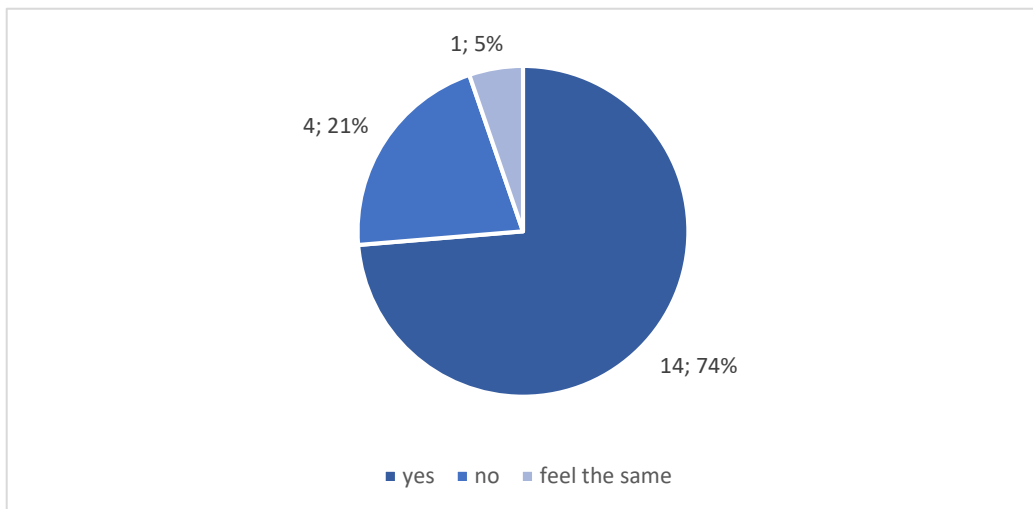


Figure 39: Pupils' feeling in comparison to a previous speaking activity in the 9th grade.

Assessment activity 2 (see Appendix n. 3, assessment activity 1 for the activity description)

Activity Type: Monologue/Interview

Activity Topic: Person description

This time, the teacher did not manage to assess as many pupils as in the previous time as the Christmas holidays were coming up. Even though, seven pupils were assessed, and the results show that all the pupils were speaking in English in at least 70% of the activity.

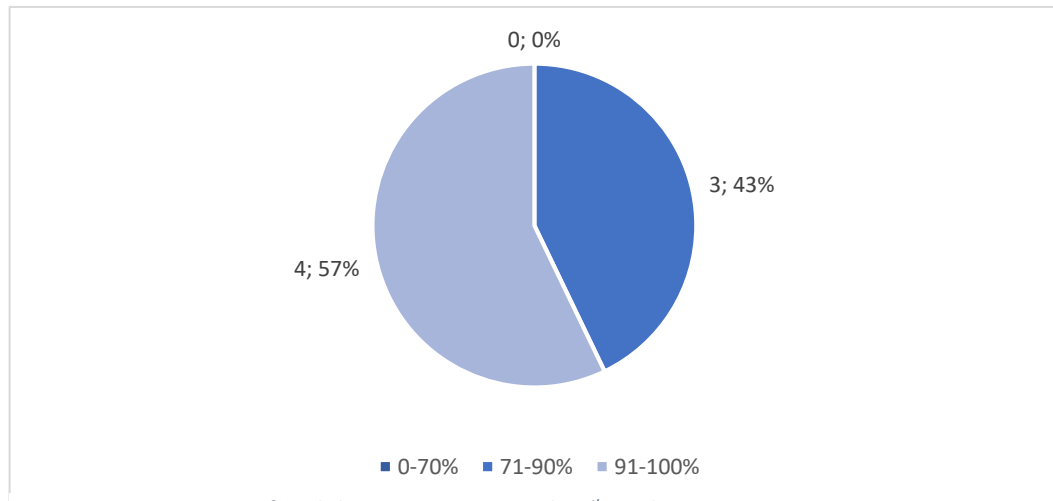


Figure 40: Usage of English to communicate in the 9th grade.

There were not any pupils who would rate themselves as feeling nervous or uncomfortable during the activity. There was only one person who stated that they felt neutral during the speaking and there were 6 pupils, which makes 86% of the pupils assessed, who said that their feeling was more on the comfortable and confident side of the scale. Two pupils commented on the speaking activity and said that they felt confident as they could prepare for the speaking at home.

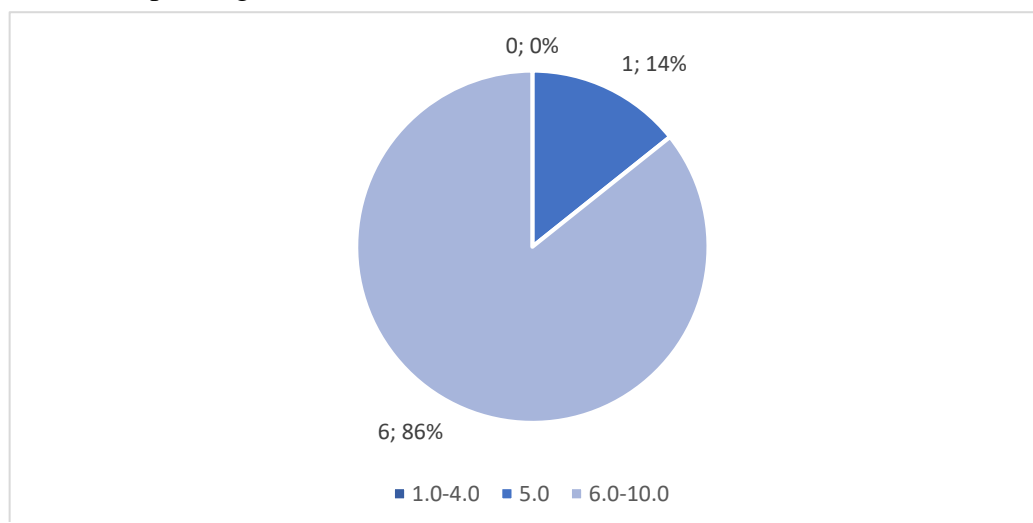


Figure 41: Pupils' feeling during the activity on a scale from 1 to 10 in the 9th grade.

Five of the 7 pupils stated that they felt better than during the previous speaking activity, there was one pupil who felt the same and one who felt worse than the previous time. However, they did not mention any reason for that.

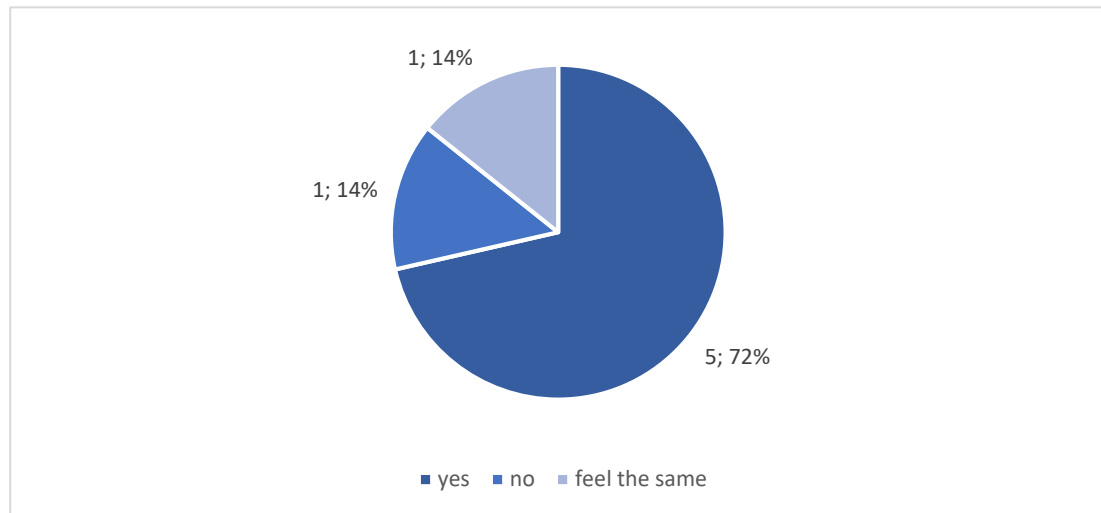


Figure 42: Pupils' feeling in comparison to a previous speaking activity in the 9th grade.

