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Authentic Language in ELT Classes

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Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracoval samostatně a použil jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

V Olomouci 6.12.2019 ……………………………………………

vlastnoruční podpis

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List of abbreviations:

CLIL – Content and language integrated learning

CLT – Communicative language teaching

L1 – native language, first language, mother tongue

L2 – second (foreign) target language

EFL – English as a foreign language

ELT – English language teaching

ESP – English for specific purposes

SLA – Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract

This diploma project deals with the use of authentic materials in ELT classes and their possible impact on learners' motivation. It does so by reviewing literature that focuses both on defining authentic materials and on their practical usage and, more importantly, by conducting a research to answer stated research questions. The practical part of the thesis then includes the interpretation of two questionnaires (for both learners and teachers) and several example activities utilizing authentic materials. The findings seem to support the claim that most respondents have encountered authentic materials in class and they profess a positive attitude towards using them.

Introduction

From all of my high school English lessons, I can remember only a handful of them distinctly. I definitely do not remember the lessons when all the teacher did was go through the coursebook with us, the students. What I can recall, however, is when our teacher brought a simplified, shortened version of an interesting novel. We did not spend our whole lessons reading I, of course. It was our reward for the final 15-20 minutes after working with the coursebooks. But I did look forward to every lesson when I knew we would continue with the thrilling mysterious adventure, talking about the newly encountered vocabulary and summarizing the story in our own words. What I did not know then was the fact that out teacher had just used authentic material to make our experience more fun and interesting. But this was just one of the few exceptions in a long line of tedious, identical lessons. So why was there not more of such interesting learning?

Expanding upon my bachelor's thesis (Mainstream Media in Teaching English), the aim of this paper is to bring further arguments and evidence that using materials that are not primarily made for the target language education might be highly useful and efficient for ELT. This is done through research questions that have been defined as follows:

1. To what extent do students experience authentic materials being used in the classroom in Olomouc region ELT classes?
2. How does the use of authentic materials affect students' motivation in ELT classes in the Olomouc region?
3. What are the teachers' opinions on using authentic materials in the classroom?
4. From teachers' point of view, what are the main disadvantages of using authentic materials?

To be able to answer the aforementioned questions, it is first necessary to provide a thorough literature review in the theoretical part. This part of thesis defines the terms *authentic language* and *authentic materials* and categorizes said materials, it deals with the comparison between authentic and non-authentic materials from various points of view, identifies the advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials, provides a list of possible sources for them and establishes criteria for selection of said materials. Furthermore, the theoretical part features five linguistic or educational arguments that

support the use of authentic materials. Lastly, some specific use cases are given for the teaching of different skills/areas of language education through the use of authentic materials.

The second half of the thesis is then dedicated to answering the research questions stated above. This is done through research, which has been realized with the use of two questionnaires designed for both students and teachers of English. The results are interpreted to give an idea of the current situation in Czech schools and also to indicate the opinions and attitude towards using authentic language in English lessons. Finally, the practical part also contains example activities that showcase the strengths of authentic materials when used appropriately.

THEORETICAL PART

1 Authentic language

To begin with, it is necessary to clarify the terms *authentic language* or *authentic materials* that are extensively used throughout this thesis.

Across various literature, said terms have been defined in diverse ways. A very simple way to define authentic materials is that they are materials designed for native speakers of English (or any other mother tongue – henceforth L1) and not deliberately designed for language students (Hwang, 2005). Another way of defining authentic materials is to consider it a piece of discourse created to fulfil some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced (Little & Singleton, 1988). Furthermore, Rogers & Medley (1988) explain the term as describing language samples, both oral and written, that reflect naturally used language forms appropriately based on the cultural and situational context.

With said definitions in mind, it is obvious that the term *authentic materials* has been coined in contrast to prefabricated patterns used extensively in textbooks, where authentic materials represent non-pedagogical materials used to help learners improve in their target language (henceforth L2) proficiency. This explanation of the term agrees with the point of view of the author of the thesis and will serve as the basis for the understanding of said concept.

For the purpose of this thesis, the only noticeable difference between *authentic language* and *authentic material* is in the generality, where authentic language is considered to be the superordinate term. Authentic material is a piece of authentic language – be it a text, a YouTube video or a modern pop song – that the teacher or learner uses in the process of language acquisition.

However, a number of professionals in the field of linguistics have expressed profoundly different opinions on the concept of authenticity itself; this topic is therefore discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

1.1 Authenticity in general

It is essential to give an overview of the issue of authenticity itself, for many authors express different ideas while talking about said concept.

Widdowson (1990) claims that authenticity is not merely an attribute of the study material itself; instead, it rather depends on the manner in which the learner responds to it. This claim takes into account the link between language and its social community; simply, one can hardly fully communicate with a native speaker of L2 without also understanding the social conventions of L2 native speakers. It is therefore important for the learner to sort of be able to mimic the behavioral patterns of certain community based on the usage of authentic materials.

Taylor (1994) argues in his article *Authentic in authenticity or Inauthentic Authenticity* that the divide between classroom artificiality and the authenticity of the real world lacks accuracy. One of the reasons is that authenticity is an interpretable social construct and as such is hard to clearly define. Taylor further claims using an authentic material does not necessarily guarantee the activity itself to be authentic, e.g. analyzing song lyrics to find a real-world use of certain grammatical phenomenon. He proposes that a more beneficial way would be to, for example, discuss the song's main ideas. When utilized in such fashion, the lyrics are then reflecting their original purpose given to the song by the artist – that is to invoke some feelings or thoughts in the listener.

According to McDonough and Shaw (1993, p. 43), authenticity can be described as "*a term which loosely implies as close an approximation as possible to the world outside the classroom, in the selection both of language material and of the activities and methods used for practice in the classroom.*"

The aforementioned approaches all agree that it is not only the material itself that matters, but also the manner in which the material is used (setting, task etc.) is of importance. This will be taken into account while dealing with authentic materials in the following chapters.

1.2 Categorizing authentic materials

Authentic materials are still a very general term; this chapter therefore deals with some more specific categories or types of authentic materials and provides their examples.

Gebhard (1996) classified authentic materials into three basic categories – visual, printed and listening/viewing materials.

1.2.1   Authentic visual materials

Not really featuring language themselves, authentic visual materials are an example of the authenticity relying not only on the material itself, but also on its usage. This category refers to photographs, paintings, slides etc., which contain no language per se but can be used to spark a conversation among learners that, if used correctly, can be considered authentic.

1.2.2   Authentic printed materials

As the name suggests, authentic printed materials are materials in written form, e.g. newspaper articles, comic books, song lyrics, short stories, advertisements, blogs etc.

1.2.3   Authentic listening/viewing materials

This category contains materials such as TV commercials, YouTube videos, songs, radio shows, documentaries, cartoons, podcasts etc. These materials enable the learners to see and most importantly hear L2 in use.

It is appropriate to mention that quite often, two or even more of said categories can be implemented together in a more complex way. One clear example would be listening to a song while also reading (or otherwise utilizing) the printed song lyrics on paper.

1.3 The differences between authentic and non-authentic materials

This chapter provides a brief overview of what can constitute the main differences between authentic and non-authentic materials and their usage across various types and categories of materials.

According to Hedge (2000), some general differences might be in the formality of the language used (authentic often being colloquial and less formal – depending on the source and context, of course), the grammatical preciseness (non-authentic language often featuring mistakes in grammar), the use of ellipsis etc.

Hedge (2000) also mentions more profound discrepancies that are characteristic particularly to spoken language. Authentic language varies in the speed and quality of delivery – it tends to be fast, yet full of hesitations, and might be less cohesive. The intonation is more natural for the speaker and the utterance contains features of connected speech which are completely omitted or only very rarely present in non-authentic materials. In real world situations, a variety of accents appear, while non-authentic materials usually feature perfect Received Pronunciation (at least in a typical Czech classroom setting). Speakers often interrupt each other or speak at the same time, there tends to be a non-negligible use of ellipsis and, quite regularly, there might be some background noise present.

While all aforementioned differences might actually make authentic materials harder to comprehend in some cases, they also present the learner with challenges that are closer to real world interactions and therefore seem to be more practical in their nature. The linguistic input learners come across in class tends to be overly formal, sometimes loses its communicative purpose and is quite often very unnatural in comparison.

Should one consider the broader sense of authenticity – not only the materials themselves, but also the authenticity of the tasks and settings as mentioned in chapter 1.1 – it is worth noting that one of the key differences between authentic and non-authentic language might be the "meaningfulness" of the tasks. Quite often, standard textbooks offer isolated, decontextualized competencies – this is where the authenticity of tasks fails to be introduced. Instead, interaction-oriented tasks, where learners try to act as they would in

a real-world situation outside of the classroom, often seemingly abandoning the role of a learner, might offer much more in the way of authenticity and usefulness. It is of course imperative to find a task that the learners would be interested in (Ollivier, 2015). Tomlinson (2012, p. 163) explains the authentic task as "*one which involves the learners in communication in order to achieve an outcome, rather than practice the language.*"

To sum up, there are a lot of factors that differ between authentic and non-authentic materials. The most prominent ones include the formality, grammatical preciseness and variances in spoken language (speed, ellipsis, cohesion, accents, hesitations). These can make authentic language more difficult to comprehend, but also more beneficial for being closer to the real-world communication. It is also worth mentioning that even the authenticity of setting and task can be considered.

1.4 Benefits of using authentic materials

In this chapter, a synthesis of the arguments different authors have made in favor of introducing authentic materials in classes will be given.

First of all, an arguably very important advantage of using authentic materials with the addition of authentic tasks is an increase in the motivation of learners. As Jaccomard & Kuuse wrote in the conclusion to their case study *Authenticity in the Language Classroom: A Case Study* (2016), the participants of the study have reported a motivation to do well not for external rewards (such as grades) but to help them understand the relationship between language and the world and to strengthen social relationships. Or, as Ciornei & Dina have noted: "*Teachers and students are naturally attracted to authentic texts. Finding that you can read something designed for a native speaker is motivating, and developing strategies to deal with 'real' texts enables students to read more confidently and extensively outside the classroom*" (Ciornei & Dina, 2015).

Another advantage is the easy accessibility of authentic materials in our internet age. There is virtually a limitless supply of books, songs, videos etc. This is especially true when using modern technologies and multimedia (Ciornei & Dina, 2015).

As was already mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the obvious benefits of using authentic language is that it is significantly closer to the language learners might encounter

when dealing with L2 as opposed to carefully constructed, perfectionist language void of any mistakes that is to be found in textbooks (Qamariah & Tadris Bahasa Inggris, 2016).

Another point worth mentioning is that the use of contemporary authentic materials – such as the latest news/interviews with famous people/videos of learners' favorite YouTubers etc. – can also keep the learners and teachers alike up-to-date on the latest trends and development of L2 language, educate them on contemporary culture, important world events and so forth (Widyastuti, 2017).

Even more clearly can one see the advantage of using correctly incorporated authentic materials when talking about English for Specific Purposes (henceforth ESP). Especially in various fields of work, coming into contact with professional language resembling its real-life use is very important. It implies the use of appropriate terminology, expressions and grammar structures that are typical for each individual field. Combined with the previous point, it also helps to keep learners updated of changes and developments in the professional language in their line of work or study (Ruiz & Molinero, 2004).

Finally, it's noteworthy that well-constructed and meaningful authentic tasks introduce the opportunities for genuine communication and social interactions, which should be the ultimate goal for any type of ELT (or any language in general).

1.5 Disadvantages and challenges of using authentic materials

This chapter presents some possible issues to be encountered when dealing with authentic materials and their use in classroom.

Since the list of arguments in favor of using authentic language started with it supporting learners' motivation, it is only fair to start with a direct counterargument – some authors claim that using authentic materials can have a strongly demotivating effect because of the language complexity, which defeats the purpose of their incorporation. The problem then lies either in the used vocabulary or in the cultural knowledge that is presumed existing in the consumer of such material to understand a particular text (Gilmore, 2007). Of course, this obstacle can be overcome by carefully selecting the authentic materials that are introduced to the learners; according to Stephen Krashen's theory of Second Language

Acquisition (henceforth SLA), input that is slightly beyond the competency level of the learner is the most suitable one that brings the best results. Put into a simple mathematic formula, if one imagines the current level of learner's internalized language as *i*, then the comprehensible input the learner should be subjected to is *i + 1* (VanPatten & Williams, 2015).

However, possible demotivation is not the only challenge that can arise during the use of authentic language. "*The use of authentic materials in the language classroom presents instructors with several challenges. One such challenge is development of effective research skills required to manage the vast amount of information available in written, spoken, or multimedia format. An additional challenge is the selection of the material most appropriate to the objectives of curriculum, a course, or even a single task. A third challenge is the implementation of materials and the subsequent demands of flexibility and adaptation of instruction that may not be confined to a traditional classroom setting*" (Dumitrescu, 2000).

There are, of course, possible solutions to these challenges. If the teacher is not necessarily trying to incorporate cultural knowledge in the classroom, it is possible to discover authentic materials that are relevant to their local context (Thomas, 2014). For example, it would not be hard to find pieces of news about the Czech Republic, be it about the latest sport achievements, related to politics etc.

Regarding the issue of being able to manage such vast amount of information, it is possible to have the learners work in the teachers' favor. One can ascertain what are the areas of learners' interest and then let the learners themselves find materials that they would consider useful, meaningful and interesting to work with. Such empowerment might even be able to elevate the motivation in learners (Thomas, 2014).

