

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta pedagogická

Katedra anglického jazyka

Diplomová práce

**EFEKTIVNÍ VÝUKA ŘEČOVÝCH DOVEDNOSTÍ NA
DRUHÉM STUPNI ZÁKLADNÍCH ŠKOL**

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Plzeň 2019

University of West Bohemia

Faculty of Education

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Thesis

**EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF SPEAKING SKILLS AT
LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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Plzeň 2019

Původní zadání diplomové práce

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V Plzni dne 30. června 2019

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Jméno Příjmení

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Mgr. Gabriela Klečková, Ph.D. for her invaluable guidance and continued support throughout the past two years. I would also like to thank Mgr. Šárka Karpíšková and Mgr. Martina Šafránková without whom it would not be possible to complete my research.

ABSTRACT

Weiszová, Petra. University of West Bohemia. June, 2019. Effective teaching of speaking skills at lower secondary schools.

Supervisor: Mgr. Gabriela Klečková, Ph.D.

The thesis is concerned with the topic of effective teaching of speaking skills. In particular, attention is given to the methods of maximizing speaking opportunities in language lessons and how second language learners perceive them. The thesis includes theoretical background which presents the reader with information concerning methodology of teaching speaking. Subsequently, a description of the research is provided. The research was conducted by means of observations, questionnaires and discussions with a group of lower secondary school learners. Its aim was to evaluate the amount of opportunities to practice speaking provided by textbook tasks and by activities modified according to the principles of effective teaching. The research particularly focused on organization, scaffolding, pre-planning, repetition and learners' interest. The results indicate that textbook activities do not offer as many opportunities for practice as their modified versions. Furthermore, all examined phenomena proved to be of high value for teaching practice, as they were evaluated positively by the learners.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is generally perceived as the most important of the four language skills. One might argue if such a claim is true. Nevertheless, language learners have a tendency to evaluate their level of proficiency and knowledge of a certain language according to their ability to produce a fluent and accurate speech. Even though we put significant emphasis on oral production, as seen in conversation classes which focus solely on speaking, many language learners still struggle. This might be caused by various factors, such as cognitive demands, anxiety, or simply reluctance. Nonetheless, speaking, as any other skill, needs to be practiced in order to develop. It should, therefore, be our intention to provide learners with as many speaking opportunities as possible and design tasks which motivate learners to talk in lessons.

The thesis is concerned with the topic of effective teaching of speaking skills. More precisely, it explores efficient ways of maximizing speaking opportunities in language lessons and how these methods are perceived by second language learners. The theory behind the research is provided to the reader in Theoretical Background, which primarily focuses on the conditions of oral production and the methodological framework for teaching speaking. In the following chapter, called Methods, the aims and the methodology of the research are presented as well as the characterization of the participants of the study. Results and Commentaries then present the outcomes of the research which are accompanied by interpretations of the results. Furthermore, we discuss implications of the research as well as its limitations and suggestions for further study in the upcoming chapter. Finally, the main ideas and findings of the thesis are summarized in Conclusion.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter presents the reader with the theoretical background regarding the topic of effective teaching of speaking skills. It summarizes the conditions for speaking, such as affective factors and cognitive demands, as well as the process of speech production. The description of speaking competence follows with focus on fluency, accuracy, automaticity, and complexity. Furthermore, attention is paid to the goals and issues in oral production and how to provide learners with maximized opportunities for practice. Moreover, it provides an overview of several models for teaching speaking, followed by the description of principles of speaking task design, their types, and examples.

Speaking as part of the four skills

There is a tendency to think of language use in terms of four skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These are further divided into two groups; reading and listening are classified as receptive skills, because the language user only receives and understand the language. Speaking and writing, on the other hand, are considered to be productive skills, because they demands the users' own language production.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that these four skills are often addressed in isolation, they are hardly separate. Speaking activities will almost necessarily involve listening. As Harmer (2007, p. 265) points out: “when we are engaged in conversation, we are bound to listen as well as speak because otherwise we could not interact with the person we are speaking to.” Receptive and productive skills depend on each other. Speaking tasks can function as a preparation stage for other activities. On the other hand, interesting texts or recording can lead into discussions.

Yet Ur (2012) suggests that “of all the four skills, speaking seems intuitively the most important.” (p. 117). Users of L2 are often described as ‘speakers’ of that language, which only highlights the significance we attribute to the productive skill. Therefore, it is the goal of most language learners to communicate orally at an acceptable level.

Speech conditions

Thornbury (2005) suggests that the speakers' degree of fluency is influenced by the conditions in which speaking is produced. He recognizes three categories of factors, which either hinder or facilitate communication. Cognitive factors include familiarity with the topic, the genre, and the other participants of the conversation. The speaker's feelings towards those, alongside their self-consciousness, belong to affective factors. In terms of performance, the speakers' might be affected by time pressure, conditions of the environment (e.g. loud music or noise in the background), or the absence of planning and rehearsal time.

Speaking and affective factors

Speaking a foreign language can be stressful, even when one understands how important practice is. As Goh and Burns (2012) suggest, anxiety has a noticeable impact on learners' ability to communicate. This is mainly due to the fact that in speaking it is usually required to process and produce language at the same time without preparation. Anxiety affects learners' confidence and willingness to take risks. They might experience this especially when they find themselves in situations in which they have to use the target language. Learners are usually very critical in self-assessment and focus primarily on things they are not capable of.

Brown (2000) supports the notion and claims that anxiety is the major obstacle learners have to overcome in speaking. Since speaking naturally involves an audience, pupils might feel pressured; they are afraid of making mistakes and thus of being judged and negatively evaluated by others. Goh and Burns (2012) furthermore claim that second language learners might experience anxiety when they communicate with a competent speaker. In this case, the main cause is learners' unrealistic expectations. Such issues might result into avoidance of oral communication in and out of class.

Speaking and cognitive factors

Speaking is a remarkably complex process. It involves expression of both form and content at the same time and while speech production is not completely unprepared, the amount of time we have for preparation is quite restricted in real life situations. Therefore, as a spontaneous process, speaking is rather demanding. Goh and Burns (2012) differentiate between three stages of production: conceptualization, formulation and

articulation. These stages are not separate as they naturally occur simultaneously. On a different level, they are further accompanied by another process, self-monitoring.

Conceptualization is also known as conceptual preparation. At this stage, the speakers prepare the topic (if it is not already given) and the information they want to convey. While they search their memory for ideas, they also have to choose what is appropriate in terms of discourse type. As Goh and Burns (2012) point out “these speech events require learners to think about what they have to say before or while they are saying it.” (p. 37)

Formulation. This stage might be the most challenging for learners as it “involves making strategic choices at the level of discourse, syntax, and vocabulary.” (Thornbury, 2005, p. 3). It is a process of transforming one’s ideas into words. To successfully communicate their meaning, learners have to utilize their knowledge of the grammatical system of the language while also paying attention to the cohesiveness and appropriateness of their utterances. (Goh and Burns, 2012)

Articulation. To carry the information from the speaker to the listener, we need to produce sounds by the use of the articulatory system. Despite the fact that articulation is a physiological process, it is interwoven with memory; competent language speakers have aspects of speech such as pronunciation or stress placement automatized. Therefore, they do not need to focus on these during speech production. Nevertheless, language learners might not be as sure and therefore, they have to consciously attend to the process of articulation. (Goh and Burns, 2012)

Self-monitoring is a process that occurs concurrently with the three previously mentioned stages of conceptualization, formalization, and articulation. Competent speakers monitor their speech production for accuracy and appropriateness. When they notice an error, they correct themselves. To successfully check their speech production, learners need to have knowledge of grammar and pronunciation; with a limited amount of metalinguistic knowledge, they will not be able to monitor their speaking properly. Goh and Burns (2012) argue that even though self-monitoring is a useful strategy for language learners to acquire, it might also “indirectly put further demands on the other cognitive processes that are already in operation.” (p. 39). In order to focus more on the meaning, it is possible to ignore this stage. Nevertheless, it might have a negative impact on learners’ accuracy development.

Differences between L1 and L2 speaking

As Thornbury (2005) suggests, producing speech in L2 is not much different from L1 production. The speakers have to undergo all the cognitive processes (e.g. conceptualization, formulating and articulating) as they monitor their production and adjust it accordingly to the situation, while, at the same time, they pay attention to their interlocutors.

What is different, however, is the speakers' knowledge of the L2. This includes grammar and vocabulary, which is rather limited in comparison to their L1. Nevertheless, as Thornbury (2005) argues, "the problem may be less a lack of knowledge rather than the unavailability of that knowledge." (p. 28). Without sufficient integration into the learners' language system, they will not be able to retrieve the knowledge.

Furthermore, the process is made more difficult by the speakers' inclination to express their ideas in their L1 before translating them into L2 in their minds. Naturally, this is done at the expense of speed. In order to avoid making mistakes, learners will overuse their self-monitoring process, which, however, negatively affects the speakers' fluency as well. On the other hand, some learners might choose a different strategy and use excessively language they have already memorized. (Thornbury, 2005).

Speaking competence

Speaking competence according to CEFR

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) describes language ability by means of a six-point scale, which ranges from A1 (beginners) to C2 (proficient users). Language learners at the lower secondary should reach level A2 by the end of their school attendance.

According to CEFR, second language learners at this level should be overall capable of giving simple and short presentations or description on topics that include daily routines, likes and dislikes, people or living and working conditions. They should be able to describe in a simple manner their experiences as well as events past and future events. Presentations given are short, rehearsed and on a familiar subject. Language learners, however, are not expected to participate in a debate at this level.

Fluency, accuracy, complexity and automaticity

Goh and Burns (2012) suggest to divide the quality of learners' speech production according to three criteria: fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Thornbury (2005) also additionally mentions automaticity.

