



## Diplomová práce

# The use of dictation in English language teaching

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## Zadání diplomové práce

# The use of dictation in English language teaching

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## Zásady pro vypracování:

Cíl práce: Cílem diplomové práce je zjistit zda učitelé používají diktáty ve svých hodinách a za jakým účelem.

Výzkumná otázka: Používají učitelé diktáty k testování nebo jako učební nástroj?

V teoretické části práce se zaměřím na techniky diktování: „running dictation, teacher-centered dictation, dictogloss, student-centered dictation, mutual dictation, picture dictation, associations, whistle gaps, word sets, text created by students“ jejich popis a význam.

Upozorním na problémy spojené se zavedením diktátů do výuky a to jak během plánování takové hodiny, tak při vlastní implementaci. Na základě studia odborné literatury podám přehled doporučených postupů pro využití diktátů v hodinách anglického jazyka a upozorním na problémy s přípravou hodin a během výuky.

V praktické části bude práce postavena na dotazníku pro učitele z různých stupňů škol první stupeň, druhý stupeň a střední školy s předpokládaným počtem respondentů 30, ve kterém bude zkoumáno, zda diktáty využívají, za jakým účelem a jaké druhy využívají. Součástí práce budou i plány hodin na bázi doporučení. Na základě odučených hodin vytvořím sebereflexi.

The aim of the diploma thesis is to find out if teachers use dictation in their English language classes and for what purposes.

Do teachers use dictation as a testing device or as a teaching device?

*Rozsah grafických prací:*

*Rozsah pracovní zprávy:*

*Forma zpracování práce:*

*Jazyk práce:*

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Angličtina

### **Seznam odborné literatury:**

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Poděkování patří paní PhDr. Ivě Koutské, Ph.D., za vedení diplomové práce, její podnětné rady a cenné připomínky při jejím zpracování. Dále děkuji všem, kteří přispěli k mému dotazníkovému šetření.

V neposlední řadě děkuji své rodině, která byla mou psychickou podporou a povzbuzením při psaní této práce a po celou dobu mého studia.

## **Anotace**

Diplomová práce je zaměřena na použití diktátů v hodinách anglického jazyka. Cílem této práce je zjistit, zda učitelé používají diktáty v hodinách, za jakým účelem a jaké. Následně vytvořím plány hodin se zapojením diktátů pro rozvoj řečových dovedností a jazykových znalostí.

Teoretická část se zabývá významem a účelem diktátů jako testovacího nástroje a jako nástroje pro rozvoj řečových dovedností a jazykových znalostí. Vyjmenovány jsou různé druhy a techniky zapojení diktátů do vyučovacích hodin anglického jazyka. Dále je podán postup při plánování hodiny a problémy, které mohou nastat při plánování a během výuky.

V praktické části je popsán průzkum na základě dotazníků, kterým bylo zjišťováno, zda učitelé na prvním, druhém stupni či středních školách využívají diktáty ve svých hodinách anglického jazyka a za jakým účelem. Součástí práce jsou také plány hodin s využitím diktátů jako nástroje pro rozvoj řečových dovedností a jazykových znalostí a má sebereflexe k odučeným hodinám. Na základě aplikace diktátu je zjištěn i postoj žáka k diktátům před lekcí s diktáty a zjištění, zda se postoj změnil po odučené hodině.

**Klíčová slova:** diktáty, diktát jako testovací nástroj, diktát jako výukový nástroj, druhy diktátů, plány hodin, dotazníky, reflexe

## Summary

This diploma thesis focuses on the use of dictations in English language classes. This thesis aims to find out whether teachers use dictations in their lessons and for what purpose and what kind of dictations they use. Subsequently, the aim is to create lesson plans including dictation for a language system and language skills development.

The theoretical part deals with the meaning and purpose of dictation as a testing tool and a tool for developing language system and language skills. Various types and techniques of incorporating dictation in English lessons are listed. Furthermore, the procedure for planning a lesson with dictation and problems that may occur during planning and teaching is given.

The practical part describes a survey based on questionnaires and results in answering issues of whether teachers at primary, lower secondary and secondary schools use dictation in their English lessons and for what purposes. Part of the work are also lesson plans using dictations as a tool for language system and language skills development, and self-reflection on the taught lessons is included. Based on the application of dictation, the pupil's attitude to dictations before the lesson with dictation is also determined and whether the attitude has changed after the lesson is detected.

**Keywords:** dictations, dictation as a testing device, dictation as a teaching device, types of dictations, lesson plans, questionnaires, reflection

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# 1 Introduction

Dictation has been present in language classes for hundred years. However, when teachers or students hear the word dictation they usually, according to my personal experience, imagine something old-fashioned, traditional, teacher-cantered, and boring. I was wondering why dictations can be so boring or perceived so. There might be a preconceived idea that dictations are used only as a testing device in a ‘traditional way’ i.e. when the teacher dictates something and the students write it down, when they finish the written text is corrected and they get the mark.

But the dictations can easily be turned into an excellent teaching device by using the new modern techniques of dictations. Using dictations in a more ‘modern way’ in our classes can activate students, differentiate the lesson, and include the practice of all language skills e.g. listening, speaking, reading, writing, and subskills as pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation, etc.

This diploma thesis aims to find out the teacher’s and student’s attitudes to the dictations and introduce some dictation techniques and lesson plans with dictations used as a teaching tool.

Teaching English has been developing and students are more demanding, their level of English has risen and teachers need to be creative. This is the reason why teachers should activate their students, gain their interest and provide a lot of practice in their lessons. The benefit of using dictations for teachers is their variability, little preparation needed, and fewer photocopies necessary, and the fact that dictations can be done with any level of an English student.

Nowadays, dictations are either used, in my experience, as a testing device or rejected completely and therefore I have decided to present some dictation techniques and types that are listed in reference books as useful, activating, fun, etc. The thesis describes also the most important stages for preparing a lesson with dictations, and problems that might appear when realizing dictations in English language classes at the eight-year grammar school, representing the lower secondary and at the four-year grammar secondary school.

The theoretical part of the diploma thesis includes the first chapter with the introduction and the second chapter where I describe the history of dictation and its development until now. The third chapter follows theoretical information about testing

presenting general context for the issue of dictation as a testing device. The fourth chapter is dedicated to dictation as a teaching device.

The practical part is based on the research done among teachers and at school in which various methods and research tools were used. Via structured questionnaires, students' (pupils') and teachers' approach to the use of dictation in English lessons was researched and the results are visualised in graphs. I also included my self-reflection on the lesson plans taught in the sixth chapter. The students' reflection done by semi-structured interview and self-reflection notes might change the teacher's approach to using dictations in their classes. Lesson plans should help all of them to use dictations in their classroom more effectively and in a more enjoyable way for the pupils and students and to use dictations as a teaching device not only as a testing tool.

## Theoretical part

### 2 The history of dictation

The term dictation is defined various in dictionaries. The Cambridge dictionary (2022) says: *“Dictation is the activity of dictating something for someone else to write, a test in which a piece of writing is dictated to students learning a foreign language, to test their ability to hear and write the language correctly.”* In this definition, we can see that dictation is defined only as a testing device for teachers to check students spelling with a focus on writing skills and respects the grammar-translation method.

A more modern definition is introduced in the McMillan dictionary (2022) which defines the word dictation as: *“The act of saying something that someone else writes or types for you, for example, a letter. The activity in which a teacher reads something to a student that they write down to see how well they understand and write a language.”* The term dictation is not understood only a testing device but also a teaching device. Students practice writing and listening, including the context of the letter.

For another comparison, the Oxford Learners’ Dictionary (2022) offers the following definition: *“The act of speaking or reading so that somebody can write down the words or they can be recorded.”* This definition describes dictation as a speaking, and listening activity opposite to the definitions above, representing the communicative approach.

In CEFR (2001), dictation is also mentioned but only four times. It is quoted on page 61 (and again in Table 6 p. 100) as one of the written production activities a learner should be able to perform (e.g. writing down a message from dictation). On the other hand, despite listing dictation as one of the real-life communicative activities a learner should be trained to do, the document clearly takes position against this activity when discussing text-to-text activities: *“The more mechanical meaning-preserving activities (repetition, dictation, reading aloud, phonetic transcription) are currently out of favour in communication-oriented language teaching and learning owing to their artificiality and what are seen as undesirable backwash effects”* (CEFR 2001, 99). However, the CEFR does neither discuss nor identify these backwash effects. Nevertheless, on page 53, another reference is made to dictation, where it is described as a means to develop the learner’s ability to pronounce a language (CEFR 2001).

As far as the history of dictation is concerned, dictation is considered one of the oldest techniques being used in education from the Middle Age. Stansfield (1985, 121) offers a comprehensive history view on dictation and writes that dictation has long been associated with the grammar translating method, which mostly emphasizes grammar and translating from one language to another. In other words, in the past dictation was used as a testing device only and for writing books.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, as a reaction to the grammar-translation method, came the natural/direct method which tried to use the natural way of learning language in a way children do through verbalization and action. At that time the use of dictation declined, because supporters of this method preferred teaching speaking and listening in English lessons (Afsharrad 2014, 2204).

The sharpest decline was in 1960 because of the development of the audiolingual method and structuralism. Dictation was criticised that there is no relation to the type of behaviour people usually use through communication and lack of interaction (Stansfield 1985, 124). The same criticism can be seen also in Lado (1977, 34 in Stansfield 1985, 124) who criticised dictation as a testing device because it “*tests a little of language*”. The reading examiner gives the word order and vocabulary. The aural perception cannot be tested because the text provides the context. Dictation is very artificial in a communicative way; repetition and slowness of speech are far away from real communication. Harris (1969, 5 in Stansfield 1985, 125) mentioned that “*dictation is very uneconomical and imprecise*”. On the other hand, some proponents such as Brooks (1964, 269 in Stansfield 1985, 125) and Rivers (1981, 290 in Stansfield 1985, 125) accepted dictation as a teaching device for teaching graphic representations of sounds (Stansfield 1985, 125).

The change in favour of dictation happened in the 1970s due to the research done by Vallette (1967 in Stansfield 1985, 126), and Oller (1971 in Stansfield 1985, 126). The results showed that dictation is a good measure of language proficiency and listening comprehension. It helps students to predict grammar, chunks and functional language (Stansfield 1985, 126). According to Lado (1965 in Stansfield 1985, 128) dictation also increases memory-span which results in improvement in foreign language proficiency.

Nowadays dictation is used as a teaching and testing device (Stansfield 1985, 126). In any average group of language teachers, more than half use dictation either regularly or from time to time in their teaching (Davis and Rinvoluceri 2002, 21).

Nation and Newton (2008, 99) considers dictation a valuable language-focused teaching and learning technique. The most common advantages are: dictation can help students to diagnose and correct grammatical errors, it ensures attentive listening and trains students to distinguish sounds, it helps to learn punctuation and develop aural comprehension.

Wilson (2003, 335) claims that discovery listening is based on the learners-centered approach and gives them an opportunity to have their own views about the difficulties they deal with in understanding language. Discovery listening is where the dictogloss is used and students write the words from the text being dictated and afterwards they reconstruct the text. Students have to generate the meaning and then they discuss their understanding with classmates. Discovery listening techniques give the balance between focus on meaning generating and attention to the form.

Daiute and Lightfoot (2004 in Yuniarti 2017) say that dictation exercises are very important, particularly for developing children's awareness of phonic sounds, and contrary to the popular view of dictation, it can be a lot of fun. And continues with several reasons why dictation activities work well in the classroom. From the teacher's point of view, dictation: *"(1) Can be done at any level, depending on the text used. (2) Can be graded for a multi-level class. For the students, dictations: (1) Can focus on both accuracy (form) as well as meaning, e.g. in the dictogloss activity. (2) Can develop all four skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing can be developed if the students do the dictating rather than the teacher. (3) Give students the opportunity to notice features of pronouncing such as weak forms, linking and elision. In fact, dictation can be used to decrease preparation time for other activities"* (Yuniarti 2017, 19).

Norris (1993, 78–79) found the implementation of creative dictation exercises (dialogue dictation race, numbers dictation, pronunciation relay, building with rods, and picture dictation) in the students' English classes motivated the students *"by providing practice in several areas (e.g. accuracy, fluency, self-correction, negotiation of meaning, etc.) while combining the speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills"*.