Lastly, the challenge of authentic materials being too difficult language-wise is something that can also be addressed – not only through careful selection, but also through adapting the materials to match the level of learners' internalized language (Widdowson, 1990). However, some authors believe that literary and other authentic materials should not be simplified; rather than altering the material itself, it is of greater educational value to provide the learners with reading strategies and activities to help them comprehend the

authentic material in question. These tools can be divided into three categories called pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading activities (Ciornei & Dina, 2015). It is also possible to only demand a general understanding of the material (skimming) or, on the contrary, to work with specific passages and details of said material (scanning).

To conclude, using authentic materials certainly presents the teacher with challenges that need to be taken into account. However, it is reasonable to think that careful planning and analysis before introducing authentic materials in the classroom should help to overcome said challenges and bring forth the benefits of using them.

1.6 Sources of authentic materials

A brief overview of possible sources of authentic materials and authentic language is given in this chapter. A number of factors need to be considered beforehand, such as the students' field of interest, relevance and availability of desired materials.

Considering the age we live in, the most easily available source of anything is, of course, the internet. Whether one is in need of videos, songs, books, news articles, or anything else, it is very likely to be found somewhere on the web (Soufi, 2013). Naturally, with using the world wide web comes also the risk of encountering false information, especially in the form of articles and news, even to the degree of some online newspapers being almost exclusively full of fake news and deliberate disinformation.

For teachers in search of some rather short materials that can fully accommodate even more complex tasks, ads and TV commercials might be very useful. Both are condensed in their language and message and do not contain a great deal of redundancy. In the case of TV commercials, there is also the advantage of added non-verbal clues (body language, facial expressions, visualization in general) to help the learners with their comprehension (Ruiz & Molinero, 2004).

Another simple yet powerful medium that can help generate complex but fun tasks are cartoons. If used correctly, they can stimulate the learners' imagination and creative process, regardless of whether the desired outcome of the task is written or oral (Masood, 2005).

Having already talked about online news, classic printed newspapers are certainly an option as well. If chosen correctly, they can be a good starting point for beginner learners – they often contain pictures and have short and clear headlines, making them relatively easy for comprehension (Jusoh, 2016). However, these might be difficult to obtain in non-L2 speaking countries and, by the time they might be incorporated in an ELT class, the news themselves might already be irrelevant. In other words, if they are easily obtainable, they might be a great source of authentic language, otherwise it is more practical and time-saving to use online sources of news (Mishan, 2005).

Music in the forms of songs and song lyrics is also a vast source of authentic language. It is also one of the favorite type of media enjoyed by learners, regardless of whether they usually do try to understand the meaning behind the words. This and the easy accessibility of songs are also one of the reasons why they are one of the most widely used sources of authentic language among teachers (Mishan, 2005).

Furthermore, films, movies or TV series are the sort of media that "*is designed to appeal most directly and fully to our emotions (and) it is also the one most clearly entrenched in learners' minds as a medium of entertainment*" (Mishan, 2005, p. 223). They also provide the great advantage (or in some cases a great challenge) of often being strongly culturally satiated, offering the learners a glimpse of the life and culture of L2 native speakers or at the very least particular groups of such (Tourki, 2013). Movies also have the advantage of inherently invoking the feeling that the language used is natural and purposeful, since there are visible, realistic characters using it for the purpose of communication, just as if in real life (Mishan, 2005).

Another source of authentic language could be computer software and video games – or rather, in the recent era, mobile phone apps. At the bare minimum, some of these are regularly – if not daily – used by learners, and while some apps do contain localization in Czech language, a lot of them do not have such options. Using apps and software in L2 is therefore a viable option of encountering authentic language; a different matter altogether is the degree of their usability in classroom (Soufi, 2013).

In conclusion, there is a vast amount of various types of authentic language sources to choose from and the aforementioned ones are but a few of many plausible possibilities.

Some of these sources will be analyzed in greater detail in chapter 3, dealing with the practical use of authentic materials in different areas of ELT.

1.7 Criteria for selecting AM

After identifying some of the possible sources of authentic language, it is important to mention that various authors have tried to establish certain criteria to be taken into consideration during the selection process of authentic materials.

According to Widyastuti (2017), the most important thing is to pick a topic that is relevant and interesting for the students, a material that is both practical and helps learners relate to real-life experiences. Widyastuti also mentions the opportunity to challenge learners' critical thinking, which is a skill that has been receiving a rapid increase in attention in recent years (Sláma, 2017). Also, the aim of the materials should be on understanding the meaning firstly, not necessarily the language form as such. One last point Widyastuti makes is the visual "attractiveness" of the material, such as using newspaper or internet articles that contain pictures or diagrams. These tend to be more visually appealing and therefore might come off as inherently more interesting than a piece of plain text. Although it might seem trivial and superficial to some, it might make a great difference for the learner.

Nuttall (1996) proposes three main criteria when choosing authentic materials (texts in particular) – *suitability of content, exploitability* and *readability*.

- Suitability of content can be considered the most important of the three. Again, Nuttall claims that the materials have to be interesting and relevant to learners' needs. The texts should also be motivating.
- Exploitability suggests that unless the text can be used to develop the learners' competence as readers, it has no place in the classroom. Having a piece of text that is in L2 does not automatically ensure its usability.
- Readability refers to the combination of lexical and structural difficulty of the text. The text should not contain too many new items of vocabulary and grammatical forms to discourage the learners and therefore render it useless.

Mishan (2005) suggests that the teachers should focus mostly on the task and therefore sets forth several criteria for selecting and designing the tasks themselves. Mishan cites Nunan

(1989) who distinguished between *pedagogical* tasks (e.g. read a newspaper article and answer comprehension questions about it) and *real-world* tasks (e.g. read a newspaper article and write a letter to the author about it), claiming that real-world tasks are more suitable at preparing learners for situations outside of the classroom, but pedagogical tasks have their justification as well because they are more effective when practicing certain skills. Mishan also notes that authenticity is a subjective matter and what one learner might consider an authentic task would does not necessarily feel authentic to a different learner.

Appropriacy is another term Mishan mentions, claiming that "*learners can only be expected to respond to the original communicative purpose of the text if given an appropriate task*" (Mishan, 2005, p. 72). Again, Mishan mentions that typical comprehension questions as a post-reading activity are not exactly an authentic way of checking the learners' comprehension of the text, which should instead be done in ways that are respectful of learners' sensitivities and intelligence, via questions or tasks that are appropriate to the texts.

To sum up, various authors have pointed out different criteria; among the ones that are most often repeated can one find the level of interestingness, relevance and suitability to the learners, focus on meaning rather than form, the appropriate level of difficulty and authenticity of the task that is connected to the selected material.

2 Linguistic/Educational arguments in support of authenticity

While chapter 1 defines and gives an overview of the authentic materials and language themselves, it does not provide a theoretical background of pedagogical/linguistic theories and arguments that support the use of authentic materials and language. Chapter 2 deals with said theories to make a case in favor of exploiting authenticity in the classroom.

2.1 Communicative language teaching

This chapter provides a short summary of what does the Communicative language teaching (henceforth CLT, alternatively also Communicative approach) constitute and how does it support the idea of using authentic language in the classroom.

Communicative approach differentiates between *pre-communicative* and *communicative* learning activities. The pre-communicative activities find the teacher isolating specific elements of the language system or language skills which then compose the communicative ability – isolated vocabulary items, certain grammatical constructs, questions & answers drills etc. The purpose of learners' language output is to be correct and precise, but it does not usually focus on communicating meaning. On the other hand, communicative learning activities expect the learner to activate and actively use the knowledge and skills gained through pre-communicative activities to fulfil the ultimate goal of the language, that is to communicate meanings (Littlewood, 1981).

Littlewood furthermore claims that the aim of foreign language teaching then is "*to extend the range of communication situations in which the learner can perform with focus on meaning, without being hindered by the attention he must pay to linguistic form*" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 89). Pre-communicative activities then serve the purpose of allowing the learners to automatically, at a lower level of processing, use the knowledge and skills gained through them, so that the production of forms becomes subordinate to communication and negotiating the meaning (higher level of processing and decision making). The criterion of success is then not whether the discourse is without flaws, but whether the meaning was communicated successfully and effectively (Littlewood, 1981).

Mugimu & Sekiziyivu (2016) suggest that authentic materials are highly appropriate for CLT because of their characteristics, including their learner-centeredness, emphasis on the social function of language, practice of natural and meaningful communication or strong learner interaction. Mugimu & Sekiziyivu also propose that it is not only imperative to incorporate the language authenticity into teaching, but also into testing – since the desired outcome of CLT is to produce effective communication, not perfect isolated items of language, their assessment should reflect this as well.

Mugimu & Sekiziyivu use a figure (Figure 1) illustrating the relationship between authentic instructional materials, communicative teaching approach, and communicative competences. The availability and use of authentic materials support the CLT approach, resulting in acquisition of communicative language competences, which then should be manifested in real-life communication when using L2. Learners capable of using L2 appropriately can subsequently, in turn, generate authentic materials and authentic language to be used during CLT etc.
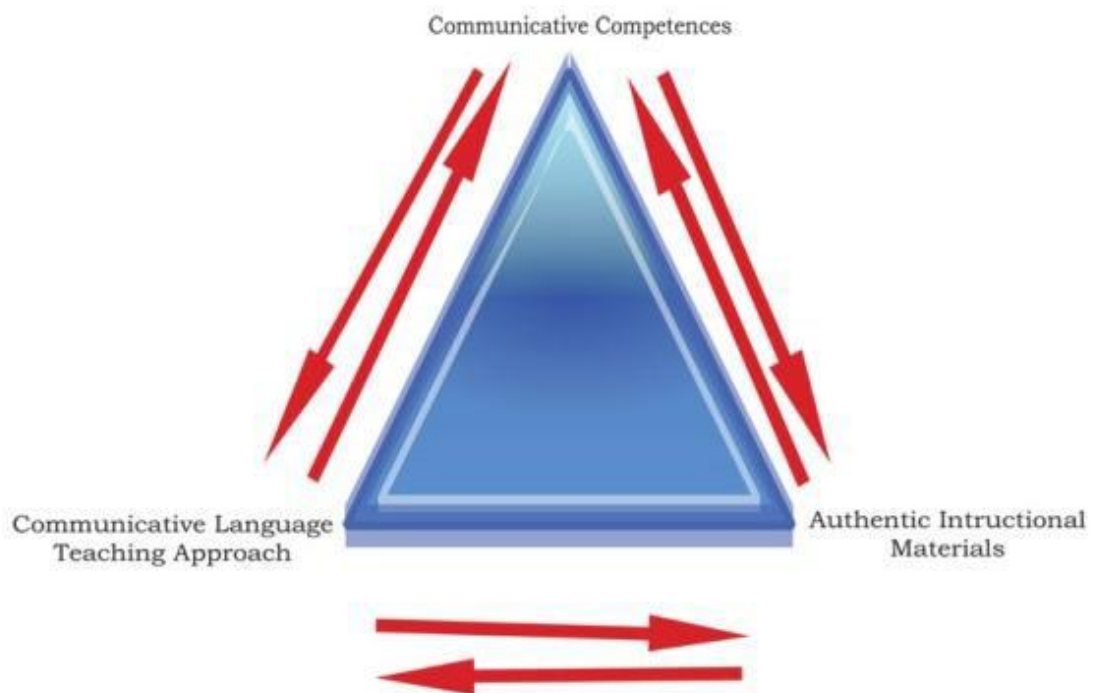

Figure 1: Illustrating the relationship between authentic instructional materials, communicative teaching approach, and communicative competences

To conclude, authentic materials play an important role when considering CLT and if selected and used correctly, they bring a vast amount of assets into classroom.

2.2 Culture, currency and challenge

Mishan (2005) put forward three pedagogical arguments in favor of the use of authenticity for language learning. Said three arguments are encapsulated as *culture*, *currency* and *challenge* and this chapter provides a brief summary of Mishan's theory.

As regards *culture*, it is necessary to include a definition of sorts that explains what culture is. The anthropological definition coined by Murphy is „*Culture means the total body of tradition borne by a society and transmitted from generation to generation. It thus refers to the norms, values, standards by which people act, and it includes the ways distinctive in each society of ordering the world and rendering it intelligible*" (Murphy, 1986, p. 14). Mishan then argues that the other view of culture is intellectual refinement and artistic achievement of a society, its literature, art and music. This facet of culture both affects and reflects the culture as it is regarded in anthropology. What is common to both of said facets is the language of a particular culture. Sapir-Whorf hypothesis claims that the language we use defines how we see and think about the world around us. This implies that neither culture nor language can be fully understood when studied isolated (Mishan, 2005). Kramsch (1993) then proposes that because we cannot separate language and culture, the materials can be authentic only if they are products *of* and *for* said culture. This leads to the possibility of teaching/learning cultural awareness as well (detailed in chapter 3.1).

The term *currency* is used by Mishan (2005) to encompass several advantages – the 'up-to-date-ness' and topicality of the materials and by their extension the relevance and interest to the learner. Most SLA researchers and theorists agree that motivation is highly important in language acquisition; Chomsky (1988) goes as far as to claim that 99 % of teaching is to make the learners feel interested in the subject they are learning. Ellis (1994) claims that one of the strongest facets of motivation is the learners' desire for communication, which is something that teachers need to consider when selecting appropriate authentic materials and, most of all, when setting appropriate tasks. The aforementioned is especially true for the learners who are *integratively* motivated – that is learners with a strong desire for absorbing or integrating into the L2 culture (Mishan, 2005). One of the issues that ELT

coursebooks often introduce is the lack of controversial issues and adult content, which holds the potential to be the most engaging and stimulating to learners. This can be easily overcome with authentic materials; however, one must not forget his learners' age and cultural background when selecting appropriate materials. Of course, the currency does not only apply to the materials and their subject matter, but also to the language itself, which is constantly changing. Learners will feel more engaged with modern language incorporated then they would when reading an 18ᵗʰ century novel full of archaic structures and vocabulary. The recent decades have seen the most rapid changes in the use of language because of communications' technologies, which should be reflected in ELT; while not always proper and correct, modern expressions, terms and abbreviations are very likely to be encountered by the learners when using L2. Textbooks very rarely reflect or even mention the features of communication via the internet or text messages (Mishan, 2005).

