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**Popular music as motivating element and
means of acquiring listening skills
in English language teaching at B1 level**

Diploma Thesis

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Declaration

I honestly declare that I worked on my thesis on my own and all the sources I used are listed in the bibliography.

Praha, 6th June 2012

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Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with the use of music and songs in teaching English as foreign language at B1 level. Its aims are the analysis of the song activities presented in various sources, creating the song activities, their pilotage in the classroom and subsequent evaluation. It is divided into five chapters.

The theoretical part deals with listening comprehension as a skill, its relation to other skills, its definitions, reasons for teaching listening comprehension, its principles, approaches towards teaching listening comprehension and sources of listening comprehension activities. Furthermore, the development of language skills at intermediate level is presented and the essential parts introduces reasons for using songs in the development of listening comprehension skills, alternative use of music and songs and classification of song activities.

The practical part covers the analysis of the song activities presented in three different course books at intermediate level and their comparison with the song activities presented in other sources. The research examines the application of the chosen song activities in practice and students' perception of them.

Key words: Listening comprehension skill, song activities, motivation, listening to songs, lyrics

Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá využitím hudby a písní ve vyučování anglického jazyka na úrovni B1. Jejím cílem je analýza hudebních aktivit prezentovaných v různých zdrojích, vytvoření dalších hudebních aktivit, jejich pilotáž v praxi a následná evaluace. Práce je rozdělena do pěti kapitol.

Teoretická část se věnuje poslechové dovednosti, jejímu vztahu k ostatním jazykovým dovednostem, její definici, jejími principy, přístupy k výuce jazykových dovedností a zdroji poslechových aktivit. Dále podává popis jazykových dovedností na úrovni B1 a uvádí důvody proč používat písně k rozvoji poslechových dovedností. V poslední části představuje alternativní použití hudby a písní a klasifikaci hudebních aktivit.

Praktická část zahrnuje analýzu hudebních aktivit ze třech různých učebnic pro středně pokročilou úroveň a porovnává je s hudebními aktivitami z jiných zdrojů. Výzkum se zabývá aplikací vybraných hudebních aktivit v praxi, a jak je studenti vnímají.

Klíčová slova: Poslechová dovednost, hudební aktivita, motivace, poslech písní, texty písní

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Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to introduce song and music as a motivating element and means of acquiring listening skill in English language teaching at B1 level. I chose this topic out of my own concern as I have experienced and witnessed English language learners who became motivated and eager to learn the language because of their interest in music and simultaneously the songs became their means of learning. What is more, thanks to the phenomenon of globalization people are now more and more exposed to English as an international language, especially through the media, so we as the English teachers might as well make use of it.

Evidently, the ones who are interested in popular music the most, are teenagers; therefore I chose a group of seventeen year old students as my research group. However, the practical part was preceded by the theoretical one where I researched the background of listening comprehension skill, its principles, approaches to it and possible sources including songs and music. Furthermore, to be able to effectively apply the song activities to the work with my research group, I looked into the definitions of the development of the language skills at an intermediate level. In the last section of the theoretical part, I presented various reasons for using songs and possible ways of classifying the song activities.

Having the theory covered, I performed the practical part. Firstly, I analyzed the song activities in three different course books and compared them with the song activities presented in other sources. I chose six song activities from the course books and formulated six other song activities based on the theory presented in other sources. For these ones I used the songs that are being frequently played by commercial radio stations nowadays. After having carried out all the song activities, students were asked to evaluate them in three different levels – free written evaluation, questionnaires and oral interview.

As the core of the research was qualitative, the aim of this work is not to generalize, but to look closely how the chosen song activities were perceived and interpreted by the chosen research group of students and how it affected them.

I. Theoretical part

1. Listening comprehension skill in relation to other language skills

Many authors consider listening comprehension to be the fundamental tool of language development. “For a person to learn a second language three major conditions are required: (1) a learner who realizes the need to learn the second language and is motivated to do so; (2) speakers of the target language who know it well enough to provide the learner with access to the spoken language and the support (such as simplification, repetition and feedback) they need for learning it; and (3) a social setting which brings the learner in frequent enough and sustained enough contact with target-language speakers to make language learning possible.”¹ It is obvious that listening is required in two of these conditions and therefore it is an essential means of language development.²

However, indeed in teaching English as a foreign language it is important to develop all four basic language skills: listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension and writing. This is also the order in which one normally learns a language and Lewis and Hill consider this to be the argument for primacy in listening. Furthermore, they believe that listening is significant because in addition to what is listened to, much of what is only heard influences the unconscious acquisition process and therefore the general language level is being developed as well. They claim that as people learn and master their first language simply by listening, the best way to learn foreign language is also through good listening.³

According to the method of communication the skills can be grouped into oral (listening, speaking) and written (reading, writing). Another generally known classification is according to the direction of communication where listening and reading are considered to be receiving skills while speaking and writing are producing skills.

¹ROST, M. *Teaching and Researching listening*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2002, ISBN978-0-582-36930-6. 309 p. (p. 90)

²ROST, Michael. *Teaching and Researching listening*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2002, ISBN978-0-582-36930-6. 309 p.

³LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 55 8. 136 p.

As far as the sequence of teaching skills is concerned there are no certain rules for the best order. Nevertheless, as English has been generally considered to have difficult spelling, the best order could be considered as mentioned above: hear, speak, read, and write.⁴

1.1. Integrated-skill approach

Language skills can be taught separately – segregated-skill approach or together – integrated-skill approach. The latter is nowadays preferred by the most professionals in the field of teaching English as foreign language. The reasons are clear and persuasive. If we imagine teaching English as creating a tapestry, then the skills are strands interwoven together leading into optimal communication. It promotes real authentic language, natural interaction, picture of richness and complexity of English, learning of real content and is highly motivational.⁵

There are two basic forms of integrated-skill approach:

- Content-based language instruction – it emphasizes learning content through language. Students practice all language skills in integrated way.
- Task-based instruction – is based on performing tasks that require communicative language use. These tasks are constructed in a way that they can stand alone as fundamental units and require comprehending, producing, interacting and manipulating. This type increases students' collaboration and interaction through pair and group work.⁶

1.2. Relationship between listening and reading

Listening and reading skills are considered to be very similar as they both engage and rely on motivation, interest, purpose and processing strategies, knowledge and expectations of the world, culture, co-text, and the language system. Also, they are largely the subconscious application of sub-skills. The reader or listener is actively,

⁴LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 55 8. 136 p.

⁵OXFORD, R. *Integrated Skills in the ESL/EFL Classroom*, 2001. Online. 2 March 2012 <<http://www.ericdigests.org/2002-2/esl.htm>>

⁶OXFORD, R. *Integrated Skills in the ESL/EFL Classroom*, 2001. Online. 2 March 2012 <<http://www.ericdigests.org/2002-2/esl.htm>>

though normally unconsciously, constructing understanding and uses this to draw conclusions, make evaluations, changes in knowledge, attitude and behavior.⁷

Listening may be sometimes considered to be more difficult as it has to be processed in real time and there is the need to respond. Also, the problems such as background noise and distance could be present, the pronunciation can be bad or unclear and there is more redundancy. Moreover, items that are phonetically quite different can represent the same underlying forms and the listener has to tune into language, content and features of speaker's voice.⁸

On the other hand, reading can be considered to be more difficult as in reading there is no prosody present, there is less redundancy (this might be confusing for proficient readers), less extra-textual information and the receiver does not have the possibility to intervene and negotiate the meaning.⁹

1.3. Defining listening comprehension

Listening is not only the perception and processing of signal but the “process of parallel construction on the part of the listener: construction of a coherent interpretation which is consistent as far as possible with the acoustic clues and the listener's image.”¹⁰ Apart from this definition, the following aspects should be considered in providing a clear insight into listening comprehension.

1.3.1. Reasons for teaching listening comprehension

The basic source for listening comprehension in the class is the teacher who is consistent in their speaking styles. Therefore, it is necessary to expose learners to a lot of other different varieties of spoken English, as they are likely to meet with these outside the classroom. It is also important to lead students to the understanding of English as the world language.

In addition, Bowen and Marks list the following reasons for teaching listening comprehension:

⁷BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889.176 p.

⁸ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889.176 p.

⁹ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889 176 p.