5.2.3. SUMMARY

The pupils in the 6th grade used English the most during the drill activity focused on practising present continues using speaking cards. On the other hand, the least successful activity in the case of using English was the conversation activity focused on talking about the house chores the pupils have and do not have to do.

The highest level of confidence was achieved during the first time using the speaking cards for present continuous. It is interesting, that during the second time, the pupils did not feel as comfortable. The lowest level of confidence was achieved during the conversational activity focused on chores.

In the 9th grade, the most successful activity in the context of English use was the roleplay alibi activity focused on past continuous. On the other hand, the pupils used English the least during the milling activity Find Someone Who. The pupils felt the most confident during the dialogue-oriented activity focused on talking about themselves. On the contrary, the least confidence was achieved during the Alibi roleplay even though the pupils were able to use English the most during that activity.

Nonetheless, the most successful activity in all the categories was the second assessment activity. It was the interview focused on character description. The ninth graders were able

to use English the most there and they felt the most confident out of all the activities conducted.

5.3. POST-RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE PART

After executing all the activities, the pupils in both classes – the 6th grade and the 9th grade were given the last type of the questionnaires in this part of the research.

The questionnaire consisted of 3 open questions and 2 closed questions. It was focused on summarizing the questionnaire research.

The first question of this questionnaire was focused on the changes that the pupils could notice in their confidence and feeling comfortable while speaking English. The pupils were supposed to create the answers themselves for the purpose of receiving as authentic answers as possible.

The second question was focused on specific activities that made the pupils feel more comfortable and confident or, on the other hand, less comfortable and nervous.

Question 3 was focused on the pupils' ideas or suggestions on the topic of feeling more comfortable during the process of developing their speaking skills.

The first closed question was focused on describing the feeling of the pupils on a scale with 1 being nervous and uncomfortable, 5 being neutral and 10 being comfortable and confident.

The second closed question was focused on identifying current problems with speaking English in the lessons.

5.3.1. 6TH GRADE

The results show that there are 12 pupils who feel that they have become more confident in their speaking during the 5-month period of the research happening. However, there are still 3 pupils who, according to themselves, did not become more confident nor comfortable while speaking English. The scale shows that currently, there are 13 pupils who feel comfortable and confident while speaking English.

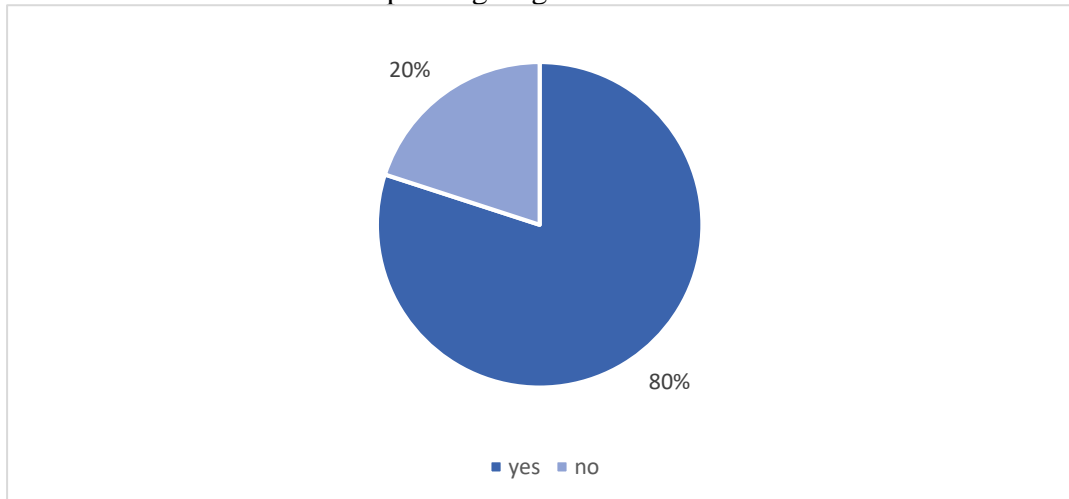


Figure 43: Improvement in confidence and comfort in the 6th grade.

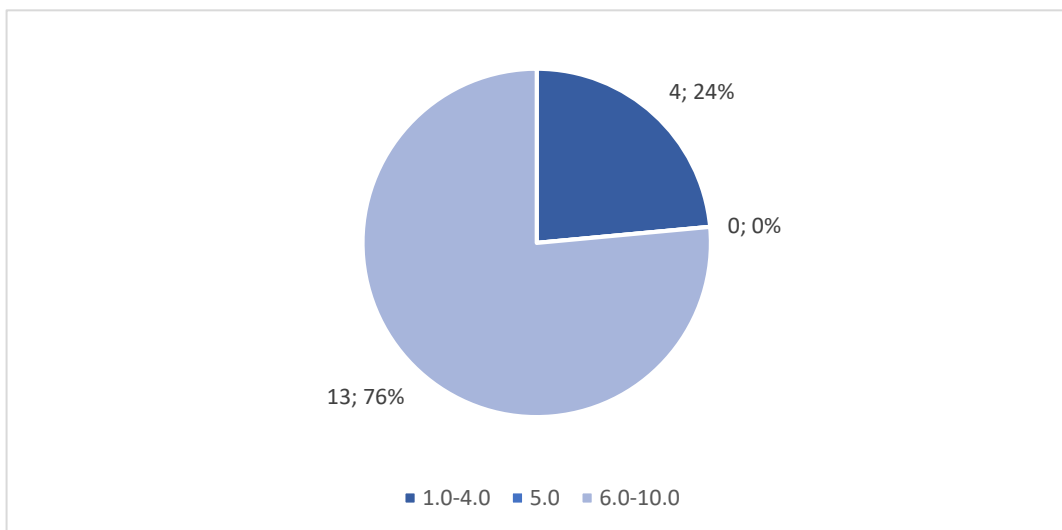


Figure 44: Feelings of the pupils during speaking after the research in the 6th grade.

Currently, there are 10 pupils who stated that they do not have any problems with speaking in English. The biggest problem in the 6th grade is formulation of the sentence.