The process of speech production is cognitively demanding and therefore, language learners might have issues with producing speech that is both fluent and accurate. Even if they have the necessary linguistic knowledge, they might make mistakes because it is hard to think of the meaning and the form at the same time. As the learners' primary goal is to express themselves, they will do so in any way available often at the expense of accuracy. It is therefore quite discouraging and frustrating for language learners, when they are always expected to focus on both. Thus, it is up to the teacher to prepare such activities that will develop both fluency and accuracy at appropriate time in order to achieve complex use of language (Goh and Burns, 2012).

Fluency. Speaking fluently means “maintaining the flow of speech without disruptive pauses, restarts and breakdowns.” (Richards, 2015, p. 472). The learners are capable of developing fluency when they have good knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and fixed expressions which they can automatically access. As a result, they can concentrate on meaning as they do not need to search for the correct form of expression. The features of fluency include rate of speech, the amount and frequency of pauses, hesitations, and repairs. Thornbury (2005, p.7) suggests competent speakers use various “production strategies” in order to appear fluent; such strategies include for example pause fillers (e.g. words like *uh* or *um*), vague expressions (e.g. *I mean, sort of*) or repetition of words. The speakers' ability to produce formulaic language units from their repertoire, for example phrasal verbs, idioms or routine expressions, also significantly contribute to a fluent speech.

Repetition plays an integral part in increasing fluency. According to Bygate (2005), it enables learners to focus more on content rather than on form. Richards (2015) agrees as he states that learners often have issues with speaking because it is unpredictable. “By repeating a task, the expectation becomes more predictable, allowing the learner to practice and improve” (p. 426). Nevertheless, he stresses that the task should not be the same as learners might tire easily. We can either change the topic, set a time limit, divide learners into different groups and pairs or add a more complex challenge.

Accuracy. Conventionally, “accuracy involves the correct use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation” (Gower, 2006, p. 99). Other features could also be included,

such as appropriateness of topic or the use of formal and informal language. According to Richards (2015) the term is, however, not as easily defined as it used to be; with the new status of English, the notion of what it means to be accurate is also changing. Ur (2012) agrees as she states that the conventions of native speakers are no longer considered to be the standard; instead they are “those which are used by the majority of the fluent, educated speakers of the language in international communication.” (p. 1)

Accuracy is often the focus in regular language classrooms. Teachers provide corrective feedback in order to help learners improve. This is done by various strategies which include asking for repetition, repeating the learners’ utterance with correction, asking others to correct the error etc. It is, however, questionable as to when and how to correct. Intervening too excessively might hinder learners’ natural development of automaticity. On the other hand, if we do not provide any corrective feedback, the learners’ speech will be fluent, but inaccurate. A solution would be to take notes of mistakes the learners’ produce during an activity and address those afterwards. The activity then can be repeated with the correct use of the target language. (Richards, 2015)

Automaticity. The four stages of speech production demand the learners’ full attention. It is therefore necessary for language learners to achieve some degree of automaticity in order to be able to speak accurately and fluently. If we manage to automatize some of the processes, we can focus on the parts of the speaking task which need our attention. Thornbury (2005) believes that that speaking, similarly to other skills, needs to be practiced in order to be efficient. Goh and Burns (2012) argue, however, that practice is insufficient and that learners should also be introduced to various speaking strategies in order to be able to communicate outside of the classroom as well.

Complexity. Goh and Burns (2012) summarize complexity as a “speech where the message is communicated precisely.” (p. 43). The focus is given on both meaning and form; after some of the processes become automatized, the learners can pay attention to construction of more complex utterances. They can draw on their grammatical knowledge to produce longer and more accurate speech. We can achieve a higher degree of complexity, if we provide learners with the opportunity to plan and rehearse. Increased language complexity is a sign of development in second language acquisition.

Issues in teaching speaking

Besides shyness and reluctance, Ur (2012) points out other reasons as to why learners might not be active in lessons. She suggests that thinking of what to say might be rather problematic as well; the topic has to be interesting and relevant enough for pupils to feel the need to express themselves and to actively communicate their original ideas.

Other issues that might arise in language lessons are the use of L1 and the amount of speaking time offered to individual learners. We have to keep in mind that it is more natural and easier for children to communicate in their mother tongue. It is impossible to eliminate L1 completely. Besides, its use is in certain situations welcomed, for example when we check for comprehension after instructions were given. Nevertheless, there has to be enough opportunities for learners to practice English. Usually, only one person speaks at a time. In a larger group, this is rather troublesome as each participant has a very limited amount of time to speak. Moreover, some learners might naturally dominate and therefore more reserved pupils might not have as many opportunities.

Scrivener (2011) believes teachers might also be at fault and hinder learners' interaction in lessons. Echoing is one of the issues Scrivener addresses; when teachers repeat everything after their learners, there is no need to listen to anyone else but them. This negatively affects interaction among learners in the classroom. While teacher talking time (TTT) is inevitable, its amount should never surpass student talking time (STT).

Another issue is completion of learners' sentences. Even though the teacher is trying to be helpful, Scrivener assesses sentence completion as contra-productive; the teacher only assumes what the learner wanted to say. If the children struggle then it is appropriate to offer support in order for them to express their own ideas and not the teachers'.

Motivating learners to speak

Safe situations. It is up to the teacher to create a positive and supportive environment in which learners' anxiety will be lowered to the minimum. If we provide them with a 'safe situation' as Scrivener (2011, p. 213) suggests, they might be willing to take more risks and communicate in English. While sometimes we need learners to feel pressured and challenged to use new items, it is useful to give them the opportunity to practice language they already know but did not make part of their active repertoire yet. In such situations, learners are less worried and nervous which has a positive impact on their confidence.

Learners' self-esteem. According to Hedge (2010) building confidence and ease is essential for learners to automatize language production. This can be achieved if we provide pupils with the opportunity to experience success. When the learners manage to successfully complete a task, not only do they acquire the target language faster, we also positively impact their self-esteem. The issue of confidence also involves assessment and feedback. Ur (2012) urges to test learners only when they are ready to perform well. Corrective or negative feedback should be given tactfully and we should always praise and encourage learners when it is possible.

Choice of the topic. Nevertheless, whether the learners feel motivated to speak also depends on the task itself. Ur (2012) stresses the need to choose the topic carefully. Furthermore, we should always try to appeal to learners' interests and goals. They should be aware of why and how the activity is useful to them. If the learners understand the importance of equality of opportunities for practice, they might monitor the use of L1 in the class instead of the teacher. (Brown, 2000)

Personalizing language. Another way of encouraging learners to participate is to "enable students to express their own ideas, feelings, preferences, and opinions." (Hedge, 2010, p. 274). While it is questionable whether personalized practice makes language learning easier, it is certainly motivating. To a degree, learners should have the option to choose what they want to say.

Methodological framework

To ensure learners successfully execute the speaking task, it is useful to provide them with some kind of support or to give them time to prepare the language and content they will need.

Maximize speaking opportunities

According to Ur (2012) the use of group or pair work "increases the amount of learner talk in a limited period of time and also lowers the inhibitions of students who are unwilling to speak in front of the whole class." (p. 118) Even though teachers cannot monitor all learners at once and therefore, errors and slips into L1 might occur, the amount of opportunity for speaking per individual is higher than in a regular whole-class task. Scrivener (2011) admits that whole-class speaking activities are sometimes useful,

however, he agrees that enabling as many learners as possible to speak at the same time is essential in achieving fluency and confidence.

Scaffolding

As it is quite demanding for learners to think of the content and the language at the same time, we need to provide them with something to speak about. We need to offer them a structure. Thus, it is necessary to plan the sequence of individual steps of the speaking activity in advance.

The support a more competent language speaker offers to learners is called scaffolding. Maybing, Mercer, and Steier (1992) define scaffolding as “help which will enable learners to accomplish a task which they would not have been quite able to manage on their own.” (p. 188). Eventually, learners are brought closer to being able to complete the task on their own.

There are different ways of providing scaffolding. Harmer (2007) suggests to introduce learners the key vocabulary they will need during the speaking tasks. By providing vocabulary support, learners can focus on what to say rather than on how to say it. On the other hand, we can help them by giving them the content or information they need for the task to be completed effectively. Teachers can also scaffold by modelling. Seeing a more competent speaker to accomplish the task provides learners with a successful example they can follow. (Goh and Burns, 2012). Scrivener (2011) suggests even such techniques as echoing or agreeing by nodding and showing interest through eye contact could give learners the support they need.

Pre-planning

Harmer (2007) also stresses the need of exposure and practice before productive activities as learners are not capable of using spontaneously newly encountered language items. Preparation is another form of support the learners might receive. When learners are doing simple tasks like information-gap activities, the only help they might need is reviewing the key vocabulary. However, when we want our learners to engage in more complex tasks, such as discussions, dialogues or presentations, we should consider allowing them time to prepare communication strategies which could help them in case they encounter issues while executing the activity. Under normal circumstances, learners might feel pressured by the lack of time and their speech might therefore be halting,

grammatically incorrect or not very expressive. However, when they have time to prepare the content or the language they will need, they can focus on the message or the accurate use of language forms more clearly. As Goh and Burns (2012) conclude, incorporating pre-planning before the speaking task reduces the cognitive load and positively affects to a certain extent learners' fluency, accuracy, and complexity.

Repetition

Task repetition has several benefits. Naturally, the cognitive load is reduced as we provide learners with a phase similar to a rehearsal. Thus, we pave the way for automaticity. Furthermore, Goh and Burns (2012) argue that "task repetition also enhances learners affect." (p. 161). When we make it possible for children to revise their earlier attempts, which might not have been successful, we motivate learners and develop their confidence. Additionally, learners have a better grasp of what is expected of them when the task is performed a second time.