The last of the trinity Mishan suggests is *challenge*. She references the aforementioned input hypothesis by S. Krashen (*i + 1*, detailed in chapter 1.5), claiming that the challenge has to be reasonable, that is at the right level. This, just like currency, can be linked to motivation – for most learners, successfully fulfilling a challenge is motivating in itself, building their confidence and sense of achievement. This is especially the case regarding authentic materials, since the learner feels that they understand or produce a piece of discourse meant to be understood or produced by a native speaker. By gaining such confidence and ability, the learner is more likely to illicit a *risk-taking* behavior (guessing meanings based on context or background knowledge, speaking when not completely certain about the correct forms or vocabulary etc.) This is important and recommendable for the learner as long as the risk-taking is calculated, not simply careless behavior (Oxford, 1993). Using authentic materials of course might pose problems rather than present challenges when the level of authentic language is too distant from the learner's level. This should not lead to neglecting authentic materials when dealing with lower level learners, however. Challenge should also be considered a factor of the *task*, not only of the material itself; this then means that the materials can be made accessible by simplifying the tasks rather than the materials (Mishan, 2005).

In conclusion, this chapter presented three pedagogical arguments for using authentic materials in the classroom as proposed by Mishan based on various authors; the cultural

aspect of authentic materials, the currency in relationship to the learner and also the necessary challenge they bring.

2.3 Learning autonomy

In this chapter, a brief overview of the learning autonomy theory and its relation to using authentic materials is given.

Little (2003) suggests that learning autonomy is a problematic term since it is very often confused with self-instruction. Learning autonomy deals with positive attitude that learners possess towards the awareness of their own learning process and practices; it focuses on insight and self-reflection about one's strategies, self-commitment, effectiveness and the materials itself. However, language learning autonomy cannot exist without autonomous teaching. According to Holec (1981), assistance in setting the goals, taking the initiative in planning and executing activities and the evaluation must be provided by the teacher first; this might be difficult, however, for it demands the teachers to have a holistic view of the learners and all the aspects of their learning.

The main reason to support learning autonomy is that learners are then actively engaged with their own language learning. The learners are in this case supposed to approach their tasks proactively, which in turn contributes to their overall motivation (Oyola, 2011). Little (2003) adds that because of the insightfulness and ability of self-reflection, the learners can easily overcome their possible motivational setbacks. This is where authentic materials come into the spotlight; when self-chosen, they enable the learners to trigger language learning autonomy by providing the learners with an identity, as well as with focus and purposes towards learning of their own.

Oyola suggests that "*promoting learner autonomy is a matter of helping learners to develop a capacity for critical thinking, discover their learning potential, gathering knowledge about the learning process, develop self-control and self-discipline, give up total dependence on the teacher and the educational system, understand that autonomy is a complex process of interacting with one's self, the teacher, the task, and the educational environment*" (Oyola, 2011, pp. 15-16). This means the transfer of decision making concerning the learning process, evaluation and practice of L2 to the learners themselves.

Providing supportive claims for this argument is the *English through Self-study by New Arrival Children* project carried out by Tang & Yang in Hong Kong in 2000. They investigated the effects a new program called *English Self-Learning Packages* had on their learners; the study was based on autonomous learning, including authentic self-chosen materials and communicative approach for language practice. Most of the participants manifested an increase in their English language and an increase of their motivation and enjoyment of the learning process; however, it is fair to mention that some learners did not appreciate the independence and less noticeable presence of teachers in their learning process. The project also disproved claims that only adult learners can benefit from autonomous learning, seeing as it was carried out with teenagers and even younger children, ranging from ages 6 to 16 (Tang & Yang, 2000).

To conclude, authentic materials – especially self-chosen – and language learning autonomy both support each other and bring several desired advantages to the learner's language learning process and can be a powerful tool when implemented correctly.

2.4 Consciousness-raising approach

There is evidence based on research that shows SLA (or even native tongue acquisition) being a result of inductive processing based on noticing and inferring rules from the received input. Although, based on Krashen's input hypothesis, this does not occur unless the learner is at the right level. If noticing these rules is the first step toward their acquisition, language teaching should then help this process by exposing learners to as much various authentic language sources as possible and by guiding learners towards said inductive processes (Mishan, 2005).

Mishan (2005) proposes that this *awareness* of language rules is a first step towards acquisition, which in turn is the ability to apply these rules. Based on this proposal, a *consciousness-raising approach* has been on the rise in recent years. The proponents of this approach claim that given sufficient exposure and opportunity, learners notice elements

of L2 grammar and draw conclusions in their own interlanguage[1]. Mishan also calls this process "*noticing the gap*" (2005, pp. 38). Thanks to said process, the learner comes ever closer to the manner in which native speakers use grammatical phenomena in question; finally, the acquisition takes place. Consciousness-raising approach draws heavily on L1 acquisition and it does not force the learner to immediately produce particular grammatical phenomena, making the process feel more natural to the learner. If applied correctly, this approach helps learners develop techniques that can be used for more independent study process, which then leads to curiosity and confidence in the learner. Of course, given its nature, this approach is more suitable to learners who already achieved a certain level of L2 and is not very effective for entry-level L2 learners (Mishan, 2005).

2.5 Automaticity theory

Automaticity theory is an attempt at explaining the acquisition of various skills when considering the automaticity of operating processes. The word *automatic* in this case means a fast, parallel, relatively effortless process not occupying the person's short-term memory and not directly consciously controlled by the person; it is a performance of a well-developed behavior. Automatic processing is a result of the subject's repeated exposure to or interaction with a certain stimulus. It is the opposite of controlled processing which is a slower, serial process that requires the subject's conscious effort; it usually activates when dealing with new or inconsistent information (Schneider & Fisk, 1982).

Schneider and Fisk (1982) also argue that with frequent and consistent exposure to certain stimuli, practice transforms controlled processing into automatic processing. They view automatic production as a modular system consisting of many component processes; each component process might be a part of many more complex skills. This theory assumes that human attention span is limited and therefore some of the actions a person executes have to be automatic, i.e. not consciously controlled. When a process becomes automatic, it no

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[1] Interlanguage – "*Simply put, it is the learner's system of rules and grammar with which he or she tries to approximate the target language.*" (Tulek, 2016, p. 9).

longer uses up the capacity of the person's attention and short-term memory and it enables a vast amount of automatic processes to be active at the same time.

Automaticity acquired through effective, repeated practice enables the person to process further information and stimuli simultaneously. This is very easily illustrated on an activity/skill such as playing the piano. When considering a starter-level learner, the performance is slow, serial and very effortful, with each motor task occupying some of the learner's attention and processing capacity. However, with time and consistent practice, the learner acquires the notes, chords and the motor tasks to execute those into their register of automatic processes and is then able to speed up the performance, incorporate complex rhythms and utilize their processing capacity by concentrating on increasingly complicated actions (Widyastuti, 2017). Similarly, in language learning, learners at the lower levers need to think about the form and about the vocabulary before they can produce meaningful communication. As soon as the learners acquire certain grammatical patterns and vocabulary, those become a part of their automatic component process register and they can focus on more complex actions such as negotiating meaning, the subtleties of cultural influence in the language etc.

In conclusion, if the ultimate goal of ELT is to enable the learner to successfully and meaningfully communicate in L2, the means to this process – such as grammar, vocabulary and language skills – need to be to some extent automated in the learner. This can be achieved trough constant exposure to authentic materials, which provide a rich source of grammar and vocabulary, and authentic tasks that train the learner in language skills.

3 Specific use of authentic materials

After establishing necessary theoretical background in support of using authentic materials in the previous chapters, this chapter deals with the usage of authenticity in various areas and in developing important language skills.

3.1 Cultural awareness

As Kozhevnikova (2014) argues in her study *Exposing students to authentic materials as a way to increase students' language proficiency and cultural awareness*, EFL classes traditionally focus on language systems (grammar, vocabulary) or the language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), but ignore the importance of culture, which is closely related to every language in the world, and also to communication in said languages. Very often are the exchanges in L2 saturated with transmission of socio-cultural knowledge. This makes the cultural aspect of L2 undesirable to omit in ELT. Linguistic competence is not complete for the learners unless they are able to successfully produce and decode culturally appropriate communication.

No authentic material can be absolutely culture-free, nor can any learner who comes into contact with said material be completely void of culture. Every learner has not only their own native cultural background imprinted in them, but also some knowledge or preconceptions – even false ones – about the culture of L2; the first necessarily acting as a sort of filter for the latter. In the case of learners having wrong assumptions or stereotypes about L2 culture, this can manifest itself as an obstacle to meaningful and appropriate communication; it is therefore important to raise learner's knowledge of L2 culture for it to become an aid instead of posing a threat to successful communication (Mishan, 2005).

Put into this context, authentic materials can both provide an essential asset in gaining cultural experience and at the same time be one of the reasons why elements of L2 culture are indeed needed in the classroom. Materials can by definition provide a truthful representation of L2 culture only if they are products both *of* and *for* said culture, i.e. if they are authentic. Of course, the cultural element is not always explicitly manifested in the authentic material; sometimes the learner needs to be trained to ascertain appropriate culture-related information from the material. This skill is called *cultural awareness* and it sensitizes the learner to the impact of culture-related behavior on language and

communication. With cultural awareness on a satisfying level, the learners should become increasingly more empathetic with L2 culture and should be able to identify with the language culture in question (Mishan, 2005).

Coming back to Kozhevnikova's study, she used sitcoms and magazines as easily accessible sources of authentic language and L2 culture in two different groups of intermediate students. Both groups were exposed to sitcoms and magazines for the length of one semester. All participants were afterwards asked through semi-structured interviews about their feelings and thoughts. As much as 95 % of participants marked their encounters with culture through authentic materials as highly beneficial for their cultural and linguistic development. The experiment also had the added value of increase in motivation of the learners, firstly because of the materials' currency (see subchapter 2.2) and secondly because of the feeling of accomplishment provided by the learners' ability to understand situations where native speakers used L2 in everyday manner. The exposure to sitcoms (*Friends* in particular) was highly successful in increasing the participants' cultural awareness by introducing situations and language typical of the L2 culture. Recurrent topics and situations also aided significantly in vocabulary acquisition, which demonstrably happened in 95 % of participants – this was verified though a series of vocabulary tests and quizzes. Apart from vocabulary items on their own, most learners also noticeably expanded their understanding of idioms. In addition, the participants reported improvement in listening and reading comprehension (Kozhevnikova, 2014).

In conclusion, culture is a vital aspect of language and language learning and should not be overlooked; on the contrary, raising cultural awareness should be a standard and fundamental part of ELT seeing as it is one of the aspects that lead to successful acquisition of L2 and mainly to meaningful and appropriate communication in L2.

3.2 Grammar

There have always been various approaches to teaching grammar, some of which are nowadays considered outdated or tend to be outright rejected by many pedagogues and linguists – such as the likes of *Grammar Translation* method or *Audio-lingual method*. These old approaches are not in accordance with today's knowledge on language processing or the learning process in general. Aforementioned methods are but a few

examples of deductive approaches, which tend to be very teacher-centered, present individual grammatical phenomena independent of context, use scripted material, L1 to explain the grammar and include a considerable amount of drill activities. Deductive approaches then address mainly cognitive skills, which may not be fully developed in younger learners; more analytical learners and those with previous experience of the language structure are more likely to benefit from said methods. However, a substantial disadvantage of deductive approaches is their indifference to learners' need for meaningful context (Seeger, 2008).

On the other side of the spectrum, one can find methods of learning grammar based on learning autonomy and consciousness-raising approaches. According to Nunan (2001), learners should extract the grammatical rules from given data and assess how to use them themselves. Nunan does add that while some grammatical structures are more suitable to be taught in a linear way, most grammatical phenomena should be acquired rather than drilled and memorized. On that note, Ellis (1994) argues that learners are the only ones who can construct a complex network of grammatical and linguistic structures. These rules cannot be implanted into their brains by teachers – however, learners can be led in the right direction of certain awareness through consciousness-raising approaches (see subchapter 2.4).

To conclude, many contemporary authors consider teaching methods such as Grammar Translation or Audio-lingualism antiquated and argue for at least partially implicit acquisition of grammar through exposure to authentic language and through consciousness-raising approaches, supporting the learners' awareness of grammatical structures and their ability to extract said rules themselves.

3.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary acquisition has always been a discussed topic in the ELT field. According to some authors, acquisition of L2 vocabulary does not necessarily differ greatly from the way L1 vocabulary is acquired – repeated gradual exposure to a certain vocabulary item is certainly needed. Some propose that this exposure should come as naturally as possible, that is through the use of authentic materials, rather than through instruction and drill

exercises for memorizing vocabulary items. For example, extensive reading (see subchapter 3.4) might be able to aid the learners in vocabulary acquisition (Coady & Huckin, 1997).