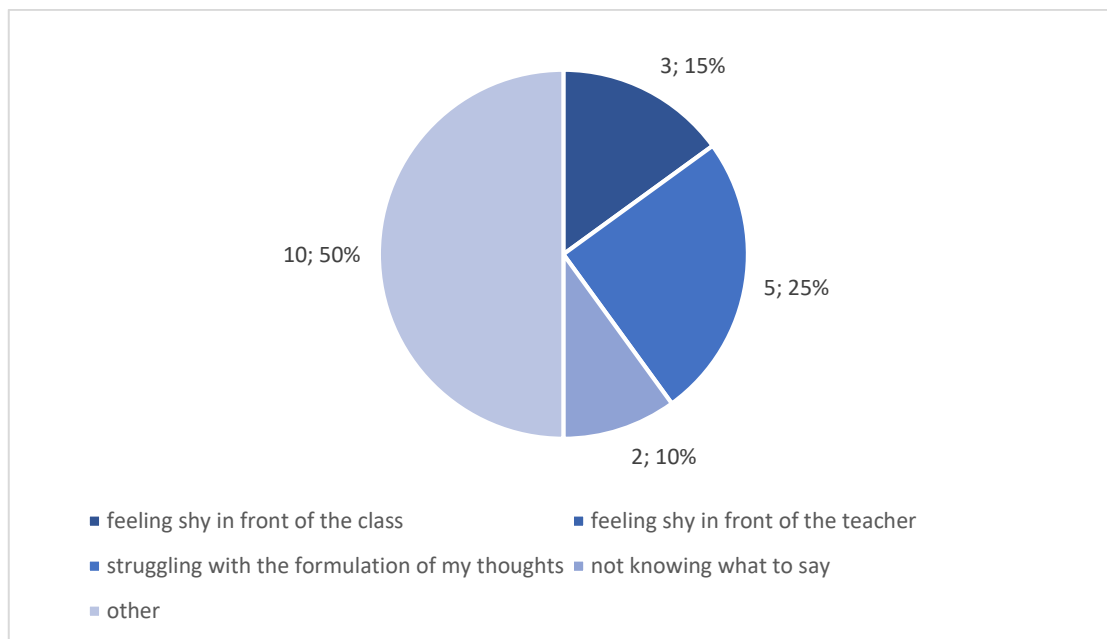


Figure 45: Issues preventing the pupils in the 6th grade from speaking after the research.

Further, pupils mentioned the activities that they felt the most comfortable about and those which they felt the most nervous about. Four pupils mentioned that they felt comfortable during every activity. Three pupils mentioned that the most comfortable activities were those where they worked in groups or in pairs with their friends. 4 pupils specified that the drill-focused shopping interview activity made them feel the most confident and comfortable. Two other pupils stated that the drill-focused present simple activity with speaking cards was the most comfortable for them.

Pupils did not mention any specific activity that would made them feel nervous or uncomfortable. Two pupils even specified that none of the activities made them feel uncomfortable.

Lastly, the pupils thought about ways that would help them with their speaking skills development as well as with feeling more confident during speaking. The pupils suggested that they would benefit from working in groups with their friends and not groups created by the teacher. Further they suggested oral speaking assessment as well as not talking in front of the whole class. Lastly, the pupils thought of practising speaking at home, practising pronunciation as well as silence in the classroom.

5.3.2. 9TH GRADE

In the ninth grade, there are 11 pupils who have noticed that they have become more confident in their speaking throughout the research time and 4 of the pupils have not. Two pupils commented on this question that they are still afraid of speaking in front of their classmates.

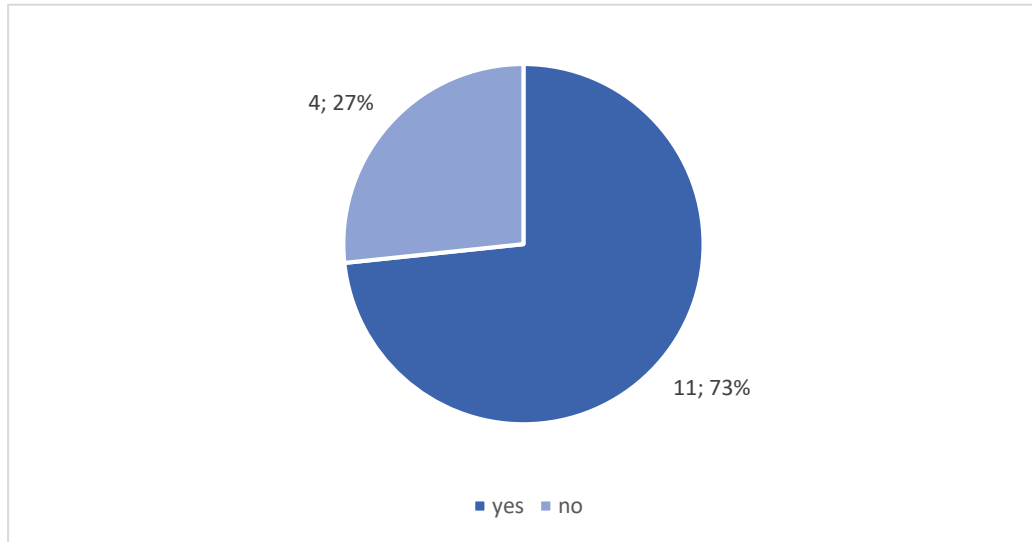


Figure 46: Improvement in confidence and comfort in the 9th grade.

The scale results show that currently there are 12 pupils feeling comfortable in the 9th grade, 3 pupils feeling neutral during speaking and there is a 1 person who feels rather nervous during speaking.

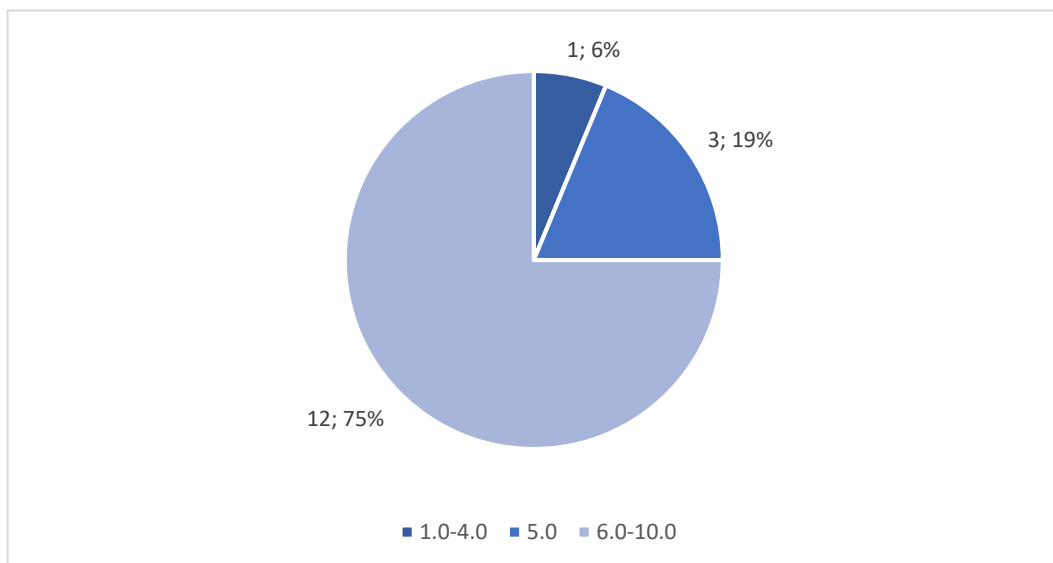


Figure 47: Feelings of the pupils during speaking after the research in the 9th grade.

Currently, there are 6 pupils whose problem with speaking is feeling shy when speaking in front of the whole class, 5 pupils have problems with formulation of a sentence and 5 pupils stated that they do not have any problems with speaking English.