Bygate (2005) suggests several ways of carrying out repetition. Learners could either do the entire exercise again with different partners or groups, or repeat just parts of it. Another option is to assign a new task with a similar topic. Thornbury (2005) believes, however, that learners might not be motivated to repeat a task unless there is a clear reason to do so. He suggests that recording learners might provide the necessary incentive they need to be willing to improve.

Make activities communicative

To provide a purposeful and meaningful interaction between learners, we should employ communicative tasks; these include an information or opinion gap, therefore, learners feel the need to interact and real information or opinion is being exchanged. According to Gower (2006) communicative activities have a motivational function. He argues that even controlled activities can be done communicatively if learners exchange real opinions instead of dully repeating words from the textbook. Ur (2012), however, claims that it is not enough to make the activities communicative. If we managed to raise learners' interest, we also have to maintain it. Ur suggests to employ interesting tasks such game-like activities.

Models for teaching speaking

Basic methodological model

Harmer (2007) offers a basic methodological model, which can be applied to speaking or writing. He divides it into four stages: the lead-in, the task, feedback and follow-up work.

Initially, there is the lead-in. During this stage, the learners are introduced to the topic. We activate their prior knowledge and raise their interest by asking questions. Then we set the task. At this stage, the learners receive the information necessary for task completion; this includes instructions and materials. Harmer (2007) also suggest to demonstrate the procedure of the activity before its start. During the activity, the teacher monitors the class. Observing the learners involves providing them help when necessary. After the task has finished, the teacher gives feedback. The learners have the opportunity to reflect on their learning. The focus should be given not only to the language but also to the content. Eventually, the task is followed by another one, which should be appropriately related to the original activity. Nevertheless, it is possible to revisit the task or a similar one and repeat the suggested sequence again. (Harmer, 2007)

Similarly to Harmer, Scrivener (2011) outlines a basic structure of a task, which can also be applied to speaking. He deems it necessary to provide the learners with the most opportunity to practice; the teachers' task is to monitor the activity.

Before the lesson, the teacher should become familiar with the materials and the activity. The learners should also be familiarized with the activity before its start. In the lead-in stage, they prepare for the task. After, the teachers gives instructions and organizes the class. While the learners perform the task, the teacher should be uninvolved or monitor discreetly. When the activity has finished, the learners receive feedback and reflect on their learning. Eventually, the learners move to a proper follow-up work.

Teaching cycle for speaking

Goh and Burns (2012) suggest seven stages of a teaching cycle focused on speaking. They argue that oftentimes, activities occur as standalones and little attention is given to teaching of speaking. Therefore, the cycle provides a model for planning a sequence of activities. Each stage aims to provide learning and opportunities to practice. Nevertheless, the cycle is not meant to be completed at once; each stage needs to be appropriately paced.

Stage 1 aims to focus learners' attention on speaking. They are encouraged to think of the demands of speaking a second language. Furthermore, the teacher by the use of prompts prepares the learners for the tasks; after they familiarize themselves with it, they strategize how to complete it. The stage is also aimed at activating the learners' prior knowledge.

Stage 2 is focused on providing the learners with input and guidance. In order to avoid cognitive overload, the learners are given support before the task. This can include either content or language scaffolding or help in the form of a model example provided by the teacher. This stage also includes learners' planning of the content.

Stage 3 provides the learners with the opportunity to practice speaking in context. They are encouraged to focus primarily on fluency. Usually, pair or group interaction is involved. Goh and Burns (2012) urge to create a "communicative need and personal motivation to talk to one another." (p. 159)

Stage 4 is dedicated to enhancement of accuracy. It is focused on the teaching of language, skills and strategies one needs to speak effectively. The learners' attention is turned towards grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation and text structure as well.

At stage 5, the speaking task is repeated. The learners can improve by utilizing the knowledge acquired in the previous stage. It is possible to repeat only parts of the activity or to assign a new, but similar task. Therefore, we give the learners the opportunity to improve their previous attempts.

Stage 6 concentrates on learners' evaluation of their learning. They reflect on the preceding stages and their experience. They assess their performance and the improvement they have made, but also think of the future tasks and how they could apply their newly acquired knowledge.

Stage 7 facilitates feedback on learners' performance. It is usually provided by the teacher, however, it might not be possible to monitor all the learners. Under guidance, peer feedback is an acceptable alternative. (Goh and Burns, 2012)

Speaking tasks

Ur (2012, p. 44) defines a task as “a learner activity that has two objectives: learning of some aspect of the language; and an outcome that can be discussed or evaluated.” A good speaking task should, therefore, result into good learning and have clear objectives. For a task to be considered effective, Ur (2012) recommends several underlying principles for task design.

Validity. To be considered valid, a task has to teach and practice the language items or skills it is meant to teach. For example, a whole-class discussion does not offer much opportunity for practice as group or pair work. Nevertheless, a task can be considered valid even if it does not reflect real-life communication. Drills and repetitions, for example, serve their primary purpose to rehearse and improve the selected items.

Productivity. Thornbury (2005) claims “a speaking activity needs to be maximally language productive in order to provide the best conditions for autonomous language use.” (p. 90). Therefore, the activity should be filled with language; we need to ensure learners engage with the items in various contents as much as possible. Nevertheless, time is oftentimes wasted on organization or unnecessary fillers, such as puzzles. (Ur, 2012).

Success-orientation. To reinforce the learners’ acquisition of the target language, we need to provide them with opportunities to perform the task successfully; repeated successful performance results in automatization. It is also encouraging. (Ur, 2012). To help learners feel a sense of achievement, Thornbury (2005) suggests to include an acceptable degree of challenge. Nevertheless, learners also need to feel confident to attempt the task. Therefore, the task should not be too difficult. Moreover, they need to feel safe in the class in order to take risks.

Heterogeneity. According to Ur (2012), “a good task is heterogeneous: that is to say it provides opportunities for students to engage with it at all, or most, of the different levels of proficiency within a class.” (p. 44). For example, only a small amount of pupils will benefit from a task with predetermined answers. To provide everyone with meaningful and useful practice, we have to create opportunities for learners to work at an appropriate level.

Interest. Boredom results into learners’ inattention, low motivation and therefore, less learning. To appeal to the learners, we can employ an interesting topic or materials, add a game-like aspect, include an information gap or challenge the learners intellectually and creatively. (Ur, 2012)

Types of speaking activities

Gower (2006) divides interactive speaking activities into three categories: controlled activities, guided activities and creative or freer communication. It is, however, possible for an activity to overlap between categories.

Controlled activities are those tasks in which the language to be used is given and controlled by the teacher, for example by the use of prompts or cards. They usually include drills and repetition practice, either whole-class or individual, short dialogues in which the teacher is the supplier of the language, or the learner has prompts for replies. Thornbury (2005) describes controlled practice as a “repetitive practice of language items in conditions where the possibility of making mistakes is minimized.” (p. 63)

Guided activities are controlled by the teacher only to a degree; the learners have a certain level of freedom. For example, the selected area of language to be practiced could be giving directions. Learners are able to make language choices, which are however fairly limited. We can use controlled or guided activities especially when practicing a particular language item or structures.

Creative or free communication activities are used usually when we want to focus on the development of speaking skills. We provide the materials and motivate the learners, however, they can use any language they have to communicate and complete the task. The only restraint is the situation itself. Learners are given the opportunity to experiment, to make all the necessary choices to practice the fluent use of language. Naturally, the language is determined to a degree by the teachers because of the situation they set up. We can predict some of the language items that are most likely to occur. A freer stage usually follows more controlled practice of language items. (Gower, 2006).

Speaking activities used in language lessons

Discussions. Many teachers hope to implement discussions into their lessons successfully; to have learners share their opinions and argue, to practice fluent language use. Nevertheless, as Harmer (2007) suggests, discussions usually do not meet the teachers’ expectations. “The ability to give spontaneous and articulate opinions is challenging in our own language, let alone in the language we are struggling to learn.” (p. 90). Therefore, it is important to have a preparation stage before the actual discussion can take place, as the learners need time to think of what to say. By prompting the learners and by asking them questions, we can build up into a proper debate.

Gower (2006) agrees and mentions other factors that should be considered, such as learners' interest in the topic, motivation, or organization of the activity. For example, group-work is considered to be more convenient than whole-class discussion and it is suitable to assign learners roles (e.g. group leader etc.)

Richards (2015) further suggests to provide the learners with guidelines of the discussion. These should include, for example, what is expected of the learners, what are the goals, or how long the activity will last. Nevertheless, he argues that discussions in language lessons are often a mere 'chit-chat' rather than a real exchange of opinions and ideas.

Role-plays and simulations. Outside of the classroom, learners will have to use English in situations that cannot be practiced in the lessons under regular circumstances. In order to provide learners with the opportunity to prepare for such moments, Thornbury (2005) suggests adding a drama element to speaking activities. Drama allows us to simulate various situations in a safe environment, such as meeting a stranger or filing a complaint. While there are learners, who might feel more confident when playing a part instead of speaking for themselves, some might struggle. Speaking is already demanding, if the learners are not comfortable enough to perform in front of the class, they are put even under more pressure. Therefore, preparations and rehearsals should always precede the performance.

Thornbury (2005) distinguishes between role-plays and simulations. In role-plays, learners are required to pretend to be somebody else; they are provided with the necessary information on a card in order to play the role. In simulations, however, they perform as themselves. "They are confronted by a task to do or a problem to be solved and they must do what they would do in the circumstances." (Gower, p. 107). On the other hand, Scrivener (2011) offers a different definition. According to him, a simulation is "a large-scale role play." (p. 224). The task and the information provided to learners are more complex than in a regular role-play. He then suggests another term, real-play, to describe what Thornbury and Gower defined as simulation (e.g. learners acting as themselves).