3.4 Reading

When considering reading, it is important to mention two ways to process texts – either *top-down* or *bottom-up*. Bottom-up reading is when a reader carefully constructs meaning from analyzing the text word for word – this is sometimes associated with slow readers. Top-down is then processing of the text as a whole, where the reader does not try to analyze every single word but infers the global meaning – this tends to be associated with good and fast readers. Of course, in reality, both processes should be combined to achieve the best results – top-down to predict the meaning and bottom-up to check it (Berardo, 2006).

Similarly to the difference between top-down and bottom-up approaches can be defined the distinction between two processes known as *skimming* and *scanning*. Skimming is the process of quick read-through to get the general idea of the text, while scanning entails reading specific parts of the text to find certain pieces of information (Nuttall, 1996).

Ideally, to develop their reading comprehension abilities, their vocabulary and even possibly their writing skill, *extensive reading* should be incorporated by learners in their routine. Extensive reading means reading often and in large quantities, covering a wide variety of topics and genres, reading self-chosen interesting authentic materials for pleasure and information. Naturally, this cannot be achieved with all learners and they cannot be forced to do so; however, teachers can definitely try to encourage the learners and, if need be, aid them in their reading journey (Guo, 2012).

To sum up, reading is of high importance because it develops other necessary areas as well, namely vocabulary, writing skills and communication competence in general. If encouraged appropriately, learners can benefit vastly from extensive reading of authentic materials that are of interest to them.

3.5 Writing

In the past, the emphasis in teaching writing was on grammar and punctuation; only recently had the educational trends turned in favor of content and organization of ideas. Writing should not be limited to learning mechanical skills and grammar – of course, these need to

be mastered to some extent as well – but it should be focused on its main goal, that is communication and expressing ideas and meaning. It is not supposed to be only a mechanical, automatic process but also a creative one (Masood, 2005).

As regards authentic language, it is of importance to mention that most EFL classes feature writing in the form of a pre-planned activity, i.e. programmed writing, while usually omitting any kind of spontaneous writing, which is what occurs more frequent to most people in real life outside of the classroom. Task authenticity should also be taken into consideration when designing writing tasks – however, on the contrary to some of the other areas, writing tasks do tend to feature some amount of authenticity. Modern textbooks often feature writing tasks such as e-mailing a friend, applying for a job, writing a complaint etc. These are all types of text that learners might use in their lives, making such tasks useful and meaningful (Masood, 2005).

Writing being a productive skill makes it useful to exploit its receptive counterpart as well – learners also need to read to be able to write successfully. This is where the usage of authentic materials come into play – book excerpts (or even complete books), newspaper articles, advertisements, cartoons and various other materials all provide the learner with authentic language that can be used as a source of inspiration, form, style, vocabulary etc. What is more, these materials can also be utilized by the teacher to devise authentic tasks, such as reacting to a newspaper article, explaining a novel's content in a few sentences to tell a friend about it, and many others (Dumitrescu, 2000).

In conclusion, while writing exercises in textbooks sometimes omit interesting activities such as spontaneous writing, they have recently started to show a tendency towards orienting on rather authentic tasks. Authentic materials can also be used to further develop the learners' writing abilities if used correctly.

3.6 Listening

According to Brown (2004), listening can be divided into two different processes – *extensive* and *intensive* listening – the division of which is very similar to the difference between skimming and scanning, as utilized in reading. Extensive listening is a way to develop a global understanding of spoken language; it is focused on understanding the meaning of the speech as a whole. On the other hand, there is the intensive listening;

activities connected to intensive listening emphasize the perception of more isolated components of a larger stretch of language, such as phonemes, words, intonations, accents etc. Concerning authentic materials, it seems that extensive listening is the one that should be incorporated because it can lead to authentic tasks; contrarily, intensive listening is not very similar to real-life experience and is usually a part of more traditional approach to listening activities usually found in textbooks.

Hansen and Jensen (1994) argue that learners of any proficiency level should be subjected to authentic speech regularly as a part of their listening practice. Even less proficient learners can to some extent understand and benefit from authentic aural materials. To determine the most suitable listening material, it is appropriate for the teacher to ascertain what do the learners listen to in their free time to approximate the materials to their real-life experience.

As mentioned in subchapter 1.3, authentic listening materials bring the benefit (and challenge at the same time) of featuring native speakers' speech in its true, natural form, as opposed to perfected Received Pronunciation usually featured in ELT textbooks. It is also necessary to not forget about cultural awareness, for authentic listening materials can present the learner with a rich source of culturally saturated content.

To conclude, listening is a language skill which has a great potential to be learned through the use of authentic materials, especially when utilized in so-called extensive listening. This brings the challenge of selecting the appropriate audio materials but has its benefits in exposition to naturally sounding language.

This chapter dealt with particular use cases for authentic materials, which is the connection between theoretical knowledge and real-life application, bringing the thesis to its practical part.

PRACTICAL PART

The theoretical part of the thesis presented a rather complex overview of authentic materials and authentic language in general, the aspects of their possible specific uses and also theories and arguments based on linguistics and pedagogy that support their usage.

The first section of the practical part of the thesis tries to ascertain the current state of the usage of authentic materials and language on a sample from selected Czech educational institutions; it features data collected from both learners and teachers of English. It compares the views of learners, teachers and my own experience of using authentic materials during both of my teaching practices.

The research has been realized in the form of a short questionnaire, which has been chosen as an appropriate means corresponding to the possibilities of the thesis. It was designed to collect the views and experiences of both learners and teachers when dealing with authentic materials in the classroom. Both questionnaires were distributed in physical form during my teaching practice and in several other schools as well. To gain more respondents from teachers, a second wave of questionnaires was distributed using Google Forms and Facebook, seeing as it has arguably the largest possible reach. On the learner side of the spectrum, there were a total of 150 respondents. Seeing as it is slightly more difficult to get responses from EFL teachers, there are only 37 responses.

The second section of the practical part presents several possible examples of authentic tasks and lesson plans that could be implemented in the classroom. It also features the analysis of potential issues and suggestions on how to deal with those.

4 The research

The research is based on the premise that incorporating authenticity in the classroom, be it in the form of materials, language or tasks, is highly advantageous to the learners and it might be a very capable tool of developing learners' L2 proficiency when used appropriately.

This thesis is in no way trying to be an argument to utilize authentic language exclusively, however; as it is indicated in several places throughout the theoretical part, authentic materials definitely bring with them certain challenges to be considered. Some areas of the language are better dealt with through instruction and standard textbook tasks. In my opinion, as is often the case, the most appropriate way is to combine both approaches, using authentic language to complement the more typical classroom activities and to spark additional enthusiasm, interest and motivation in the learners.

The reason why this thesis is directed at authentic materials is their availability and advantages of their usage. It goes without question that nowadays, there are vast possibilities of acquiring authentic materials and coming into contact with authentic language. Larger libraries tend to offer at least some reading in foreign languages. The radio is full of songs with English lyrics. Some music-oriented TV stations offer the same choice of songs; a number of programs on TV stations such as ČT, Prima Cool and others feature the possibility of watching movies or TV series with Czech subtitles without the Czech dubbing. DVDs with movies that can be watched with subtitles only are now as cheap as ever. Some schools offer various options of experiencing authentic language, such as student exchanges or Erasmus projects – even below the university level, there are short Erasmus+ projects that different high schools across Europe and other Erasmus+ countries participate in.

And all of those examples are only before even considering the most gigantic source of authentic materials and authentic language ever known to mankind – the internet. The number of Czech households with internet access was as high as 81 % in 2018 and is on a steady rise every year. When considering only young families and families with children, the number grows to astonishing 99 % of households with internet connection, meaning that virtually every English learner of school or university age can access this vast source

(Český statistický úřad, 2018). Essentially every type of authentic material or language can be found on the internet. Movies and TV series are featured on ever more popular streaming services such as Netflix. YouTube provides access to a countless number of videos in every language and category possible, be it movies, music videos, educational videos, news, reviews etc. A vast amount of books and other literary texts are either digitalized or straightaway released as e-books[2]; the same applies to many newspapers, magazines and other periodicals. Music, similarly to movies, can be found on various music streaming services; among the most popular ones can one find Spotify, Deezer and Apple Music. And authentic language can be found on internet just as often; social networks, comment sections and discussions on various websites, discussion forums, e-mails, various instant messaging apps and other communication software are to name but a few of the possible channels letting people use authentic language, regardless of whether the communication happens in their L1 or L2.

The research itself consists of two main sections. As regards the first part, a decision was made to devise a brief survey to compare the experiences of using and encountering authentic materials in the classroom. First questionnaire was designed to ascertain learners' experiences and opinions on using authentic materials. There was a total of 150 respondents coming from different types of secondary education institutions. All of said questionnaires were distributed physically in the classes either by myself during my teaching practice or through acquaintances who teach at various schools. Second questionnaire was made to obtain the experiences and views of teachers. There was a total of 37 respondents from different types of schools. These questionnaires were distributed in two waves; in the first one they were physically distributed in schools, amounting to 8 responses. The second wave

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[2] "*An electronic version of a printed book that can be read on a computer or handheld device designed specifically for this purpose*" (OxfordDictionaries.com, 2019).

consisted of online distribution via Facebook, seeing as it is still the largest social network in the world; this amounted to additional 29 responses from EFL teachers.

Both questionnaires were processed, and their results analyzed to give an overview on the topic of authentic materials in the ELT classroom on the secondary level of Czech educational system. Then a comparison was made between the set of answers of both learners and teachers and also my own experience of using authentic materials during both of my teaching practices.

The second section of the practical part features several proposed possible classroom activities and tasks that incorporate authentic materials and authentic language. They are analyzed to include possible issues with those tasks, possible solutions to the issues. The tasks were all designed by myself; if there was an inspiration somewhere else, the source is properly cited.

5 Questionnaire results

This chapter provides a complex analysis and summary of both questionnaires. In both cases, the respondent group is analyzed, and the explanation of selected questions is provided. Then it also deals with the findings of the survey and lastly, the findings between both respondent groups and my own experiences are compared.

5.1 Respondent group 1 – learners

In this chapter, the group of respondents who are learners of English on a secondary education level is analyzed and described. It also deals with the reasons for selection of the target group. The questionnaire itself can be found in the appendices.

This respondent group consists exclusively of learners of English on a secondary education level, the age of the group ranging between 11–20 years old. The students study at various schools (and various type of schools, to be precise) to ensure a degree of diversity among their school environments. Secondary education students were chosen as ideal candidates because of their daily encounters with ELT classes and also because at this development stage, their brains are still very formidable (Kohoutek, 2008) and can therefore benefit significantly from repeated and regular exposure to authentic language.

In total, 150 respondents from secondary education students have participated in this survey. As can be seen in Figure 2, the distribution of genders in this group was roughly equal with female students comprising a slight majority.
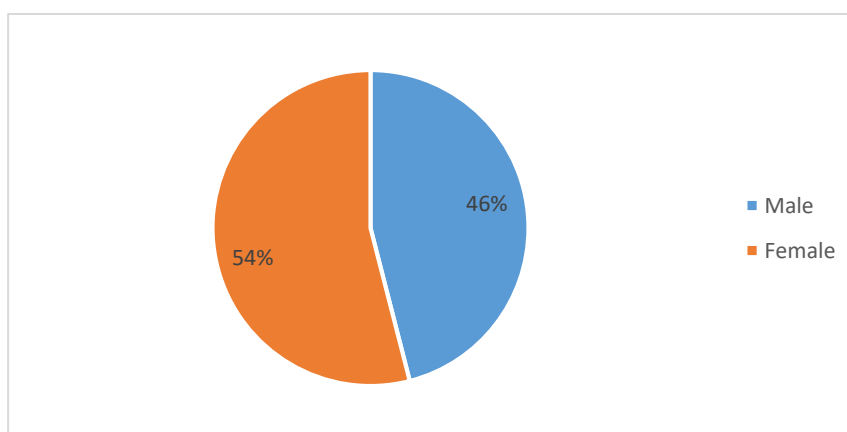

Figure 2: Gender distribution of respondent group 1

The age of respondents (see Figure 3) was not as balanced – 75 % were students 15-years-old or younger, that is lower secondary education students. This is caused mainly by the choice of schools, which were in most cases elementary schools (and one gymnasium with similarly-aged students). The older group were then students of a gymnasium and various other high schools.
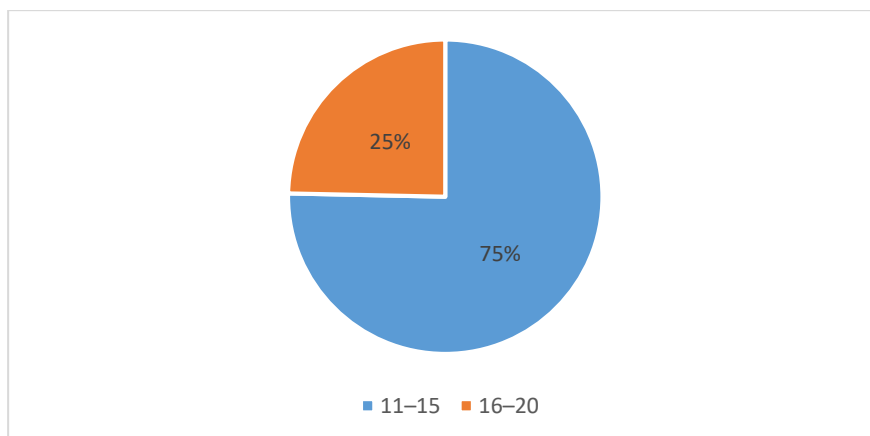
Figure 3: Age distribution of respondent group 1

As regards the students' current education, more exact figures can be seen in Figure 4. Prevalence of respondents, as figure 3 indicated, come from elementary schools with 56 %. Gymnasiums had the second largest number of respondents with 19 %, followed by SOU[3] with 14 % and other high schools with 11 %.
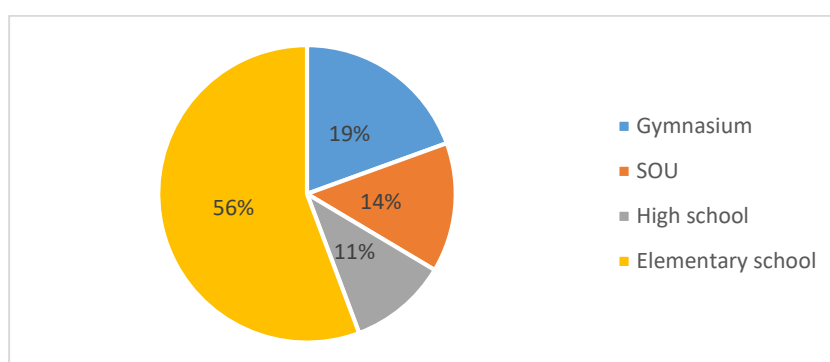

Figure 4: Educational institution distribution of respondent group 1

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[3] Střední odborné učiliště

The last attribute for dividing the respondent group 1 was whether English was their primary foreign language. This question was incorporated to determine the respondents' experience with English in school – seeing as my own experience is with German being the first foreign language at my elementary school. However, this has proven to be virtually purposeless since every single respondent answered that English was their primary foreign language.