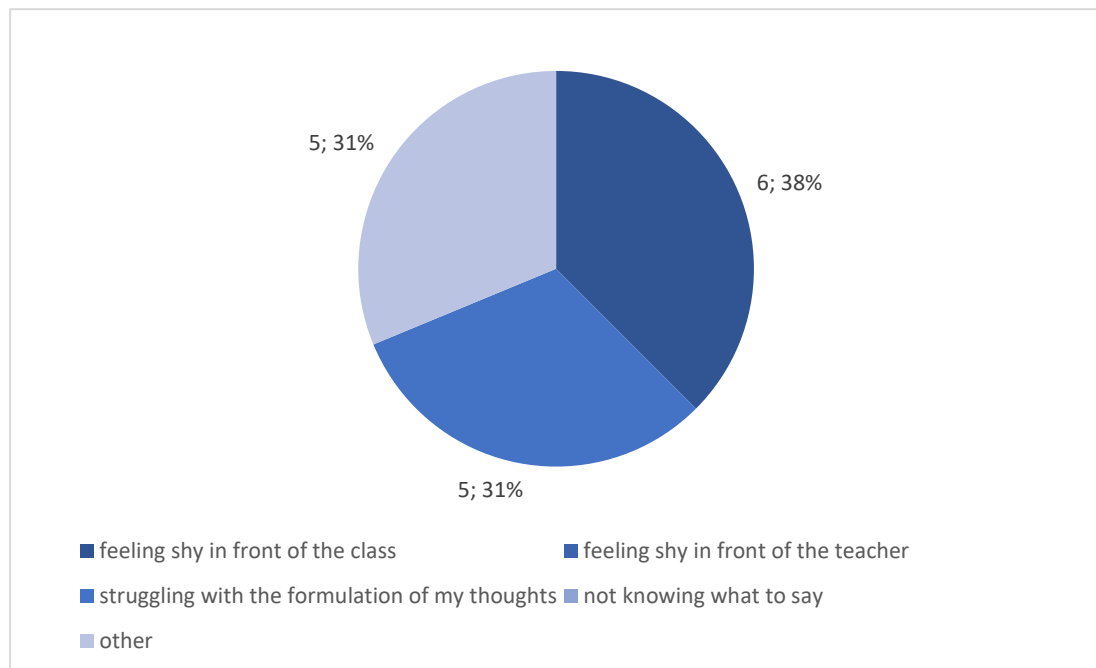


Figure 48: Issues preventing the pupils in the 9th grade from speaking after the research.

Many pupils suggested that speaking activities conducted in groups made them feel the most comfortable and confident in their speaking. There were also pupils who suggested the roleplay alibi activity the most comfortable one for them. There were even two pupils who stated that they felt comfortable during every speaking activity.

On the other hand, the pupils did not feel confident during presenting and talking in front of the whole class. There was one pupil who mentioned that the roleplay alibi activity made them feel uncomfortable the most. However, many pupils did not mention that there was an activity which made them feel especially nervous or uncomfortable.

The 9th graders also suggested ways that they felt could improve their speaking skills development as well as increase their confidence during speaking. Some of the pupils stated that games focused on practising speaking would be helpful, other pupils suggested practising at home as well. The pupils seemed to be aware of their own learning. However, many pupils suggested that the way to improve their speaking skills as well as become more confident in their speaking is simply to speak more in the English lessons.

5.3.3. SUMMARY

The number of pupils noticing that they have become more confident since the beginning of the research is similar in both grades – in the 9th grade 11 pupils and in the 6th grade 12 pupils. In the 9th grade there are 4 pupils and in the 6th grade there are 3 pupils who haven't noticed more confidence nor comfort.

In the 6th grade, there are 13 pupils who feel comfortable during speaking and in the 9th grade, there are 12 pupils. Both grades improved in the comfort of the pupils during speaking.

In the 6th grade, the biggest problem now is not knowing how to formulate the pupils' thoughts. In the 9th grade, the biggest problem is with shyness and speaking in front of the whole class. However, in both cases, there is an improvement as in both classes there are multiple pupils who selected that they do not have any problems with speaking in English.

The activities that made the pupils feel the most comfortable were group work and drill activities in the 6th grade and group work and roleplay in the 9th grade. In the 6th grade the pupils did not mention any activity as being the most uncomfortable. In the 9th grade, some of the pupils chose presentation to be the most uncomfortable for them.

As for the suggestions, both classes agreed on the need to practise speaking at home. Further, the 6th grade suggested assessment the speaking skill, "safe" group work and silence in the classroom. The 9th grade suggested speaking games and more speaking in the lessons in general.

6. RESEARCH RESULTS

The research shows that the teachers at this lower secondary school mainly apply activities that are based on questions and answers as well as drills. Other activities used are information-gap tasks or conversations. The teachers use speaking activities in every or in every other English lesson and they mainly organize the pupils into pairs or groups. However, they find the pupils working more effectively in pairs. The teachers do not apply a whole-class speaking activities often. All three teachers have noticed that the pupils may be nervous during speaking in English, and they find the reason for it to be the fear of making mistakes, focusing too much on accuracy and personal issues in the classroom. The research also showed that the teachers do not assess the pupils' speaking skills even though they assess other language skills.

The observations confirmed the usage of mainly pair-work and group-work. It also confirmed that the teachers apply mainly activities focused on questions and answers. During the observations, the teachers applied mainly interviews and conversations as the activities developing pupils' speaking skills.

Lastly, during the questionnaire research, there were applied mainly drills, further roleplay, information-gap task, and conversation in the 6th grade. The pupils felt the most comfortable during the drill activity. The least comfortable activity was a conversation. The pupils used English the most during a drill activity. The comments of the pupils show that the activity being exciting and funny helps the pupils feel more confident. Besides that, the pupils feel more comfortable when they speak with their friends.

Drill activity, roleplay, interviews, and monologues were applied in the ninth grade. The pupils felt the most comfortable and confident during the dialogue/interview activity and further during the assessed monologue. On the other hand, they felt the worst during the roleplay. During this activity, the pupils used English the most. The comments of the pupils explain that the pupils feel more confident and comfortable when they speak with their classmates that they are friends with.

The comfort of pupils during speaking increased throughout the research in both 6th and 9th grade and therefore, it can be assumed that practise also helped the pupils feel more comfortable and confident during speaking in English.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this diploma thesis focused on exploring the topic of application of activities that develop speaking skills of lower secondary level pupils. The aim of this diploma thesis was to introduce activities that develop speaking skills as well as to analyse the application of the speaking activities at a specific lower secondary school. Further, the secondary aim of the thesis was to explore the feelings of the lower secondary pupils during specific speaking activities.

The practical part of this diploma thesis was focused on exploring the speaking activities and their application at a specific lower secondary school. The primary aim of the practical part was to explore the current state of speaking skills developing activities and their application in the lower secondary English lessons. The secondary aim was to analyse the feelings of the pupils in the 6th and 9th grade during specific speaking activities. The research was conducted via three research methods – observations of English language lessons, interviews with English language teachers and questionnaires in 6th and 9th grades given to the pupils after specific speaking activity use.

The theoretical part of this diploma thesis introduced the speaking skills in general and it further focused on specific aspects of teaching speaking such as the methodology, principles, goals, and possible problems in teaching speaking. Afterwards, the theoretical part introduced specific types of speaking activities and their features.