In closing, one can sum up that dictation used as a testing device can be considered a good learning technique to improve learners' language proficiency and listening comprehension. Using dictation as a testing device for listening, reading, and writing is effective because it can check students' language proficiency in spelling through listening skills. It trains students to develop grammar, vocabulary and functional language.

On the other hand, dictation as a teaching device helps students learn the language system, phonology, grammar and vocabulary including spelling and pronunciation. What is more, dictation has numerous uses in language classrooms and can integrate all language skills for developing accuracy and fluency. A new methodology to dictation use can change the dictation “from the old times” into an interesting, motivating and learners-centred activity.

Most of the related literature has focused on applying the dictation technique as a teaching tool for almost all language skills (Mohammed 2015). A large number of applications are associated with listening comprehension (Davis and Rinvoluceri 2002; Habibi et al. 2012; Kiany and Shiramiry 2002; Marzban and Abdollahi 2013; Sari et al. 2013; Yonezaki 2014; Yuniarti 2017) and language proficiency (Kavaliauskienė and Darginavičienė 2009; Mohammed 2015, Morris 1983; Rahimi 2008; Valette 1964). Furthermore, dictation is thought to help in correcting grammatical errors (Frodesen 1991; Kazazoğlu 2013; Montalvan 1990) and vocabulary (Mohammed 2015; Natalicio 1979; Nation and Newton 2008), focusing on meaning transfer (Wilson 2003), teaching speaking (Eksi and Yesilcinar 2016; Kavaliauskienė and Darginavičienė 2009), or extending memory span (Oller 1971). Dictation was also researched as a tool for scaffolding learners with learning disabilities (Li 2014; Olagboyega 2008), especially reading disabilities (Wood et al. 2018).

A summary of the past research is offered by Alkire (2002) who writes that although how dictation facilitates language acquisition is not yet completely understood, the pedagogical value of dictation is acknowledged (Alkire 2002, 1). However, despite the researched and described benefits of dictation, dictation is no longer as popular as it was in the past because it is considered to be boring, old-fashioned, mechanical, inauthentic, and teacher-centered (Davis and Rinvoluceri, 2002; Kazazoğlu 2013; Mohammed 2015), especially in ESL or EFL classrooms (Alkire 2002).

### 3 Teaching dictation as a testing device

#### 3.1 Testing

*“A test is a method of measuring a person’s ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain”* (Brown 2002, 3). In education, testing plays a part in the teacher’s role. It is a measuring instrument for teachers and students. There are several reasons for language testing.

For example, a test can be used as a means to (Ur 1996, 34):

- *“give the teacher information about where the students are at the moment, to help decide what to teach next,*
- *give the students information about what they know, so that they can also have an awareness of what they need to learn or review,*
- *access for some purpose external to current teaching (a final grade for the course, selection),*
- *motivate students to learn or review material,*
- *get a noisy class to keep quiet and concentrate,*
- *provide a clear indication that the class has reached a target in learning, such as the end of the unit, thus contributing to the sense of structure in the course as a whole,*
- *get students to make effort (in doing the test itself), which is likely to lead to better results and a feeling of satisfaction,*
- *give students tasks that may provide a useful review or practice, as well as testing,*
- *provide students with a sense of achievement and progress in their learning”* (Ur 1996, 34).

Generally, language teaching and testing go parallel in any language teaching and learning context. Bachman and Palmer (1996, 8) believe that *“virtually all language teaching programs”* involve some testing.

From the definitions above we can conclude that test is beneficial for both students and teachers. It is a useful tool to reveal students’ performance and see their strengths and weaknesses so it is an instrument for teachers make reflection of their work and set future goals, motivate the students. Students profit from tests because they



see their success, determine their knowledge gaps or find the motivation to learn and practice harder.

The test is also an integration of teaching and testing which means that test cannot be given if students haven't been taught or received the instructions in teaching-learning activity. And if a mistake or an error occurs one can always learn from it thus testing with its backwash effect is an invaluable source of teaching and learning.

### **3.2 What is tested**

To understand what is tested and what should be tested, an internationally standardized descriptors of proficiency, 'Can Do' statements, were written in the CEFR. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a European standard for describing language level. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing, such as teachers or learners, to see the level of different qualifications. It also means that employers and educational institutions can easily compare our qualifications to other exams in their country (Cambridge 2011).

CEFR is a useful tool for teachers because it can help to determine students' level of English according to their language proficiency, prepare the tests and the plans for teaching and set the goals. Moreover, Czech national curriculum, RVP, is based on CEFR, hierarchically followed by school curricula, ŠVP.

Generally speaking, we should test both to gain language proficiency in the language system and skills.

### **3.3 Types of dictation tests**

There are various types of tests a teacher can use. Hutauruk (2015) describes the following types: A test which is used to test points of language is called "*the discrete point test*": it tests knowledge of the language by one item at a time; "*phonemic recognition, Yes/No, True/False answers, spelling, word completion, grammar items, and multiple choice tests*": in this kind of test, we can test single language components of like grammar, vocabulary, syntax or single basic skills like speaking, listening, writing or reading; "*the integrative test*": attempts to test knowledge of the language by using many points at the same time to reach communicative competence. It can test skills set in context, e.g. "*cloze tests, dictation, translation, essays and other cohesive tasks in writing, oral interviews and conversation, reading and other extended samples*

*of real texts*” (Hutauruk 2015, 22–23): dictation can be an integrative test because we test more than one language skill listening, reading and writing including single components of grammar, vocabulary or syntax. The teacher can use both tests according to the goal they want to reach.

According to Oller (1979, 263–264), there are five types of dictation procedures that have been used in a variety of ways as testing techniques. Those five ways are elaborated as follows:

- **Standard dictation**

*“Standard dictation is probably the best known. Students are required to write verbal sequences of material as spoken by a teacher or played back from a recording.”* The material should be presented at a normal conversational speed and given in sequences that are long enough to challenge students’ short-term memory (Oller 1979, 264). In standard dictations, students usually write the passage or sentence word-by-word how they hear it.

- **Partial dictation**

Partial dictation also is called spot dictation. This type has a close relationship with the standard dictation, but the students are given either a written version of the text or the spoken one. The written version has certain portions which are deleted. The students must listen to the spoken material and fill in the missing portion in the written version. It is easier to perform because more sensory information is given concerning the message, a partly written version and a complete spoken version (Oller 1979, 264). In this kind of dictation, students fill in the part that is missing according to what they hear.

- **Dictation with competing noise**

This type of dictation is rather difficult because the material is presented with added noise. This kind of dictation drills the students to be used to everyday communication contexts where language is used in less-than-ideal acoustic conditions, for example, we are trying to have a conversation in someone’s living room when the television and air conditioner are producing a high-level of competing noise or trying to hear a message over a public address system in a busy air station, etc. (Oller 1979, 264). Dictation with competing noise is more demanding because students need to concentrate on the speech and the sound behind the conversation is distracting.

- **Dicto-Comp**

This type of dictation is a combination of two forms, namely dictation and composition. Here, the teacher reads the whole passage three times and the students are only given chance to write their work after the teacher has finished the third reading. They should recall the whole story and write the story as a reproduction of what they heard (Oller 1979, 264). Students should also pay attention to the grammar, spelling and cohesion of the text when they reconstruct the text.

- **Elicited imitation**

In this case, the students listen to the material, but instead of writing down the material, the students are asked to repeat it or otherwise recount what was said (Oller 1979, 263). It is a useful tool to test students understanding of the meaning of the text. Also listening, speaking or writing is involved.

According to Rost (2002, 137–144 in Yunairty 2017, 19), other variations of dictation are:

- **Fast speed dictation**

*“The teacher reads a passage at natural speed, with assimilation, etc. The students can ask for multiple repetitions of any part of the passage, but the teacher will not slow down her articulation of the phrase being repeated. This activity focuses students’ attention on the features of fast speech”* (Yunairty 2017, 19).

- **Pause and paraphrase**

*“The teacher reads a passage and pauses periodically for the students to write paraphrases, not the exact words used. (Indeed, students may be instructed not to use the exact words they heard). This activity focuses students on vocabulary flexibility, saying things in different ways, and in focusing on meaning as they listen”* (Yunairty 2017, 19).

- **Listening cloze**

*“The teacher provides a partially completed passage that the listeners fill in as they listen or after they listen. This activity allows students to focus on particular language features, e.g. verbs or noun phrases”* (Yunairty 2017, 19).

- **Error identification**

*“The teacher provides a fully transcribed passage, but with several errors. The students listen and identify (correct) the errors. This activity focuses attention on detail: the errors may be grammatical or semantic”* (Yunairty 2017, 19).

- **Jigsaw dictation students work in pairs**

*“Each person in the pair has part of the full dictation. The students read their parts to the other to complete the passage. This activity encourages the negotiation of meaning”* (Yunairty 2017, 19).

### **3.4 The reasons for using dictations as a testing device**

The authors Oller and Streiff (1975, 34) suggested that *“dictation activates the learner’s internalized grammar of expectancy, which we assume is the central component of his language competence”*. Dictation does appear to tap into what Oller (1979, 24 in Fouly and Cziko 1985, 556) calls *“expectancy grammar”*, [which is described as] *“the combined knowledge of the phonological, syntactic, semantic, discourse, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic rules of a language”*. Dictation tests measure writing and listening skills. Furthermore, subskills are integrated. It is a useful tool to test grammar items, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation.

According to Montalvan (2006) dictation used in English language classes as a test has many advantages:

- *“Dictation can help develop all four language skills in an integrative way.*
- *As students develop their aural comprehension of the meaning and also of the relationship among segments of language, they are learning grammar.*
- *Dictation helps to develop short-term memory. Students practice retaining meaningful phrases or whole sentences before writing them down.*
- *Practice in careful listening to dictation will be useful later on in note-taking exercises.*
- *Correcting dictation can lead to oral communication.*
- *Dictation can serve as an excellent review exercise.*
- *Dictation is psychologically powerful and challenging.*
- *Dictation fosters unconscious thinking in the new language.*
- *If the students do well, dictation is motivating.*
- *Dictation involves the whole class, no matter how large it is.*
- *During and after the dictation, all the students are active.*
- *Correction can be done by the students.*
- *Dictation can be prepared for mixed-ability groups.*
- *Dictation can be prepared for any level.*

- *The students, as well as the teacher, can get instant feedback if the exercise is corrected immediately.*
- *The dictation passage can and should be completely prepared in advance it also can be taped.*
- *Dictation can be administered quite effectively by an inexperienced teacher.*
- *While dictating, the teacher can move about, giving individual attention.*
- *Dictation exercises can pull the class together, for example, during those valuable first minutes.*
- *Dictation can provide access to interesting texts, by introducing a topic, for example, or summarizing it, as in a dicto-comp.”*

Research has also shown that learning to write down what you hear can encourage the development of literacy (Beranda 2017, 1).

The list of advantages proves that dictation is useful testing advice for teachers and students to evaluate and measure language proficiency. So, teachers and students should take all these advantages into account.

In addition, it can be used successfully without taking considerations to the class size or a variety of skills learners have or teachers want to include into the tests. In other words, dictation can be perceived a task that is used to challenge and motivate students to work (together) by using grammatical and context clues to complete the dictation and engage in learning by problem-solving.

### **3.5 Stages in designing tests**

Before giving a dictation test to students it is important to plan the test carefully as with any other tests.

Brown (2002, 42–43) introduced a tool how to design a test (not only a dictation test). Teachers should ask themselves the following questions while designing any test:

1. *“What is the purpose of the test?”* Teachers should specify for what purpose they want to design the test, overall goals, ends or intentions.
2. *“What are the objectives of the test?”* The teacher should think about individual stages of the test that students need to reach to fit the goal.
3. *“How will the test specifications reflect both the purpose and the objectives?”* Teachers should look at the whole design of the test if there are samples of what they need to reach the goal and think about the proportions of the items.

4. *“How will the test tasks be selected and the separate items arranged?”* Teachers should take into account the practicality, validity and reliability of the test.
5. *“What kind of scoring, grading and feedback is expected?”* Depending on the purpose we should decide what feedback will students get and how will we score the test, by grades, letters, or percentages.