Prepared talks. According to Harmer (2007) presentations are a popular task in language lessons; learners prepare their speech and then present to the rest of the class. Due to the preparedness, the production is more writing-like. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that learners should not memorize and then reproduce their speech, but rather follow simple notes. It is beneficial to provide learners with the possibility to rehearse; presenting in smaller groups at first is an appropriate option. Harmer (2007) suggest to

“give other students tasks to carry out as they listen.” (p. 352). Learners could be provided with performance criteria according to which they then could give feedback to the presenter. Or they could be tasked to ask follow-up question in order to ensure learners are not only actively speaking but actively listening as well.

Questionnaires and surveys. Conducting questionnaires and surveys is a great way of getting learners to talk. Harmer (2007) deems them useful especially because they are pre-planned and thus, both learners have something to say. If the surveys are closely designed, they offer practice of “certain repetitive language patterns” in quite a natural manner. (p. 352). Furthermore, if we select an appropriate topic, learners can design their own questionnaires with possible help from the teacher. Thornbury (2005) suggests working in pairs or small groups; learners prepare their questionnaires together, collect answers from others and then compare their results. Each group then can share their findings with the rest of the class or we can choose other follow-up activities, for example discussions, presentations or written work. (Harmer, 2007).

Theoretical Background Summary

From the information presented in the theoretical background, we can conclude that speaking is a cognitively demanding process. Therefore, learners might feel overwhelmed and anxious which results into their reluctance to speak. Other aspects, such as learners’ disinterest, might be the reason for inactivity in class as well. Nevertheless, to automatize language and produce language fluently and accurately, we need to provide our learners with maximized speaking opportunities to practice. This can be achieved by conducting engaging activities. Choosing an interesting topic, personalizing the task or simulating a communication need can motivate learners to speak. Creating a challenge also encourages pupils to participate. Nevertheless, learners need to feel confident in order to be willing to take risks. Therefore, it is necessary to allow them to prepare and rehearse and to provide them with appropriate scaffolding, either in terms of language or content.

III. METHODS

This chapter provides the reader with the information regarding the research methodology. Apart from the description of the research aims, the chapter also introduces the procedure of the research. Furthermore, the process of selecting and modifying activities is described. The chapter also included the characterization of the participants of the research.

Research aims

The research aimed to explore ways of providing learners with maximized speaking opportunities as described in the theoretical background and to assess their value in practice. The goal was to ascertain learners' attitudes towards the applied methods and principles by providing a comparison with textbook activities. We had decided to focus on the following issues:

- The amount of speaking opportunities. We evaluated how the activity was organized and whether the task allowed as many speakers to be active at once as possible.
- Learners' interest and motivation. We noticed whether learners actively participated during the activity and whether they found it to be engaging and interesting.
- Scaffolding. We tried different ways of content and language support and evaluated its beneficial effects.
- Pre-planning. We questioned the value of the preparation stage and whether it affected the learners' speech production and confidence.
- Information gap. We simulated a communicative need and noticed whether the learners behaved differently during the task. We also paid attention to the amount of L2 use.
- Repetition. We examined its benefits on learners' oral production and whether learners considered it to be redundant or valuable.

The main hypothesis was that activities and tasks presented in textbooks do not provide learners with sufficiently effective opportunities for speaking and that tasks, which prepared in accordance with the principles of effective teaching, offered more valuable practice.

Research procedure

The research procedure could be divided into three parts. The first part was concerned with selecting appropriate activities from the textbooks. These were critically assessed to identify potential issues and deficiencies, which could be later improved in accordance with effective language teaching.

In the second part of the research, the selected activities were presented to a group of learners. The participants were familiarized with the concept of the research in advance. To avoid unnecessary confusion, the general information was given in Czech, however, the tasks and activities were done in English. The research took three regular lessons (45 minutes each) and the procedure was always the same.

Firstly, the learners were asked to perform the chosen activity from the textbook, as they would have done in a regular lesson. There was, however, no lead-in or follow-up stages due to a limited amount of time. During the activity, the participants were observed primarily in order to estimate if all of the learners were active at the same time, if they were engaged in the activity and if they were speaking English instead of their mother tongue.

Secondly, learners were asked to perform the modified version of the same activity. While the topic always remained the same, the content had been slightly changed to avoid repetition. The learners were observed at this stage as well to see if there were any differences in behaviour between the two activities.

Thirdly, the participants of the research obtained a questionnaire, in which they either agreed or disagreed with a set of statements. These concerned the comparison of the two tasks and the learners had to decide, for example, which activity was more engaging, during which tasks they spoke more English or which exercise they would prefer in their everyday English lessons. (See Appendix A).

Finally, the respondents were given additional questions by the researcher, about the content and language of the activity; the whole group had the opportunity to comment on the activity and further elaborate their answers from the questionnaire.

In the third part of the research, the results of the questionnaires had been evaluated as well as the results of the observations and discussions.

Criteria for selecting activities

The activities selected for the research were all taken from the fourth and fifth Project textbooks (fourth and third editions respectively), as those are the textbooks used on regular basis at the school at which the research had been conducted. All of the activities were listed under the speaking section in the textbooks. Due to time limitations of the research, only activities which did not require an extensive lead-in and did not function as a follow-up activity for another task were selected. Since the amount of speaking activities per chapter is limited and the task types are fairly repetitive, it was not possible to employ activities only from the chapter the learners were currently occupied with. Therefore, activities were chosen from different areas of language and content. In general, activities which were thought to be inefficient in their presented state and which potentially could be enhanced were chosen.

The selected activities from the textbook were assessed and then modified in compliance with the principles of effective teaching of speaking as described in the theoretical background of the thesis. The modifications mainly aimed to provide maximized speaking opportunities; add pre-planning stage, scaffolding, and repetition; raise learners' interest and provide communicative need. Therefore, the modifications usually involved the change of organization and sequence of individual steps of the activity. Nevertheless, it was not our intention to change the task completely. Therefore, the topic and the target language of the activity always stayed the same as well as the focus of the activity (e.g. fluency or accuracy focused). The content, however, was adjusted in the modified version of the task in order to maintain objectivity. If the content was repeated, the second activity could automatically be easier for the learners.

Selected Activities and their modifications.

Activity #1

Exercise 1 (Textbook version). In this activity, learners were divided into groups. Each group had the task to think of all the jobs and professions they know and to choose one which could be defined as the hardest and the easiest. After reaching a consensus, the group then selected a representative who shared their ideas with the rest of the class. (See appendix C).

While discussions could be a useful speaking activity, there are several reasons why this particular task could be perceived as ineffective. Asking learners to “discuss a topic”

never leads to a discussion. While the topic might be interesting, the learners feel no need to communicate in English and thus, they will primarily use their mother tongue. Some learners might also be excluded from the group work, either because they do not want to participate or because a more competent learner takes over the group. Furthermore, there is no specification of what the result is supposed to be. They know what they are supposed to say, but the amount and form are not specified. Ultimately, only three learners do have the opportunity to speak English when they present the groups' ideas. Furthermore, only one person speaks at the time and there is no need for others to listen.

Exercise 2 (Modified version). In the modified version of the task, the discussion was replaced by pair and group work to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate. The learners had to assess individually what job or profession is the best. They then shared their ideas with their partner. The learners were warned to listen carefully to their partner. Eventually, the pupils formed a group of four or five. This time, they had to describe their partners' ideas instead of their own. (See Appendix D).

To avoid uncertainty, the learners were introduced to the activity through an example; the teacher modelled the activity and projected a written example on the board. The pupils were also provided with performance criteria, which included what the learners have to say (title of profession, working hours, wage etc.) and how many facts they should include. Furthermore, the learners were given several minutes to prepare for the activity. Additionally, the pupils had the option to consult the textbook, in which various jobs and professions were described.

Activity #2

Exercise 1 (Textbook version). For this activity, learners were divided into pairs. Their task was to ask each other questions from the textbook and to answer them honestly. Then they were supposed to think individually about what they would do, if they found themselves in certain situations. Learners were then asked to share their ideas with the rest of the class. (See Appendix E).

While we can assume all learners are active in the first part of the exercise, which primarily functions as a lead-in to the second part, we cannot say so about the second part in which only one learner speaks at a time. Furthermore, there is no motivation for learners to speak; while the given questions offer support in a controlled activity, there is no compelling reason as to why learners should ask each other these questions and answer them. There is no motivation for learners to engage in the activity.

Exercise 2 (Modified version). This activity was divided into two parts. In the first part, each of the learners received a chart for bingo with various adventurous and dangerous situations. Their task was to walk around the class and ask others if they would do the things described in the chart. If the person said yes, he/she signed their paper. Whoever managed to collect four signatures in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal line, scored a bingo.

In the second part, the learners individually prepared a situation similar to those in the previous exercise. After the preparation stage, they had to ask at least three people for their answers. In the end, the class was divided into two smaller groups. Everyone shared their question and one of their peers' answers. (See Appendix F).

The activities were modelled before the start of the exercise. The learners were provided with both content and language scaffolding. Therefore, all of the learners were able to participate. Furthermore, everyone got the opportunity to practise as all the pupils are active at the same time. By assigning the amount of people the pupils had to speak to, we were setting certain performance criteria. Learners had to repeat the target language several times. Moreover, they were given a choice, as they could decide what and whom to ask. They could also create their own sentences or choose from predefined ones, if they did not feel confident enough to try. Additionally, transforming the first part of the activity into a game also made the task more engaging and learners were more motivated to speak.