The primary and the secondary aim of this diploma thesis were fulfilled in the research. The observations and interviews showed that the teachers at lower secondary school mostly apply activities that are focused on questions and answers, therefore dialogues, interviews and conversations. Further, they often use drill activities for developing speaking. The teachers usually apply speaking activities in every lesson, and they mostly organize the pupils into pairs. Further, the interviews and the questionnaires pointed to different reasons for pupils feeling confident and comfortable during speaking activities. In the 6th grade, the pupils felt confident when the activity was exciting for them. Furthermore, the pupils felt the most confident during a drill activity and the least confident during a conversation activity. In the 9th grade, the confident feeling was dependent on the pairs and small groups that the pupils were organized in. The pupils felt the most comfortable and confident during an assessment speaking activity that was in the form of a monologue and interview with the teacher. They felt the least comfortable during a role-play activity.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CLT Communicative Language Teaching

ALM Audio-Lingual Method

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Appendix n. 1 – Interview transcriptions

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APPENDIX N. 1 – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

Interviewer: Jak často využíváte aktivity na rozvoj mluvení v hodinách?

Teacher 2: Každou hodinu to asi nebude. Každou hodinu to asi nebude, ale celkem v té učebnici, Bloggers, tam ta cvičení většinou jsou, takže asi každou druhou hodinu, kdy je tam buď mluvení ve dvojici nebo ve skupinách, kdy mají spolu něco hodnotit. Nebo pak mám takové ty otázky do dvojic na sluchátka k mluvnicki, k minulému času, z All Things Topics nebo All Things Grammar, takže buď mluví ve dvojici na sluchátka nebo dostanou každý jednu otázku a hledají někoho ve třídě anebo často hrají Bingo, kdy musí najít někoho, kdo vstává v tolik a tolik. Takže si myslím, že každou druhou hodinu.

I: Jak organizujete žáky při aktivitách zaměřených na mluvení?

T2: Buď je to dvojice a jsou na sluchátkách nebo chodí po třídě, nebo když mají nějakou otázku, tak ve skupinkách, když mají něco prodiskutovat společně. Nebo mají před sebou ty otázky, otázku si vyberou, někomu ze skupiny dají tu otázku.

I: Ale jako celá třída ne.

T2: Celá třída, že by mluvila, to ne.

I: Mluví vaši žáci především anglicky?

T2: To záleží od úrovně žáků. Někteří se snaží, ale někteří, pokud u nich nestojím, tak sklouznou do té češtiny. A i když chodí po třídě, tak taky, radši si položí tu českou otázku než anglickou – je to těžké uhlídat.

I: A liší se to třeba podle rozdělení? Že by ve dvojici mohli mluvit více anglicky než třeba ve skupině? Nebo na tom nezáleží?

T2: Já si myslím, že to vyjde na stejno. Pokud je to dvojice, která chce, tak anglicky mluví. Když vedle sebe budou sedět ti, kteří nechtějí, tak budou mluvit česky.

I: Máte nějaký způsob, jak docílit toho, aby mluvili anglicky? A pokud, tak jak to monitorujete?

T2: To nedocílím. Prostě na začátku jim vždycky řeknu, že by měli mluvit anglicky a že to dělají pro sebe, že jediné tak se naučí, když budou poslouchat jeden druhého a budou mluvit, takže se snažím je spíše motivovat k tomu, aby opravdu mluvili anglicky, ale nedá se to uhlídat. Takže já jim říkám: „Když mluvíte česky, ubližujete sami sobě. Nenaučíte se, takže dělejte to pro sebe. Děláte to pro sebe, mluvte anglicky.“ Jinak se to nedá, v tom množství dětí. Musím důvěřovat, že anglicky mluví. Musí chtít sami.

I: Všimla jste si někdy, že by byli nervózní během mluvení?

T2: Určitě! Protože když si nejsou jistí tou slovní zásobou, tím, jak postavit větu – ti průměrní a slabší – nedokážou poskládat větu. Takže oni dokážou odpovědět jedním slovem, ale neumí odpovídat ve větě. To je ta jejich nejistota v tom, jestli je to správně anglicky nebo ne. Takže určitě ti slabší žáci nebo ti tišší, introverti, mají s tím problém, promluvit. I ve dvojici, i ve skupince, i ve třídě, když mají někoho najít, oslovit ho – to jim dělá problém. Ti, kteří jsou extrovertní, ti všechny převálcují.

I: A nutíte je, introverty, aby mluvili?

T2: Určitě. Ať to zkusí. Jinak se to nenaučí. A tam jim více vyhovuje ta práce ve dvojici se sluchátky, kde mají vedle sebe někoho, s kým si sednou, s kým si rozumí a nemají s tím mluvením problém. Horší je, když se posadí tichá holka k nějakému „zbojníkovi“, to je horší. To ona už moc nepromluví.

I: Ano. A poslední otázka je, jestli nějak hodnotíte mluvení žáků. A jestli, tak jakým způsobem?

T2: Nehodnotím. Abych sama pravdu řekla, vůbec nevím, jak bych to hodnotila. Tohle by se dalo možná hodnotit, kdyby byla frontální výuka a já bych diskutovala se třídou a ten, kdo by se nejvíce zapojil, toho bych ohodnotila a možná bych tím motivovala ty další, kteří by pak taky zvedli ruku a chtěli by mít taky jedničku.

I: Hodnotíte tedy schopnost psát, číst a poslouchat, ale schopnost mluvit ne. Je to tak?

T2: Ano, nehodnotím. Ono by správně mělo být, a vždycky si říkám, že k tomu někdy sáhnu, že žáci si vytáhnou téma a mluví, a to bych oznámkovala, ale teď je problém, že žáci nejsou zvyklí na zkoušení v žádném předmětu, před tabulí být zkoušení, stresujeme je zbytečně před tou tabulí. Jediné, co zkouším, ať už v ruštině nebo v angličtině, je rozhovor. Rozhovor, který máme připravený, zkoušeli jsme si ho v hodině, trénovali, a oni si ten rozhovor upraví na svoji situaci – tak rozhovor. U tabule.

I: Ve dvojici?

T2: Ve dvojici. Každý ví, co bude říkat, jak bude mluvit. Ale jinak ne.

I: Děkuji.

Interviewer: jak často využíváte aktivity na rozvoj mluvení v hodině?

Teacher 1: Aktivity na mluvení – docela dost, často. Vždycky to minimálně jednou zařadím.

I: Jednou za hodinu?

T1: Ano, každou hodinu máme aktivitu na mluvení. Bez toho to nejde. Takže se něco naučíme, potom to

procvičíme a potom musí i mluvit.

I: Dobře. Jak žáky organizujete během mluvení?

T1: Většinou mluví ve dvojici, protože ve dvojici je to pro ně jednodušší a občas hrajeme hru, kdy musí

mluvit před třídou – takovou tu slovní kopanou, kdy jeden mluví a ostatní poslouchají a pak mluví

další. To je asi to, co nejvíce použiji.

I: Takže dvojice nebo třeba celá třída, ale nějaké větší skupiny ne?

T1: Někdy hrajeme i teamové hry, kdy mají aktivitu v teamech, musí se společně domluvit, ale to není

každou hodinu. Aktivitu na mluvení máme každou hodinu, ale v těch dvojicích, ale teamové hry máme občas.

I: Mluví žáci při aktivitě na rozvoj mluvení především anglicky?

T1: Musí! Já zakazuji mluvit česky, takže jedine anglicky. Jinak to nemá smysl.

I: Takže mluví anglicky ze 100 %?

T1: Měli by. Problém je v tom, že já je obcházím, poslouchám a kolikrát tam tu češtinu slyším, takže je

zarazím, opravím a řeknu jim, že musí mluvit anglicky.