Oller (1979, 39) stated that, as an integrative test (see in chapter 3.2), dictation has to meet the naturalness requirements:

- a) *“The sequences of words or phrases to be dictated are selected from normal prose, dialogue, or some other natural form of discourse (or perhaps the sequences are carefully contrived to mirror normal discourse, as in a well-written function).*
- b) *The material is presented orally in sequences that are long enough to challenge the short-term memory of the learners. Based on those naturalness requirements, it is important for teachers to make some preparation when they are going to give dictation tests to their students.”*

I.e. stages to be followed when preparing a dictation test are, according to Oller (1979, 39):

- a) *“Teachers have to select suitable materials to be dictated.*
- b) *The words dictated should have been taught to the students before.*
- c) *The words dictated should be selected or chosen from simple words.*
- d) *Teachers have to select suitable procedures which are appropriate in giving dictation tests.*
- e) *There are two ways of giving a dictation test; the first is the teacher reads the words directly, and the second is the words dictated have been recorded before.”*

### **3.5.1 Preparation of dictations as a testing tool**

In the preparation stage, the teacher chooses the material, for example from the book provided and use it as a reference and/or the teacher may use a tape recorder as an aid in presenting the material to the test. Besides preparing the materials, teachers have to select suitable procedures which are appropriate in giving dictation tests.

The procedures of the presentation can be arranged in two ways, the teacher himself reads the material in front of the class or uses a tape recorder as an aid

in presenting the test. In standard dictation, the teacher is required to read the passage three times in all: first, at normal speed; then, with pauses between phrases or natural word groups so that the students may write down what they have just heard, and finally, at normal speed once more so they can check their work.

In partial dictations (see chapter 3.3, 21) students listen to the examiner or the recordings of a chosen material in a foreign language and fill in missing words in the written version with deleted parts. Partial dictation is preferable to standard dictation (see chapter 3.3, 21) because is more economical, easy to construct, administer and score. Partial dictations can be used to test phonology, lexicology, and grammar. As opposed to standard dictation which takes more lesson time because students have to write the whole text. The administering and scoring part is also more complicated because the teacher has to decide what is going to be scored and has to read the whole text written by students.

There are generally two ways how to design a partial dictation testing tool according to Stig (1973, 13):

A	B
Use a recording that is suitable for your dictation.	Choose a text to be recorded.
Make a written version of the recording.	Have a text recorded by a native speaker of the language.
Decide which proportions should be left out from the text.	Decide what proportion of the text should be left out.
Insert pauses in the recording for each missing proportion in the text.	Insert pauses in the recording for each missing proportion in the text.

From the requirements above, it is clear that the materials of dictation are any single words, compound words, word phrases, and sentences which are going to be dictated. In standard dictation, the teacher chooses a text that is going to be read or a recording suitable for the dictation.

### **3.5.2 Realisation of dictation as a testing tool**

There are three stages of the teaching-learning process using cloze dictation (Hoelker in Ratnawati, 2013, 10):

#### **1) Pre-Dictation**

In the pre-dictation activity, the students are activated to the topic. The teacher can also pre-teach the vocabulary that may be difficult for the students. Finally, the

teacher should allow students to make some predictions about what the students will hear during the dictation by giving them the written part of the test.

## **2) Whilst-Dictation**

The teacher gives the instructions the students must do while listening to cloze texts or an example to make sure that students know what to do for their comprehension and write the texts down correctly. This stage helps the students to concentrate on comprehending the information that is useful in doing the comprehension tasks the teacher has set.

## **3) Post-Dictation**

Finally, the teacher can present post-dictation activities. In these activities, the teacher gives the students a chance to check their comprehension in oral form.

### **3.5.3 Assessment and feedback to dictation test**

According to Shohami (1981), the two most used techniques for scoring Cloze tests are the “*exact*” and the “*acceptable*”. The “*exact*” word method means that the originally deleted word is the only correct answer. The “*acceptable*” method implies that every word which is considered to be acceptable and was not originally used by the author of the text but fits into the context and is grammatically correct is a correct answer.

*“Most of the research has shown that there is no significant difference between the two scoring methods and also that correlation between the two scoring methods is very high. The “exact” method is more practical and very easy to score; the “acceptable” method provides the test user THE CLOZE PROCEDURE with better discrimination among the various proficiency levels and is probably less frustrating for the test-takers”* (Shohami 1981, 106).

## **3.6 Dictation in standardized English Exams**

One of the most widely used and known English exams are the Cambridge English Qualifications known as Cambridge ESOLS Examinations (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

These qualifications are known and recognized by schools, universities, and private and public sector employees all over the English-speaking world. Success in a Cambridge English exam provides people with an internationally recognized



certificate showing the level of English. Dictation appears in many of them, for example in YLE Young Learners.

YLE tests introduce children to everyday written and spoken English and are an excellent way for them to gain confidence and improve their English.

Dictation is included in listening parts. It is a type of partial dictation where students have to fill in the missing information via matching, answering questions, gap-fill, and colouring. They need to be able to listen for names, numbers, descriptions and situations.

In A2 Key (KET) that show that a student can communicate in basic English in simple situations, dictation is included in listening parts. It is a type of partial dictation where students have to fill in the missing information. The structure of the test is multiple-choice, gap – filling, question and answers, and matching. They need to be able to listen to monologues and dialogues and identify the key information and the main idea.

In B1 Preliminary (PET) that show that a student has mastered the basics of English and now has practical language skills for everyday use, dictation is included in listening parts. It is a type of partial dictation where students have to fill in the missing information. The structure of the test is multiple-choice, gap – filling, question and answers, and matching. They need to be able to listen to monologues, dialogues and interviews, identify the key information and the main idea, and understand the gist and details.

Also B2 First (FCE) test uses dictation. In general, FCE shows that a student has the language skills they need to communicate in an English-speaking environment.

Dictation is included in listening parts. It is again a type of partial dictation where students have to fill in missing information, cloze dictation where students have to fill in parts of text and dictation with competing noise such as phone conversation, announcements, and news. The structure of the test is multiple-choice, sentence competition, question and answers, and multiple-matching. They need to be able to listen to monologues, interviews, discussions, dialogues and conversations, identify the key information and the main idea, and understand the gist and details, stated opinions, attitudes, feelings, purpose.

Advance level test, i.e.C1 Advance (CAE) that represents an in-depth, high-level qualification that shows that a student has the English language skills that employers and universities are looking for, makes use dictation.

Dictation is included in listening parts. It is a type of partial dictation where students have to fill in missing information, cloze dictation where students have to fill in parts of text and dictation with competing noise such as radio broadcasts, speeches, lectures, talks, and interviews. The structure of the test is multiple-choice, sentence competition, question and answers, and multiple-matching. They need to be able to listen to monologues, interviews, discussions, dialogues and conversations, identify the key information and the main idea, understand the gist and details, stated opinions, attitudes, feelings, purpose, interpreting context.

The same applies to C2 Proficiency (CPE) that shows that a student has mastered English to an exceptional level and communicates with the fluency of a highly competent English speaker.

Dictation is included in listening parts. It is a type of partial dictation where students have to fill in missing information, cloze dictation where students have to fill in parts of text and dictation with competing noise such as radio broadcasts, speeches, lectures, talks, and interviews. The structure of the test is multiple-choice, sentence competition, and multiple-matching. They need to be able to listen to monologues, unrelated recordings, and dialogues and listen for gist, detail, function, topic, feeling, attitude, opinion, interference, and main points, and interpret context (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

The dictation appears also in the Czech Maturita Exam in part three as an open cloze exercise where students have to fill in a word or a number. It is a partial, cloze dictation (Cermat, 2022).

## 4 Teaching dictation as a teaching device

### 4.1 What is taught

Dictation as a teaching device is beneficial in many ways for foreign language learning. In 1900 Edward Joynes waxed rhapsodic about the pedagogical merits of dictation: “*we have the most perfect combination of faculties and functions. There is the accurate tongue, speaking to the listening and discriminating ear, there is the reproductive hand, bringing back to the intelligent and critical eye that which the mind has heard by ear – all the faculties of perception, conception, and expression are alert and in harmonious cooperation*” (Joynes 1900 in Sawyer and Silver 1961, 40).

The most obvious benefit of dictations in teaching is listening comprehension which involves discrimination of sounds. Oller (1971) regarded the taking down of dictation by a student and his trying to make sense of the stream of sounds as a dynamic process, which he called “*analysis-by-synthesis*” (Oller 1971, 257). In other words, language contains a chain of sounds and while students are listening and writing they need to analyse these sounds to understand what they are writing during dictation.

According to Brown (1915) in *How the French Boy Learns To Write* dictation is a useful tool to develop handwriting, capitalization, extending vocabulary, and sentence and paragraph formation. “*It gives the pupil much practice in the handling of the sentence, it directs his attention to grammatical constructions, it helps him to learn to spell, to punctuate, and to capitalize, it enlarges his vocabulary and gives him practice in the use of words already known to him, and it fills his mind with good standards of speech. To these should be added one value that the thoughtful teacher must regard as greatest of all, namely that dictation prevents the pupil from separating spoken language and writing*” (Brown 1915, 57–58).

Furthermore, dictation provides context so students use their hypothesis to use correct grammar constructions. Oller and Streiff (1975, 33–34) further postulated that “*the perceiver formulates expectancies (or hypotheses) concerning the sound stream based on his internalized grammar of the language*”, [and it is this] “*grammar of expectancy*”, “*the central component of his language competence*”, which is activated in dictation.

Wajnryb (1990) links dictation to graded exercises with grammar focus and lists in the “dictogloss” semi-dictation, semi-composition technique. Another sources of

inspiration can be taken from Morley (1976) who gives classroom-ready dictation exercises based on grammar, intended for the language laboratory but which can also be given “live” to the class.

Scrivener (2011, 362) emphasises that dictation can be turned into an enjoyable activity and he mentioned some ideas on how to do it: traditionally the teacher made all the decisions about dictation, nowadays learners can be incorporated into decisions about who dictates, what will be dictated, how many times, who will correct it, and how. And this how is well described in Davis and Rinvoluceri (1988, 38) who offer 69 variations on dictation for use in the classroom.

## 4.2 Types of modern dictations

From the traditionally perceived dictation with teacher-centered focus and used as a test item, dictation altered into a learner-centered activity.

Davis and Rinvoluceri (1988, 3–4) gave teachers ideas on how dictations can become an enjoyable and useful activity. Authors suggest that teachers need to ask themselves a few questions: “*Who dictates? Who chooses the text? How long should the text be? How should the dictating voice sound? Must the listener write down everything? Who corrects the dictation?*”

Scrivener (2011, 362–364) listed several examples of dictations used as a teaching tool:

- **Keywords dictation/Text created by students**

The teacher finds an interesting story and underlines fifteen to twenty most important words. These words should be content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. The students use these words and make a story. In the end, the class can swap the stories, read them or tell them. The teacher can show them the original one.

- **Collocation dictation**

The teacher prepares ten to twenty useful two-word collocations. The teacher dictates one word from the collocation, students must not write the word but write some words that collocate with it. After the dictation students work in small groups and try to complete the original collocation according to the list they wrote.

- **Wall/Running dictation**

The teacher chooses a text, makes more copies, and sticks them on the wall. Divide students into readers and writers. Readers read the texts, memorize part of it, and

dictate them to writers who sit down and wait until the readers run to them. It is a race and the aim is to write the most accurate text.

- **The bad cold dictation**

The teacher dictates but sometimes sneezes. When the teacher sneezes students should write any good word that fits the space.

- **The wild dictation**

The teacher dictates a numbered list of description words e.g. name, adjective, verb, etc. After that, the teacher dictates a short story with gaps in the numbers. The winner is the person with the funniest story.

- **Dictogloss**

It is an activity where the teacher dictates some keywords from the text chosen. The teacher should read it at a normal speed three times and give students time for writing the words they remember. After that students try to build the story in groups and get closest to the original one.

- **Living tape recorder**

The teacher uses the board and draws a picture of a tape recorder with buttons for playing, stopping, or replaying. Two students stand in front of the class near the board and control the tape recorder. The class can call out to ask the controllers to press the buttons. The teacher follows the buttons on the recorder.

- **Picture dictation**

The teacher describes a picture and students draw it or it can be done as a pair or group activity.

- **Sound dictation**

The tape recorder is playing some sounds and students act them out.

- **Silent dictation**

Students dictate their text to a partner by whispering.

- **Mutual dictation**

This is a pair work activity where students take turns and dictate parts of their text to each other to get a complete text. Students shouldn't look at each other's texts. It provides lots of student to student interaction. When they have the complete text, there can be added a solving task to practice speaking (Darling, 2013).