¹⁰ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889 176 p. (p.131)

- To give further revision and practice of previously learnt language in new contexts
- To introduce new language items in context
- To practice the skill of listening comprehension
- To help learners understand spoken variety of English
- To build their confidence
- To help them realize that they should not overreact if they don't understand everything¹¹

In performing listening comprehension, there is: "widely accepted dichotomy between doing listening in order to teach and practice language and doing listening in order to teach and develop listening skills."¹² The first one is product orientated, where words and functions are thought and material is based on syllabus of structures. The second aim is process-oriented where the details of the language contained in the material are of secondary importance and the material is chosen based on learners' needs.¹³

1.3.2. Approaches to teaching listening comprehension

As it is in all the language skills, there are two basic approaches towards listening comprehension – finely tuned input and roughly tuned input. In the later, especially with less skilled students in listening comprehension or when level of the audio material does not correspondent with the level of student, panic may occur as the result of not having control over the speed of the recording. This have to be detected by the teacher and avoided as it is really frustrating and demotivating for students. There are several ways of avoiding this problem. When it is clear that a student is troubled and frustrated, it is necessary to change into finely tuned input; also it is possible to hand the control over the recording to the students.

Another possible classification of approaches to the teaching of listening comprehension presents two complementary processes – bottom-up processing and top-down processing. The former involves "decoding the incoming utterance or message and

¹¹ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889 176 p.

¹² BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889 176 p. (p. 129)

¹³ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889 176 p.

making use of the linguistic signals actually transmitted.”¹⁴ It includes features of a message such as identifying and distinguishing words, grammar and structure. The later means “making use of previous knowledge and information which is not transmitted in the message, and using this information and basis for interpreting the message.”¹⁵

As far as the use of authentic and non-authentic listening material is concerned, there is certain discrepancy among the authors. Lewis and Hill claim that it is important to expose learners to the authentic material from the very beginning and in this way prepare students for the real life situations when travelling or in the encounter with other speakers of English.¹⁶ However, Scrivener suggests not worrying about the recording appropriate to the level but about setting the tasks for the right level.¹⁷ Therefore, teachers can use authentic material with learners at low level but have to adjust the tasks.

It is generally accepted that listening can be divided into sub-skills. Lewis and Hill provide following classification and believe that teaching aimed at developing sub-skills is more efficient¹⁸:

- Ability to follow the general idea
- Ability to understand particular detail
- Ability to check a specific piece of pre-knowledge
- Ability to understand the speaker’s intention
- Ability to understand speaker’s attitude and feelings

1.3.3. Principles of teaching listening comprehension

Teachers have to make sure that the recording is in the good quality and everyone in the class can hear it well. Harmer stresses that the engagement of the students is essential¹⁹, they have to be introduced to the topic and motivated to listen to the

¹⁴LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p. (p. 159)

¹⁵LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p. (p. 159)

¹⁶LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p.

¹⁷SCRIVENER, J. *Learning teaching: A guidebook for English language teachers*. Oxford: Macmillan Education, 2005. ISBN 1-4050-1399-0. 431 p.

¹⁸LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p.

¹⁹HARMER, J. *How to teach English*. London: Longman, 1999 (fifth impression), first published 1998. ISBN 0585 29796 6. 198 p.

recording. After engaging, he suggests following the pattern of Engage-Study-Engage-Activate where study means understanding how the language is organized and activate means practicing the language.²⁰

The preparation prior to the actual listening task is necessary and can be realized in many different ways. However, it depends on the level of difficulty and learner's abilities. It is believed that "listening skills develop more efficiently if their interest and linguistic expectations are aroused in advance."²¹

Moreover, the focus should be on the use of language as well as on the content. It is important to replay the listening and assign different tasks for different stages of listening. It is also suggested to exploit listening texts to the full.²²

Lewis and Hill are stricter in their principles. They claim that students' listening must be prepared and students should not be asked to listen for more than two or three minutes because the concentration wanders off after that. Listening for students at the lower level should not exceed 20 seconds, as "so-called listening practices which go on for long periods are a waste of everyone's time and are counter-productive."²³

The main difference between real life listening and listening when learning a foreign language is the fact that in reality we listen to understand the message whereas in the classroom we listen for variety of purposes such as new words and phrases, grammatical structure, synonyms, etc. However, we can approach the real life listening in the classroom when inviting students to respond in various ways, for instance non-verbally or with vague language. Lewis and Hill offer a list of more imaginative responses for a listening activity:²⁴

- Imagine and describe what the speakers look like and where they are
- Form questions for the speakers
- Express their agreement or disagreement with the speakers

²⁰HARMER, J. *How to teach English*. London: Longman, 1999 (fifth impression), first published 1998. ISBN 0585 29796 6. 198 p.

²¹LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 55 8. 136 p. (p.63)

²²HARMER, J. *How to teach English*. London: Longman, 1999 (fifth impression), first published 1998. ISBN 0585 29796 6. 198 p.

²³LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 55 8. 136 p. (p.63)

²⁴LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p.

- Imagine a continuation of the dialogue or narration

Listening comprehension skill is often considered as passive and receptive skill. Bowen and Marks argue that this might suggest that in order to listen effectively all we have to do is relax and listen. But “even though the processes may be deeply unconscious, listening entails a great deal of active mental participation on the part of the listener.”²⁵ They support this claim by listing the processes and sub-processes that are involved in proficient listening:²⁶

- Picking up sounds from the stream of speech and assigning them to phonemes
- Picking out word from the stream of speech
- Assigning word forms from citation forms
- Understanding prosody
- Recognizing prominence
- Recognizing the effect of cohesive devices
- Assigning coherence to discourse
- Reconstructing ellipses
- Constructing meaning from the words heard
- Guessing meaning of unknown meaning and phrases
- Recognizing known language in a context that is unfamiliar
- Interpreting the likely intention behind errors
- Filtering out any other ambient language or other sounds
- Predicting
- Attending to discourse-organizing elements
- Selectively paying attention and constantly varying the level of our attention
- Dealing with redundancy
- Choosing the content for remembering
- Remembering the chosen content and letting the remaining one slip by
- Relating what we hear to our previous knowledge and experience
- Constructing and revising understanding
- Checking what we hear against possible accompanying non-linguistic information

²⁵ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889 176 p. (p. 131)

²⁶ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889 176 p.

- Interpreting implied intention, attitude and information
- Recognizing where we are having difficulties understanding
- Checking our understanding, possibly asking for clarification and influencing what we are listening to

1.3.4. Sources of listening comprehension activities

Apart from teacher's talk, the most common source of material used for listening comprehension in the classroom are audio recordings of all sort – authentic or non-authentic that can represent various topics. Furthermore, sources can be also found outside the classroom when visiting a theatre performance, cinema or a concert.

The attitudes towards using video in the classroom for listening comprehension differ as there are visual senses engaged as well and might deviate the focus from listening comprehension. However, because of this, the video might be used in a creative way which makes the listening more interesting and motivating. Harmer suggests playing the tape without sound, covering the picture or freezing the picture and eliciting the continuation of the action.²⁷

Bowen and Marks stress that everything what teachers says before, during or after the lesson in the target language is the source of listening. They provide following examples:²⁸

- The teacher elicit spoken replies to a written exercise
- The teacher explains some special arrangements for next week' s lesson
- The teacher converse with the class before the lesson starts
- The teacher tells a story

Furthermore, they add that students are the source for each other when performing the activity in pairs, groups or as the whole class. A student can be also the source for himself/herself. For example, when he/she formulates a sentence quietly before uttering it.²⁹

²⁷ HARMER, J. *How to teach English*. London: Longman, 1999 (fifth impression), first published 1998. ISBN 0585 29796 6. 198 p.

²⁸ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889. 176 p.

²⁹ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A division of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889. 176 p.

Besides the sources mentioned, there are other sources that are not normally used in every lesson such as broadcast via commercial television, cable and satellite or using songs which is will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

1.3.5 Common problems in listening comprehension

According to Bowen and Marks there are certain common problems that learners have when listening to English. These are:³⁰

- The language is too fast
- The speakers eat their words
- The speakers swallow their words
- The speakers do not pronounce words as they are written
- There are many differences of pronunciation

As the solution to these they claim that the perception of any language for a foreign learner “asfast” is normal. Also, that even though pronunciation teaching is based on the notion of phonemes or segments that are sequenced to form words and utterances, the stream of speech contradicts this linearity and expresses indeterminacy of real speech. As to the “swallowing” of the words, it is due to the fact that vowels are ideally pronounced only in stressed syllables and consonants could be dropped from clusters, or assimilated to adjoining sounds. Variability of words stress position and linking causes obscurity of word boundaries, too. Finally, they believe that English is exceptionally versatile in connected speech and its spelling is not reliable guide to pronunciation. All this can subvert listener’s expectations based on written forms and might lead to hostility towards English language.³¹ Therefore, teachers should be aware of possible problems that learners face when developing listening comprehension and solve them adequately.

³⁰ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A dvision of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889.176 p.

³¹ BOWEN, T., MARKS, J. *Inside teaching*. Oxford: A dvision of Heinemann Publishers, 1994. ISBN 0435240889.176 p.