Activity #3

Exercise 1 (Textbook version). In this activity, learners worked in pairs. Their task was to imagine themselves at one of the places described in the textbook (on a beach, at a train station, in a shopping centre, at the cinema). The learners then shared in pairs, where they are and what they hear, see, feel and smell there, while using the cues from the textbook. (See Appendix G).

While all learners are active at the same time, we could argue that not everyone might find the activity engaging; there is no reason why learners should listen to someone describe an imaginary place. As in the previous activities, there is no palpable result. Even though scaffolding is partially provided by the textbook in the form of pre-written beginnings of sentences, lower level learners might find it difficult to think of the content and therefore, experience cognitive overload.

Exercise 2 (Modified version). The learners were divided into pairs and one group of three. After the activity was modelled to them, the pupils had a few minutes to think of

the content of their speech. The learners were provided with language cues as in the first exercise. In addition, they were given locations with pictures. Their task was to choose one of those locations and describe it to their partner. Their partner then had to guess about which location their friend is speaking. (See Appendix H).

By providing an example before the start of the activity, we avoid misunderstandings. The learners can also prepare better for the activity, because they are given time to think of the content and the language they will need to successfully fulfil the task. While the language support remains the same, scaffolding of content was added in forms of pictures. To motivate the learners to take actively participate and communicate, the activity was made into an information gap task; the pupils have to talk to each other to complete the exercise. Furthermore, the activity becomes more engaging when a game-like aspect is added.

Research participants

The research took place at Základní škola Chrást. The participants of the research were a group of thirteen learners between the ages of fourteen and fifteen. The group consisted of four boys and nine girls. Not everyone participated in all the activities; during the first activity, only eleven learners were present. During the second and third activities, the full group participated. Because the research heavily relies on learners' feedback, a group of older learners has been chosen, as we assumed they might be better equipped to critically assess the activities and be more eloquent in the discussions. The group has been described by their teacher as hard-working, cooperative, and active. We have also thought that a smaller group of learners would offer better opportunities for discussion and feedback. However, we could argue that findings provided by such a small group are not relevant enough. (See Implications).

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

This chapter is aimed at presenting a detailed description on the results of the research. The results are accompanied by commentaries, which further interpret the gathered data. The chapter is structured according to individual activities and includes the results of the observations, the responses to the questionnaires, and the data acquired during the discussions. Key findings of the research are summarized at the end of the chapter.

Activity #1

Observation findings

Exercise 1. After the instructions were given and the learners were divided into groups, the activity started well; while the group was not particularly enthusiastic about the task, majority of the respondents, with only few exceptions, participated in the discussion. Nevertheless, nobody spoke English at all; all of the learners used their L1 to discuss the topic-related issues, despite the fact they had to present their ideas at the end of the activity to the rest of the class in English. After five minutes, the learners were ready to choose one representative who had to summarize the groups' findings. There were three presentations in total and all of the speakers had to be prompted to say at least four to five sentences. Only some of the learners listened to their classmates' presentations, the others mostly chatted silently among themselves. The activity took about ten minutes.

Exercise 2. While the activity was being presented and modelled, all of the learners were paying attention. They were interested in the performance criteria that were projected to them on the board. As they were preparing their speeches, majority of the learners seemed focused and all of them constantly consulted the board for guidance. Some of them opened their textbooks as suggested. No one seemed to struggle with the preparation and they rarely asked for help (mostly vocabulary related). As they were sharing in pairs, the learners kept looking at the board. Czech was heard only minimally during the activity. Some of the learners struggled in the groups, as they did not remember exactly what their partner had said, but most of them seemed to enjoy the challenge. One of the learners, however, did not have much to speak about, as his partner did not share much with him in the previous stage and thus did not meet the performance criteria. There seemed to be no issues otherwise. The duration of the activity was 15-20 minutes.

Commentaries: observations

Exercise 1. During the observation, several of our assumptions proved to be correct; the learners did not use Czech during the discussion at all, because there was no reason or motivation for them to do so. To a certain extent, this would have been acceptable, if the discussion was followed by a task in which all the learners would have to further work with the information gathered and communicate in English. Nevertheless, the learners were only supposed to share their groups' ideas with the rest of the class, and thus, just a few learners had the opportunity to speak in English. Furthermore, the pupils struggled during the presentation as there were no specifications in the instructions what the learners should focus on. Finally, there was no reason for the rest of the class to be listening to the presenters, therefore, it is no surprise that some of the learners became bored.

Exercise 2. As expected, the learners spoke more in English during the modified version of the activity. Since we provided them with an example and performance criteria, the learners had a clearer vision of what was expected of them. By allowing them to prepare in advance, they were able to think of what they want to speak about and focus only on the language. There were, however, some issues during the task, as one of the lower level learners did not speak much in the pair work and therefore their partner could not follow up in the group work. It is questionable what caused this and whether it could have been prevented if the activity had a better or perhaps different scaffolding. The second exercise was not noticeably longer than the first one, yet it clearly offered more opportunities for learning.

Questionnaire findings

According to the results of the questionnaire, the learners preferred the modified version of the exercise over the textbook version. Majority of the pupils found the task to be more interesting and engaging. Only two learners agreed with the first statement.

Nevertheless, the responses to the second statement were rather contradictory; while five learners agreed that they knew better what was expected of them in the first exercise, four disagreed. Five respondents then decided not to answer and stated that both exercises were equally clear to them.

The results of the third question also proved to be ambiguous. Six learners were in favour of the textbook exercise. Three pupils agreed strongly and three rather agreed with

the statement that it was easier to come up with what to say in exercise 1. On the other hand, five respondents rather disagreed and two strongly disagreed.

While five learners felt that exercise 2 was in general easier to complete than exercise 1, most of the respondents agreed that the textbook version of the activity was easier. Three learners even agreed strongly.

Majority of the respondents claimed that in exercise 2, they spoke in English more than in exercise 1. Eight pupils strongly disagreed with the statement. Only one respondent reported to speak more in exercise 1.

At the end of the questionnaire, the learners had to choose which exercise they would prefer in regular lessons. According to the results, no one would give preference to the textbook activity with eight respondents objecting strongly.

Table 1: Results of questionnaire 1

Question	Completely agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Completely disagree
#1	1	1	7	4
#2*	1	4	4	0
#3	3	3	5	2
#4	3	5	5	0
#5	0	1	4	8
#6	0	0	5	8
	8	14	30	22

* 5 pupils did not respond

Commentaries: questionnaire

The learners agreed that the first exercise was in general easier to complete, because they did not need to speak English at all. Furthermore, not everyone needed to be necessarily active during the task as the pupils worked in groups of four or five. There was no challenge for the learners and therefore, they agreed the task was easy.

Probably for the same reason, some of the learners agreed that in the first exercise it was easier to think of what to say. Nevertheless, some of the learners agreed the second

exercise made it easier likely because the pupils had a structured list of what was expected of them to say.

Even though the second activity was modelled and an example was given to the learners, they mostly found both tasks to have equally clear instructions. This is perhaps due to the fact that the instructions of the first exercise were not as complex. The second task, however, might have caused some confusion if it were not modelled in advance.

Surprisingly, despite the fact that the first exercise was deemed as easier, all of the learners agreed that they would prefer the second task in regular lessons. The respondents also thought the second exercise was more engaging. Therefore, we can assume that the low demands of the first task and the lack of challenge were rather ineffective. While we might think that the learners would rather do an exercise which does not require them to be very active, it is quite the other way around.

Discussion findings

During the discussion, the learners agreed that the second exercise was better than the textbook version. They stated that it was easier to have the activity modelled as it helped them to have a clearer idea of what was expected of them. The example was also written on the board, however, the pupils deemed it unnecessary.

What the learners found to be immensely helpful, however, was the performance criteria stated on the board. They agreed that while they were preparing their own speech, they kept looking at the board since it provided them with an easily understandable structure. Most of them also managed to abide by the criteria.

The pupils also positively evaluated the pre-planning stage, in which they could think of the content and meet the performance criteria. All of the learners confirmed that they would not be able to fulfil the activity successfully if they did not have the opportunity to prepare.

The learners also admitted that no one spoke English during the discussion (exercise 1). They argued that there was no need for them to speak L2 as the main goal of the activity was to reach consensus in the group. Majority of the pupils then confirmed that during the second exercise they used L2 more often.

When asked about the possibility to use textbook as a support, some of the learners admitted they were initially intrigued by the option. Nevertheless, no one used the textbook in the end. As the learners claimed, they knew what they wanted to speak about and therefore, they did not need to look up any information.

Commentaries: discussion

Several of our assumptions proved to be correct in the discussion. We had assumed that the learners will not speak during the first exercise, because there is no reason to do so; the learners themselves agreed that they did not deem it necessary to speak English to complete the task. Furthermore, they found the instructions to be too vague. By providing the learners with the performance criteria, we offered them structure, something they could rely on while preparing for the activity. They clearly knew what was expected of them. This was also achieved by giving the learners an example. Therefore, the learners did not have to struggle with what to say as they clearly knew what to focus on.

Moreover, the pre-planning stage proved to be useful as the learners agreed they would not be able to communicate their ideas straightaway. The offered support in the form of the textbook appeared to be unnecessary; the topic chosen was close to the learners' interests and therefore, they already knew the content they wanted to speak about. Majority of the pupils decided to speak about the profession they hope to do for living in the future, therefore, they were more motivated to communicate. Additionally, they were actively listening during both stages of the second exercise; in the first part, they needed the information to be able to do the task and in the second part, they had to pay attention to what was being said about them.