- **Associations/Homophones dictations**

The teacher dictates a few homophones and after each word leaves students to write down the first three associated words that come to their minds. This activity can help students understand why homophones are difficult (Dowling, 2014).

- **Word set dictation**

This activity can be done as a warm-up activity based on the topic you are going to teach. The teacher simply dictates individual words and students write them down and categorize them. For example, sports words where they have to divide the words into summer and winter sports.

### **4.3 Stages in designing dictation as a teaching tool**

#### **4.3.1 Preparation**

In general, the procedure how to prepare the “teaching” dictation depends on the type of dictation we want to use in our class. But some principles are valid for all types of dictations.

Woodward (1991, 31) designed a mind map for a teacher to prepare the dictation. Before the teachers start constructing a dictation they should decide what is the aim of dictation. Is it supposed to test, teach or consolidate the language? After this decision is made teacher focuses on the what is the language part. Is the focus on a language system or skills? Later on, the text should be chosen. Regarding the text, we should take into account the length, content, register, style, new items, adaptation, reconstruction, choice of gaps, pictures or use of multiple choice (Woodward 1991, 31).

#### **4.3.2 Realization of “teaching” dictation**

Woodward (1991) further describes in her map that when the text is chosen we should decide the timing and individual stages in the lesson. It includes a warm up stage to gain students’ interest, a pre-stage where the teacher usually pre-teach new vocabulary and gives the instructions, the main part of the lesson where the teacher and organizes learners into groups, pairs or individuals.

The main part is dictation itself where students, the teacher or the recorder can dictate. The text should be dictated at normal speed and the teacher should decide before where the pauses will be done and repetition ideally three times. The following

stage is post stage where we focus on discussion, reconstruction, and pair work to involve some speaking (Woodward 1991, 31).

### **4.3.3 Assessment and feedback to “teaching” dictation**

Woodward (1991) continues by description in her mind map that the following stage is post stage where we focus on discussion, reconstruction, and pair work to involve some speaking. The last stage is giving feedback where the teacher can use the whiteboard, or printed paper, ask other students to correct it or focus on the content (Woodward 1991, 31).

## **4.4 Benefits of modern dictations**

Davis and Rivoluceri (1988) listed ten reasons why to use ‘modern’ dictations, i.e. dictations that are used as a teaching tool, are learner-centred, fun and enjoyable activity.

- The students are active during the exercise – to activate students the teacher should use a number of different arrangements and include whole class, group, pair, individual work and move around or change seating.
- The students are active after the exercise – keeps students working the teacher can decide who can correct the work if it is a student, the whole class, the teacher gives help, the computer or nobody.
- Dictation leads to oral communication – the dictation can lead to oral communication, students can react to writing so they do not have to write what is dictated or they can work in groups, or pairs and compare their answers.
- Dictation fosters unconscious thinking – when students catch only words and after it they create a story.
- Dictation copes with mixed-ability groups – dictation can be dictated as a whole dictation but students according to their levels can write only a part or a whole passage.
- Dictation deals with large groups – the whole group is active and it brings a quiet atmosphere.
- Dictation will often calm the groups – because all students are active and need to pay attention to the teacher it calms them down.

- Dictation is safe for non-native speaker – this activity can be fully prepared in advance and does not require teachers to be surprised by a high level of grammar or vocabulary unexpected language.
- For English, it is a technically useful exercise – dictation provides a complexity of language practice involving listening and writing corresponding with decoding sounds, spelling, grammar and vocabulary expectancy.
- Dictation gives access to interesting text – all kinds of text can be included (news, newspaper articles, recipes, manuals, songs, jokes, blogs) and the teacher can choose the text according to students' interest (Davis and Rivoluceri 1988, 4–8).

All these benefits of new types of dictations prove that the new methodology can change the old-fashion exercise into interesting, interactive and practical activity in language teaching. Which is exactly the reason why I carried out a practical research of the issue, see below.



## **Practical part**

### **5 Research**

#### **5.1 Research aim**

Using dictations in English lessons is boring, student-centered, and old-fashioned or to say this is the way students and teachers usually see dictations. I believe that dictations can be changed into an attractive, efficient, teaching method that integrates listening and writing skills and reading and speaking skills in one enjoyable activity that promotes language proficiency development. This diploma thesis aims at determining if teachers at primary and secondary schools use dictations in their English language lessons for what purposes (is a dictation used as a teaching device or a testing device), what teachers test via dictations or what teachers teach via dictations plus what kinds of dictations they use. Moreover, the students' perception of dictations is revealed, especially whether there is a change in dictation perception before the lesson with dictation and after the dictation was implemented into their English language lesson based on their reflected experience.

The benefit of this study for teachers is expected to be a source of information about teaching techniques of dictations and examples of lessons that can be included in their lessons.

The benefit of this study for students is to change their perception of dictations to see dictations in a new way as an interesting, enjoyable activity in English lessons which can be motivating for them to improve their language skills and language system integrated with various types of dictations.

#### **5.2 Research population**

The research population is all primary, lower secondary, secondary teachers and teachers from other (language, alternative, nursery) schools who were involved in the teachers' perception of dictations questionnaire and students from the four-year and the eight-year grammar school, representing the lower secondary (prima, sekunda, terecie, quarta) and secondary school (kvinta, sexta, septima, oktáva, 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade) in different levels of English who answered the students' perception of dictations questionnaire and discussed via semi-structured interview the dictation method after the dictation lesson.

In the research, there were engaged 34 teachers. From them there were 8 primary teachers, 7 lower secondary teachers, 5 teachers who teach both at primary and lower secondary schools, 3 teachers who teach both at lower and secondary schools, 8 secondary teachers and 3 teachers were from other schools for teacher's perception. For the students' perception the study took data from three English classes with 33 students altogether who all filled in the questionnaire. The first class (A) consist of 14 students and they are in the third grade of four-year grammar school. They study English five times a week and each lesson lasts forty-five minutes, their level of English is B1. The second class (B) consists of 12 students in the quinta grade of eight-year grammar school. They study English three times a week and each lesson lasts forty-five minutes, their level of English is A2. The third class (C) consists of 10 students in the prima grade of eight-year grammar school, i.e. the first year of secondary school, equivalent to the sixth grade of lower secondary school. They study English three times a week and each lesson lasts forty-five minutes, their level of English is A1. No primary school class was involved into the research.

### **5.3 Instruments for data collection**

For gathering information, I used quantitative research and qualitative research.

*“Quantitative research aim to obtain accurate and objectively verifiable data on the issue under study. The basis of quantitative research is measurement. It is a procedure for obtaining accurate data expressed numerically. Quantitative pedagogical research determines the extent, frequency or intensity of educational phenomena”* (Gavora 2010).

The instrument to gain data was an online questionnaire for teachers and students. *“The questionnaire is one of the most commonly used methods in research. It is used in the social sciences for mass and rapid detection of facts, opinions, attitudes, preferences, values, motives, needs, interests, etc.”* (Gavora 2010).

The qualitative research consisted of dictations application into three lessons (i.e. teaching conduct with observation and self-reflection), and semi-structured interviews with students after the lesson thought. Unstructured interview allowed me to ask questions and the respondents answered them spontaneously in the discussion. As Gavora (2010) points out an interview allows for capturing not only *“the facts, but also going deeper into the motives and attitudes of the respondents. It can also monitor*

*the external reactions of the respondent and, according to them, guide the further course of the interview.*” Based also on observations that are “*objective, deliberate, systematic, planned and purposeful*” (Gavora, 2010). I created self-reflection.

To sum up: four instruments were used in this study:

### **1) A teacher’s questionnaire**

I created a structured questionnaire (see Appendix 1) which is easy to understand and analyse and posted it on the social media site as for example Facebook of the English teachers’ groups in September 2022.

The questionnaire includes close-ended questions and took ten minutes to fill in. It was submitted to the teachers via Google document to know their opinion about using dictation as a teaching device and/or a testing device.

This instrument consists of the diploma aim introduction, instructions on how to fill the questionnaire in, and nine questions. The first two questions dealt with general information about teachers, i.e. they served as a tool to identify teachers’ experience in teaching English language and the type of school they teach at. The second part of the questionnaire contained seven questions. This part inspected the teachers’ point of view towards dictations, the use of dictations, the purpose of their use, dictations as a testing device, dictations as a teaching device, the frequency of using dictations, and the types of dictation they use. I added also an explanation of the types of dictations for teachers to understand the terms. The questionnaire was posted in 24 English teachers’ groups. I received 34 responses.

### **2) A student’s questionnaire**

To research the students’ perception of dictation I also used a Google form questionnaire at the beginning of the lesson (see Appendix 2). The reason to use an online questionnaire was that students get used to using technology during English lessons, i.e. involvement of digital competency development into our English language lessons. We often use questionnaires, tests, and quizzes via mobile phones so it is fast to gain information.

Students’ perception questionnaire contained the introduction of the aim of the diploma thesis, instructions on how to fill it in, and five closed-ended questions based on the statements to see how students perceive dictations if they viewed as boring, enjoyable, useful, or used as testing or teaching items.

Prior the questionnaire completion we went through the whole questionnaire together in the class and the students were asked to translate the questions into Czech, the reason being to be sure that all students understand the meaning of the questions.

### **3) Direct partial observation**

Another method of data collection was an observation which is defined as “*watching of behavioural patterns of people in certain situations to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest*” (Johnson and Christensen 2004, 211).

In this case, the intention was to observe my own conduct as a teacher and the learners during the dictation lessons. As Johnson and Christensen (2004) emphasize collecting observational data in addition to self-reported data is necessary to avoid “*a potential incongruence between attitudes and behaviour*” and ensure that the researcher does not only obtain information about preferences and intended behaviour but the actual behaviour (Johnson and Christensen 2004, 211).

Observing me as a teacher and the pupils in their school environment falls within the category of naturalistic observation. This qualitative observation involved taking notes and summarising them in self-reflections added after the lessons to lesson plans.

### **4) Semi-structured interviews with students**

There was a short interview at the end of the lesson with dictation to find out if their attitude to this device is the same or has changed. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were used to comprehend the students’ perspectives and “*gather information about participant's thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations and feelings about the topic*” (Johnson and Christensen 2004, 206).

Although the questions designed for the interview were determined in advance, students added their comments naturally. Three following questions were prepared: What do you think of dictations now?, Is it an enjoyable, useful technique?, and What did you learn?

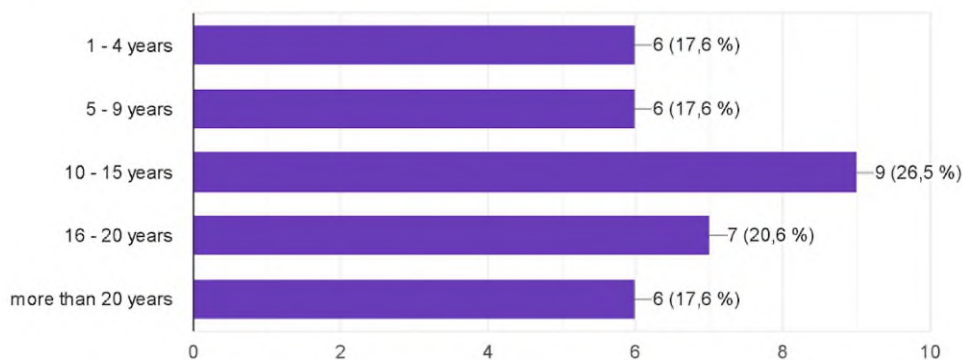
## 5.4 Research results of the quantitative research

### 5.4.1 The results of the teachers' questionnaire

To view samples of the completed questionnaire, see Attachment 1.