I: A liší se to podle rozdělení? Ve dvojici by třeba více mluvili anglicky než v té větší skupince?

T1: Těžko říct. Většinou, když pracují ve skupince, tak se najdou dva, kteří mluví a zbytek ne. Myslím

si, že ta dvojice je dobrá v tom, že tam se neschová nikdo, tam prostě musí reagovat.

I: Jak docílíš toho, aby žáci mluvili a jak monitoruješ to, že anglicky mluví?

T1: zadám jim nějakou aktivitu a donutím je. Většinou je to aktivita, která je baví, rozhovor, který je

zaujme, který by chtěli třeba i rozvádět, ale zas ne všichni se nechají namotivovat. Někoho nebaví

vůbec nic. Takže to je potom těžký. Jsou to aktivity, kdy mluví o sobě, o přátelích, o rodině.

I: A zkontroluješ to tím, že chodíš po třídě a posloucháš.

T1: Chodím po třídě, poslouchám je, dám jim doplňující otázky, opravím je, když to uznám za vhodné.

Někdy je ani neopravuji, protože oni se potom zaseknou.

I: Všimla jste si, že by někdy při byli při mluvení nervózní?

T1: Určitě! Já si myslím, že nejtěžší je pro ně, když mají mluvit před celou třídou. Je to individuální,

jsou jedinci, kteří rádi mluví a hlasitě, ale většina se spíš bojí – aby to nebylo špatně. Já mám třeba

kroužek English Café a ptala jsem se dětí, co je motivuje k tomu, aby tam chodili a oni řekli, že právě to

mluvení. Že oni se bojí, že to, co řeknou bude špatně gramaticky, takže to radši neřeknou vůbec a

taky tam může být nedostatečná slovní zásoba v mnoha případech, že neví.

I: Hodnotíte nějak mluvení žáků?

T1: Ne, vůbec. Myslím si, že by to asi nebylo dobrý. Fér. Protože vím, že někteří mají velmi pěknou

angličtinu a někteří úplně ne, dělá jim velký problém se vyjádřit, mají třeba dobrou psanou formu,

dokážou doplňovat do textu, nemají s tím problém, ale s mluvením ano. Takže hodnocení probíhá

pouze formou testů ze slovíček. Nebo máme ty týmové aktivity, projekty a za to jsou také hodnocení.

Ale nezkouším je ústně před tabulí a ani za to jak mluví nebo čtou je nehodnotím.

I: Ale dalo by se říct, že hodnotíte schopnost psát, číst a poslouchat, ale schopnost mluvit ne. Je to tak?

T1: Nezahrnuji to do celkového hodnocení, i když je nutím mluvit. Hodinu vedu většinou pouze

anglicky, když vidím, že nerozumí, tak to nějak přeložím, ale vesměs se snažím mluvit pouze anglicky.

I: Dobře. Děkuji.

Interviewer: Jak často využíváte aktivity k rozvoji mluvení v hodině?

Teacher 3: V každé hodině.

I: Jak organizujete žáky při mluvení?

T3: Pokud opakujeme, uděláme modelovou situaci – třeba já a nějaký silnější žák, vysvětlím instrukce a pak děti procvičují obvykle ve dvojicích nebo trojicích, v menších skupinkách. Podle toho, jak to vychází a pak ty skupinky střídám. Vždycky chci, aby to dítě nemluvalo jen s jednou osobou, ale aby mluvili s někým, s kým ještě ten den nemluvili. A vím, že se to opakuje, ale je to v podstatě dril, to znamená, že je to výborné. Asi ve větších skupinách moc ne, protože pak se tam už někdo veze.

I: A celá třída taky ne.

T3: Celá třída – možná když dokončíme nějakou aktivitu a celá třída poslouchá, tak někoho třeba náhodně vyvolám, abychom si to ještě zopakovali.

I: Mluví žáci především anglicky?

T3: Těžko říct. Myslím si, že když procvičujeme tu konkrétní věc, tak ano. Ale taková ta organizace jako „Kdo začne“ atd. tak to ne.

I: Takže přímo aktivita je v AJ?

T3: Myslím si, že ano. Protože i často míváme na tabuli nějaké záchytné body, aby oni věděli. Mají se čeho držet a myslím si, že to plní. A já se i snažím sondovat a sledovat ty děti, sem tam něco poslechnu, ale zároveň je nechci vyvést z komfortu, takže to občas skutečně nechám na ně. A myslím si, že můžu věřit, že to dělají.

I: A máte pocit, že se liší to mluvení podle toho, jak jsou rozdělení – do dvojice, trojice?

T3: Asi to není o tom, kolik jich tam je, ale kdo tam je.

I: Jak docílíte toho, že žáci doopravdy mluví anglicky?

T3: Aby všechno říkali anglicky – k tomu jsme se zatím nedostali. Sama sklouzávám k tomu, že ty pokyny pak dávám česky. Možná to je zbytečné. Ale chodím mezi dětmi, poslouchám, občas někoho opravím, zkouším se zaměřit na výslovnost, požádám je, aby něco zopakovali. A snažím se zaměřit v různých hodinách na jiné děti.

I: Všimla jste si někdy, že by byli při mluvení anglicky nervózní?

T3: V lavici si myslím, že moc ne. Záleží možná, jaký partner na ně vyjde. Někdy ta nervozita může přijít, protože tu aktivitu opakujeme třeba deset minut, možná i 15, s malými změnami, někdy trvám i na tom, aby mluvili s někým, s kým ještě ten den nemluvili, takže pak může dojít k nervozitě, protože někdo nechce s někým mluvit, jsou v tom i osobní věci. Jednoznačně pokud někoho vyvolám před tabulí, prezentovat něco, tak tam se dostaví ta

nervozita. To se mi stalo s devátáky a když jsme to potom rozebírali, protože se snažím hledat něco, abych je tolik nevystavovala stresu, tak řekli, že by jim třeba pomohlo se jen postavit v lavici. Tak to jsou jen takové maličkosti. Ale na druhou stranu si uvědomuji, že je potřeba to dělat – aby ty děti zažily tu pravou realitu, protože ono je komfortní být s někým ve své lavici.

I: Hodnotíte nějak mluvení žáků anglicky??

T3: Hodnotím ho obecně. Dávám malé jedničky za konverzaci a když vidím, že někdo fakt funguje, tak dostane malou jedničku z konverzace. A můžu říct, že bych se chtěla inspirovat tebou a zkusit, už jsem i zadala téma a některé děti se mi přihlásily, že by chtěly jít mluvit. A jinak nehodnotím. A nepiplám se v korektnosti. Chci, aby to dítě mělo zájem komunikovat a chci, aby i ti šikovnější se nebáli ostatní opravovat.

I: Dobře. Děkuji, to je všechno.

APPENDIX N. 2 – ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTIONS IN THE 6TH GRADE

Activity 1

Activity Type: Drill

Activity Topic: Present continuous tense

Another activity that was conducted in the sixth grade was focused on practising the present continuous tense. The activity could be described as a drill activity.