Activity #2

Observation findings

Exercise A. The learners were divided into pairs and one group of three. There was no problem with the instructions and even though the learners were not excited about the activity, most of them immediately started asking each other questions from the textbook. Some of the learners, however, were not focused on the activity and chatted among themselves instead. Several pairs finished earlier than the others and so they had more time to prepare for the second part of the activity. As the learners one by one shared their ideas with the rest of the class, majority of the participants eventually lost interest in the activity and no one was paying attention by the end. The whole task took about 10 minutes.

Exercise B. All of the learners were clearly excited about the activity. During the first part of the task, they all took an active part in playing the game. The learners were speaking a mixture of L1 and L2. Usually, when commenting on their friends' answers, they opted for Czech, however, they switched to English when they were supposed to and

some of the learners even scolded their classmates for speaking Czech. During the second part of the activity, the participants were mostly intrigued by the idea of preparing their own questions for others. They were not as enthusiastic as before, but everyone participated and used primarily English. When asked to share their questions and one of the answers, most of the learners listened as the answers often proved to be entertaining. Overall, the activity took about 20 minutes.

Commentaries: observation

Exercise A. As we have seen, majority of the learners participated in the activity and used English most of the time. Nevertheless, many did so just because they were ordered by the teacher to do the task; there was no motivation nor reason for the pupils to ask each other questions or listen during the whole-class part of the activity. Therefore, it was not surprising that some of them became distracted.

Exercise B. Changing the task into a game proved very efficient; all of the learners actively and enthusiastically participated. Because it was a competition, the learners even corrected and forced each other to use English instead of Czech. Majority of them managed to successfully score more than once. Unfortunately, one of the lower level participants, who does not have a good rapport with the rest of the class, did not win even once. It is questionable what caused this, as she did not seem unwilling to participate. Perhaps the offered scaffolding was insufficient or other factors were at fault, such as her reserved nature or simply back luck.

Questionnaire findings

Even though one respondent agreed with the statement, majority of the respondents thought exercise 2 was more interesting and engaging as three and nine learners chose options 'rather disagree' and 'strongly disagree' respectively.

The results of the second question, however, were rather even. Four respondents agreed with the statement that they knew better what was expected of them in the first exercise. One learner even agreed strongly. Nevertheless, six learners disagreed. Three respondents decided not to answer as they felt both activities were equally clear to them.

While four learners agreed with the statement, two of them strongly, most of the respondents thought it was easier to think of the content in exercise 2. One learner strongly disagreed and one of the respondents chose not to answer.

The pupils mostly disagreed that the first exercise was easier. Three respondents disagreed strongly. Three learners, on the other hand, rather agreed with the statement and one person agreed strongly. One of the respondents decided not to answer as she viewed the exercises equally easy to complete.

Majority of the responders felt they spoke more during the second exercise, as five respondents chose the option ‘rather disagree’ and six ticked the option ‘strongly disagree’. Nonetheless, two learners claimed they spoke more in exercise 1.

In the end, only one respondent would prefer the textbook task over the modified version in regular lessons. Out of the twelve remaining respondents, four strongly favoured the second exercise.

Table 2: Results of questionnaire 2

Question	Completely agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Completely disagree
#1	0	1	3	9
#2*	1	4	5	0
#3*	2	2	6	1
#4*	1	3	5	2
#5	1	1	5	6
#6	0	1	8	4
	4	12	32	22

* not all the pupils responded

Commentaries: questionnaire

The learners seemed to favour exercise 2 over exercise 1 even though the results are oftentimes rather even. We can assume that the majority of the respondents found the second activity to be more engaging because of its form; the game and the competition which it involved certainly functioned as a motivation for the learners to participate. The fact that learners could also choose whom and what they want to ask could be a major factor as to why the respondents thought the second task to be more interesting.

Even though the second exercise was modelled to the learners and an example was provided, the learners found both tasks equally understandable. The results of the next question were also balanced. Some of the learners though it was easier to think of the

content in the first exercise. This is probably due to the fact that in the first task the learners were rather limited in the amount of content they had to think of. In the second exercise, however, they had to answer more questions. Moreover, while they could prepare their questions in advance, they were unprepared to give answers and therefore, they might find exercise 2 harder. In this case, the scaffolding offered might not have been sufficient. This is probably why some of the learners also agreed that the first task was easier.

Despite the fact that the answers were rather balanced and some of the respondents often found the textbook version of the activity to be generally easier to complete, majority of the learners would prefer the modified version of the activity in regular class.

Discussion findings

According to the learners, the textbook exercise was not as engaging as the modified version. The pupils admitted that they sometimes do similar tasks in regular classes, however, they do not find them interesting at all, even though they usually take active part in them. They participate mostly because they are told to do so by the teacher. Nevertheless, they do not find these types of exercises very useful. One of the learners even questioned the value of the activity. They all agreed that playing a game instead was more engaging as they felt motivated to take an active part in the task.

During the second part of the exercise, the participants of the research confirmed that the preparation stage was helpful. The fact that the activity was modelled before its start was also appreciated. The learners agreed that they would manage to do the tasks without the support, however, they would probably struggle and would not find the activity as engaging.

Furthermore, the learners appreciated that they could create their own sentences. They thought it was more exiting rather than to ask predefined questions. There were several suggestions written on the board for those who did not feel confident enough to produce something on their own. While the learners agreed that they did not need the offered help in the end, some of them confirmed it was comforting to have the option.

The pupils also praised the use of a different organizational form. Mostly, they work in pairs or groups and those usually stay the same. Mingling was therefore perceived as a welcome change. The learners also appreciated that they could choose whom they want to ask their questions. When asked if anyone struggled to approach at least three people, no one confessed to have any issues.

Some of the pupils claimed, however, that they struggled occasionally as it was not always easy to answer the questions. Usually, the issues were not connected to the language as much as they were connected to the content. Especially one of the learners found this quite problematic, nonetheless, he agreed that he managed to answer eventually.

Commentaries: discussion

During the discussion, some of our assumptions proved to be correct. As expected, the learners preferred to play a game instead of asking each other predefined questions. In the game, the learners felt a need to communicate; to successfully fulfil the task, they had to and wanted to ask each other questions. There was, however, no information gap in the textbook version of the activity and therefore, the learners deemed the exercise pointless.

Furthermore, it was proven that the pre-planning stage is meaningful, as the learners thought they would not be able to fulfil the task as effectively as they did if they had no time to prepare.

They also supported the belief that an example provided by the teacher helps the learners to participate in the activity better; while they thought they would manage the activity without it, they also agreed that their performance would not be as good.

Nevertheless, the use of scaffolding in this activity is questionable; the support offered seemed not to be sufficient as one of the learners said it was not always easy to think of how to answer the questions.

Activity # 3

Observation findings

Exercise 1. Since there were only eleven learners present for this activity, they had to be divided into pairs and one group of three. The more advanced learners were quite talkative and spoke for the whole duration of the activity (5 minutes). The lower level students, however, soon started to speak in Czech about something else entirely, as they managed to finish the task rather quickly. Furthermore, an issue within the group of three arose, as two of the learners managed to speak most of the time and therefore, there was little time left for the third person in the group to speak. Overall, the learners seemed to be engaged in the activity and only occasionally slipped into their L1.

Exercise 2. The children were paying attention when the activity was modelled to them and continued to look at the board as they were thinking of their own speech. They

seemed to be intrigued by the added game-like aspect and some of them prepared more elaborate descriptions than in the previous exercise. In terms of engagement or language use, however, there was in general not a notable difference between the textbook and the modified version of the activity. Since some of the pairs were noticeably faster than the others, they were asked to perform the task again with different content. Then they had to switch partners and repeat the activity, which did not bother the learners, nevertheless, some of them started to chat among themselves in Czech. The modified version of the activity lasted 10 minutes.

Commentaries: observation

Exercise 1. When we selected the activity, we assumed the learners might struggle; thinking of the content and language at the same time might cause cognitive overload. To an extent, this proved to be true. While there were no serious issues and the activity offered some language support, the lower level learners could make use of additional content scaffolding, as some of them managed to say only a few sentences. The more advanced learners, on the other hand, were rather talkative. We also argued that the activity might not be as engaging, which was also partially confirmed, as some of the learners rather spoke in Czech instead of focusing on the task.

Exercise 2. During the modified version of the activity, our findings from the observations of exercise 1 proved to be true. While the lower level learners seemed to improve and be more talkative when they were provided with content scaffolding, the more advanced learners did not seem to need it at all. This only accentuates the necessity of differentiated instructions; to give everyone the same opportunity to participate, we have to offer appropriate support that will help those who need it but will not restrict those who do not. Adding a game-like element to the task seemed to make the activity only slightly more engaging and interesting.

Questionnaire findings

Majority of the learners found the second exercise to be more interesting than the first one. One participant of the research, however, found the first task to be more engaging.

While two learners strongly agreed with the statement, two strongly disagreed, implying the second activity and its process were clearer to them. Learners than preferred

the second exercise slightly more with four learners choosing it over three learners leaning towards the first one, making the results almost even.

Seven learners claimed that in exercise 2 it was easier to think of the content of their speech. Nevertheless, only one respondent chose that he strongly disagreed with the statement. Four respondents found exercise 1 in terms of content easier, with two learners even strongly agreeing.

The results to this question are rather balanced as well. Five respondents rather agreed that exercise 1 was in general easier to complete and five respondents rather disagreed. One learner, however, strongly preferred the first exercise.

Eight learners chose the second exercise as the one in which they spoke English more. Three learners even strongly disagreed with the statement. Nevertheless, three respondents felt they spoke more in exercise 1.

Exercise 2 would be generally preferred over exercise 1 as majority of the learners picked options 'rather disagree' (3 respondents) and 'strongly disagree' (4 respondents). Four learners would rather prefer exercise 1.