2. Degree of languageskills development at intermediate level

Common European Framework was established to provide common European basis of language syllabuses, curriculum, textbooks and examinations. Moreover, it defines levels of proficiency which allows learners' abilities and progress to be objectively measured and compared at each stage of learning at any time.

For the aim of this paper we will provide a description of the four language skills at the intermediate level according to Common European Framework.³²

On a global scale, intermediate level learner is described as an independent user who “can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.”³³

2.1. Degree of listening comprehension skills development at intermediate level

- Student can guess the meaning of occasional unknown words based on the context and understand the meaning of sentence if the topic is familiar.
- Can generally follow of extended discussion (if speech is clear in standard language)
- Can follow clear speech in everyday conversation
- Can understand straightforward factual information and identify general messages and specific details
- Can follow a lecture or a talk when the subject matter is familiar
- Can understand simple technical information
- Can understand the information content of recorded or broadcast audio material about familiar subjects (if it is clear and slow)

³²*The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.* Council of Europe, Education and languages. Online. 11 November 2011.

³³*The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.* Council of Europe, Education and languages. Online. 11 November 2011.
<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf> (p. 24)

- Can follow films with straightforward storyline and clear language³⁴

2.2. Degree of speaking skills development at intermediate level

- Can fluently and reasonably sustain straightforward description presented in linear sequence of points on a range of subjects of their field of interest
- Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing reactions and feelings
- Can tell the plot of a film or book and describe their reactions
- Can describe dreams, hopes, ambitions and real or imagined events
- Can narrate a story
- Can provide brief explanations and reasons for plans, opinions and actions
- Can develop a well-structured argument that could be followed without difficulties
- Can give a prepared straightforward presentation on a familiar topic³⁵

2.3. Degree of reading comprehension development at intermediate level

- Can understand straightforward texts on range of subjects related to their fields of interest
- Can find and understand general information of everyday need
- Can search for specific information
- Can understand and recognize significant points in an article on familiar subject
- Can identify the main conclusions in argumentative text that is clearly written
- Can understand the general line of argument but not necessarily in detail
- Can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters
- Can understand clearly written instructions³⁶

³⁴*The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Council of Europe, Education and languages. Online. 11 November 2011.
<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf> (p. 231)

³⁵*The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Council of Europe, Education and languages. Online. 11 November 2011.
<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf> (p. 59)

³⁶*The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Council of Europe, Education and languages. Online. 11 November 2011.
<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf> (p. 231)

2.4. Degree of writing development at intermediate level

- Can write very brief reports with factual information and state reasons
- Can write personal letters
- Can describe basic details of unpredictable events
- Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions
- Can describe plot of film or book
- Can briefly give reasons and explanations for plans, actions and opinions³⁷

³⁷*The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Council of Europe, Education and languages. Online. 11 November 2011.
<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf> (p. 232)

3. Using song in development of listening comprehension skills

Recent years have shown that in teaching a foreign language, teachers are searching more and more for creative ways of teaching so they can engage themselves and learners in an enjoyable and rich learning experience.³⁸ Using songs in development of listening comprehension skills has a great potential to create this kind of learning experience.

3.1. Reasons for using songs in development of listening comprehension skills

It is believed that “you learn to speak by good listening; good listening means the listeners are actively involved.”³⁹ Taking this into consideration alongside with the general fact that young people are very interested in popular music, it can be claimed that developing listening comprehension through songs has what it takes to be very effective and successful method.

Bassano and Christison believe, that in the process of listening skills development, students are “asking for more opportunity to become themselves in the new language. They want to become enthusiastically and authentically involved.”⁴⁰ When they listen to the songs that they themselves like or choose they are given this opportunity and can express themselves freely in the activities aimed at developing certain skills.

3.1.1. Prosodic features

Rhythm, stress and intonation are the prosodic features of speech. Developing listening comprehension skill is very important because of the presence of these and some other factors that cannot be found in the other areas of language – such as background noise.⁴¹ Students can be exposed to all of these in songs when elaborated to appropriate, meaningful and effective listening comprehension activities.

Songs are especially effective aid in establishing regular beat – regular placement of stressed syllables in a sentence in English which often causes difficulties to some

³⁸ROST, Michael. *Teaching and Researching listening*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2002, ISBN978-0-582-36930-6. 309 p.

³⁹LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p. (p. 64)

⁴⁰LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p.

⁴¹HARMER, J. *How to teach English*. London: Longman, 1999 (fifth impression), first published 1998. ISBN 0585 29796 6. 198 p.

learners.⁴² When using songs they can be thought rhythm and also rhyme in a spontaneous and natural way.

3.1.2. Use of authentic material

The basic argument for using authentic material in the classroom is that if students are ever to use English language outside the classroom, pre-selection of material (that is done in the textbooks) is not possible. A student can ask a simple question but there is no guarantee that the answer will be simple as well.⁴³ There are also arguments for using specially written material (because of possible frustration caused by misunderstanding at lower levels) but most authors recommend incorporating authentic material.

It is necessary to expose learners to real spoken language so they are ready to understand English outside the classroom. Teachers cannot expect their students to handle types of language they have never been exposed to. There are certain features that are distinctly different in listening activities especially designed for English language teaching (ELT) and authentic listening activities. Some of them are:⁴⁴

- Intonation – there is a tendency in recordings used for ELT for the intonation to “resemble that which indulgent mothers use to babies,”⁴⁵ therefore it is not what can be heard from English speakers outside the classroom.
- Enunciation – in ELT designed recording it is precisely excessive, there is only minimal assimilation and elision
- Complete sentences – that are present in ELT whereas in real speech they are mostly loosely connected.
- Pace – usually ELT listening is recorded in uniform slow pace which might be boring for the learners. The real spoken discourse is characterized by changing pace and it is usually rapid.

⁴²LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p.

⁴³LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p.

⁴⁴LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p.

⁴⁵LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p. (p. 177)

- Formality – authentic speech is usually not standardized and formal. It also often contains slang and other colloquial forms, even swear words. However, these are rarely found in classical ESL listening.
- Mutilation – that is almost always present in real life such as passing cars and other people talking and it is only rarely present in ESL listening. However, learners should get used to it since it is natural part of real listening.⁴⁶

Furthermore, Porter and Roberts claim that there is “an unrealistic match between the characteristics of the language which student listens to and that which he is taught to produce. This match between the language for production and reception is perhaps a major reason for the classic situation in which students do well in the classroom but are unable to transfer their skills to the world outside.”⁴⁷ There, they are understood but when their interlocutor answers “with loosely constructed strings of phrases and clauses, laced with colloquialism and references to what is wrongly assumed to be shared knowledge”⁴⁸ and also has a certain accent it is almost impossible for the student to understand.

Due to the differences mentioned above, Porter and Roberts suggest using authentic material such as radio programs (weather forecast, news, etc.), greetings of people, recordings of songs, station announcements, radio advertisements and extracts from conversations.⁴⁹

In the past but also often nowadays, foreign language teaching was based on careful structural progression and listening was introduced rather late in the course. However, in real life, people hardly speak using the same structure in two or more sentences and that is one of the reasons the real life talk is a lot different from the recordings used in the classroom⁵⁰. Therefore, Lewis and Hill recommend starting using authentic

⁴⁶LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p.

⁴⁷LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p. (p. 178)

⁴⁸LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p. (p. 178)

⁴⁹LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p. (p. 178)

⁵⁰LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p.

listening at an early stage in the course and not expect listening to be acquired but rather thought – by developing the sub-skills as well as global listening comprehension.⁵¹

The same authors also claim that the language used in many course books is not language but language-like behavior – that is structures and absurdities that are not present in the real life conversations.⁵²

Long and Richards also strongly support this idea of authentic material. They claim that material typically used in the classroom fails to represent accurately the nature of spoken discourse in reality and therefore cannot prepare learners for listening in the real world.⁵³ They promote the idea of the use of authentic material with the claim that learners can be prepared for it when using pre-listening activities that provides them with schemata, language and scripts and with appropriate tasks during listening that give learners the opportunity to use prediction, selection and inferencing strategies.⁵⁴

In real spoken language, speakers express themselves efficiently, that is the words that are less important might be dropped (ellipses). Moreover, consonants and vowels are affected by their position in words and that leads into their omission, assimilation and disappearance of word boundaries.⁵⁵ These all are present in songs that learners can be exposed to and therefore develop better understanding of real language.

As far as the ungrammatical forms often used in song are concerned, it is known that “due to the effort speakers put into planning and organizing the content of their utterances in ongoing time, grammaticality is often less relevant than ideational coherence.”⁵⁶ Therefore grammatically incorrect structures are often used in spoken discourse and when exposing learners to critically selected songs we are getting them ready for a real life spoken language.

⁵¹LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558.136 p.

⁵²LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558.136 p.

⁵³LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p.

⁵⁴LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p.

⁵⁵LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p.