In the activity, the pupils were working in groups of four and each group was given a set of speaking cards. These speaking cards were focused on practising present continuous tense. There was a picture of a person doing a certain activity, under the picture, there was the subject of the sentence to be made and there was the name of the activity that the pupils should create a sentence in present continuous with. On the other side of the card, there were the affirmative, negative, and interrogative sentences created for the pupils to be able to check the correct answers. The pupils were supposed to each take one card and create the affirmative present continuous sentence based on the picture and the help of the words on the card. The other pupils in the group were supposed to listen to their classmate and if needed help them or correct them. Once the pupil created the sentence, the group was supposed to check the correct answer on the other side of the card. Once the whole group created their sentences, they were supposed to exchange the cards in the group and create a negative form for the activity happening in the picture. Once the groups have finished both rounds of the activity, they exchanged their set of cards with another group and repeated the activity. Therefore, the activity happened four times.

The teacher was walking throughout the classroom, listening to the pupils speak. Subjectively, the pupils were speaking in English throughout the activity when they were describing what is happening in the picture on a particular card. However, they do not use English when speaking in an English lesson outside of a specific activity. Therefore, when they wanted to correct their classmate's sentence or when they wanted to ask their classmate or the teacher something, they used Czech language.

Activity 2

Activity Type: Drill/Picture description

Activity Topic: Present continuous tense

The activity was focused on practising present continuous using a set of speaking cards. This was the second time doing this activity as it was a preparation for an upcoming unit test.

The pupils were working in groups of three or four and this time they were given 8 cards per group. The pupils were supposed to describe what is happening in the picture on the card using the verb and the subject given on the speaking card. They were speaking one at a time and the rest of the group was listening to them. The pupils then checked their answer with the back side of the card. The pupils were taking turns in describing the activities happening in the pictures of their cards. Once they were finished with the affirmative sentences, they were supposed to exchange the cards in the group and create a negative sentence for their pictures. After finishing the two rounds, the groups exchanged the cards within the classroom and the activity happened again.

The teacher was walking through the classroom, they were listening to the pupils and if necessary, they helped them with the sentence formulation.

Subjectively, most of the pupils were speaking in English and they were actively participating as well as listening to their classmates and occasionally even correcting the sentences. However, there were pupils who had trouble focusing on multiple rounds of the activity.

Activity 3

Activity Type: Information-Gap (Describe and Draw)

Activity Topic: Present continuous tense

The activity was focused on practising present continuous tense, and it could be considered an information-gap activity, specifically Describe and draw activity.

During the activity, the pupils were divided into pairs. They sat back-to-back, one of them were describing what they were doing and wearing at that time and the other one was drawing according to their classmate's speech. Once the pairs were finished with the first drawing, the other pupil from the pair started with the description. After both pupils in the pair were finished, they observed the drawings and if they are drawn correctly.

The teacher was listening to the pupils, but they did not interrupt their speech in any way. Subjectively, some of the pupils had trouble describing what they were doing, but all the pupils managed to describe their clothes. There was not a problem in using English but in figuring out what to say.

Activity 4

Activity Type: Drill, Roleplay, Dialogue

Activity Topic: Shopping

The activity was focused on a conversation between a shop assistant and a customer in a clothes shop. The activity could be considered a roleplay as well as a drill activity as the pupils were practising a dialogue which was prepared by the teacher.

First, the whole class read the dialogue with the teacher to focus on the pronunciation and any unknown vocabulary. Furthermore, the pupils created pairs and decided who the shop assistant will be and who the customer will be. They also received visuals with the clothes they should talk about. The pupils took turns according to their roles and first they read the dialogue aloud. They repeated the reading few times until they were confident to try on their own. However, they still had the opportunity to look at the dialogue as it was on the interactive whiteboard. Later, they switched their roles and practised the dialogue again. Further, the pupils were given vocabulary they could switch in the dialogue to make it different, for instance the products they were buying in the shop. Finally, each of the pairs performed their dialogue for the whole class using the visuals to simulate choosing the clothes, colour, and size.

The activity took 40 minutes, and the teacher observed the pupils during the activity. They were listening to the pupils and observed their role-playing. Subjectively, the pupils were very active, and they used only English during the dialogue. They very successfully used the visuals to simulate the shopping. Sometimes, there was a problem with pronunciation, for instance the pronunciation of sure or changing rooms. However, the pupils were not afraid to ask about it. There was only one pupil who was afraid to speak in front of the class and therefore they were not forced. Instead, the teacher performed the dialogue with the remaining pupil. From the point of the teacher, this activity was a successful one as the pupils were speaking English, they did not seem to be afraid to speak and they used suitable vocabulary.

Activity 5

Activity Type: Conversation

Activity Topic: have to, house chores

In this activity, the focus was on practising house chores and have to. The activity shows features of a casual talk and a dialogue.

The pupils worked in pairs, and they were telling each other the house chores that they have to do regularly at home. The pupils had to create the sentences on their own. However, the teacher wrote the beginning of the sentence on the whiteboard. Therefore, the pupils could look at the board and create the sentence. The pupils were creating only affirmative sentences.

The teacher was observing the pupils, and they were walking through the classroom throughout the activity. The pupils were speaking in English a lot. However, some of the pupils did not understand the instructions and therefore the teacher had to explain it again. Sometimes, there was a problem with the chores vocabulary.

APPENDIX N. 3 – SPEAKING ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTIONS IN THE 9TH GRADE

Activity 1

Activity Type: Dialogue/Interview

Activity Topic: Character Features

In this activity, the focus was on practising talking about themselves according to questions in the coursebook. Therefore, the activity could be considered pair work, dialogue, or an interview.

The pupils were divided into pairs by drawing a coin in a particular colour and then making a pair with a classmate with the same colour. Further, the pupils took turns in asking questions given by the course book and answering them truthfully.

The teacher was observing the class and listening to their speech. However, they were not interrupting the speaking in any way. There was one pair who did not want to talk together as, at that time, they were not talking with each other. Therefore, they decided to write their answers. Otherwise, the pupils were active during the activity, and they were participating mostly in English.

Activity 2

Activity Type: Dialogue/Interview/Questionnaire

Activity Topic: can, cannot

The activity was focused on asking and answering questions; therefore, it could be considered an interview as well as a group work as the pupils worked in groups. The pupils created groups of 3 or 4 people and they were given a set of 16 questions focused on can and cannot. The questions were not focused only on abilities like playing a musical instrument or playing football, but for example on *What can you do to make yourself happy?* or *What six animals can eat you?* The questions were created in a way that the pupils had to think a little bit about the answer.

During the activity, one of the pupils chose a question strip, read it and all the pupils in the group had to answer the question. The teacher was observing the class, and they were listening to the pupils. Subjectively, the pupils were talking in English all the time. At least every time, the teacher observed them. The pupils were actively participating and really thinking deeply about their answers.

Activity 3

Activity Type: Drill (Milling activity)

Activity Topic: past simple

This activity was called Find Someone Who and it was focused on practising the past simple. It can be considered a milling activity which is described as a type of a drill activity.

The pupils were given a worksheet with a set of sentences focusing on past simple and the Christmas experience. They were supposed to first prepare their questions and write them into the worksheet. Further, they had to walk around the classroom and ask their classmates questions in past simple. If the pupil gave them positive answer, they wrote the name of the pupils in the worksheet.

Subjectively, the pupils were speaking in English with each other, and they actively participated in the activity. However, sometimes, they started talking Czech to make the activity easier for them.