Table 3: Results of questionnaire 3

Question	Completely agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Completely disagree
#1	1	1	7	4
#2*	1	4	4	0
#3	3	3	5	2
#4	3	5	5	0
#5	0	1	4	8
#6	0	0	5	8
	8	14	30	22

* 5 pupils did not respond

Commentaries: questionnaire

The results of the questionnaire were rather balanced. While the learners agreed that they found the second exercise to be more interesting and would prefer it in regular lesson over exercise 1, they disagreed quite often in other areas.

While some of the learners agreed the first exercise was easier, the rest of the class disagreed. This is also connected to the question of whether it was easier to think of the content in the first exercise. We can assume the respondents' choice dependent on whether they felt the second task to be a challenge or not. The lower level learners could focus more on what to say in the modified version of the activity as they were provided with scaffolding of content. The more advanced learners, however, were more concentrated on the game and therefore struggled with the content in the second exercise more.

Thus some of the learners claimed they spoke more in the first exercise since they were not as restricted as in the second task. Nevertheless, lower level students probably agreed to speak more in the second exercise.

Discussion findings

The learners appreciated that the activity was modelled to them before their actual performance, as it helped them to get a clearer idea of what was expected of them. Nonetheless, majority of the learners agreed that they would manage to perform the task without it as well.

The pictures, which were provided as scaffolding in order to minimize the danger of a potential cognitive overload, were received with mixed feelings. While the lower-level learners agreed that they made it easier to think of the content, the more advanced speakers found them rather unnecessary and distracting. One of the learners thought the pictures were in fact hindering her communication, as she felt they were too restricting and did not allow her speak as freely as the textbook exercise. Majority of the learners thought the pictures provided an interesting challenge and forced them to think more about what to say, as they did not want to make their description too obvious and their choices easily guessed.

Furthermore, the learners found it helpful to have a few minutes of preparation before the actual activity. As stated above, the pupils were trying to make their descriptions more mysterious and therefore, they needed time to think of the content. This also allowed them to focus on the language and create more complex sentences.

When asked about the repetition of the exercise, all of the learners agreed that it was useful. They stated that when performing the task a second time, they felt more confident and did not stumble as often as in their first run through.

Commentaries: discussion

Those who felt the modified version of the activity was harder to complete probably struggled because of the game-like aspect; they thought it was difficult because they had to think of something not as easily guessed while in the first exercise they could speak about anything they wanted. Those who thought the second exercise was easier were probably not as concerned with the game and focused more on saying anything.

Therefore, the former group of learners was not satisfied with the scaffolding, which restricted them in what to say. Meanwhile, the latter group of pupils found the offered support to be useful. It was stated during the instructions that the pictures were optional, therefore we can assume, the issues mainly arose from misunderstanding. Nevertheless, this issue which quite surprisingly arose only supports the notion that differentiated instructions are essential in providing everyone with the same opportunity to participate.

Even though we expected the learners to find the repetition of the exercise unnecessary, many of them actually found it useful; they agreed that when performing the task a second time, they felt more confident and did not stumble as often as in their first run through.

Key findings of the results

If we consider the overall results of the questionnaires, observations and discussions, we can say that the modified versions of the activities were generally preferred over the textbook versions.

Majority of the learners agreed that the second exercises were more interesting than the textbook versions. This was mainly due to the fact that the tasks were personalized; they were open to learners' creativity. Moreover, a game-like aspects were added, which made the activities engaging.

Furthermore, the modified versions of the activities provided the learners with more opportunities to speak; from the questionnaires and the observations, it was obvious the learners used their L2 more often. This was also because of the preparation stage, which

proved to be rather effective, as learners agreed in the discussions. Repetition was also evaluated positively by the learners as it had an impact on their confidence.

The results also proved the necessity of a challenge; if the activities were not challenging enough, the learners found them to be boring. At the same time, the activities had to be doable and provide enough help for everyone to succeed.

While the results of the questionnaires were not necessarily in favour of scaffolding and modelling, as the learners found both tasks to be equally clear and understandable, both proved to be a useful, appreciated addition during the discussions.

V. IMPLICATIONS

This chapter is devoted to the description of implications the findings of the research have for teaching practice. Moreover, we discuss the limitations of the research as well as possible improvements and suggestions for further research.

Pedagogical implications

The results of the research indicate that the speaking tasks presented in textbooks do not offer as many speaking opportunities as activities designed in accordance with the principles of effective teaching. The research brought interesting findings, which should be taken into consideration when designing speaking tasks.

As we commented in the theoretical background, for learners to improve their speaking, we need to ensure they actually have the opportunity to talk in the lesson. As implied in the theory and the research, this can be achieved by employing pair and group-work instead of whole-class activities. Mingling also proved to be an effective method. Nevertheless, other aspects need to be considered, such as active participation of the learners. The results of the research showed that the learners willingly participate in the task when several conditions are met.

First of all, they have to feel the need to communicate. This can be achieved by presenting them with a topic they are interested in, by ensuring the activity has an information gap (e.g. they communicate in order to acquire a missing piece of information), or by personalizing the task. Allowing learners to choose what they want to say and with whom they want to speak proved to be rather effective as those activities were evaluated as the best most of the time. Furthermore, learners find it easier to speak about themselves or something they feel personal connection to.

Second, learners actively participate if they perceive the task as engaging. The modified versions of the activities were viewed as more interesting mainly because they incorporated a game-like aspect. Tasks which did not require much effort from the learners were also dismissed. On the other hand, if the activity contained an appropriate challenge, the pupils were more interested in completing the task.

Finally, the learners take an active part in the task when they feel confident enough they can succeed. Providing the learners with an example of how to complete the task helps them to perform better; they are more confident as they have a clearer idea of what is expected of them. Furthermore, they are willing to take more risks if they know they are

being supported. If an activity is appropriately scaffolded, lower level learners can participate according to their ability without experiencing cognitive overload. We can achieve this also by providing the learners with time to think of the content of their speech. As the research indicates, both preparation stage and repetition have a positive effect on learners' confidence.

Limitations of the research

Even though the research brought into light some interesting findings, there were several limitations which decrease the research's validity.

One of the issues was the number of participants. While it was better to work with a smaller group of learners during the research because of the tools employed (especially the observations and the discussions), the number of the respondents would have to be higher for us to be able to draw out any generalizing conclusions. This way, we can only deduce some suggestions and recommendations for practice and future research.

Furthermore, the results of the research were highly subjective. Majority of the results depended on the learners' evaluation. While our primary aim was to get the learners' opinion, it is questionable to what extent the learners answered honestly. It is possible that some of the learners chose random answers in the questionnaires. In the discussions, some of the learners were more vocal than others; perhaps those learners nodded in agreement despite the fact they did not agree with what was being said, only to avoid active participation. The observations were also prone to subjectivity as they were conducted by a single person.

The modifications have to be perceived only as recommendations of how certain activities could be improved. In no way should the modifications be viewed as the only correct way of conducting said activities. While the changes were done in accordance with the theory of effective teaching, they were proposed by a single person and therefore, prone to subjectivity as well. Moreover, the modifications suggested were based only on assumptions of what might be problematic in individual tasks.

The tasks were performed out of context; due to time limitations, the individual activities could not be observed during a regular lesson. Instead, the form of an experiment, in which all the conditions are made to suit the need of the experiment, was employed. This could have also impact the way the learners perceived both activities.

Suggestions for further research

Some of the limitations mentioned in the previous section could be addressed in further research. Undoubtedly, it would be beneficial to monitor a higher number of learners for a longer period of time. Not only would this allow us to gather more data for analysis, we could also observe learners in regular lessons. The research could be conducted in real-time and in context, which would make it possible to track learners' progress. It would be interesting to follow individuals as well as whole groups; we could focus our attention on lower level learners or those who struggle with speaking and notice whether they improve. Research which would focus on different levels and ages of participants could also bring interesting findings.

Furthermore, we could compare two groups of participants; while one of the groups would follow regular textbook activities, the second group would be presented with the modified versions. From the comparison, we could then conclude whether the modifications had any impact on the overall ability to speak. To be able to evaluate to what degree the learners' speaking improved, an assessment stage would have to be included.

In the future, the research could focus more on the advantages and disadvantages of the models presented by Goh and Burns (2012), Scrivener (2011) or Harmer (2007). With enough time it would be possible to test these methodologies in detail in regular lessons instead of choosing only certain aspects.

VI. CONCLUSION

The thesis focused on effective teaching of speaking skills. The aim was to explore ways of providing the learners with maximized speaking opportunities and to evaluate their effectivity. We decided to focus primarily on organizational forms, scaffolding and pre-planning, learners' interest and engagement, the use of L2 and the value of repetition.

To assess the methods and principles described in the theoretical background, a group of learners was presented with and performed a number of speaking tasks. They then responded to a series of questions regarding the form, content, and the process of the activities. From the learners' responses, follow-up discussions, and observations, we drew several conclusions.

As we expected, the research indicated that the activities presented in textbooks do not offer as many speaking opportunities as those modified in accordance with theory. The learners not only felt more engaged in the adjusted activities, they also spoke English more often. This was achieved primarily by changing the organization of the activity. By employing pair and group-work, learners had the opportunity to speak more often than in a whole-class task. Furthermore, learners' interest in the task was much higher if they felt the need to communicate. Personalizing the task as well as allowing learners to choose both proved to be effective ways of ensuring learners' participation. Learners' willingness to take risks, and therefore speak, was also greatly affected by their confidence. To ensure everyone can succeed, we suggested to provide the learners with an example of the expected performance and with content and language scaffolding. Allowing learners to prepare before the start of the activity was also evaluated positively as well as repetition of the task.