⁵⁶LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p. (p. 165)

3.1.3. Language learning and language acquisition

Some theoreticians make distinction between language learning and language acquisition. The former is conscious and the latter is unconscious. When developing listening we utilize the both processes – much of what is heard influences both consciousness and unconsciousness. Lewis and Hill claim that experiments have shown that it is possible to teach a foreign language during early stages of learning when productive skills are only required a little bit from the students. Parts of listening and reading were selected so they were comprehensible to the students and subsequently they helped the acquisition and built students' self-esteem. These students later showed better than average progress in productive skills.⁵⁷

These results can be applied into using songs when teaching English. Songs can be chosen to play for conscious learning but at the same time used for unconscious acquisition. Teachers can achieve acquisition also when playing songs as background for some other activities.

3.1.4. Retention

Another fact that can be pointed out for the account of using songs in listening comprehension activities is that “permanent or long-term memory works with meaning, not with form. The propositional meaning of sentences is retained, not the actual words of grammatical devices that were used to express it.”⁵⁸ Therefore, since it is the meaning of lyrics rather than grammatical devices that learners are interested in when listening to a song, it is more probable that knowledge gained this way is going to be stored in their long-term memory which is desirable in learning a foreign language.

For this mental representation of meaning to become purposeful and memorable students need to use all the resources of their mind:

- achieve sensory and affective experience of the discourse
- connect the discourse to their previous experiences of language and of life
- fill in the gaps in the discourse to achieve their own completion and continuity

⁵⁷ LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p.

⁵⁸ LONG, M. H., RICHARDS, J. C. *Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle publishers, 1987. ISBN 0-8384-2695-6. 421 p. (p. 162)

- relate the discourse to their own interests, needs and views⁵⁹

Considering the above it is apparent that when students learn through listening to the songs that they like and are interested in, they get involved in affective experience, they connect it to their previous experience of listening to the songs in English language and achieve their own completion and continuity of the songs as they start to fully understand them in the lessons. These altogether contribute to the effective retention of what they learn.

Furthermore, Lewis and Hill claim that “learning is a medium-to –long-term process, and we really retain language which we understand and feel involved with while we are open”.⁶⁰ This also supports the idea of using song activities as students get actively involved in them.

3.1.5. Motivation

“What and how much is learned is influenced by the learner’s motivation. Motivation to learn, in turn, is influenced by the individual’s emotional state, beliefs, interests and goals, and habits of thinking.”⁶¹ It is clear that motivation is therefore one of the key things for successful learning.

Emotional factors also influence individual’s motivation in a great deal. While positive emotions such as curiosity, joy, amusement or serenity enhance motivation and performance, the intense negative ones – such as anxiety, insecurity, and panic, fearing punishment, failure or ridicule detract from motivation. Mild anxiety, however, can enhance learning by making the learner concentrate on the task.⁶²

Motivation could be extrinsic – relies on external pressure and intrinsic – exists within the individual and is driven by their interest and enjoyment. Intrinsically motivated students willingly engage in tasks and work to improve their skills. Intrinsic motivation is stimulated by their creativity, natural curiosity and tasks that are

⁵⁹ROST, Michael. *Teaching and Researching listening*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2002. ISBN 978-0-582-36930-6. 309 p.

⁶⁰LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p.

⁶¹McCOMBS, B., MILLER, L. *Learner-centred classroom practices and activities: Maximizing student motivation, learning, and achievement*. California: Corwin Press, 2007. ISBN 1-4129-2690-4. 182 p. (p. 52)

⁶²McCOMBS, B., MILLER, L. *Learner-centred classroom practices and activities: Maximizing student motivation, learning, and achievement*. California: Corwin Press, 2007. ISBN 1-4129-2690-4. 182 p.

innovative, optimally difficult and relevant to personal interests and give learners chance for personal choice and control.⁶³

Since there is always something that students are not interested in but must learn, teachers should put a lot of effort in motivating them. Three major conditions for intrinsic motivation were elaborated based on research. Teacher should help learners feel:

- competent and able to succeed
- autonomous and self-determining
- accepted⁶⁴

Due to the fact that effort is one of the major indicators of motivation to learn, educators should facilitate motivation with effective strategies – purposeful learning activities, guided practices that enhance positive emotions and intrinsic motivation. The evidence that students use active learning strategies are paying attention, doing the assignments or going beyond what is asked, persisting through difficulties and challenging to hard work.⁶⁵ Furthermore, peer learning can enhance motivation as learners have to put a lot of effort into learning the information and put it forward when in the role of the teacher.

Teachers should put a lot of emphasis on motivating the learners so they let “interest be the engine that deepens their learning”.⁶⁶ Teenagers are generally interested in music and listening to the songs is something that they do on daily bases, therefore providing them with such material and use it for learning English presupposes enhancing their motivation and progress.

In order to build up students’ motivation Seligson recommends stressing the importance of English language as an international language. He provides ten initial

⁶³McCOMBS, B., MILLER, L. *Learner-centred classroom practices and activities: Maximizing student motivation, learning, and achievement*. California: Corwin Press, 2007. ISBN 1-4129-2690-4. 182 p.

⁶⁴McCOMBS, B., MILLER, L. *Learner-centred classroom practices and activities: Maximizing student motivation, learning, and achievement*. California: Corwin Press, 2007. ISBN 1-4129-2690-4. 182 p.

⁶⁵McCOMBS, B., MILLER, L. *Learner-centred classroom practices and activities: Maximizing student motivation, learning, and achievement*. California: Corwin Press, 2007. ISBN 1-4129-2690-4. 182 p.

⁶⁶McCOMBS, B., MILLER, L. *Learner-centred classroom practices and activities: Maximizing student motivation, learning, and achievement*. California: Corwin Press, 2007. ISBN 1-4129-2690-4. 182 p. (p. 55)

activities that help learners to get interested and motivated. Among them four are connected with using songs:⁶⁷

- Make a list of the pop singers or groups who sing in English or have names in English.
- Choose and bring to the class a pop song or pop video that they like. Help them to transcribe and translate it.
- Make a list of films, computer games and songs which have the titles in English or are in English and are subtitled.
- Ask students what they want to do when they leave school and list the professions in which it is necessary to speak English (among these professions Selingson lists pop singer)

Moreover, Selingson promotes extra-curricular activities such as meeting English-speaking people such as musicians or trip to English-speaking events such as musicals where students can see the relevance of their efforts.⁶⁸ It is clear that Selingson considers songs as one of the key elements for increasing students' motivation.

Besides, it is believed that the more listening students do, the more their interest and desire to speak is aroused.⁶⁹ If teachers make listening (playing songs) lively and enjoyable, the language comes to life and motivation scales up.

Selingson, too, stresses the importance of choice when motivating students to learn.⁷⁰ This can be easily applied to learning through songs, when teachers allow students to choose what songs they would like to listen to and work with in the class.

In addition to all mentioned above, Harmer believes that the key to the motivation is choosing material according to the level and interest of learners. It cannot be either too difficult or too easy as this is when learners lose motivation.⁷¹ Teachers should therefore choose listening material carefully.

⁶⁷SELIGSON, P. *Helping students to speak*. London: Richmond publishing, 1997. ISBN 84-294-4926-4.96 p.

⁶⁸SELIGSON, P. *Helping students to speak*. London: Richmond publishing, 1997. ISBN 84-294-4926-4.96 p.

⁶⁹SELIGSON, P. *Helping students to speak*. London: Richmond publishing, 1997. ISBN 84-294-4926-4.96 p.

⁷⁰SELIGSON, P. *Helping students to speak*. London: Richmond publishing, 1997. ISBN 84-294-4926-4.96 p.

⁷¹HARMER, J. *How to teach English*. London: Longman, 1999 (fifth impression), first published 1998. ISBN 0585 29796 6. 198 p.

3.1.5.1 Useful and fun

When designing a song activity, teachers should bear in mind the question: "Is it usefun?"⁷² That is, whether the activity is fun but useful at the same time. On one hand, students are unlikely to learn something unless they enjoy the process but on the other hand they should perform an activity with serious purpose. Thus, it is important that the task itself is worth doing and learners are actively involved. As there is wide range of songs available, teachers have great possibilities to creatively adopt them into learning.

3.1.6. Positive learning atmosphere

Positive learning atmosphere can help to establish healthier levels of students' feeling, thinking and behaving. These help learners to feel safe and share their ideas as well as to participate in the learning process.⁷³

Learning is also greatly influenced by social interaction and communication with others. When using songs that are of common interest among learners, they are also being provided by the topic to talk about outside the classroom and therefore strengthening their relationships.