To conclude, the students' respondent group was chosen deliberately to come from various educational backgrounds, resulting in a guaranteed diversity of experiences. The respondents were divided into two main age groups (11–15 and 16–20) to ascertain a potential connection between the age and the results. All respondents are students of schools in the Olomouc Region.

5.1.1 The overall results of respondent group 1

This chapter deals with the overall results of the questionnaire and presents an overview of answers given by the respondents. Each of the following subchapters introduces one question from the questionnaire with the questions themselves serving as headings. The questions were designed in order to find answers to the research questions stated in the Introduction part of the thesis.

Question 3: "Have you ever experienced your teacher bringing some English materials (songs, videos, book excerpts, newspaper or internet article) to the class for you to work with?"

The first question concerning authentic materials was whether the students have even ever encountered them during their English classes. A strong majority of respondents, that is 80 %, have responded positively, leaving 20 % of students completely inexperienced with the use of authentic materials (see Figure 5).
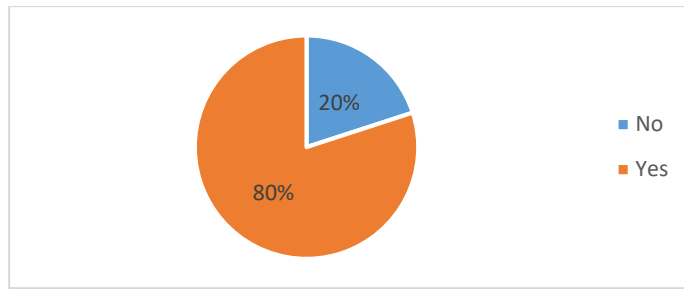
Figure 5: Have you ever experienced your teacher bringing some English materials to the class for you to work with?

Question 4: "What sort of material was it?"

All respondents who chose a positive answer in the previous question were asked to describe in more detail what kind of authentic materials they encountered in class. This question was designed as a multiple-choice question where the respondents could select all answers that apply.

As Figure 6 shows, the most common answer was a song with 60 % followed by movie/TV series scenes with 33 %, Internet videos with 24 % and book excerpts/newspaper articles wth 22 %. Articles taken from the web seem to be the least favorite with teachers, since only 8 % of responses mentioned it.

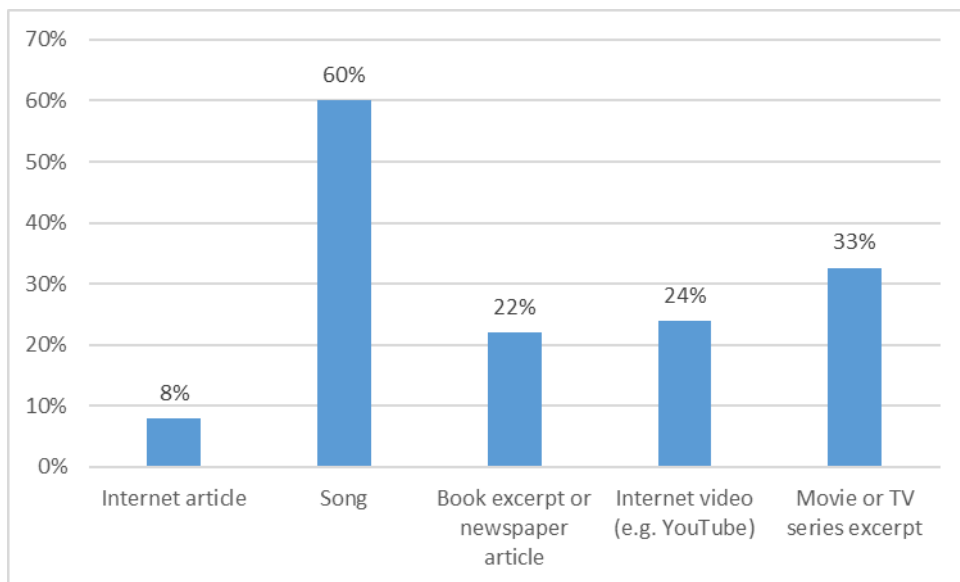

Figure 6: What sort of material was it?

This question also featured the possibility for the respondents to write their own answers. Some of the other options mentioned were *a pairs game, word games, a full movie* or *food.*

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Question 5: "Did you enjoy activities regarding authentic materials that had nothing in common with your regular coursebook? If possible, explain why."

The first question – that is whether the respondents enjoyed working with authentic materials – had an overwhelmingly uniform answer. Only 2 % of the respondents answered with the negative option, meaning that 98 % of students found using authentic materials in class enjoyable.
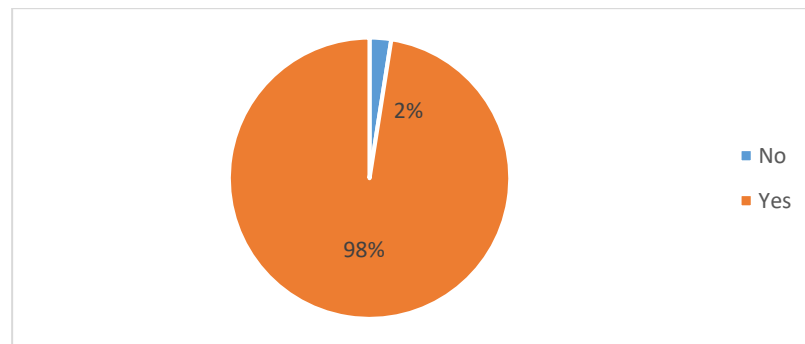

Figure 7: Did you enjoy activities regarding authentic materials?

The supplementary question was then designed to explain the reason why respondents enjoyed such activities. Among the most often mentioned reasons were – quite unsurprisingly, I would argue – *making the lesson more interesting and fun*, *broadening the students' vocabulary in a natural way*, *exercising the brain in a different manner*, *change from the usual stereotype*, *the tasks felt more applicable in real life*. Some respondents also claimed that they pay attention more since the activities are more interesting, they find it easier to learn new things when they enjoy the work, everyone was more cooperative, there was more teamwork involved and the lessons were not "*as boring as usually*".

Question 6: "If you have not experienced such situation, do you think you might enjoy it if your teacher brought any materials to class, that are not connected to the coursebook or the schoolwork you are currently doing?"

The last question was designated for the students who answered negatively to question 3 (*"Have you ever experienced your teacher bringing some English materials (songs, videos,*

book excerpts, newspaper or internet article) to the class for you to work with?"). The choices given were *Yes*, *No*, and *I don't know*.
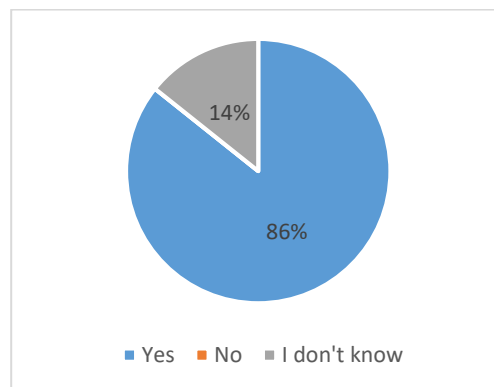
Figure 8: Do you think you might enjoy it if your teacher brought any materials to class, that are not connected to the coursebook or the schoolwork you are currently doing?

As Figure 8 clearly shows, the vast majority displayed their interest in working with authentic materials (86 %), only 14 % remained undecided on this matter and not one single respondent indicated, that they believe they would not enjoy having authentic materials incorporated in their English lessons.

5.1.2 Results in different sub-groups of learners

In this chapter, various answers will be compared among the sub-groups of respondent group 1 (learners). Only those results that show any significant differences or trends will be dealt with.

What might be found as quite unsurprising, the answers in question 3 seem to be partially connected to the age of learners, resulting in younger students not having as much experience as their older colleagues, as shown in Figure 9. Almost 25 % of respondents of age 15 or younger had no experience with authentic materials in their English lessons, whereas this number decreases to only 5 % of respondents aged 16–20.
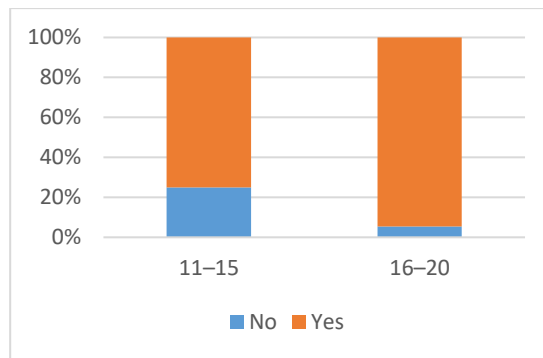
Figure 9: Question 3 according to age distribution

On the other hand, presenting results that I find quite surprising, is the Figure 10. This diagram shows the responses to Question 3 as given in different types of schools. It shows that while all of the students of SOU have experience with authentic materials, the numbers are not dissimilar amongst the other types of schools, ranging between 19 %–25 % for Gymnasiums, High schools and Elementary schools.
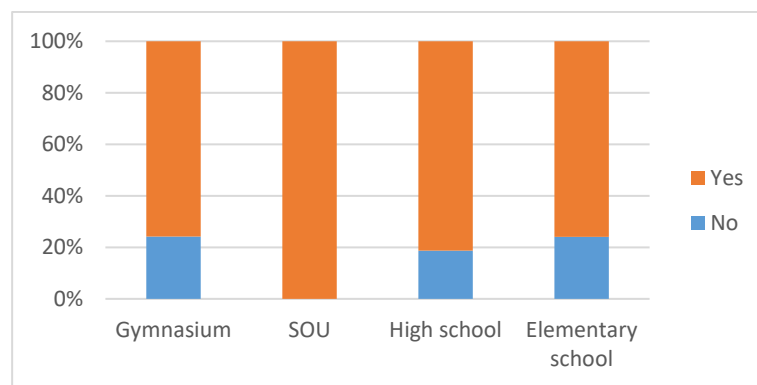
Figure 10: Question 3 according to school type distribution

Another quite interesting chart resulted from comparing the types of authentic materials used across different educational institutions (see Figure 11). Only songs and book excerpts/newspaper articles seemed to be used everywhere quite frequently. Elementary school students were the only ones to experience internet videos in their lessons. This fact seems supported by my own experience during my second teaching practice at an elementary school – so called "Youtubers" were a frequently discussed topic among the young learners. Incorporating Youtubers' works (or any YouTube videos in general) in the lesson does therefore feel like a natural way to spark interest in the learners by using something they already established a connection to.

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On the other hand, learners from elementary schools mentioned all classic reading materials (be it internet/newspaper articles or book excerpts) quite less often than the other respondents. It seems that teachers are trying to appeal to young learners' minds with materials that are more in the multimedia range.

Movie and TV series excerpts were then mentioned fairly frequently by students of gymnasiums and elementary schools but were basically absent among the respondents from high schools and SOUs.
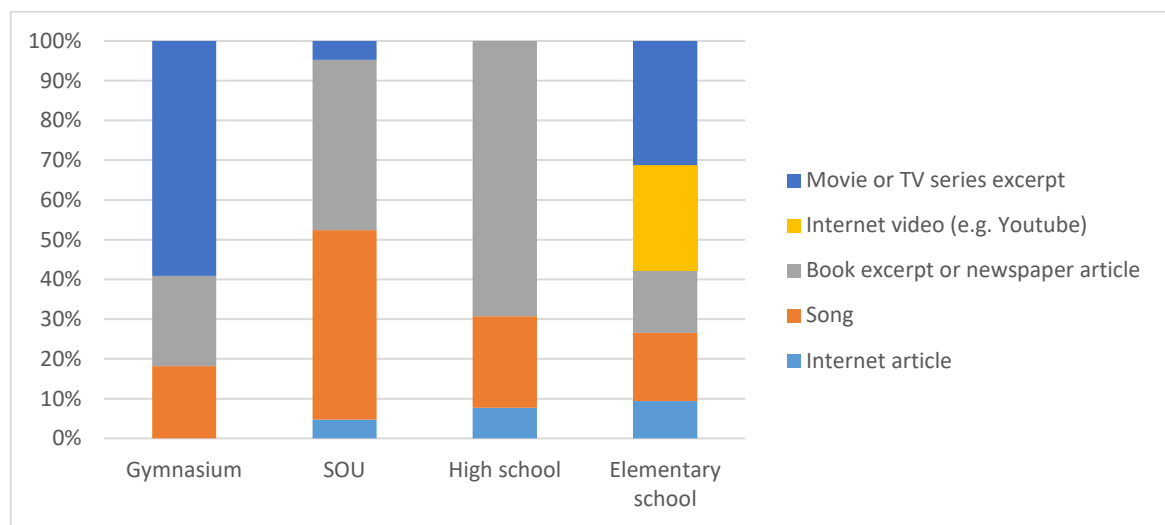
Figure 11: Question 4 according to school type distribution

To compare the results of Question 5 and Question 6 would be essentially pointless, since the results were almost fully uniform not only in general, but throughout all the sub-groups as well.