Activity 4

Activity Type: Role-play

Activity Topic: past continuous

Another activity was focused on practising past continuous tense through making alibi. The activity was conducted as a roleplay and there were 2 pupils chosen to be the suspects and the rest of the pupils were the police officers. The two “suspects” went into the hallway, and they had to craft an alibi for the time of the crime. The rest of the pupils had to create a set of questions that they would ask during the interrogation. Once both parts were prepared, the “police officers” created 2 groups and each of the suspects was interrogated by one group. However, they were asking them the same questions. When finished, the suspects switched the groups of police officers, and they were interrogated again with the same set of questions. After finishing the second round of interrogation, the police sat together and compared the notes. The suspects were sent into the hallway. As the suspects could not prepare the alibi to fit every police’s question, there emerged funny situations which the police further could build their case on. The goal in this activity was to find a proof that the alibi does not fit.

The pupils participated very actively during the activity. The “suspects” crafted the alibi very well and the “police” created their questions well, too. The pupils took the activity very responsibly and took notes about the “suspect’s” answers. They tried to use English as much

as possible, but there were occasions when they wanted to ask a question that was not prepared and ended up using a mixture of English and Czech.

The teacher was observing the class, and they were in the role of an organizer which controlled mainly the timing of the activity.

Activity 5

Activity Type: Presentation

Activity Topic: Traditions

This speaking activity was focused on presenting a piece of information to the whole class therefore, the activity is a presentation. The pupils received a signing sheet to create groups and choose the topic. All the topics were focused on American holidays and traditions. The pupils first had to create a poster with the information about their American holiday. Further, they themselves prepared the speech in the groups and presented their holiday.

During the presentation, the pupils chose to stay in their seats. The teacher and the rest of the class listened to the presentation of the pupils and afterwards, the teacher emphasized the positive things about the pupil's presentations of the holidays.

Subjectively, the pupils all were participating in the presentation. There were minor mistakes in their speech. However, those did not prevent the information from being shared properly. The pupils sometimes used Czech words in their English sentences, but that did not stop them from speaking which the teacher appreciated.

Assessment Activity 1

Activity Type: Monologue/Interview

Activity Topic: Hobbies

This speaking activity was conducted through an assessment of the speaking skills. It was a monologue type of speaking activity focused on speaking about one's hobbies. The pupils were instructed to prepare a monologue about their hobbies. In the lesson, they were supposed to sit with their teacher and speak about their hobbies while the rest of the class was working on another task.

The pupils were quite interested in this activity, and they were volunteering to speak about their hobbies with the teacher. The teacher was listening to the speech, they did not interrupt the speech of the pupils and they were writing notes on a piece of paper. When the pupils did not know what else to say, the teacher asked a question or tried to give the pupils other ideas that they could talk about. Subjectively, the majority of the pupils seemed

comfortable during speaking, they were mostly communicating in English, and they were able to answer all of the teacher's questions. The rest of the pupils were working on their specific task. However, they engaged in louder talk occasionally and it was difficult to manage to calm the class while communicating with the assessed pupil and reacting to the information the pupil was saying.

Assessment Activity 2

Activity Type: Monologue/Interview

Activity Topic: Person Description

This speaking activity was focused on the assessment of the speaking skills of the pupils. It was in the form of a monologue, and it was focused on describing a person. The pupils had a chance to prepare their speech at home and further they were supposed to verbally describe the person that they chose, to the teacher. As with the first assessment speaking activity, the rest of the class worked on another task and therefore their attention was not on their classmate speaking.

Subjectively, the pupils seemed comfortable and not very nervous while speaking. Some of them had their notes with them to glance at, some of them did not. Some of the pupils mentioned that they did not prepare at home and that they will try to figure out the speech on the spot. The teacher was making notes but did not interrupt the speech of the pupils. Once the pupils finished speaking, the teacher went through their notes with the pupil and explained possible mistakes. The pupils spoke in English in most of their speaking time. They only spoke Czech outside of the speech.

APPENDIX N. 4 – QUESTIONNAIRES

Pre-research questionnaire

Pre-research questionnaire

1. Na stupnici od 1 do 10, jak se během mluvení anglicky ve třídě, před spolužáky, cítíte? (1 – velmi špatně, 5 neutrálně, 10 – velmi dobře/sebevědomě)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Které z možností ti brání v mluvení anglicky v hodinách? (označ všechny možnosti, které platí)

- a. stydím se mluvit před třídou
- b. stydím se mluvit před učitelem
- c. nevím, jak zformulovat to, co chci říct
- d. nevím, co říct
- e. jiné: _____

3. Co byste chtěli získat během procvičování mluvení v angličtině?

- a. chtěl/a bych se naučit plynule mluvit v angličtině
- b. chtěl/a bych se umět domluvit v zahraničí
- c. chtěl/a bych být během mluvení sebevědomější
- d. jiné: _____

Research questionnaire

Research questionnaire

1. Mluvil/a jsi během této aktivity po celou dobu anglicky? Z kolika procent jsi mluvil/a anglicky a z kolika procent sis pomohl/a češtinou?

2. Na stupnici od 1 do 10, jak bys ohodnotila to, jak ses cítil/a během této aktivity (1 – velmi špatně, nervózně; 5 – neutrálně; 10 – velmi dobře, sebevědomě)? Proč?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Cítil/a ses během mluvení sebevědoměji než při předchozí aktivitě na mluvení?

Post-research questionnaire

Post-Research Questionnaire

1. Všiml/a sis během uplynulých měsíců nějaké změny ve tvém sebevědomí během mluvení anglicky?

2. Na stupnici od 1 do 10, jak se během mluvení anglicky ve třídě, před spolužáky, cítíte? (1 – velmi špatně, 5 neutrálně, 10 – velmi dobře/sebevědomě)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Byly nějaké specifické aktivity, během kterých ses cítil/a více sebevědomě během mluvení a méně nervózní? Které to byly? Byly naopak aktivity, během kterých ses cítil/a více nervózní? Které to byly?

4. Máš pocit, že se obecně cítíš během mluvení anglicky více komfortně a sebevědomě?

5. Které z možností ti brání v mluvení anglicky v hodinách? (označ všechny možnosti, které platí)
 - a. stydím se mluvit před třídou
 - b. stydím se mluvit před učitelem
 - c. nevím, jak zformulovat to, co chci říct
 - d. nevím, co říct
 - e. jiné: _____

6. Napadá tě, jak vylepšit aktivity na mluvení? Co by ti pomohlo ve zlepšení mluvení?
Co by ti pomohlo k většímu sebevědomí při mluvení?

ANNOTATION

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Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Josef Nevařil Ph. D
Rok obhajoby:	2024

Název práce:	Užití aktivit pro rozvoj mluvení na druhém stupni ZŠ
Název práce v angličtině:	Application of activities for speaking skills development at lower secondary school
Anotace práce:	Tato diplomová práce popisuje aktivity rozvíjející schopnost mluvit, principy výuky mluvení a také aktivity vhodné pro hodnocení schopnosti mluvit. Dále se práce zaměřuje na analýzu současného stavu aplikace aktivit na rozvoj mluvení na druhém stupni ZŠ stejně tak jako na výskyt možných překážek během mluvení.
Klíčová slova:	aktivity pro rozvoj mluvení, druhý stupeň ZŠ, učení mluvit, hodnocení schopnosti mluvit, schopnost mluvit
Anotace v angličtině:	This diploma thesis introduces activities developing speaking skills as well as principles of teaching speaking and speaking skills assessment activities. It focuses on analysing the current state of speaking activities application at lower secondary school as well as exploring possible problems that may occur during a speaking activity.
Klíčová slova v angličtině	speaking activities, speaking skills, lower secondary school, assessment of speaking skills, teaching speaking
Rozsah práce:	101 stran