Sharing the same interest in music can intensify the positive relationship between students and teachers and that assures that students experience their learning as meaningful, personal, complementing their other goals, and prompting their understanding.⁷⁴

When teachers manage to create positive social context, it facilitates the quality of thinking, creativity, problem solving and higher achievements.⁷⁵ Creating positive social context can be achieved with music. Moreover, researches have shown that "the most important predictor of student motivation and a range of positive academic and

⁷²LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p. (p. 19)

⁷³McCOMBS, B., MILLER, L. *Learner-centred classroom practices and activities: Maximizing student motivation, learning, and achievement*. California: Corwin Press, 2007. ISBN 1-4129-2690-4. 182 p.

⁷⁴McCOMBS, B., MILLER, L. *Learner-centred classroom practices and activities: Maximizing student motivation, learning, and achievement*. California: Corwin Press, 2007. ISBN 1-4129-2690-4. 182 p.

⁷⁵McCOMBS, B., MILLER, L. *Learner-centred classroom practices and activities: Maximizing student motivation, learning, and achievement*. California: Corwin Press, 2007. ISBN 1-4129-2690-4. 182 p.

nonacademic outcomes is students' perception that their teachers create positive relationships and positive climate for learning."⁷⁶

Selingson claims that the atmosphere in the classroom affects all that students do. The ideal atmosphere is "one which is fun and lively, but also positive, discipline and businesslike."⁷⁷ To achieve this, teachers need to balance the following⁷⁸:

- Friendliness, approachability, sensitivity
- Mutual respect
- Sharing of responsibilities
- Co-operation
- Flexibility

In summary, Selingson believes that students need to feel comfortable and relaxed.⁷⁹ When carefully designing activities with songs, teachers can achieve right balance for class atmosphere suitable for effective learning.

3.1.6.1. Pair and group work

Many authors promote the idea of working in groups or pairs, as more students are directly involved, they can help each other and "the atmosphere is more relaxed and conducive to good language learning."⁸⁰

Selingson also provides the solution for eliminating stress and tension in the classroom. He recommends using "pairwork as often as possible so speaking a foreign language becomes the norm, rather than an alien activity."⁸¹ It is fairly easy to design song activities to be performed in pairs or groups and therefore contribute to the positive atmosphere.

Pair and group work not only help to eliminate negative feelings but also increase student talking time, improve quality of talking and using features of natural speech, its

⁷⁶McCOMBS, B., MILLER, L. *Learner-centred classroom practices and activities: Maximizing student motivation, learning, and achievement*. California: Corwin Press, 2007. ISBN 1-4129-2690-4. 182 p. (p. 58)

⁷⁷SELIGSON, P. *Helping students to speak*. London: Richmond publishing, 1997. ISBN 84-294-4926-4. 96 p. (p. 18)

⁷⁸SELIGSON, P. *Helping students to speak*. London: Richmond publishing, 1997. ISBN 84-294-4926-4. 96 p.

⁷⁹SELIGSON, P. *Helping students to speak*. London: Richmond publishing, 1997. ISBN 84-294-4926-4. 96 p.

⁸⁰LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p.

⁸¹SELIGSON, P. *Helping students to speak*. London: Richmond publishing, 1997. ISBN 84-294-4926-4. 96 p. (p. 19)

natural framework for interaction and help to individualize language learning and teaching. Seligson provides comparison between traditional teaching and pair/groupwork:⁸²

Traditional teaching	Pair/groupwork
The teacher initiates every exchange	Students initiate their exchanges
Only one selected student responds to the teacher	Other students respond
The teacher judges the acceptability of response (phonological and grammatical accuracy)	Students judge the acceptability (more naturally as in real life)
The focus is usually on accuracy	The focus is on more on fluency
The rest of the class listen, do not interact	Students interact more, listen more carefully
Performing publicly creates pressure	Performing in front of fewer people is more private
Teacher spends time leading the class, selecting speakers and judging	Teacher is freer to listen to more students at once and offer individual help
There is not enough chance for students to express themselves freely	Students have space to express themselves

Table 1: Comparison between traditional teaching and pair/groupwork

Pair/groupwork makes the class more active and enjoyable and it is more likely to motivate students. Moreover it can give them more confidence and it encourages them to work more autonomously.⁸³

3.1.7. Development of all language skills

Since there are so many different song lyrics, they provide almost unlimited source for teachers to work with. Obviously, they can be primarily used either for listening comprehension activities or reading but subsequently also for speaking and writing activities. Furthermore, the activities can be especially aimed at developing some of the sub skills. It is up to the teacher to adopt the activity according to the needs, level and interests of the students.

Various songs contain various materials that teachers can use for listening comprehension – diverse accents, diverse range of vocabulary, slang, colloquial expressions, metaphors, distinguishing minimal pairs, etc.

⁸²SELIGSON, P. *Helping students to speak*. London: Richmond publishing, 1997. ISBN 84-294-4926-4. 96 p. (p. 42)

⁸³SELIGSON, P. *Helping students to speak*. London: Richmond publishing, 1997. ISBN 84-294-4926-4. 96 p.

Similarly, the same material but in the written form can be used for reading comprehension – understanding obvious and hidden meanings in the text, learning new vocabulary and new expressions.

Writing skills can be develop as well, when students complete the lyrics with their own words, write their own songs, respond to the lyrics, write continuation of the story in the lyrics or write the reflection on the meaning of the song.

Especially unlimited seems to be the possibility to develop speaking skills when using songs. This can already be used during the pre-listening activity when students can express their opinions or comment the chosen song, pictures used with the song, the topic, predict what the song is going to be about, etc. During the song they can talk to a partner or to other members of the group when performing the given task and finally, post-listening activity can also be used for retelling the lyrics, discussing the quality of the song, meaning of the song, author, genre, language used in the song, develop and adopt the topic to their own lives, create the questions for the singer, suggest ways for improving the song, etc.

3.1.7.1. Stimulation of natural conversation in English

As an addition to the specific ideas of song activities already mentioned, it is inevitable to point out another important advantage when using songs for developing speaking skills – stimulation of natural conversation.

Many authors believe that it is important to lead students to use natural language. Natural conversation does not always correspond to the classroom conversations when teacher asks questions and one of the students answer. Normally, when one speaker makes a statement, the other one shows interest and somehow encourages the first one to continue. Also, in case of a long monologue of one speaker the other one usually shows feedback.⁸⁴

Murphy stresses that for promoting the natural conversation in the classroom it is important that teachers know and understand their students' taste and interest of music.⁸⁵

⁸⁴LEWIS, M., HILL, J. Practical techniques for language teaching. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558.136 p.

⁸⁵MURPHY, T. *Music and Song*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. ISBN 0194370550.151 p.

When using songs in the classroom it is much easier to get students effectively use natural language because listening to music is one of the most favorite hobbies among teenagers and it is one of their common everyday topics. Contrastively, many topics in course books that are used for speaking activities are not attractive and stimulating for students. Lewis and Hill claim that normal conversation outside the classroom is most frequently about very banal topics and only rarely people discuss more serious topics. They believe that many textbooks offer relatively serious issues for speaking activities such as the role of women, pollution, etc. and “there is logically no more reason for students to express their views on the role of women in the English lesson than in physics and, bearing in mind that in the English lesson they are required to express their views in a language over which they have an imperfect, and often rather poor, command, it is hardly surprising that some students are positively unwilling to express their views on a subject about which they may not actually care.”⁸⁶ Therefore these authors recommend using less serious topics for stimulating comments and conversations.

3.2. Alternative use of music and songs

Murphy proposes three other groups of possibilities for using songs in alternative way – different from intentionally developing the language skills with the actual songs.

The first of his categories is called – *Tuning in*. Murphy stresses the importance of the teachers to tune in to their students’ interests and taste for music so the suitable material can be used in the class. This is important, because adolescents often use their own music to manifest their group identity and self-discovery. They also might reject music that is out of date. It is also recommended to let students bring the songs they would like to work with during the lesson. The main purpose of tuning in is therefore to allow teachers to understand how their students perceive and use music but also to develop their language skills.⁸⁷ He proposes the following suggestions:

- Musical introduction cards about students’ musical preferences
- Pop picture collage/questions – describing singers or groups, giving presentations about them
- Hit chart, music questionnaires – expressing opinions

⁸⁶LEWIS, M., HILL, J. *Practical techniques for language teaching*. Croatia: Thomson, 2002. ISBN 0 906717 558. 136 p. (p. 119)

⁸⁷MURPHY, T. *Music and Song*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. ISBN 0194370550. 151 p.