5.1.3 Interpretation and summary of results

The previous sub-chapters provided a detailed look into the respondent group 1, their responses to the questions asked in the questionnaire and comparison between sub-groups of respondents that I found interesting or otherwise important. This sub-chapter then tries to give a more complex and cohesive interpretation of the results complemented by my personal experiences and views on the matter.

The results in Question 3 clearly show that majority of teachers do consider authentic language to be useful, since 80 % of respondents experienced their teachers to bring at least some type of authentic materials to class. The remaining 20 % still seems to be quite a large

figure, but more detailed results show (see chapter 5.1.2) that this number decreases with the age and experience of the learners. This does not seem absolutely surprising, however, seeing as the level of input or cultural knowledge needed might be considered too high for students of younger age – as explained in chapter 1.5.

Considering the selection of authentic materials to be incorporated in lessons (see Question 4), the responses suggest that the choices given in the questionnaire could be recognized as the most frequently used ones. Only a handful of respondents took advantage of the possibility to write their own answers, usually mentioning games or variations of the materials already mentioned in the given choices.

Arguably, the top choices could be considered appealing for a number of reasons – it is very easy to come across articles, movie scenes or songs today, in the age of internet. Also, most classrooms or special language classrooms today are likely to feature an overhead projector and/or an interactive whiteboard (Novák, 2012). The aforementioned materials also tend to be quite short (as in the duration needed to finish consuming them) – of course, the true amount of time occupied by using them depends rather on the task accompanying the material than the material itself. Songs and videos also bring the opportunity to integrate senses that do not always work together during typical classwork and are generally more appealing to learners.

Quite interesting are then the differences in the range of materials encountered by the respondents during their education process in connection to the type of school they study, as demonstrated by Figure 11. Younger learners, represented by respondents from various elementary schools, mentioned audio-visual multimedia more often than the respondents from other sub-groups did. This might be the case because for younger children, audio-visual stimuli – especially if they are not still – tend to be considerably more captivating than a piece of written text, be it newspaper article or a book excerpt.

The results of Question 5 are debatably the most important outcome of the whole set of questions. Even when not taking into account the supplementary question, which asks the respondents to explain the reasons behind their answers, the overwhelming majority of learners who answered that they did enjoy using authentic materials is rather striking – that is over 98 % of respondents. Then again, the figure does not seem as surprising when one

considers how the activities connected to authentic materials usually help learners escape from the stereotype and, in some cases, dullness brought to English lessons by the excessive use of coursebooks. Undoubtedly, the coursebooks may vary in their quality and interestingness to the learners – in relation to the manner in which the teachers utilize the available coursebooks – but the evaluation of these variables is not the goal of this thesis.

The enjoyment itself is naturally not the most important aspect of the learning process – at least without putting it into the appropriate context. As Isen & Reeve (2005) claimed and proved through experimental research, enjoyable tasks and consequent positive attitude are helpful to increasing learners' motivation and might help learners to work more efficiently in the lessons. The implementation of enjoyable authentic tasks then positively affects learners' concentration and the effort they put in during the less enjoyable, more demanding tasks. Arguably, this could also lead to a more positive attitude towards learning (or at least English language as a subject) in general.

On top of that, when taking into account the complementary answers describing the respondents' reasons to appreciate authentic materials, the respondents' themselves mentioned breaking the stereotype, enjoying the tasks more than when using a coursebook, or the input being easier to remember. The responses to Question 5 thus very consistently indicate that the majority of learners agree that the use of authentic materials is beneficial to them.

Lastly, the results of Question 6 manifest a similar trend. In total 86 % professed a belief that they would enjoy if their teachers brought authentic materials to lessons. The remaining 14 % were unsure about the situation and no respondents answered that they were certain not to enjoy working with authentic materials. This seems to further indicate a potential for authentic materials to be useful in class.

The results of questionnaire for respondent group 1 thus suggest that from the learner's perspective, authentic materials do affect their motivation positively, and the same can be claimed about their learning process during English lessons in general. The majority of learners have experienced the use of authentic materials at some point, but there clearly is a potential for introducing them more densely.

5.2 Respondent group 2 – teachers

This chapter deals with the description and analysis of respondent group 2 – teachers of English from various educational institutions of a secondary education level – is analyzed and described. The questionnaire itself can be found in the appendices.

The respondent group 2 consists completely of teachers of English language. They all teach at various secondary education institutions, chosen according to the same pattern as school types in respondent group 1. Age of respondents was also inquired to ascertain whether there was any connection between age and the usage of authentic materials.

Teachers as a group in general were selected to gain insight into both perspectives concerning the use of authentic materials – learners, who get to use them, and teachers, who need to put their effort into preparing the materials and tasks; arguably more effort than they would have to put into only working with the coursebook.

There were 37 respondents in total. Gender-wise, respondent group 2 quite nicely reflects the current state of Czech school system – female teachers were in the majority by a substantial margin, which tends to be true in general as well (OECD, 2017). This imbalance can be observed fairly evidently in Figure 12, with female teachers comprising 81 % of the whole group.
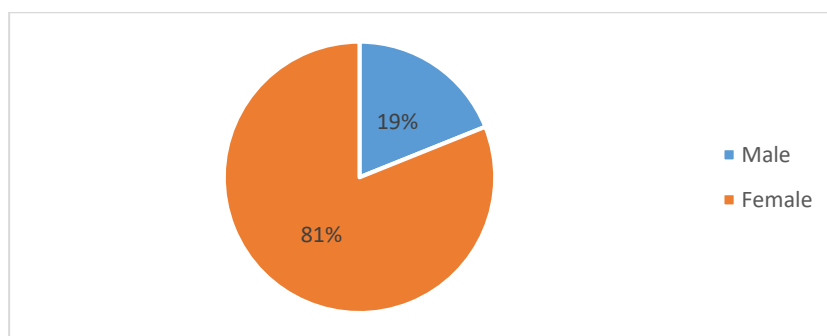
Figure 12: Gender distribution of respondent group 2

As regards age distribution in respondent group 2, 51 % of respondents were younger than 30, 35 % were between 30–49 years old and only 14 % were 50 years old or older (see Figure 13). This is not as surprising, however, seeing as according to a statistic published

by MŠMT[4] (2019), English teachers are among the youngest ones on average. Also, there is the fact that part of the respondent group found the questionnaire through Facebook, where the most common age demographic is 25–34 years old (Statista, 2019).
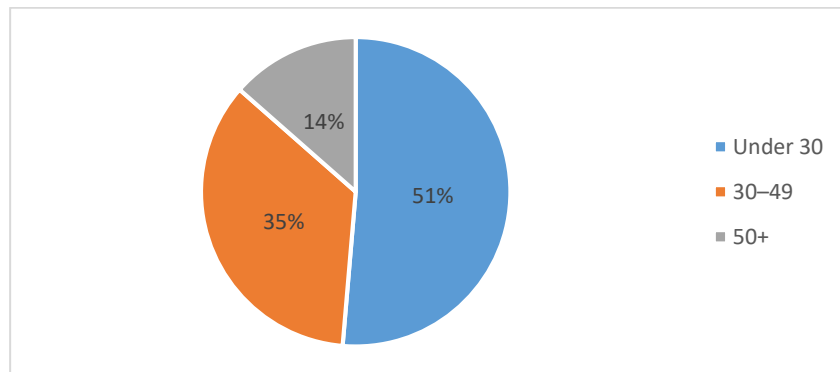
Figure 13: Age distribution of respondent group 2

The last distinction is according to the type of educational institution. Again, the questionnaire was designed only for teachers from secondary educational institutions, similarly to respondent group 1. This is not the only similarity, however; the distribution chart in Figure 14 looks very similar to the one in respondent group 1 (see Figure 4).
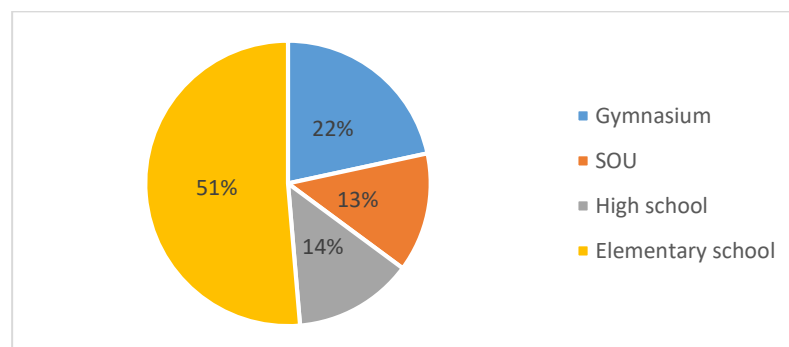
Figure 14: Educational institution distribution of respondent group 2

[4] Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

In conclusion, respondent group 2 comprised of teachers from various educational institutions in the Olomouc Region. The main idea was to investigate a diverse group of teachers from different schools and of different age to cover most of the spectrum.

5.2.1 The overall results of respondent group 2

In this chapter, a presentation of the general results of the questionnaire is given without regard to the teachers' gender, age or educational institutions. Similarly to chapter 5.1.1, the following sub-chapters each deal with a single question with the questions posing as headings.

Question 2: "While teaching English, have you ever used so-called authentic materials – that is materials that were not primarily designed for education, such as short clip from a movie, an excerpt from a novel, an internet article or a song – for the students to work with?"

In this particular case, there is no need for a diagram – the answer was a 100 % "Yes". All of the respondents have at some point used authentic materials in their lessons.

Question 3: "What sort of material was it?"

All respondents who responded positively to question 2 were asked to specify which type of authentic materials they selected for incorporating in their lessons. This question was designed as a multiple-choice question where the respondents could select all answers that apply and add their own ideas if applicable.

As seen in Figure 15, the most common type of authentic materials utilized by teachers are songs with 86 % of teachers having used them at some point. Almost as frequent answers were internet videos, movie or TV series excerpts, book excerpts and newspaper articles. On the other hand, only 51 % of respondents claimed they have ever used an internet article.
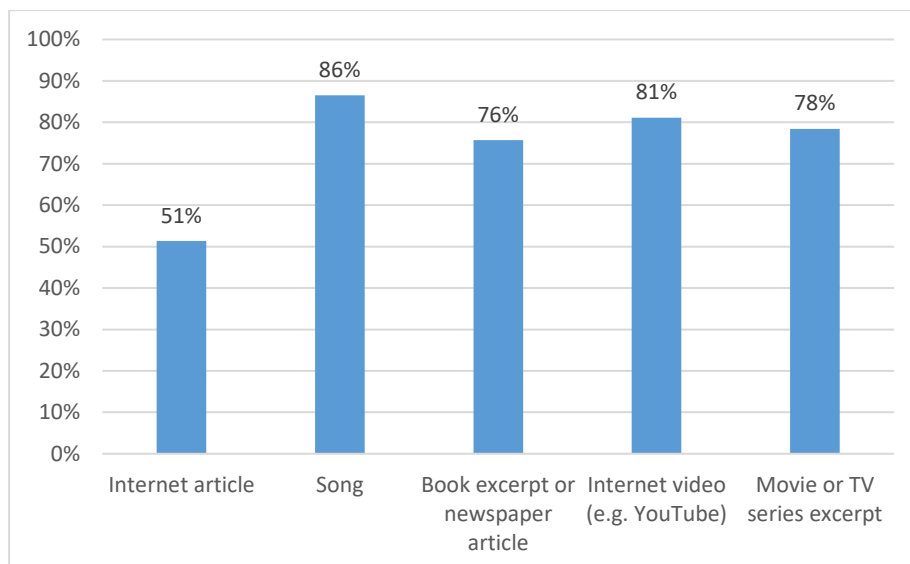
Figure 15: What sort of material was it?

Several respondents have made use of the possibility to add their own answers, resulting in responses such as PC games, board games, radio news or podcasts.

Question 4: "Did the learners seem to react positively to activities unrelated to their coursebooks? If so, can you explain what you believe to be the reason?"

This crucial question was a multiple-choice question with four possible choices:

 a) *Yes*
 b) *Majority of learners did*
 c) *Only some learners did*
 d) *No*

Based on said choices, all of the responses were on the approving side. As seen in **Chyba! N enalezen zdroj odkazů.**, the results were almost tied between "Yes" and "Majority of learners did", whereas "Only some learners did" and "No" were not marked at all.
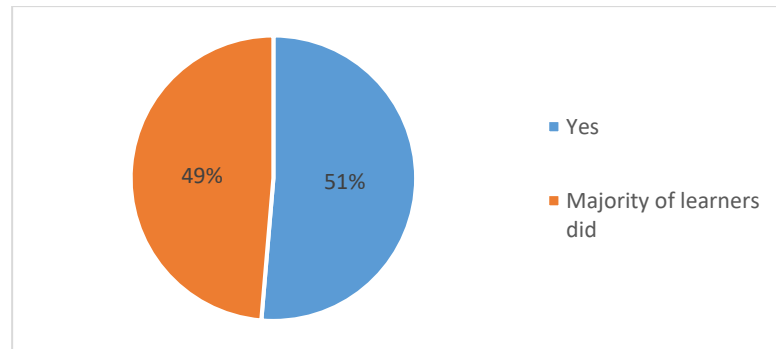
Figure 16: Did the learners seem to react positively to activities unrelated to their coursebooks?