1. How long have you been teaching English?

34 odpovědí

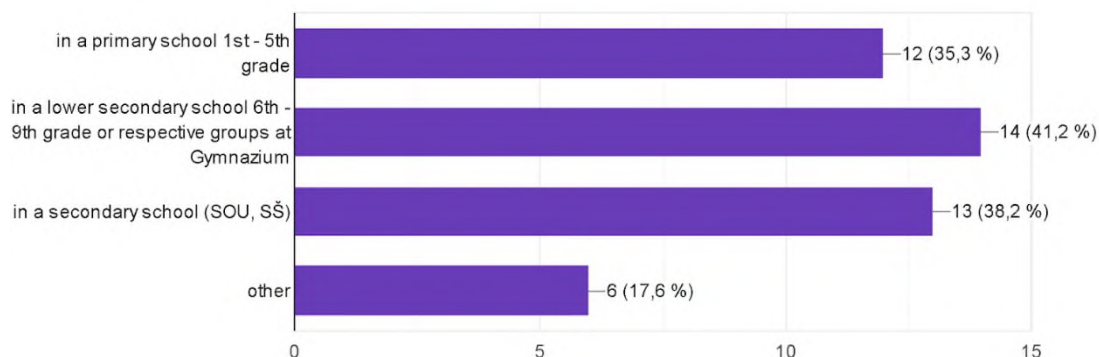


Graph 1: Teachers' experience with teaching English

Bar chart 1 indicates that English teachers who were involved in the questionnaire according to their teaching experience range from 1 year to more than twenty years of teaching. The sample includes almost the same proportions of teachers according to their teaching experience. In groups of teachers with year experience 1-4, 5-9 and more than twenty years answered six teachers which are 17,6 % of the total 100%. Teachers who teach for 10-15 years are 9 teachers which is 26,5 %. Teachers who teach for 16-20 years are 7 teachers which is 20,6 %.

2. Where do you teach?

34 odpovědí



Graph 2: Types of school where teachers teach English

Bar chart 2 presents data on the schools where teachers teach English. The majority of teachers (42, 2%) teach in lower secondary schools or respective groups at Gymnasium. 38,2% of participants teach in secondary schools while 35% teach in primary schools. 17,6 % are teachers who teach in different schools.

3. What do you think about dictations in EFL lessons?

34 odpovědí

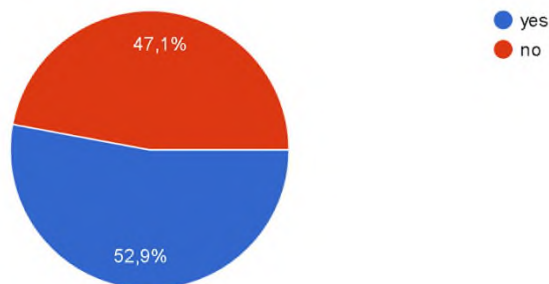


Graph 3: Teachers' attitudes to dictations in EFL lessons

If we look at this pie chart 3 you can see that 58% of teachers consider dictations as useful, drill, and gradable and 41% of teachers consider dictations boring, old-fashioned, and teacher-centered. We can notice that the perception of dictation is half positive and half negative.

4. Do you use dictations in the classroom during your lessons?

34 odpovědí

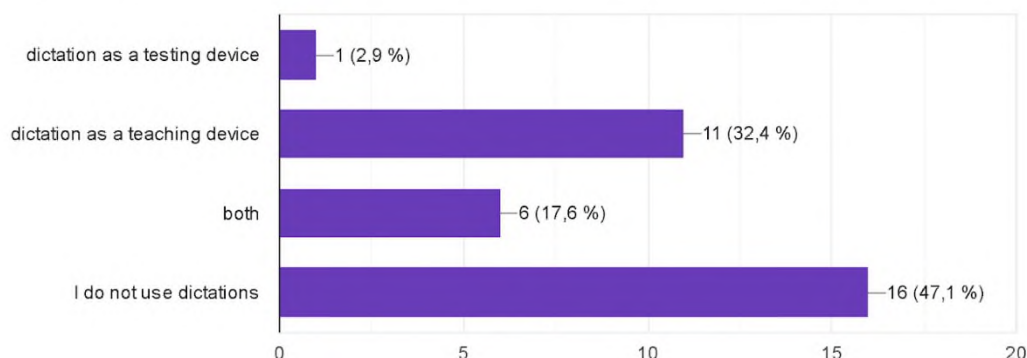


Graph 4: The use of dictations in the classroom during lessons

The pie chart 4 illustrates the use of dictations in the classroom during lessons. The figures from this chart help us discover that the number of teachers using dictations and teachers who do not use dictations is almost the same.

### 5. What type of dictations do you use?

34 odpovědí

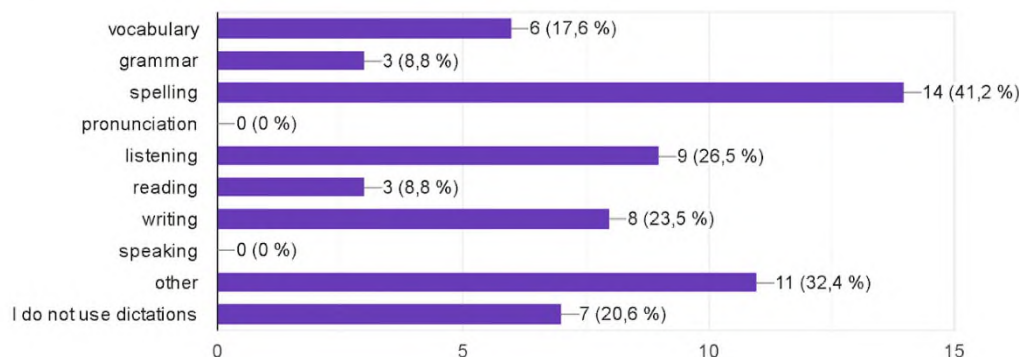


Graph 5: Types of dictation usage

This bar chart provides us with information about the type of dictation used. The results show that the majority (47,1%) of teachers do not use dictations while 32,4 % of teachers use dictations as a teaching device and only 2,9 % of teachers use dictation as a testing device. However, 17,6 % of teachers use dictation both as a teaching and a testing device.

### 6. What do you test via dictations?

34 odpovědí

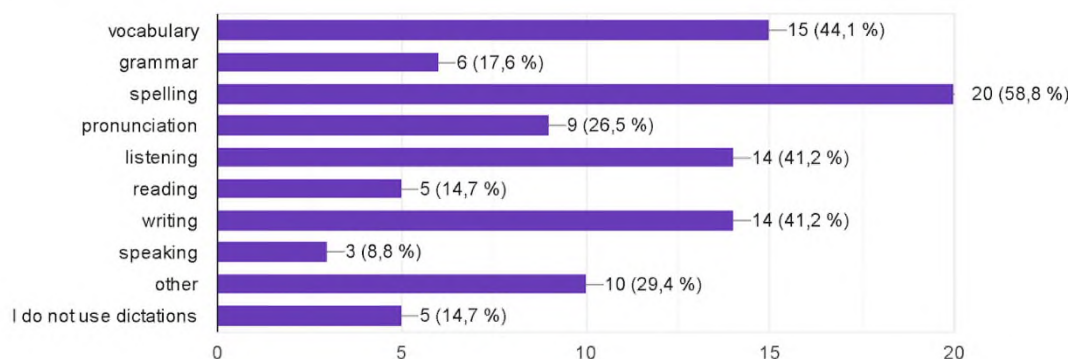


Graph 6: Dictations as a testing device

The bar chart 6 represents dictation as a testing device. Most teachers use dictations to test spelling (41,2%), listening (26,5%), and writing (23,5%). Fewer teachers use dictations to test vocabulary (17,6%), grammar (8,8%), and reading (8,8%). 32,4% of teachers use dictation the other way. Teachers added comments into chat that they use dictations for the alphabet, and numbers as running dictation. 20,6% do not use dictation at all. Nobody tests pronunciation or speaking via dictation.

### 7. What do you teach via dictations?

34 odpovědí

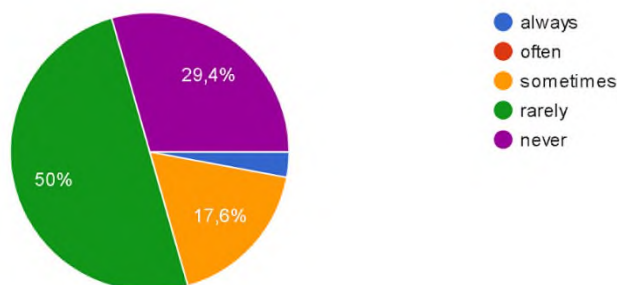


Graph 7: Dictation as a teaching device

Based on the figures from the bar chart 7 we can say that the majority of teachers use dictations to teach spelling (58,8%), vocabulary (44,1%) and listening (41,2%), and writing (41,2%). Grammar (17,6%), punctuation (26,5%), reading (14,7%) and speaking (3,8%) are used to teach less. 14,7% do not use dictations and 29,4% of teachers teach other stuff through dictations.

### 8. How often do you give students dictations?

34 odpovědí



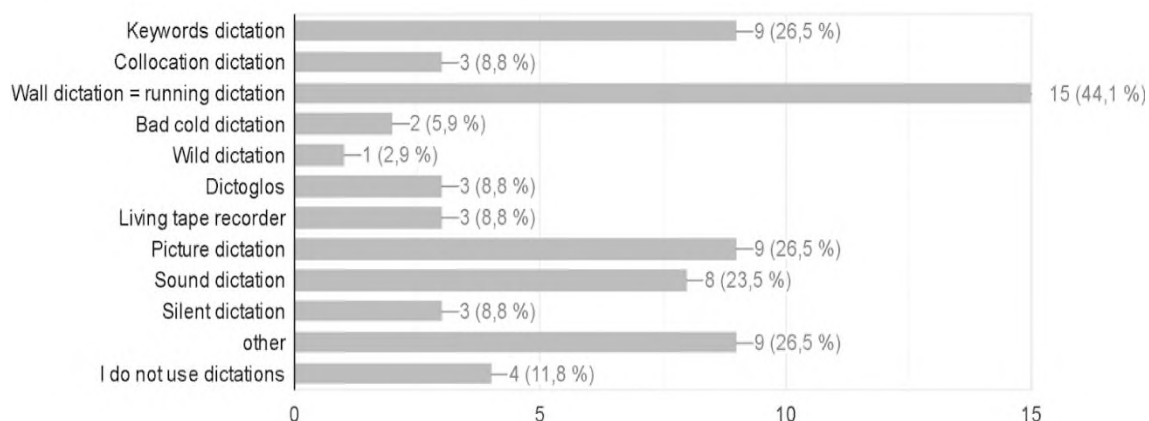
Graph 8: The frequency of using dictations

The result of the question number 8 show us that 50% of teachers rarely use dictations, 17,6% sometimes use dictations, and 29,4% of teachers never use dictations, 2,8 % of teacher use dictations always.



### 9. Which of these have you used?

Správných odpovědí: 0/34



Graph 9: The types of dictations used

The answers we got from the bar chart 9 reveal that teachers mostly have used wall/running dictation (44,1%), and 26,5% of teachers have used keywords dictation, picture dictation, sound dictation, and other dictations. 8,8% of teachers have tried also collocation dictation, dictogloss, living tape recorder, and silent dictation. Only 5,9% of teachers have used bad cold dictation, and 2,9% of teachers have used wild dictation.

To view samples of the completed questionnaire, see Attachment 1.

According to the data collected from the questionnaires from teachers (researching teachers' point of view), I found out that more than half (58,8%) of the teachers responding to the questionnaire use dictations in their lessons and consider dictations useful, drill, and gradable. The smaller half (41,2%) of respondents do not use the dictations and consider them boring, teacher-centered, and old-fashioned. Dictations are used by half (52,9%) of the teachers. Dictation as a testing device is used less than dictation as a teaching device.

Teachers mostly test skills such as listening, writing, and a little reading. From the language system, they test mostly vocabulary, spelling, and a little grammar. Speaking and pronunciation are not tested via dictation. But based on the theory, pronunciation is part of listening so when we test listening we test also pronunciation because without knowledge of pronunciation we would not be able to write correct words. From the collected data, we can sum up that teachers teach all skills via dictations but reading and listening are mentioned in a smaller amount. As for the language system, the teachers teach spelling, and vocabulary mostly and less grammar and pronunciation. Dictations in general are involved in English lessons rarely or sometimes. The involved teachers

stated they have experienced running dictations, keyword dictations, picture dictations, and sound dictations. Less frequent are collocation dictations, silent dictations, bad cold dictations, dictogloss, life type recorder dictation, silent dictation, and wild dictation.