- Music survey, music newsletter, star reports – writing, presenting, reporting
- Favorite songs of learners – dictating to each other, guessing games, presentations
- Discussion on the extreme opinions on music and songs
- Assigning weekly song rota who will be choosing songs for the lessons

The second category is called – *Just Music*. Murphy states that “it is only a matter of time before teachers catch on the powerful effect that music can have on a student’s performance, whether it is used as background or foreground composition, reading and discussion, in language classes or in other areas.”⁸⁸ It is believed that music gives energy and inspires. Murphy provides practical examples of using music to fulfill this function:⁸⁹

- Start with music to set certain mood, relax or excite the students
- Play background music to relax or stimulate students while performing an activity
- Play and stop the music for the game – Stop and find someone who ...
- Play music while students capture their reactions to it
- Play music and lead students to visualization and subsequent description
- Play music to inspire students while stream of consciousness writing
- Elicit different associations with the same piece of music
- Use advertising jingles to show the power of music accompanying a message and let students create the advertising messages

The Artists and the industry is the third category that exploits songs without using the actual lyrics. It is focused on the artists themselves and on the industry. The advantage is that articles on this topic are widely available in the magazines or on the internet. The specific ideas for use are as follows:⁹⁰

- Guessing game – Who am I (an artist)
- Sorting artists into different categories
- Grouping genres of music
- Identity cards with pop stars’ profiles

⁸⁸MURPHY, T. *Music and Song*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. ISBN 0194370550. 151 p. (p. 37)

⁸⁹MURPHY, T. *Music and Song*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. ISBN 0194370550. 151 p.

⁹⁰MURPHY, T. *Music and Song*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. ISBN 0194370550. 151 p.

- Creating questions and roleplaying magazine interviews
- Presenting and working with musical terminology
- Students write their music journals
- Story writing based on the titles of the songs
- Discussion based on hit charts, pop songs, pop industry
- Make students aware of how important music is in their lives using a questionnaire
- Discussion based on quotations on the subject of music and songs
- Grammar focus on song titles

3.3. Classification of song activities

Murphy argues that dividing song activities into categories according to the conventional language is unnatural and difficult as teachers often exercise more skills at once. Therefore he suggests dividing into:⁹¹

1. The activities that start with reading and writing and move on to listening and singing
2. The activities that start with listening, speaking and singing and then proceed to reading and writing

However, Hancock provides another perspective on classification of song activities which is elaborated in more detail. This classification is based on the focus of the song activity – on skill, on language form or on the topic of the song:⁹²

1. According to the focus on skill
 - a. Listening - songs can provide practice in listening skills.
 - i. Prediction
 1. Picture discussion
 2. Key word discussion
 3. Snippets
 4. Prediction – completing the task before listening
 - ii. Listening for gist
 1. Picture selection

⁹¹MURPHY, T. *Music and Song*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. ISBN 0194370550. 151 p.

⁹²HANCOCK, M. *Singing Grammar: Teaching Grammar through Songs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. ISBN: 0521625424. 96 p.

2. Note-taking
3. Discourse-type recognition
4. Function recognition
- iii. Listening for detail
 1. Word-spotting
 2. Gap-filling
 3. Error-finding
 4. Sequencing
 5. Picture sequences
 6. Picture differences
 7. Dictation
 8. Questions
 9. True or false
- b. Speaking, reading and writing skills can be involved in follow-up activities (see 3. According to the topic)
2. According to the language – songs can be used to focus on the form of language, including grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.
 - a. Grammar
 - i. Tense-selecting
 - ii. Error-identifying
 - iii. Transformation
 - iv. Word-ordering
 - b. Vocabulary
 - i. Text reconstruction
 - ii. Lexical transformation
 - iii. Search
 - iv. Lexical gaps
 - c. Pronunciation
 - i. Sound search
 - ii. Stress search
 - iii. Script transformation
 - iv. Drilling
 - v. Singing

3. According to the topic – songs can provide topics for discussion and extension activities.
 - a. Characters
 - i. Diary-writing
 - ii. Letters
 - iii. Role-play
 - iv. Imagining
 - b. Plot
 - i. Summarizing
 - ii. Continuing
 - iii. Prior events
 - iv. Reporting
 - v. Story-telling
 - c. Lyrics poetry
 - i. Genre transformation
 - ii. Ambiguity
 - d. Musical styles
 - i. Classification
 - ii. Culture reflection

Furthermore, Hancock emphasizes that it is important to maximize the opportunities that song has to offer. To choose an appropriate activity type for a certain song, he offers the following guideline:⁹³

- Listening skill activity:
 - The lyrics of the song are clearly audible
 - The level of difficulty is appropriate for my class
- Language form activity:
 - The song provides a good illustration of a certain structure
 - The song includes a lexical field which fits well in the course
 - The pronunciation is natural enough to present a model
- Topic-based activity
 - There are clear characters or an obvious plot in the lyrics

⁹³HANCOCK, M. *Singing Grammar: Teaching Grammar through Songs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. ISBN: 0521625424. 96 p.

- The poetic images or the cultural background of the song is suitable for discussion

II. Practical part

4. Evaluation of the song activities presented in course books and other sources

4.1 Analysis of questions

The questions formulated for the evaluation of song activities were:

1. What kind of song activities do course books (New Headway Intermediate, New English File Intermediate, New Cutting Edge Intermediate) contain and what do they develop?
2. What kind of song activities do other sources contain and what do they develop?
3. What is the difference between the song activities presented in course books and song activities presented in other sources?

To answer the research questions I used the classification system of Hancock presented in his publication *Singing Grammar*.⁹⁴ After analyzing and listing the areas of focus of individual songs, I arranged them in a graph for better schematic distinctness. This allowed me to compare the song activities from course books and the song activities from other sources.

4.2 Song activities presented in coursebooks for intermediate level

In my research I scrutinized song activities of three different course books at the intermediate level:

- New Headway Intermediate⁹⁵ (NH)
- New English File Intermediate⁹⁶ (NEF)
- New Cutting Edge Intermediate⁹⁷ (NCE)

⁹⁴ HANCOCK, M. *Singing Grammar: Teaching Grammar through Songs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. ISBN: 0521625424. 96 p.

⁹⁵ SOARS, J., SOARS, L. *New Headway: Intermediate, student's book*. Oxford: Oxford university press, 2003. ISBN-139780194387507.160 p.

⁹⁶ OXENDEN, C., LATHAM-KOENIG, CH. *New English File: Intermediate, student's book*. Oxford: Oxford university press, 2006. ISBN 978 0 19 4518000.159 p.

⁹⁷ CUNNINGHAM, S., MOOR, P. *New Cutting Edge Intermediate, student's book*. Essex: Longman, 2007. ISBN 0582825172.175 p.

1. *New Headway Intermediate* contains twelve units that include four songs:
 - a. *Who wants to be a millionaire*
 - listening skill activity – focused on listening for detail; it is as pre-teaching for reading comprehension task (introduces the topic of the article)
 - b. *My way*
 - listening skill activity – the first task is focused on listening for gist (verbal answers are required) and the second task is listening for detail – gap-filling with the option to choose from two possibilities
 - c. *California Dreaming*
 - listening skill activity – lead-in tasks – students imagine the mood of the song; prediction – completing the task before listening; listening for detail – gap-filling with the option to choose from two possibilities; topic used for discussion
 - d. *Why does it always rain on me*
 - topic used for discussion – lead-in – answering questionnaire, sharing answers with a partner; listening for gist; prediction – completing the task before listening; listening for detail – gap-filling with the option to choose from two possibilities; topic used for discussion – agreeing or disagreeing with the statements

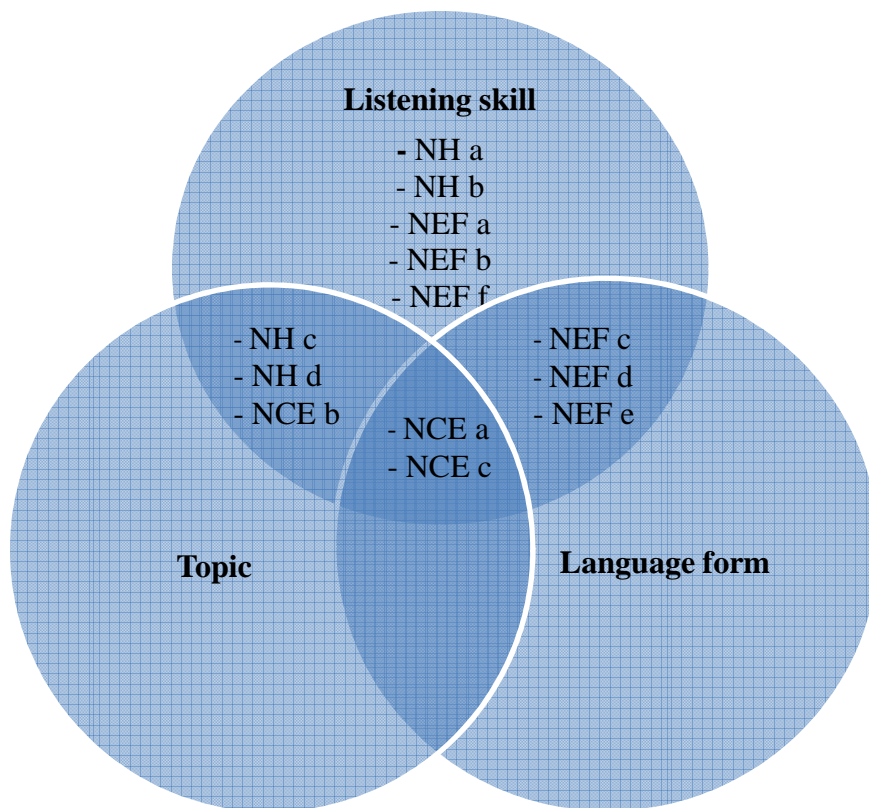
2. *New English File Intermediate* contains seven units including six songs:
 - a. *We are family*
 - listening skill activity – listening for detail – error finding (there is a word highlighted in every line, during the first listening students put a tick or a cross next to a line depending on the correctness of the word).
 - during the second listening they write the correct word where the incorrect one was used
 - b. *You can get it if you really want*
 - listening skill activity – listening for detail – gap filling; matching the phrases of the song with their meaning
 - c. *Our House*
 - listening skill activity – listening for detail – gap filling; listening for gist; focus on language form – vocabulary – describing adjectives
 - d. *Skater boy*