The complementary question was aimed at ascertaining the teachers' opinion on why they believe authentic materials were a success/failure in their lessons. Some of the responses were repeated quite regularly, e.g. *making the lesson more interesting and diverse, taking a break from the stereotype and the coursebook, using materials that are closer to learners' interests,* or *the activities being more enjoyable than regular coursebook tasks.* Some teachers also mentioned a noticeable increase in the learners' attention and activity. Several respondents even noted that they knew students enjoyed working with authentic materials because they received a very positive feedback from the students.

Some of the respondents then also talked about possible challenges. A few respondents reported, for example, that learners enjoyed the work because they knew and liked the materials the teachers had chosen, but some of the less proficient students found the language too difficult. Another teacher claimed that while an interesting change for the learners, the use authentic materials cannot be employed too often.

Question 5: "If you have never used authentic materials, what are your reasons?"

Seeing as all the answers were positive in Question 2, this inquiry remained completely without responses.

Although respondents were supposed to be divided into sub-groups for the possibility to compare their results – just like in chapter 5.1.2 dealing with respondent group 1 – two challenges have arisen during the research and its subsequent assessment. First of all, not enough teachers have engaged in the survey, making the figures for sub-groups statistically insignificant. Secondly, the actual results have been so uniform that any comparisons may

have been pointless even with higher number of respondents. The principal findings – that is the answers to questions 2, 4 and 5 – were practically unanimous.

5.2.2 Interpretation and summary of results

While the previous chapter presented a comprehensive overview of the questionnaire used for respondent group 2 and focused on exact figures, this section provides a complex summary of said survey with my commentary and interpretation of the results.

What the results in chapter 5.1 and the subsequent sub-chapters indicated seems to only be proven further by the responses from respondent group 2. It might come off as a surprise that all respondents, without any exceptions, claimed that they have used authentic materials in their lessons at some point. Some of the answers to the complementary inquiry in Question 4 do seem to suggest that a number of teachers have their reservations, however, and implement authentic language in their lessons rather rarely. Nonetheless, this does not change the fact that teachers of English language generally seem to believe in the advantages of using authentic materials. Question 2 in particular was designed with the intention of comparing the results among different groups of English teachers divided either by their age, gender or educational institution, therefore the findings were fairly unexpected and made it completely pointless to draw any comparisons.

As regards the types of materials used, there was again no point in comparing the results among different sub-groups of teachers. What seems more interesting, however, is the comparison between both of the main respondent groups. For example, 51 % of teachers claimed that they have used internet articles in their lessons, whereas only 8 % of learners remember working with them. Of course, this might be very well caused by various factors, be it statistical reasons or simply the students not remembering correctly. Even generally, teachers insisted to have used basically all of the remaining types of materials much more frequently than the learners claimed to work with them – for direct comparison, please see Figure 6 and Figure 15, respectively.

Looking at Question 4, it seems that teachers are quite more reserved about the learners' reactions than the learners themselves. While 49 % of teachers believed that "only" majority of their students professed enjoyment and welcomed the use of authentic materials, as many as 98 % of learners claimed to have enjoyed such activities. Again, it is

hard to pinpoint the exact reason for this discrepancy. I believe it to be caused by the change of stereotype for the learners – even though they might not necessarily visibly manifest their satisfaction with the tasks given to them, it still provides them with a chance of breaking away from the expected structure of the lesson and an opportunity to encounter real-world language in a real-world use, while also preventing them from working with their coursebooks, which many students, at least according to my experience, find somewhat tedious.

The complementary question and its responses then quite nicely support the aforementioned opinion – as written in the previous chapter, teachers themselves often mentioned breaking the stereotype, the attractivity of materials closely related to the learners or the possibility to engage with real-life language as the possible explanations for the students' enjoyment of them, among others. These exact points are the arguments in favor of using authentic materials, as explained in chapters 1.4 and 1.7, respectively. Admittedly, some respondents also mentioned challenges in using such materials, mainly their possible difficulty. This is also one of the central points of chapter 1.5; however, the difficulty of language, as disclosed in the aforementioned chapter, can be overcome with a careful selection of the material or the design of the accompanying task. If said criteria are met, there is no reason to believe that the difficulty of such language would pose an obstacle in the learners' learning process, not to mention having a detrimental impact on their motivation.

Finally, the responses to Question 5 – or the lack thereof, since there have been no teachers to claim they have never utilized authentic language in their lessons – are an indicator on their own. Here, the same situation as in Question 2 applies – this question was designed with having the aim to compare answers among different sub-groups in mind; nevertheless, this was rendered impossible by the unanimous answers.

To conclude, the results of questionnaire for respondent group 2 again seem to express a very positive attitude that English teachers possess towards the usage of authentic materials.

6 Classroom activities

This chapter presents a collection of example activities that could be implemented to make use of authentic materials or authentic language in general. The following instructions are intended as guidelines or ideas to be expanded upon, showcasing the strengths of authenticity while also trying to take into account possible challenges that might arise during such tasks. If desired, these sub-chapters can be used by teachers as guidelines for their lessons. The sources of and inspiration behind the following activities are always stated; if not stated, the activity is of my own design.

6.1 Scientific research

Example task: In your group, find a common topic you are interested in. In the next 15 minutes, read and talk about this topic in your group – you cannot write anything down. After the time is up, you are going to present your findings to the rest of the class.

Instructions for the teacher:

- This activity needs the students to have access to school computer or tablets. If this is not possible, let the students use their smartphones – but only one per group.
- Divide your class into groups of maximum 4 students.
- Give your students a common more general topic (e.g. catastrophes, mythologies, famous buildings etc.) to freely choose from, alternatively give a list of more specific assignments (e.g. Chernobyl, Thor, Louvre…).
- After each group has found its research topic, let them work with the school computers/tablets/their smartphones in order to do their research. Give them a website that they are only allowed to use (e.g. the English version of Wikipedia).
- Give the students 15 minutes. During this time, they are not allowed to write anything down, they can only read about and discuss the topic in the group. Make sure to regularly check that the learners are using English.
- After the time has run out (or earlier, if everyone seems to be ready), let the groups present the findings of their research.

Advantages: The activity lets the learners work with authentic language in the form of encyclopedic articles. They need to summarize an article (or series of articles, depending

on the topic selection) briefly and in their own words. This activity also contains an extensive use of groupwork. The students have to cooperate in order to establish who is supposed to know and present particular information.

Challenges: The regular Wikipedia might contain language that is overly difficult for some learners, especially lower secondary grades. Depending on your learners' level, it might be a good idea to use Simple English Wikipedia.

Comment: The activity might be especially effective for students of sciences, since they usually need to know how to research information, often in English. It also quite nicely incorporates CLIL (content and language integrated learning) and communicative language teaching (see chapter 2.1).

Source: https://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator/authentic-materials-in-foreign-language-teaching/

6.2 Interview with a popstar

Example task: You are a very famous popstar doing an interview. Explain what the lyrics to your song mean.

Instructions for the teacher:

- Prepare a list of songs that your students can choose from.
- Each student gets/chooses one song – give them 10 minutes to study the lyrics and think of their own way of interpreting the song.
- After the time is up, let the students (famous popstars) talk about their song.

Advantages: If chosen appropriately, modern popular songs can be very close to your learners' interests and thus make this activity feel interesting and personal to them. It also has an added value in the interpretation stage – students cannot just repeat the lyrics, they should explain the meaning behind them, doing a sort of analysis of the text.

Challenges: Since this task requires analytical thinking, it is generally more suitable for students of higher grades of upper secondary education.

Alternatives:

- Let the students choose the songs themselves, e.g. as a homework for the next lesson. A possible issue that may arise is the students selecting songs with explicit lyrical content. This might be partially solved by doing said activity with students of age 16/18 or older – the explicit content, while not exactly suitable for class, is no longer prohibited for these students. This is likely to make the task even more personal and interesting to your learners.

Comment: The "Interview with a popstar" activity connects young adult learners with a thing that is usually very important in their adolescent lives – music. Especially so when given the freedom to choose their own songs that have personal meanings to them. Making this a memorable activity. The interview part also incorporates communicative language teaching approach quite heavily. Depending on the selection of songs, it can also help in raising cultural awareness (see chapter 3.1).

6.3 Storytellers

Example task: You have found a mysterious note with the beginning of a short story written on it. Try and imagine how the story goes on and how it ends. Then write your own ending for it.

Instructions for the teacher:

- Find a few short stories and only use their beginnings (on to two paragraphs or even only a few sentences). Choose the text accordingly to the language proficiency of your students.
- Depending on the size of your class, hand out the short story excerpts to students/pairs of students.
- Each student/pair has to think of their own continuation and ending to the story.
- Decide on the length of the story the students need to write – recommended length is one to three paragraphs.
- Encourage the students to try and retain the mood of the excerpt – be it a horror story or an anecdote, for example.
- Optionally allow them to use dictionaries.
- Give the students an appropriate amount of time to finish their stories.

- After they have finished, let the students read the stories to the rest of the class.

Advantages: Apart from utilizing authentic language in the excerpts, the students can let their imagination and creativity loose and enjoy writing their own creations. Furthermore, they need to try and make the stories coherent, training their written language skills and storytelling. If you opt for the pair-work, the activity can also enhance their cooperation.

Challenges: Depending on your learners' level, it is imperative to consider the length and difficulty of the language used in the excerpt.

Alternatives:

- Give your students only an ending to the story and let them make up and write the events that led to it, starting at the beginning.
- Give your students an identical, very short excerpt. After everyone is finished, let them read their stories out loud and make a contest, where students vote for the best story. This version more suitable to classes with maximum of 10 students.

Comment: This activity is supposed to spark a bit of imagination in the learners' minds. They need to create stories in their heads, utilizing their creativity. Although not every individual is necessarily creative, it is important to cater for everyone's needs – while some students enjoy the analytical side of language, some might find joy in this activity. The option to use dictionaries in the process might also help the learners to gain new vocabulary while doing something memorable, making it easier to remember.

6.4 LinkedIn

Example task: You are unsatisfied with your current job and want to find a better one. Your friends are encouraging you to set up a LinkedIn[5] profile to help you in your career growth. You decide to listen.

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[5] LinkedIn is a professional network used by professionals and employers to connect with others in the same occupation fields. It is used as both a social network and job seeking platform.

Instructions for the teacher:

- Prepare a nicely looking worksheet simulating the account information page of LinkedIn.
- Unlike a real LinkedIn profile, make all the fields required.
- Unlike a real LinkedIn profile, allow your students to enter fake information (especially with personal information such as date of birth).
- Assume the role of headhunter – pretend you work in a company that needs several new employees and "hire" the students with best profiles.

Advantages: Students will use language in an authentic situation – it is likely they will encounter having to complete a user account/profile on some sort of network, which very well might be in English. The same can be applied to language used when searching for a job. Introducing your students to LinkedIn might also be beneficial to them.

Challenges: This activity is better suited for learners of at least 9th grade, even more so for high school students or adult learners.

Alternatives:

- If you can use computers/tablets during the lesson, let your students complete the form digitally.
- If you are teaching an adult class, let the learners, if they wish so, create a real LinkedIn account.

Comment: The LinkedIn activity might be especially important for young adult or adult students, seeing as they might soon experience (or heave already experienced) situations similar to the one given to them through the task. Everyone will eventually be looking for an employment, regardless of whether it will be in the sort of professional fields usually covered by the users of LinkedIn.

6.5 Classroom activities – conclusion

This chapter presented examples of classroom activities utilizing authentic materials and authentic language that could be easily used with English learners of most levels. However, I believe all language teachers could, with a little extra work, think of their own useful and

enjoyable activities that their students would appreciate. Besides, it is fairly easy to find a number of various activities or model lesson plans on the internet. Some noteworthy examples are websites such as:

- Film English (http://film-english.com/) – contains lesson plans built around short films and movie excerpts. The lessons usually do not focus on the language per se, rather on phenomena introduced in said excerpts; quite often, the lesson plans integrate serious social topics in the lessons. The activities and topics are designed for intermediate to advanced learners. Film English is completely free of charge.

- ESL Brains (https://eslbrains.com/) – this website again offers a number of teaching materials, including various activities and complete worksheets for both students and teachers. The materials are often based on videos and are designed for adult learners of B1-C1 levels, some of them primarily targeting Business English needs. Most of the worksheets are free, but the website features an option of becoming a Patron through the Patreon[6] platform.

- Fluentize (https://www.fluentize.com/) – is an online resource provider focused on ESL lesson plans, activities and tips, often working with authentic videos. The lessons usually feature complete printable lesson plans, interactive lesson plans and a teacher's guide. It is also possible to choose lessons according to their specific purpose (Business English, General English, Conversation lessons, Exam preps etc.) Fluentize is unfortunately fully monetized with various pricing options – e.g. single lessons, multiple lesson packs, subscriptions for individual teachers or organizations and more.

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[6] Patreon.com is a platform enabling content creators (musicians, YouTubers, photographers, etc.) and other businesses to create a subscription model for their supporters – Patrons, usually rewarding their Patrons with extra content, earlier releases and other bonuses.