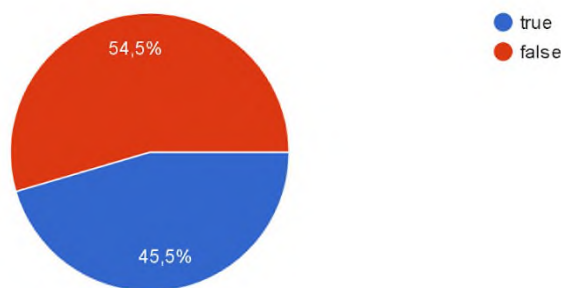
The results of the teacher's perception show that teachers use dictations both as a teaching and as a testing device but the frequency of using them is not very high.

#### 5.4.2 The result of the students' questionnaire

To view samples of the completed questionnaire, see Attachment 2.

I think dictations are boring and old-fashioned.

33 odpovědí

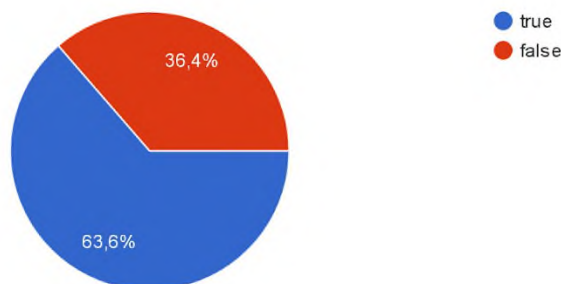


Graph 10: Dictations are boring

The pie chart 10 illustrates the percentage of students' perception that dictations are boring and old-fashioned. Almost half of them (45,5%) think that they are boring and old-fashioned. 54,5% disagree with this fact.

I enjoy dictations because I can learn to listen, read, write and speak.

33 odpovědí

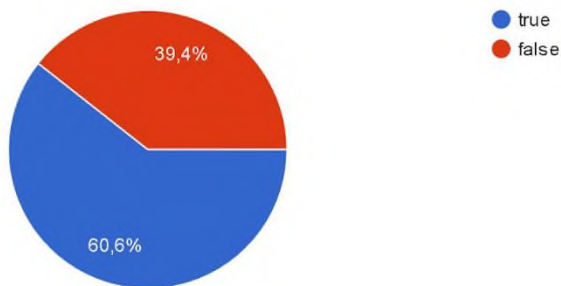


Graph 11: Dictations are enjoyable

According to this pie chart diagram number 11, 63% of students think that dictations are enjoyable and that they can learn all language skills through them. 36,4 % think that it is false.

I hate dictations because it is a test.

33 odpovědí

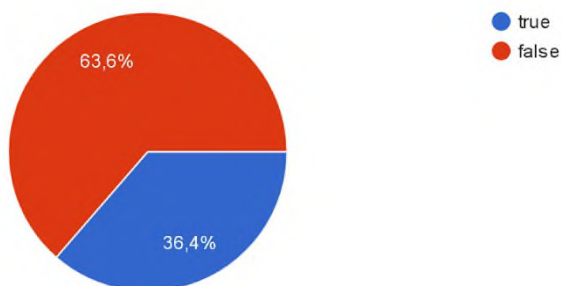


Graph 12: Dictation is a test

This pie chart 12 represents dictation as a test. 60,6% of students hate them and 39% of students are against this fact.

I don't like dictations because they are difficult.

33 odpovědí

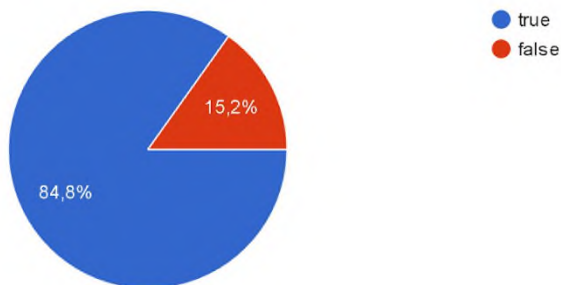


Graph 13: Dictation is difficult

This pie chart 13 displays a dislike of dictations because of their difficulty. Most students consider them easy (63,6%) and 36,4% find them difficult.

I think dictations are useful because they help with grammar, spelling and punctuation.

33 odpovědí



Graph 14: Dictation is useful

Researching the usefulness of dictations, see Graph 14 84% of students claims that dictations are useful and only 15,2 % of students regard them as not beneficial in writing.

The key objective of the questionnaire was to find out students' perception of the dictation. It has been discovered that there is almost the same amount of students who think that dictations are boring and old-fashioned and the students who think that they are enjoyable.

More than half of the students consider dictations a test device and also a teaching device to learn language skills and language system.

Interestingly, more than 80% claim that dictations are useful because they help (especially with writing and writing subskills) and only a few students consider them difficult.

## **5.5 Research results of the qualitative research**

As said above the qualitative research was carried out and the following research instruments were used: observation, semi-structured interviews with students and self-reflection. As all these are closely connected to the lessons taught, I present the research results together with the lesson plans and realisation description, see Chapter 6.

## 6 Lesson plans, observation and interview with students

An investigation of articles and studies published in the context of dictations led to the conclusion that dictations have great potential, the data collected in the quantitative research, however, showed that the implementation of dictations in English language classrooms is not frequent and dictations are not used sufficiently. For that reason, the main aim of the qualitative research was to apply the new modern methodology of dictations in three different lessons, commented with self-reflection (based on observation and semi-structured interviews with the students) with the hope that they might be an inspiration for English teachers to use dictations more in their English lessons for various purpose in some enjoyable ways.

I prepared three lesson plans for three groups of students at different English language levels attending eight-year grammar school and four-year grammar school to show how English teachers can change this traditional exercise (especially viewed as standard dictation, used for testing) into a more modern one.

All the lesson plans work with dictations as a teaching device. The choice of dictations was dictogloss, running dictation and picture dictation. I chose these dictations because I could implement different advantages of dictations mentioned in the theoretical part. Dictogloss was chosen because with an interesting text students develop their creative thinking. Picture dictation was chosen because it is (as opposed to running dictation which is a typical rouser) a settling activity so while the teacher dictates drawing follows and students calm down. Running dictation where students are active all the time was found the most suitable for the mixed-ability class.

The first lesson plan, see 6.1 uses the dictogloss dictation. It was used in the class A which consists of 14 students who are in the third grade of the four-year grammar school. Their level of English is B1. Dictogloss was used as an activity where a short text is read at a normal speed and students have to write keywords. After this stage, they reconstruct the text together in groups and conclude the activity with a story writing which is a part of their graduation exam (with a focus on the layout, past tenses, and linking words). In my opinion, students generally consider any writing tasks difficult and prefer to do the task for homework rather than at school. Teachers' attitude toward teaching writing is also quite often, from my experience, negative because it takes a lot of time to correct each writing task and give feedback to each individual student.

In the lesson with dictogloss, I tried to show the method that can satisfy both, the teachers and the students as well. All stages of the dictogloss process are done in the classroom. Students go through each stage together and use all language skills. Teachers save time correcting writing tasks at home and involve students in self-correction and peer-correction in the classroom.

The second lesson plan, see 6.2 is devoted to younger students and makes use of picture dictation. The class B consists of 10 students in the prima grade of eight-year grammar school (equivalent to the sixth grade of lower secondary school) and their level of English is A1. From my personal experience with the students, they have a short span concentration and all senses need to be included in their lessons, sometimes teachers have to calm them down and dictation can serve as a good tool. I included physical movement which is part of the TPR method to show that dictation can involve not only writing but also drawing. Students demonstrated prepositions of place by physical movements, then they memorized vocabulary connected to the picture of a classroom, drew objects from the classroom according to teachers' dictation (with deliberate use of prepositions) and worked in pairs to describe the picture orally.

The third lesson plan uses running dictation and is focused on the passive voice grammar. The class C which consists of 12 students in the quinta grade of eight-year grammar school (equivalent to the first year of secondary schools) and their level of English is A2. In using running dictation, I tried to show the advantage of dictations as a suitable tool that we can use for mixed-ability classes. A short printed text is stuck on the wall. Students are divided into three groups according to their level of English. Half of them are writers and half of them are readers. Readers have to run to the wall and try to remember part of the text. They walk/run to their writers and dictate the part they memorized. To the first group (with the lowest level of English), the text is simply dictated and afterwards the students underline all instances of the passive tenses. In the second group, readers dictate the text and verbs are in the form of infinitives. Their further task is to transform the sentences in the passive constructions. The most advanced students read the text and dictate it to writers. The text is in active voice and later on, they have to change it into the passive voice.

In designing the lessons, I took inspiration from the theoretical part, especially from methodological books written by Davis and Rinvoluceri (1988), Wajnryb (1990), and Scrivener (2011).

Texts used for dictations were found online and modified for the dictation lesson. I tried to invent exercises that can reveal all the advantages of using dictation in the classroom as a teaching device.

## 6.1 Lesson Plan 1

Topic: Dictogloss

Description of the group: B1 level according to CEFR, 16-17 years old, Gymnasium (3rd grade)

I. Aims: To use students' knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and linkers in the task of story creation, to realize the attempts to reconstruct the text according to the notes. To upgrade and refine the learners' use of language through a comprehensive analysis of language options in the correction of the learners' approximate texts.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson student will be able to identify a story writing, the parts and the structure, to write a story about the best holiday including linking words and the past simple tenses.

II. Preparation:

Purpose / Rationale (putting the activity in a wider context): The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the draft of writing the story in the context of my best holiday, to use linking words, the past simple tenses, and vocabulary connected to the best holiday.

Assumed knowledge

Linking words and past simple tenses.

Listening skills for general understanding.

Vocabulary related to the topic of the holiday.

Writing skills with a focus on the product.

Anticipated problem:

Students may use only past simple and past continuous tenses. The teacher will remind students of the past perfect tense and ask them to add it to their story. Students may not use enough adjectives so the teacher can ask other students which adjective might match a specific noun.

Materials: (*Resources for English teachers and students of English/ELT, Busy teacher.org*)

### My holiday

This happened about five years ago. I was coming back home from Turkey where I'd been on holiday with some friends who had rented a bungalow in the mountains near Ankara.

Anyway, we were on the plane and had just taken off when there was a loud bang from the right-hand side of the plane and I could see a lot of smoke coming from one of the engines. Of course, everyone started looking around but the plane carried on flying normally. And then a few minutes later the pilot came on and said there was a problem with one of the engines and we'd have to return to the airport.

I felt pretty nervous, I can tell you, but I tried to concentrate on my book and about ten minutes later we landed without any problems. We had to wait for about an hour, and then we returned to the plane. It was a different plane, and I was pretty relieved that it was.

### III. Procedure

### Timing

#### A. Introduction

##### Stage 1:

Introducing the topic of the lesson                      5 min. WC

T: Good morning. Today we are going to practice holiday dictation.

T: Look at the board with a draft of the story.

T: What is this?

SS: A story.

T: What is it about? How do you know?

SS: Holiday. The title says it.

T: How many parts does the story have? How do you know?

SS: Three. There are three paragraphs.

T: So we have a title. The first paragraph describes the scene and introduces the characters and the place or time of the plot. The second paragraph describes the plot.



The third paragraph comments on the whole story and gives the feelings or reactions of the characters and the possible consequences of the events.

T: Which grammar should be included?

SS: Past tenses-past simple, continuous, perfect.

T: How can we make the story interesting?

SS: By using a lot of adjectives, adverbs, and vocabulary connected to the holiday.

T: How many words do you write in your Maturita exam writing part?

SS: 200-230 for grammar schools.

Aim: To introduce the lesson's topic, analyse the layout of the story writing, and define the language for the story writing.

Stage 2

Introducing vocabulary

5 min. WC

T: Look into the Google classroom where our board is shared and write as many words connected to the holiday as you can in one minute.

SS: [Write the words].

T: Underline the words with the wrong spelling and ask the class for correction.

SS: [Correct the spelling].

T: Are there any unknown words?

SS: [Name the words].

T: Ask other students for an explanation of the words.

Aim: To prepare learners for the topic.

B. Body of the Lesson/Input:

Stage 3

Dictation

5 min. GW

T: Remember the number I will give you.

T: Make groups of numbers 1, 2, 3.

T: There are three people in the group, each member of the group gets a paper with a part of the story. Do not show your piece of the story to other students in your group. Read the paragraph for yourself and decide if you have the first, the second, or the third

paragraph. The person who has the first paragraph dictates first, then the second, and the third person.

The reader reads the paragraph for the first time and the listeners only listen. The reader reads the paragraph for the second time and the listeners write down the words that carry the information for example nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs not the grammar words such as articles, prepositions, and pronouns.