- listening skill activity – listening for detail – gap filling with articles; language form focused activity – grammar – the use of articles (if students cannot catch the article while listening to the song, they can fill the gaps according to their knowledge); listening for gist
 - e. *Holding out for a hero*
 - listening skill activity – listening for detail – gap filling; second task is matching phrases of the lyrics with their meaning; focus on language form – vocabulary – focused on adjectives
 - f. *Ironic*
 - listening skill activity – prediction – completing the task before listening (filling gaps with already written phrases); listening and checking
3. *New Cutting Edge Intermediate* contains twelve units including three songs:
- a. *Remember the days of the old schoolyard*
 - listening skill activity – prediction – completing the task before listening (filling gaps with verbs already written); listening and checking; topic used for discussion; focused language form – grammar – grammar analysis based on phrases in the song
 - b. *Manic Monday*
 - topic used for discussion; listening skill activity – prediction – completing the task before listening (filling gaps with words already written); listening and checking; topic used for discussion
 - c. *Out of Reach*
 - topic used for discussion; listening skill activity – prediction – completing the task before listening (filling gaps with phrases already written); focused on language form – vocabulary – identifying and sorting words to certain categories; pronunciation – sound search

4.2.1 Categorization of song activities presented in the coursebooks for B1 level

As it is obvious from the graph 1, all of thirteen song activities from the three scrutinized course books are used for developing listening comprehension – listening for detail, listening for gist and prediction. Alongside with listening development, some of them are focused on language form – grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation. Another group of three simultaneously provides practice for listening development and topics for

speaking development. Finally, only two out of thirteen song activities include all three areas – focus on listening, language form and topic.



Graph 1: Categorization of the song activities presented in the coursebooks for intermediate level

4.3 Song activities from other sources

Other sources such as *Music and Songs* by Murphy or *Singing Grammar* by Hancock provide wider range of ideas of song exploitation in English language classroom. In contrast to the exercises from the course books, they include various physical activities, creative processes, frequent group and pair work, encourage critical awareness and individual studies of learners.

Murphy provides the following propositions of song activities:⁹⁸

a. Text completion and construction

- listening skill activity, reading, guessing and composition
- variations: include glossary of the missing words; leave out the rhyming words; delete every fifth, seventh or ninth word; insert an extra word; type out words

⁹⁸MURPHY, T. *Music and Song*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. ISBN 0194370550.151 p.

with mistakes; do not provide written text, students can listen for certain phrases, grammatical constructions, count the number of times they occur or number the items in the order they hear them

b. Jumbled lyrics

- listening skill activity and using of contextual clues
- students order parts (stanzas, words in the lines) of the lyrics
- variations: give each student an expression of the song to listen for, as they listen they have to arrange themselves physically in order in which they hear the song

c. Writing to know tunes

- listening skill activity, creative writing, use of rhythm, rhyme and resonance
- students supply song with different lyrics, finish lines or make up whole new lines
- variation: teacher partially dictate the lyrics, students have to predict and create the rest

d. Song line answers

- activity focused on topic
- students create questions for familiar song lines, then make them into an interview

e. Mass distance dictation

- listening skill activity (selective listening); giving dictation; language form focused (pronunciation); physical activity
- teacher distributes slips of paper with lyrics around the class or outside the class, students work in pairs, one memorizes lyrics (part by part) and goes back and forth to the other student and dictates, then the other way round

f. Changing the text

- language form focused activity, changing lexical and grammatical categories
- students change tenses, pronouns, adjectives to their opposites, gender reference, then discuss in pairs whether the meaning of the song was changed

g. Group songwriting

- language form focused activity, composition and creative writing skill
- teacher prepares stem sentences, students compose lyrics in groups
- this can be also transformed into lyric-writing contest (individual, pair or group)

h. Poetic analysis of lyrics

- languageform focused activity, poetic elements in pop songs

- students identify structural and poetic items (title, stanza, chorus, rhyme ...) in the song
 - i. The English of pop lyrics*
 - language form focused activity – identifying and recognizing different registers of English
 - students identify registers of different songs
 - j. Discourse analysis of pop songs*
 - language form focused activity
 - student scrutinize discourse analysis of lyrics (designated pronouns, time and place reference, implications of the sex of the singer, ...)
 - k. Photo-story dialogue writing*
 - listening skill activity; topic focused activity; contextualizing the language in song
 - students plan the scenes and subtitles as they listen to the song, later take pictures and complete the project
 - variation: videos can be made instead
 - l. Songs and story writing*
 - listening skill activity; topic focused activity (conventions in different song types and styles)
 - students identify typical features of different song types, recognize clichés and create songs of certain types exaggerating clichés
 - m. Song to literature*
 - listening skill activity; topic focused activity
 - students identify parallelism between music and other artistic expressions (literature, filmography), discuss the differences when dealing with the same topic
 - n. Song feedback*
 - listening skill activity; developing critical awareness, language form focused activity
 - students fill in questionnaire describing various aspects of the song (boring, warm, good beat, good lyrics, disorganized, ...) while listening to the song
 - o. Cultural comparison and contrast of music*
 - listening skill activity; topic focused activity

- students compare songs from different cultures, discuss and finally produce written composition comparing and contrasting different types of songs

p. Unknown songs and artists

- listening skill activity; topic focused activity; language of prediction
- students listen to the songs of unknown authors and guess and justify who sing which song (they can see the pictures of the singers)

q. Singing

- language form focused activity
- students sing the song practicing pronunciation and intonation
- variations: give different groups different parts to sing

r. Song rotation dictation

- listening skill activity
- each student listens to and transcribes different song for five minutes, then hands his/her paper to the next student. This goes on for thirty minutes, then the comparison with the actual lyrics is made

s. Recording opinions

- listening skill activity; topic focused activity
- students record their opinions one after another right after listening the song

t. Open selection song lab

- listening skill activity, encouragement of independent learning
- students choose a song to listen to, fill in the song analysis form

u. Name these songs

- topic focused activity
- at the end of the course students listen to the parts of all the songs again and try to recall the names

v. Tape exchange

- listening skill activity, encouragement of individual learning and interaction outside the classroom
- students exchange mixtapes they created themselves and comment on each other choices

Hancock provides the following song activities for the intermediate level in his book *Singing Grammar*:⁹⁹

A. If you're lonely

- listening skill activity; language form focused activity
- students predict what the song is about based on picture, listen for gist, fill in them missing words in lyrics, practice pronunciation, look for adjectives of feelings

B. Dangerous romance

- listening skill activity, language form focused activity, topic focused activity
- students predict what the song is about based on cartoon script, fill in the missing words, practice pronunciation of regular verbs in past tense, they write another verse of the song

C. Josephine

- listening skill activity, language form focused activity, topic focused activity
- students match parts of lyrics to the pictures, listen for detail, fill in gaps, practice pronunciation, discuss the topic

D. Sweet things

- listening skill activity, language form focused activity, topic focused activity
- students describe pictures and guess what the song is about, listen for gist, fill in missing words in lyrics, practice pronunciation, change the story

E. In trouble again

- listening skill activity, language form focused activity, topic focused activity
- students predict what the song is about based on pictures, listen for detail, order events in the song chronologically, practice pronunciation, write their own verses