While the credibility of the research was affected by the low number of participants, we perceive the feedback provided by the learners as still quite valuable for our teaching practice. Speaking is often viewed as the most important of the four skills, but also as the hardest. Second language learners often struggle due to various reasons, which negatively impacts their self-esteem. Therefore, it is important for teachers to try and examine new ways, which might help improve not only their learners' performance, but their confidence as well.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire in Czech

Jméno:

Aktivita:

Jak moc souhlasíš s následujícími tvrzeními? Zakroužkuj.

1. Cvičení 1 bylo zajímavější (bavilo mne více) než cvičení 2.
 - a. Naprosto souhlasím
 - b. Spíše souhlasím
 - c. Spíše nesouhlasím
 - d. Naprosto nesouhlasím
2. U cvičení 1 jsem spíše věděl/a, co se ode mne očekává než u cvičení 2.
 - a. Naprosto souhlasím
 - b. Spíše souhlasím
 - c. Spíše nesouhlasím
 - d. Naprosto nesouhlasím
3. U cvičení 1 pro mne bylo snazší vymyslet, o čem budu mluvit než u cvičení 2.
 - a. Naprosto souhlasím
 - b. Spíše souhlasím
 - c. Spíše nesouhlasím
 - d. Naprosto nesouhlasím
4. Cvičení 1 se mi celkově plnilo lépe (snáze) než cvičení 2.
 - a. Naprosto souhlasím
 - b. Spíše souhlasím
 - c. Spíše nesouhlasím
 - d. Naprosto nesouhlasím
5. U cvičení 1 jsem mluvil/a anglicky více (byl/a jsem aktivnější) než u cvičení 2.
 - a. Naprosto souhlasím
 - b. Spíše souhlasím
 - c. Spíše nesouhlasím
 - d. Naprosto nesouhlasím
6. V běžných hodinách bych upřednostnil/a cvičení 1 před cvičením 2.
 - a. Naprosto souhlasím
 - b. Spíše souhlasím
 - c. Spíše nesouhlasím
 - d. Naprosto nesouhlasím

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire in English

Name:

Activity:

Do you agree with the following statements? Circle.

1. Exercise 1 was more interesting than exercise 2.
 - a. Absolutely agree
 - b. Rather agree
 - c. Rather disagree
 - d. Absolutely disagree
2. In exercise 1, I understood what was expected of me more than in exercise 2.
 - a. Absolutely agree
 - b. Rather agree
 - c. Rather disagree
 - d. Absolutely disagree
3. It was easier to think of what to say in exercise 1 than in exercise 2.
 - a. Absolutely agree
 - b. Rather agree
 - c. Rather disagree
 - d. Absolutely disagree
4. Exercise 1 was in general easier to complete than exercise 2.
 - a. Absolutely agree
 - b. Rather agree
 - c. Rather disagree
 - d. Absolutely disagree
5. I spoke in English in exercise 1 more than in exercise 2.
 - a. Absolutely agree
 - b. Rather agree
 - c. Rather disagree
 - d. Absolutely disagree
6. I would prefer exercise 1 in regular lessons over exercise 2.
 - a. Absolutely agree
 - b. Rather agree
 - c. Rather disagree
 - d. Absolutely disagree

APPENDIX C

Activity 1 – Exercise 1 (Textbook version)


D

The Coffee Pot Restaurant

We're looking for **Saturday assistants** to help in our busy town centre restaurant. Duties will include setting and clearing tables, serving customers and helping in the kitchen. We're looking for polite and friendly people who can work under pressure.

Hours: 10–4, including a half-hour lunch break.

Pay: Minimum wage + lunch




E

Walkies

A lot of people have got a dog, but they haven't got time to give it enough exercise. That's where we come in. We take their dogs for a walk and we're looking for young people to be dog walkers.

You must be responsible and reliable. Dogs need exercise whatever the weather. So if you're fond of animals and you like walking, we'd like to hear from you.




F

PART-TIME ASSISTANTS WANTED

Shop 'n' Save Supermarket needs two young people (14–18) for evening and weekend work. The job involves helping customers, putting things on the shelves, collecting trolleys, etc.

Hours: 5–7 evenings or 10–5 Saturdays and Sundays

You must be tidy, honest and good at Maths.



6 a 2.25 Listen. Freddie and Megan are talking about their jobs. What do they do?

b 2.25 Listen again. What does each person like and dislike about their job?

Speaking

7 a Work in a group. Think about all the jobs and places to work in this lesson. Choose:

- the most interesting
- the hardest
- the best
- the most boring
- the easiest
- the worst

b Tell the class about your ideas. Give reasons.

Pronunciation

Corrective stress 1

8 a 2.26 Listen. Underline the words in B's answers that have the main stress. Why is the stress here?

1 A Do you live at twenty-two Water Street?
B No, I live at twenty-four Water Street.

2 A Do you live at twenty-two Water Street?
B No, I live at twenty-two Water Avenue.

b 2.26 Listen and repeat. Copy the stress.

47

(Project 5, 3rd edition, p. 47)

APPENDIX D

Activity 1 – Exercise 2 (Modified version)

The best job

Criteria:

- Name of the job
- What you do (**min. 3 things**)
- What you need: personality, knowledge... (**min. 3 things**)
- When you work.
- Pay.

A teacher

- The job involves working with children or teenagers.
- The teacher has to prepare each lesson and all the materials.
- The teacher has to give grades.

....

- You have to be organized and hard-working.
- You need to be good at the subject you teach.
- You have to enjoy working with children or teenagers.

...

- You work from Monday to Friday from 8 am to 2 pm.
- The wage is 22.-25.000 czk per month

Choose any job you want or choose one from pp. 46-47 in your textbook.

APPENDIX E

Activity 2 – Exercise 1 (Textbook version)

Speaking

7 a Complete the questions. Use these verbs.

sleep swim do ~~hold~~ eat go

- 1 *Would you hold* a tarantula?
- 2 _____ a bungee jump?
- 3 _____ sky-diving?
- 4 _____ in a haunted house?
- 5 _____ raw eggs?
- 6 _____ with sharks?



b Work with a partner. Ask the questions.

- *Would you hold a tarantula?*
- *Yes, I would. / No, I wouldn't.*

8 a What would you do if these things happened?

- 1 Someone tried to steal your mobile phone.
- 2 You found a wallet with some money in it.
- 3 You saw people bullying your friend.

b Tell the class your ideas.

Pronunciation

Word stress 1

9 a Say the words. Which syllable has the stress?

hairdresser	happen	tattoo
eyebrow	parents	orange
permanent	butterfly	dangerous

b 2.8 Listen and check. Which word is the odd one out?

c 2.8 Listen again and repeat.

(Project 5, 3rd edition, p. 33)

APPENDIX F

Activity 2 – Exercise 2 (Modified version)

Cooperative bingo.

Find someone who would do these things! **Ask questions.**

If they say “yes”, they sign your paper. If they say “no”, ask somebody else.

Example: Would you eat a spoonful of salt? Yes, I would / No, I wouldn't.

eat a spoonful of salt	ride a motorcycle	break an egg on your head	visit the graveyard at midnight
hold a snake	go swimming in December	eat a spoonful of ketchup	have a tiger as a pet
sleep on the ground for a week	drink a glass of olive oil	dress as a clown for a day	give up your phone for a month
live abroad	work in a circus	try rock-climbing	eat a worm

APPENDIX G

Activity 3 – Exercise 1 (Textbook version)



b  2.22 Close your book. Listen. Are the statements true or false?

c Imagine you are the man on the bench. Write sentences about the scene. Use the cues.

There's a / an ...-ing ...

There are ...-ing ...

I can see ...-ing ...

I can hear ...-ing ...

I can feel ...-ing ...

I can smell ...-ing ...

Speaking

6 Work with a partner. Imagine you are in one of the places below. Describe what you can see, hear, smell and feel. Use the cues in exercise 5c.

- 1 on a beach
- 2 at a busy train station
- 3 in a shopping centre
- 4 at the cinema

(Project 4, 4th edition, p. 47)

APPENDIX H

Activity 3 – Exercise 2 (Modified version)

Work with a partner. **Imagine** you are in one of the places below. **Describe to your partner what you can see, hear, smell and feel there.** Your partner has to **guess** where you are. Use these cues:

- There is/are ... - ing
- I can see / hear / feel / smell.... – ing...

Example: I can see people sitting at a desk. There are people reading a book.

1. in a forest



2. in the mountains



3. in a shop



4. in a restaurant



5. in a library



6. at a birthday party



<https://www.canvasholidays.co.uk/camping-in-black-forest/> (pic 1)

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/magazine/sport/skiing> (pic 2)

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SHRNUTÍ

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá otázkou efektivního vyučování řečových dovedností na 2. stupni základních škol. Pozornost je věnována především metodám a prostředkům, kterými lze navýšit a zefektivnit příležitosti pro praktické procvičování mluvení v hodinách cizího jazyka.

Práce obsahuje teoretickou část, která čtenáři poskytuje informace týkající se metodologie vyučování řečových dovedností. Následuje popis praktické části práce. Výzkum byl proveden prostřednictvím observací, dotazníků a diskusí se skupinou žáků z devátého ročníky základní školy.

Cílem práce bylo zhodnotit, zdali cvičení v učebnicích poskytují žákům dostatečné příležitosti k mluvení. Tato cvičení poté byla porovnána s aktivitami, které byly upravené dle zásad efektivního vyučování popsaných v teoretické části práce.

Výzkum implikuje, že učebnice neposkytují pro žáky takové množství příležitostí jako upravené aktivity. Obzvláště jako vhodné a pro praxi užitečné bylo vyhodnoceno použití jazykové a obsahové podpory, repetice celých cvičení nebo jejich částí a přípravná fáze mluvních cvičení.