T: Writes the instructions on the board. Can you show the piece of information to your partner?

SS: NO.

T: What do you have to decide when reading the paragraph, yourself?

SS: What number of paragraphs is it?

T: How many times do you read your paragraph?

SS: Two times.

T: When do you write your keywords? When the paragraph is dictated for the first time or for the second time?

SS: For the second time.

T: Which word will you write JACK or A?

SS: Jack.

Aim: To organize learners into groups and give them instructions. To maintain as much information as possible from the original text.

Stage 4

Reconstruction of the text 12 min. WC

T: Give me your pieces of text. Work in your groups, use your keywords, work on your version of your story, check your grammar and spelling, and write your story into a shared document in Google classroom.

SS: [Work on their stories in groups].

T: [Monitors the activity].

Aim: To produce a sound English text with correct grammar, vocabulary, and cohesion.

### Stage 5

Analyses and correction 15 min. WC

T: [Displays three texts. Look at the first test].

Group 1: Look at the layout. Title, paragraphs, and the content of paragraphs. Is everything correct?

Group 2: Look at the vocabulary. Is there a wide range of vocabulary connected to holidays? Find them.

Is the spelling correct?

Group 3: Look at the grammar. Are there past tenses? Find examples. Are there connectors? Find them. Is the form correct?

Aim: To encourage students to reveal mistakes and correct them.

### Stage 6

Voting for the best story 3 min. WC

T: Look at all the stories and give your vote to the story you like the most and is the most similar to the original one. Raise your hand only once.

SS: [Vote].

T: [Call out the winner].

Aim: To feel the success.

### The board plan

Dictation instructions:

- work in groups of three
- read your piece of writing for yourself
- decide if it is 1st, the 2nd, 3rd part of the story
- do not show it to others in your group
- reader dictates the passage to others
- listeners only listen
- reader dictates the passage to others
- listeners write keywords
- each group makes its own story with the keywords

### My holiday

This happened about five years ago. I was coming back home from Turkey where I'd been on holiday with some friends who had rented a bungalow in the mountains near Ankara.

Anyway, we were on the plane and had just taken off when there was a loud bang from the right-hand side of the plane and I could see a lot of smoke coming from one of the engines. Of course, everyone started looking around but the plane carried on flying normally. And then a few minutes later the pilot came on and said there was a problem with one of the engines and we'd have to return to the airport.

I felt pretty nervous, I can tell you, but I tried to concentrate on my book and about ten minutes later we landed without any problems. We had to wait for about an hour, and then we returned to the plane. It was a different plane, and I was pretty relieved that it was.

#### **6.1.1 Teacher's self-reflection to LP1**

I was teaching a language procedure called dictogloss included in story writing. Students determined the layout, applied the passive voice, and chose the vocabulary connected to the holiday topic. Students were active throughout the whole lesson. They learned how to create stories for their writing part in the Maturita exam.

The application of dictogloss into the lesson was successful in most aspects. It was interesting and practical for them because they gained knowledge about writing a story and what structure is needed for story writing in the Maturita writing part.

The exercise with vocabulary was also useful. Sometimes students are shy to ask for an explanation of the words they do not know so when they underlined the unknown words first, I asked the stronger ones to explain those to the students who did not grasp their meaning from the context. It was challenging for the stronger ones as well because they defined the word in English.

Because the groups were selected randomly there were students with different levels of English in each group so the stronger ones helped the weaker ones. One drawback was the time. The groups were not able to finish the whole story on time so I asked each group to do just one part of the story. In the end, pieces of the story

were assembled into one text. We found only two mistakes in the article so as due to the group help they offered each other, the dictogloss activity resulted in accuracy in grammar and spelling.

We can conclude that dictogloss dictation is beneficial for developing accuracy in writing as there were only two mistakes in the final written product. Furthermore, students extended their knowledge of vocabulary both in spoken and written form. Dictation in the form of dictogloss integrated all language skills, we used listening, reading and writing when students dictated their passages and noted them down and speaking when they created their texts. Correcting also led to oral communication. Students were active during the whole lesson and they used creative thinking while creating their stories based on key words they wrote.

### **6.1.2 Students reflection to LP1**

Students commented on the dictogloss activity after the lesson and defined dictogloss as an interesting and useful activity. They mentioned that when they dictate it is more enjoyable than if the dictation is done by the teacher and they have to focus on pronunciation more while dictating than by any other activity. They saw dictogloss as useful for practising writing, vocabulary and grammar. They appreciated also the fact that I included into the dictogloss procedure the writing part similar to the Maturita exam because the students considered Maturita preparation as very important.

## **6.2 Lesson Plan 2**

Topic: Running/Wall dictation

Description of the group: A2 level according to CEEF, 15-16 years old, Gymnasium (quinta grade)

I. Aims: To provide the opportunity for different English levels in the class. To introduce and practice the passive voice with listening, reading and writing skills. To practice speaking in the quiz with the passive voice.

Objectives: To recognize the passive voice, use the passive voice, and create sentences in a quiz.

## II. Preparation:

Purpose / Rationale (putting the activity in a wider context): The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the passive voice, form the passive voice, listen, read and write the sentences. In the end to be able to prepare for the quiz with a passive voice.

### Assumed knowledge:

The passive voice present and past

The listening skills for general understanding.

The writing skills focused on spelling.

The speaking skill to form sentences in the passive voice.

### Anticipated problem:

Students may use active voice instead of passive. I will remind students that the object is more important than the subject in the passive.

Materials: SCRIVENER, Jim. *Teaching English Grammar*. 2010. Thailand: Macmillan, 2017. ISBN 978-3-19-022730-3.

Materials: (*Resources for English teachers and students of English/ELT, Busy teacher.org*)

## III. Procedure:

### Timing

### A. Introduction

#### Stage 1:

Introducing the topic of the lesson                      10 min. PW

T: Good morning. Today we are going to practice the passive tense with a running dictation.

T: Look at the board. Work in pairs and match the halves to make the correct sentences.

SS: [Work in pairs to solve the quiz].

FB: The teacher asks pairs and draws the lines to connect the beginnings and endings of the sentences and reads the sentences.

T: [Erase all the verbs and the lines. Write the complete correct sentences into your

notebook].

SS: [Write the sentences individually]. IW

Aim: to introduce the topic of the lesson and give examples of passive sentences.

Stage 2:

Explaining the rules of the passive tense 5 min. WC

T: Look at these two sentences:

Hamlet was written by Shakespeare.

Shakespeare wrote Hamlet.

T: Do these sentences have the same meaning?

SS: Yes.

T: Do the sentences have the same emphases?

SS: No.

T: In an active sentence there is more emphasis on Shakespeare and in a passive sentence there is more emphasis on Hamlet.

T: Which sentence is passive?

SS: The first sentence.

T: Look at these two sentences:

Risotto is made with rice.

Hamlet was written by Shakespeare.

T: Which sentence is present passive?

SS: The first sentence.

T: Which sentence is past passive?

SS: The second sentence.

T: How do we form the passive?

SS: to be + past participle

Aim: to explain the rules of how to form the passive sentence

B. Body of the Lesson/Input:

Stage 3:

Running dictation

10 min. PW

T: There are three rows in this classroom. I will divide you into three groups according to your level of English. The first group sits next to the window. The second group sits in the middle. The third group sits near the door.

T: Sit in pairs. The people on the right are readers. People on the left are writers. Readers have to walk to the wall, read the text on the wall and memorize part of it. Then they go back to the writers to dictate it. The writers sit down and write down the pieces. The writer can ask questions about spelling, punctuation, etc.

T: It is a race. Walk-no running. No shouting across the room. There are four pieces of news. Swap roles after two news.

SS: [Do the dictation].

Aim: To practice reading, listening, and writing.

#### Stage 4

The passive tense practice 5 min. GW

T: The first group underlines all the passive sentences. The second group changes all the verbs in brackets into the passive voice. The third group changes all the sentences from active to passive tense.

SS: [Work in their groups].

FB: [The teacher displays the first group news with underlined passive sentences on the board]. 5 min. WC

Aim: To practice the form of the passive voice.

#### Stage 5

Inventing a quiz 15 min. GW

T: Use your mobile phone to find interesting facts about exploration, famous buildings, world sporting records, space travel, etc., and prepare 5-10 true or false sentences in the passive voice for other groups. Work in the rows you did the dictations.

T: This is an example of one sentence. Hamlet was written by Shakespeare. Is true or false?

SS: [Prepare the quiz].

T: Group 1 read the sentences for group 2. Group 2 decide if the scenes are true or false. Group 2 read the sentences for group 3. Group 3 decide if the scenes are true or false.



Group 3 read the sentences for group 1. Group 1 decide if the scenes are true or false.

SS: [Do the quiz].

T: [Counts the points of correct passive sentences, correct answers and corrects passive mistakes].

Aim: To practice forming the passive voice.

FB: [The teacher writes mistakes that students made on the board and asks students to correct them].

### The board plan

Hamlet was written by	Galileo
The moons of Jupiter were discovered by	Shakespeare
The internet was invented by	in the evening
The car is washed	in autumn
TV is watched	Tim Berners-Lee
The apples are harvested	every week

### Active or passive

Hamlet was written by Shakespeare.

Shakespeare wrote Hamlet.

### Present and past simple passive

Risotto is made with rice.

Hamlet was written by Shakespeare.

The first group

#### *International news*

More than 2.500 people were killed in Iran during the earthquake. The earthquake measured 6.7 on Richter's scale.

#### *Sports news*

The world 100 meters record was broken for the second time this week.

#### *Readers letter*

I wonder if anybody can answer my question. How much lipstick is eaten on average by women every year?

*TV guide*

New episodes of SpongeBob are shot in our town every month.

The second group

*International news*

More than 2.500 people (kill) in Iran during the earthquake. The earthquake measured 6.7 on Richter's scale.

*Sports news*

The world 100 meters record (break) for the second time this week.

*Readers letter*

I wonder if anybody can answer my question. How much lipstick (eat) on average by women every year?

*TV guide*

New episodes of SpongeBob (shoot) in our town every month.

The third group

*International news*

The earthquake killed more than 2.500 people in Iran. The earthquake measured 6.7 on Richter's scale.

*Sports news*

Mr Davis broke the world 100 meters record for the second time this week.

*Readers letter*

I wonder if anybody can answer my question. How much lipstick do women on average eat every year?

*TV guide*

Filmmakers shoot new episodes of SpongeBob in our town every month.

### **6.2.1 Teacher's self-reflection to LP2**

I was teaching a dictation lesson with running/wall dictation focused on the present and past passive tenses in passive voice. The purpose of doing a dictation lesson was making use of running/wall dictation for mixed-ability class. The lesson was successful and all aims and objectives of the lesson were fulfilled. The whole lesson was conducted in L2 (English).

At the beginning of the lesson students seemed quite unhappy when they heard that they are going to have a dictation lesson with grammar. I observed unhappy faces, heard derisive sounds and comments.

When I explained the rules one boy informed me that his English level is very low and is afraid that he cannot do the activity. I explained to him that his task is only to read and dictate what is written on the wall. It seemed that he was feeling better. Interestingly, the whole class knew what to do and the activity was calm and all of them were very active to finish the task first. They might have already done this type of activity but they called it differently based on their awareness of what to do.

The lesson went smoothly and the students learned to identify the passive voice, make sentences about the present and the past in passive, and change the active sentences to the passive sentences. What could have been done better is greater differentiating between the dictation material level.

The first group was much slower in finishing their task than the third group. I would give the first group only two pieces of news to dictate or add two more pieces of news for dictation to the third group.

In closing, we can say that running/wall dictation proved a suitable activity for classes with different English levels and all students felt success at the end. All students were active during the lesson and all language skills were implemented. Dictation, in this case running/wall dictation, also provided an opportunity to access interesting texts, here world news.

### **6.2.2 Students' reflection to LP2**

At the beginning of our discussion, I asked students what they think about dictation now because as said above their first reaction was rather negative. The students asked if we did any dictation and it turned out they did not consider running dictation a dictation. Most of them said that running dictation (focused on the passive voice) was effective, educative, and fun. Three students from the third group still did not like dictation and still considered any dictation not only running/wall dictation boring and useless.