7 Research summary

To conclude the practical part of this thesis, the findings and results of the questionnaires seem to strongly support the arguments put forward in the theoretical part. As stated in chapters 5.1.3 and 5.2.2, a great majority of both learners and teachers do show very positive attitudes towards the use of authentic materials.

The teachers, while naturally also disclosing some of the possible challenges, appreciate the effect on majority of their students, who are usually more motivated to do authentic tasks then to work with the coursebooks.

The learners then praise authentic materials for providing a break from the stereotype, being more enjoyable and more interesting than the usual activities tend to be. Those learners without any experiences with authentic materials in class predominantly claim that they would appreciate working with them.

Lastly, several examples of possible classroom activities are given to illustrate appropriate applications of authentic materials accompanied by authentic tasks, utilizing their power to bring real-life use of everyday language to students.

Conclusion

Firstly, the issue of authenticity in language and authentic materials was dealt with using several definitions from various linguists. The theoretical part continued with the categorization of authentic materials, explained the difference between authentic and non-authentic materials and discussed benefits and challenges of introducing authentic materials into classroom.

Furthermore, linguistic and educational theories that support the use of authentic materials were presented, providing the arguments in support of the goal of this thesis. Finally, the theoretical part ended with specific uses of authentic materials that help in teaching various language skills.

The practical part then presented the findings of two questionnaires, which were designed to find answers for the research questions formulated in the Introduction chapter. The results of both questionnaires were summarized and interpreted, and, where applicable, a comparison was made between various sub-groups of both main respondent groups (learners and teachers of English) and between the results of the main groups as well. The interpretations were supplemented with experiences of using authentic materials during both stretches of my teaching practice. The practical part was then completed with example activities to show a possible use of authentic materials in lessons.

As regards answers to the research questions, the findings were as follows:

1. To what extent do students experience authentic materials being used in the classroom in Olomouc region ELT classes?
   - According to the results, 80 % of learners claimed they have encountered authentic materials in class before. As for the teachers, 100 % of the respondents stated the have used authentic materials during English lessons in the past. I found myself rather pleasantly surprised by such a large number but also by the discrepancy between students' and teachers' answers.
2. How does the use of authentic materials affect students' motivation in ELT classes in the Olomouc region?

- Over 98 % of learners stated that they have enjoyed working with authentic materials. As explained in the theoretical part, the enjoyment is one of the integral parts of motivation. The responses to the complementary question listed further arguments supporting the claim that authentic materials do have a positive effect on the learners' motivation. This is a result I expected, since my own experience with using authentic materials has always been positive.

3. What are the teachers' opinions on using authentic materials in the classroom?

- In general, teachers do seem to have quite high opinions on using authentic materials and maintain a positive attitude towards their usage, as proven by answers to the complementary question. I expected a generally positive attitude, nevertheless, I was taken aback by the fact that every respondent claimed to have used authentic materials.

4. From teachers' point of view, what are the main disadvantages of using authentic materials?

- While the absolute majority of teachers cited mostly advantages, several respondents mentioned also challenges, the most frequent being authentic language being too difficult for some of the less proficient students. This was to be expected, in my opinion, and can be overcome with an appropriate material selection and task design.

The answers to the research questions thus seem to support the idea that at least an occasional use of authentic materials can only be beneficial to the learners, which I believe to be confirmed not only by responses in the surveys but also by the theoretical part, summarizing theories and past experiments in favor of their use. However, this research only reflected the opinions and experiences of a relatively small number of learners and teachers. There is certainly room for either more thorough research on this matter – through an experiment, for example – or for research on a larger scale in general. This would help in achieving more conclusive and objective data.

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List of appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for learners – Czech

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for learners – English translation

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for teachers – Czech

Appendix 4: Questionnaire for teachers – English translation

Dobrý den,

jmenuji se Milan Tulek a jsem studentem Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci. Prosím Tě o vyplnění dotazníku, který bude využit jako jeden z podkladů výzkumné části mé diplomové práce. Výsledky dotazníku budou zpracovány anonymně. Pokud není v zadání zmíněno jinak, označ, prosím, vždy **jen jednu odpověď**, a to zakroužkováním. Dotazník je určen hlavně žákům druhého stupně základních škol, případně středoškolákům. Tímto také děkuji všem, kteří se šetření zúčastní.

Jsem: žena / muž   **Věk:**

1. Navštěvuji:
    a) Základní školu
    b) Střední odborné učiliště
    c) Střední školu
    d) Gymnázium

2. Anglický jazyk mám ve škole jako svůj:
    a) Hlavní cizí jazyk
    b) Další cizí jazyk (pokud jich už máš více)

3. Setkal/a ses někdy s tím, že by učitel přinesl do hodiny nějaký materiál (písnička, krátké video ze seriálu, úryvek z knížky, článek z časopisu nebo z internetu) v anglickém jazyce, se kterým jste následně pracovali?
    a) Ano – pokud ano, pokračuj prosím otázkami č. 4 a 5.
    b) Ne – pokud ne, můžeš přeskočit k otázce č. 6.

4. Pokud jsi na otázku č. 3 odpověděl/a kladně, o jaký druh materiálu se jednalo? Vyber všechny odpovědi, se kterými souhlasíš.
    a) Úryvek z knihy nebo článek z časopisu
    b) Článek z internetu
    c) Video ze seriálu nebo filmu
    d) Video z internetu (např. z Youtube)
    e) Píseň
    f) Jiné (doplň): _____

5. Pokud jsi na otázku č. 3 odpověděl/a kladně – bavilo tě takovéto cvičení, které nemělo nic společného například s učebnicí, kterou běžně v hodině používáte? Pokud můžeš, doplň prosím i důvod proč.
    a) Ano _____
    b) Ne _____

6. Pokud jsi na otázku č. 3 odpověděl/a záporně – myslíš, že by tě mohlo bavit, kdyby tvůj učitel do hodiny přinesl něco takového, co nesouvisí s učebnicí nebo celkově s právě probíranou látkou?
    a) Ano
    b) Ne
    c) Nevím

Hello,

my name is Milan Tulek and I am a student of Palacký University in Olomouc. I kindly ask you to fill out this questionnaire which will serve as one of the sources of the research part of my diploma project. The results will be handled anonymously. Unless state otherwise, please mark **only one answer** with a circle. The questionnaire is designed mainly for students of secondary education. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who will participate in this survey.

I am a: woman / man   **Age:**

1. I study:
    a) Elementary school
    b) SOU/SOŠ (Vocational school)
    c) High school
    d) Gymnasium

2. English language is my:
    a) Main foreign language
    b) Secondary foreign language (in case you already study more of them)

3. Have you ever experienced your teacher bringing some English materials (songs, videos, book excerpts, newspaper or internet article) to the class for you to work with?
    a) Yes – if so, please continue with questions 4 and 5.
    b) No – if not, you can skip to question 6.

4. If you answered "Yes" to question 3, what sort of material was it? Please select all answers that apply.
    a) Book excerpt or magazine article
    b) Internet article
    c) Movie or TV series excerpt
    d) Internet video (e.g. from Youtube)
    e) Song
    f) Other (fill in): _____

5. If you answered "Yes" to question 3 – Did you enjoy activities regarding authentic materials that had nothing in common with your regular coursebook? If possible, explain why.
    a) Yes _____
    b) No _____

6. If you answered "No" to question 3 – do you think you might enjoy it if your teacher brought any materials to class, that are not connected to the coursebook or the schoolwork you are currently doing?
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) I don't know

Dobrý den,

jmenuji se Milan Tulek a jsem studentem Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci. Prosím Vás o vyplnění dotazníku, který bude využit jako jeden z podkladů výzkumné části mé diplomové práce. Výsledky dotazníku budou zpracovány anonymně. Pokud není v zadání zmíněno jinak, označte, prosím, vždy **jen jednu odpověď**, a to zakroužkováním. Dotazník je určen hlavně učitelům AJ na druhém stupni základních škol, případně i středoškolským pedagogům. Tímto také děkuji všem, kteří se šetření zúčastní.

Jsem: žena / muž   **Věk:**

1. Učím na:
    a) ZŠ
    b) SOŠ
    c) SŠ
    d) Gymnáziu

2. Použil/a jste někdy během výuky anglického jazyka tzv. autentické materiály (tj. materiál nevytvářený primárně za účelem edukace, jako například krátké video z filmu, úryvek z románu, internetový článek či píseň), se kterými by žáci dále pracovali?
    a) Ano – pokud ano, můžete pokračovat otázkami č. 3 a 4.
    b) Ne – pokud ne, můžete pokračovat otázkou č. 5.

3. Pokud jste na otázku č. 2 odpověděl/a kladně, o jaký druh materiálu se jednalo? Vyberte všechny odpovědi, se kterými souhlasíte.
    a) Úryvek z knihy nebo článek z časopisu
    b) Článek z internetu
    c) Video ze seriálu nebo filmu
    d) Video z internetu (např. z Youtube)
    e) Píseň
    f) Jiné (doplňte): _____

4. Pokud jste na otázku č. 2 odpověděl/a kladně – zdálo se Vám, že žáci reagovali kladně na takové cvičení, které nemělo nic společného např. s učebnicí, popřípadě ani s právě probíranou látkou? Můžete případně uvést, proč si myslíte, že se tak stalo?
    a) Ano _____
    b) Větší část ano _____-_____
    c) Pouze malá část ano _____
    d) Ne _____

5. Pokud jste na otázku č. 2 odpověděl/a záporně – z jakého důvodu takováto cvičení neprovádíte? Vyberte všechny odpovědi, se kterými souhlasíte.
    a) Časová náročnost přípravy (přemýšlení nad vhodným materiálem, jeho zpracování atd.)
    b) Nedostatek času v hodinách
    c) Nenapadlo mě to
    d) Nevidím v tom smysl nebo přínos pro žáky
    e) Jiný důvod (prosím, doplňte): _____

Hello,

my name is Milan Tulek and I am a student of Palacký University in Olomouc. I kindly ask you to fill out this questionnaire which will serve as one of the sources of the research part of my diploma project. The results will be handled anonymously. Unless state otherwise, please mark **only one answer** with a circle. The questionnaire is designed mainly for teachers of English providing secondary education. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who will participate in this survey.

I am a: woman / man   **Age:**

1. I teach at:
   a) Elementary school
   b) SOU/SOŠ (Vocational school)
   c) High school
   d) Gymnasium

2. While teaching English, have you ever used so-called authentic materials – that is materials that were not primarily designed for education, such as short clip from a movie, an excerpt from a novel, an internet article or a song – for the students to work with?
   a) Yes – if so, please continue with questions 3 and 4.
   b) No – if not, you can skip to question 5.

3. If you answered "Yes" to question 2, what sort of material was it? Please select all answers that apply.
   a) Book excerpt or magazine article
   b) Internet article
   c) Movie or TV series excerpt
   d) Internet video (e.g. from Youtube)
   e) Song
   f) Other (fill in): _____

4. If you answered "Yes" to question 2 – did the learners seem to react positively to activities unrelated to their coursebooks? If so, can you explain what you believe to be the reason?
   a) Yes _____
   b) Majority of learners did_____
   c) Only some learners did_____
   d) No _____

5. If you answered "No" to question 3 – If you have never used authentic materials, what are your reasons? Please select all answers that apply.
   a) Demanding preparation (selecting the right materials, its processing etc.)
   b) Lessons are too short
   c) I never thought of it
   d) I can't see their value or benefits to the learners
   e) Other reasons (please, fill in): _____

Résumé

Diplomová práce se zabývá využitím autentických materiálů v hodinách angličtiny a jejich možným dopadem na motivaci žáků. Toto je provedeno prostřednictvím analýzy literatury zaměřené jak na definování autentických materiálů, tak na jejich praktické využití, a především provedením výzkumu pro zodpovězení položených výzkumných otázek. Praktická část tedy obsahuje analýzu a interpretaci výsledků dvou dotazníků (pro učitele i žáky) a několik příkladových aktivit vyžívajících autentické materiály. Zjištění výzkumu podporují tvrzení, že většina respondentů zažila využití autentických materiálů v hodinách angličtiny a má na jejich využití pozitivní názor.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Milan Tulek
Katedra nebo ústav:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Josef Nevařil, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2020

Název práce:	Využití autentického jazyka v hodinách anglického jazyka
Název v angličtině:	Authentic Language in ELT Classes
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce se zabývá využitím autentických materiálů v hodinách angličtiny a jejich možným dopadem na motivaci žáků. Toto je provedeno prostřednictvím analýzy literatury zaměřené na definování autentických materiálů a jejich praktické využití, a dále potom provedením výzkumu pro zodpovězení položených výzkumných otázek. Praktická část obsahuje analýzu a interpretaci výsledků dvou dotazníků (pro učitele i žáky) a několik příkladových aktivit vyžívajících autentické materiály.
Klíčová slova:	anglický jazyk, učení, metodologie, autentické materiály, autentický jazyk
Anotace v angličtině:	The diploma project deals with the usage of authentic materials in ELT classes and their possible effect on learners' motivation. This is done through literature review focused on defining authentic materials and their practical use and by conducting a research to answer stated research questions. The practical part of the thesis then includes the interpretation of two questionnaires (for both learners and teachers) and several example activities utilizing authentic materials.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	English language, learning, methodology, authentic materials, authentic language
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Appendix 1: Questionnaire for learners – Czech Appendix 2: Questionnaire for learners – English translation Appendix 3: Questionnaire for teachers – Czech Appendix 4: Questionnaire for teachers – English translation
Rozsah práce:	78 s.; 108 647 znaků (vlastní obsah práce)
Jazyk práce:	Anglický jazyk