### 6.3 Lesson Plan 3

Topic: Picture dictation

Description of the group: A1 level according to CEEF, 11-12 years old, Lower Gymnasium (prima)

Aims: To learn vocabulary connected to objects in the study. To practice prepositions of place.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson students will be able to use objects in the study in sentences and describe the study with prepositions of place.

II. Preparation:

Purpose / Rationale (putting the activity in a broader context): The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the objects in the study and practice prepositions of place.

Assumed knowledge:

Listening skills for specific information.

Vocabulary object in the study.

Grammar prepositions of place.

Speaking skills to describe the study with prepositions of place.

Anticipated problem:

Students may forget the definite article in the sentences. I will put the example sentence on the board.

Materials: a picture of the study

III. Procedure:

Timing

A. Introduction

Stage 1:

Introducing the topic of lesson

10 min. WC

T: Good morning. Today we are going to practice picture dictation.

T: Look at the picture. What can you see in the picture?

SS: There is a lamp, a notebook, a mouse, a desk, a chair, a mat, a window, and some folders.

T: Which room is it?

SS: It is a study.

T: What else can we have in the study?

SS: [Say the objects that can be in the study].

T: [Draws the objects on the board].

T: [Points to the pictures on the board and asks individuals:] What is it? Can you spell it?

SS: [Name the objects and the teacher writes the names next to the objects].

Aim: To introduce the lesson's topic and to find examples of objects in the study.

### Stage 2

Dictation 10 min. WC

T: Look at your picture. Take a pencil. Draw the objects I dictate into the picture anywhere you like.

SS: [Listen and draw].

Aim: To practice listening and vocabulary of objects in the study.

### B. Body of the Lesson/Input:

#### Stage 3

Prepositions of place 10 min. WC

T: Stand up and repeat after me and do the action.

T: on [the teacher puts the fist on the palm]

T: in [the teacher puts the fist in the palm]

T: under [the teacher puts the fist under the palm]

T: behind [the teacher points with both thumbs behind the shoulders]

T: in front of [the teacher points with both thumbs in front of the chest]

T: next to [the teacher points to the right side]

T: Look at our desk. Where is the pen?

SS: The pen is on the desk.

T: Where is the book?

SS: The book is under the desk.

T: Where is the chair?

SS: The chair is in front of the desk.

T: Where is the lamp?

SS: The lamp is next to the computer.

T: Where is the coat?

SS: The coat is behind the chair.

Aim: To revise the prepositions of place.

Stage 4

Picture dictation in pairs

Picture description 10 min. WC

T: Look at your picture. Where is the pen?

S: The pen is on the desk.

T: [Points on the displayed picture on the board].

T: Work in pairs. One student asks: Where is the object? Second student answers:  
The \_\_\_ is \_\_\_.

SS: [Work in pairs and practice questions and answers]. PW

Aim: To practice speaking for describing the picture and the prepositions of place.

Stage 5

Describing a picture 5 min. WC

T: Look at your pictures in pairs. What is the same?

SS: The book is on the desk.

T: What is different?

SS: The book is on the desk and the book is on the chair.

Aim: To sum up what we have learned.

### **6.3.1 Teacher's reflection to LP3**

I was teaching a picture dictation lesson with a make use of the prepositions of place and memorize vocabulary connected to the study room. At the end of the lesson, the students combined the prepositions of place and objects in the study.

The first stage where students named the vocabulary surprised me because they named all the words in the picture in detail. Every student added at least one word. They seemed very motivated. In the picture dictation, I used only five objects because students needed time to draw nice pictures.

When we practised the prepositions via the picture dictation followed this time not by drawing but by action (TPR) students enjoyed the picture dictation, especially when we increased speed.

I observed that while using picture dictation, students were motivated and had a lot of fun. They learned pronunciation of the words, prepositions of place and the articles in the sentences in context.

Picture dictation also calmed the students because when they drew the pictures they seemed very concentrated on their work. On the other hand, when followed by TPR students were active and roused.

### **6.3.2 Student's reflection to LP3**

The students said that the picture dictation is much different than they know about dictations and that they would like to have more lessons like this one. They commented that the picture dictation activity it was a lot of fun. One student emphasized that there is a huge difference when the teacher dictates and when the student dictates because they can practice more their speaking and pronunciation plus listening comprehension as well.

## 7 Conclusion

This thesis deals with topic dictations which still hold an important place in English language teaching. Dictations have a long history and there were stated arguments for and against their use as a testing device or teaching device. There is preconceive idea that they are old-fashioned, teacher-centred and boring. Dictations with new methodology have proven to be a suitable way of developing not only all language skills such as reading, listening, writing and speaking but also their sub-skills such as pronunciation, spelling, phrases, and language functions.

The main purpose of this diploma thesis was to find out if teachers use dictations in their classes, for what purpose and what kind of dictations they use. Three lesson plans with dictations were prepared and taught. By observation, I found their benefits and students reflected on their opinions on the new types of dictations.

The theoretical part provided a comprehensive overview of the historical background, theoretical principles of using dictations as a testing device and new types of dictation and the methodology. As a testing device dictations can test language proficiency and listening comprehension. They are part of Cambridge tests and Maturita didactic tests as an integrative test in the type of cloze tests, partial dictations or competing noise dictations. They test the expectancy of grammar, lexis, syntax, discourse, sociolinguistic or pragmatic competence. A new methodology of dictations was introduced and some types of dictations such as keyword, collocation, wall/running, bad cold, wild, picture, sound dictation, dictogloss or living tape recorder dictation were explained. The benefits of new dictations were listed and proved in practical qualitative research.

In the practical part, both the quantitative and qualitative research tools were used to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' and students' attitudes towards dictations. Data obtained from questionnaires distributed to English teachers demonstrate that half of the teachers use dictations and they are used both as a testing device and a teaching device. Dictations are used less frequently even thou they develop all language skills and also the language system. New types of dictations were mentioned by teachers and their implementation into their lessons but there appeared a question if teachers are aware of what exactly they teach through dictations.

The qualitative research consisted of three lesson plans with the implementation of dictations and self-reflection of the lessons thought and also students' reflection. The



application of three types of dictations dictogloss, running dictation and picture dictation proved that all language skills can be integrated through dictations. Furthermore, all students were active and used unconscious thinking, dictations coped with mixed ability classes, they were a useful tool to calm the class and brought an interesting text to the class which led to students' motivation. We can teach all skills, writing brings accuracy in spelling, grammar, vocabulary, listening help with pronunciation, speaking develop fluency, reading develop vocabulary extension.

Students' perceptions changed after the lessons they respond positively as they enjoyed and had fun during the lessons, and they consider dictation a useful tool to practice vocabulary, grammar, writing, and pronunciation. They expressed a desire to have future English lessons with dictations.

To conclude, I believe that the new methodology of dictations is a powerful tool which integrates all language skills and has many benefits. English language teachers have a great opportunity to use them in their lessons in an efficient, enjoyable and new way. Since dictations are used rarely and by half of the teachers, further research should be devoted to a deeper awareness of the methodology of dictation and what is taught through them.

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## 10 List of abbreviations

CEFR	Common European Framework of languages
IW	Individual work
LP1	Lesson Plan 1
LP2	Lesson Plan 2
LP3	Lesson Plan 3
PW	Pair work
RVP	Rámcový vzdělávací plán
ŠVP	Školní vzdělávací plán
TPR	Total Physical Response
WC	Whole class

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# Attachment 1: Teachers' perception of dictations

10.10.22 17:30

Teachers' perception of dictations

## Teachers' perception of dictations

Dear teachers,

my name is Lucie Podhorská and I am studying at the Technical University in Liberec. This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for my Master's diploma thesis. It deals with the use of dictations in English language teaching. Your contributions will assist me to achieve the objectives of the study. This questionnaire should only take 5 minutes and your responses are completely anonymous. You are kindly requested to answer honestly the questions below. Please tick the appropriate answer. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

*\*Povinné pole*

1. 1. How long have you been teaching English? \*

*Zaškrtněte všechny platné možnosti.*

- 1 - 4 years
- 5 - 9 years
- 10 - 15 years
- 16 - 20 years
- more than 20 years

2. 2. Where do you teach? \*

*Zaškrtněte všechny platné možnosti.*

- in a primary school 1st - 5th grade
- in a lower secondary school 6th - 9th grade or respective groups at Gymnázium
- in a secondary school (SOU, SŠ)
- other

3. 3. What do you think about dictations in EFL lessons? \*

*Označte jen jednu elipsu.*

- boring, old-fashioned, teacher-centered
- useful, drill, gradable

4. 4. Do you use dictations in the classroom during your lessons? \*

*Označte jen jednu elipsu.*

- yes  
 no

5. 5. What type of dictations do you use? \*

*Zaškrtněte všechny platné možnosti.*

- dictation as a testing device  
 dictation as a teaching device  
 both  
 I do not use dictations

6. 6. What do you test via dictations? \*

*Zaškrtněte všechny platné možnosti.*

- vocabulary  
 grammar  
 spelling  
 pronunciation  
 listening  
 reading  
 writing  
 speaking  
 other  
 I do not use dictations

## 7. 7. What do you teach via dictations? \*

*Zaškrtněte všechny platné možnosti.*

- vocabulary
- grammar
- spelling
- pronunciation
- listening
- reading
- writing
- speaking
- other
- I do not use dictations

## 8. 8. How often do you give students dictations? \*

*Označte jen jednu elipsu.*

- always
- often
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

## 9. 9. Which of these have you used? \*

*Zaškrtněte všechny platné možnosti.*

- Keywords dictation
- Collocation dictation
- Wall dictation = running dictation
- Bad cold dictation
- Wild dictation
- Dictoglos
- Living tape recorder
- Picture dictation
- Sound dictation
- Silent dictation
- other
- I do not use dictations

The explanation notes to the dictation titles.

Keywords dictation is where the teacher finds an interesting story and underlines fifteen to twenty words most important words. These words should be content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. The students use these words and make a story. In the end, the class can swap the stories, read them or tell them. The teacher can tell them the original one.

Collocation dictation is where the teacher prepares ten to twenty useful two-word collocations. The teacher dictates one word from the collocation, students must not write the word but write some words that collocate with it. After the dictation, students work in small groups and try to complete the original collocation according to the list they wrote.

Wall dictation/running dictation is where the teacher chooses a text, makes more copies, and sticks them on the wall. The teacher divides students into readers and writers. Readers read texts, memorize part of it, and dictate them to writers who sit down and wait until readers run to them. It is a race and the aim is to write the most accurate text.

Bad cold dictation is where the teacher dictates but sometimes sneezes. When the teacher sneezes, students should write any good word that fits the space.

Wild dictation is where the teacher dictates a numbered list of description words e.g. name, adjective, verb, etc. After that, the teacher dictates a short story with gaps in the numbers. The winner is the person with the funniest story.

Dictogloss is an activity where the teacher dictates some keywords from the text chosen. The teacher should read it at a normal speed three times and give students time for writing the words they remember. After that, students try to build the story in groups and get closest to the original one.

The living tape recorder is where the teacher uses the board and draws a picture of a tape recorder with buttons for playing, stopping, or replaying. Two students stand in front of the class near the board and control the tape recorder. The class can call out to ask the controllers to press the buttons. The teacher follows the buttons on the recorder.

Picture dictation is where the teacher describes a picture and students draw it, or it can be done as a pair or group activity

Sound dictation is where the tape recorder is playing some sounds and students act them out.

Silent dictation is where students dictate their text to a partner by whispering.

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## Attachment 2: Students' perception of dictations

### Students' perception of dictations

Dear students,

my name is Lucie Podhorská and I am studying at Technical University in Liberec. This questionnaire serves as a data collection tool for a Master's diploma thesis. It deals with the use of dictation in English language teaching. Your contributions will assist me to achieve the objectives of the study. This questionnaire should only take 5 minutes and your responses are completely anonymous. You are kindly requested to answer honestly the questions below. Please tick the appropriate answer. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

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\*Povinné pole

1. I think dictations are boring and old-fashioned. \*

*Označte jen jednu elipsu.*

true

false

2. I enjoy dictations because I can learn to listen, read, write and speak. \*

*Označte jen jednu elipsu.*

true

false

3. I hate dictations because it is a test. \*

*Označte jen jednu elipsu.*

true

false

4. I don't like dictations because they are difficult. \*

*Označte jen jednu elipsu.*

- true  
 false

5. I think dictations are useful because they help with grammar, spelling and punctuation.

*Označte jen jednu elipsu.*

- true  
 false

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