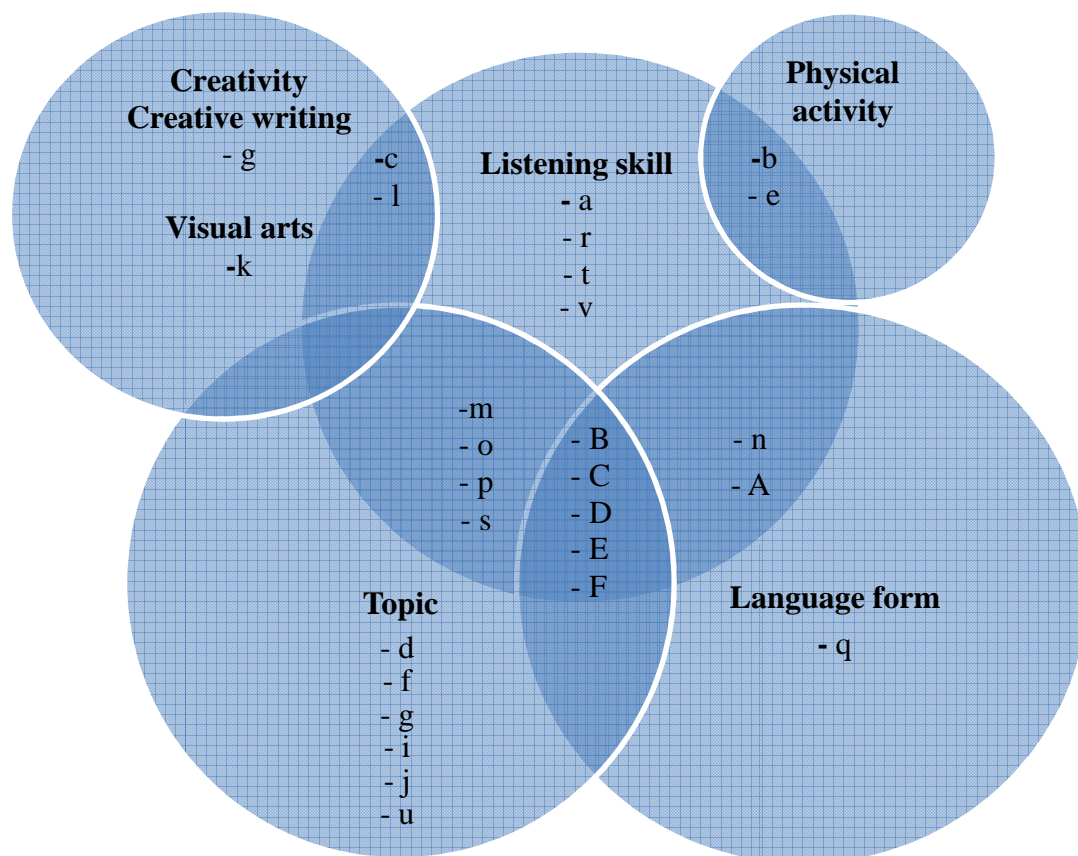
F. I've been waiting

- listening skill activity, language form focused activity, topic focused activity
- students predict what the song is about and brainstorm key words, listen for detail, fill in missing words, practice pronunciation, create possible further dialogues between characters

⁹⁹HANCOCK, M. *Singing Grammar: Teaching Grammar through Songs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. ISBN: 0521625424. 96 p.

4.3.1 Categorization of song activities from other sources

Song activities of Murphy and Hancock are diversified and incorporate the three elements – developing listening skill, focus on language form and focus on topic in different way than the ones in course books. They also develop creativity and include physical activity alongside the developing of language skills.



Graph 2: Categorization of the song activities presented in other sources

4.4 Evaluation summary

The presented graphs 1 and 2 might suggest that the song activities presented in other sources are richer – as to the diversification and creativity of the tasks as well as to the areas that they focus on. The song activities from other sources include physical activity and develop students' creativity in addition to the song activities presented in

the course books. Moreover, the song activities presented in the course books are more in the intersection of two or three areas – they are more versatile.

5. Pilotage – the use of song activities in the classroom

5.1 Research questions

My research questions for this part of the research were:

1. How do the students of this group perceive the chosen song activities?
2. What makes the song activity appealing for these students?
3. What makes the song activity difficult for these students and how does it influence their motivation?

These questions were answered in the four parts of the research as follows in the subsequent chapters.

5.2 Methodology

The practical part of the research took approximately ten hours. It was divided into four parts:

1. Students carried out twelve song activities
2. Students evaluated the activities – free writing evaluation
3. Students ranked the activities according to their preference and according to the degree of difficulty
4. Students were interviewed

The core of my research was based on qualitative research – I wanted to find out how do the chosen students perceive the chosen song activities, what are their feelings about them and how do these activities influence them. To reach the satisfying answers, the method of unstructured free writing was used as a pre-research which provided clues about students' general impression of the activities. For further investigation, I chose the method of ranking where the students expressed their preferences of the activities and the level of difficulty of the activities. Finally, students were interviewed to complete the picture of their perception of the chosen song activities.

5.3 Characteristics of the students

The research was carried out in Gymnázium Budějovická, Praha 4 in class 5.D. Ten students were engaged – four boys and six girls, aged seventeen at average. For the

protection of their privacy their names are not used, symbol - “S + number” is used instead. All of the students are Czech native-born except two students – S4 and S5.

5.4 Characteristics of the chosen song activities

Students carried out the song activities in their classroom during their English lessons where their teacher was substituted by me. The order of the song activities was random and students were not told the sources of them.

Six of the song activities were taken from coursebooks, namely:

- **New Headway Intermediate/intermediate**
 - *Why does it always rain on me*(H)
 - *California Dreaming*(I)
- **New English File Intermediate/intermediate**
 - *Skater boy* (A)
 - *We are family*(B)
- **New Cutting Edge Intermediate/intermediate**
 - *Manic Monday*(K)
 - *Out of Reach*(L)

I formulated the remaining six songs activities with the help of the other sources mentioned in the previous chapters. These are:

- *Upside down* (C)
- *Hard Sun* (D)
- *Rasmus Faber* (E)
- *Lazy song* (F)
- *Lego house* (G)
- *Stereo hearts* (J)

5.4.1 Categorization of the chosen song activities

Categorizing them the same way as the song activities in the theoretical part (according to Hancock), it can be seen that the song activities from the coursebooks are mainly focused on listening skill, topic and language form, whereas in addition, the remaining six activities involve physical activity, creative writing and visual arts.

New Headway Intermediate/intermediate

- *Why does it always rain on me*(H)
- topic used for discussion – lead-in – answering questionnaire, sharing answers with a partner; listening for gist; prediction – completing the task before listening; listening for detail – gap-filling with the option to choose from two possibilities; topic used for discussion – agreeing or disagreeing with the statements
- *California Dreaming*(I)
- listening skill activity – lead-in tasks – students imagine the mood of the song; prediction – completing the task before listening; listening for detail – gap-filling with the option to choose from two possibilities; topic used for discussion

New English File Intermediate/intermediate

- *Skater boy* (A)
- listening skill activity – listening for detail – gap filling with articles; language form focused activity – grammar – the use of articles (if students cannot catch the article while listening to the song, they can fill the gaps according to their knowledge); listening for gist
- *We are family*(B)
- listening skill activity – listening for detail – error finding (there is a word highlighted in every line, during the first listening students put a tick or a cross next to a line depending on the correctness of the word).
- during the second listening they write the correct word where the incorrect one was used

New Cutting Edge Intermediate/intermediate

- *Manic Monday* (K)
- topic used for discussion; listening skill activity – prediction – completing the task before listening (filling gaps with words already written); listening and checking; topic used for further discussion
- *Out of Reach* (L)
- topic used for discussion; listening skill activity – prediction – completing the task before listening (filling gaps with phrases already written); focused on

language form – vocabulary – identifying and sorting words to certain categories; pronunciation – sound search

I formulated the remaining six songs activities with the help of the other sources mentioned in the previous chapters. These were:

○ Upside down (C)

- listening skill activity – listening for detail – word spotting; focused on language form – pronunciation – sound distinction in minimal pairs
- physical activity involved – each student goes in front of the queue every time he/she hears the word

○ Hard Sun (D)

- listening skill activity – listening for gist – students work in pairs, they have one blank poster in front of them. While listening, one of the students writes down the key words from the song and the other one draws (abstract) ideas from the song.
- topic used for discussion – students discuss the possible meanings of the song
- creativity – visual arts – one week project – students take posters home and take photos based on the ideas on the poster
- one week later – discussion on the choice of photos

○ Rasmus Faber (E)

- listening skill activity – prediction – students have three pictures of women, they predict what is their style of singing; listening for gist and style – students listen to three different songs and match them with the three women
- topic used for discussion – students discuss and argue for their choices
- focused on language form – students listen for phrasal verbs and attempt to interpret them

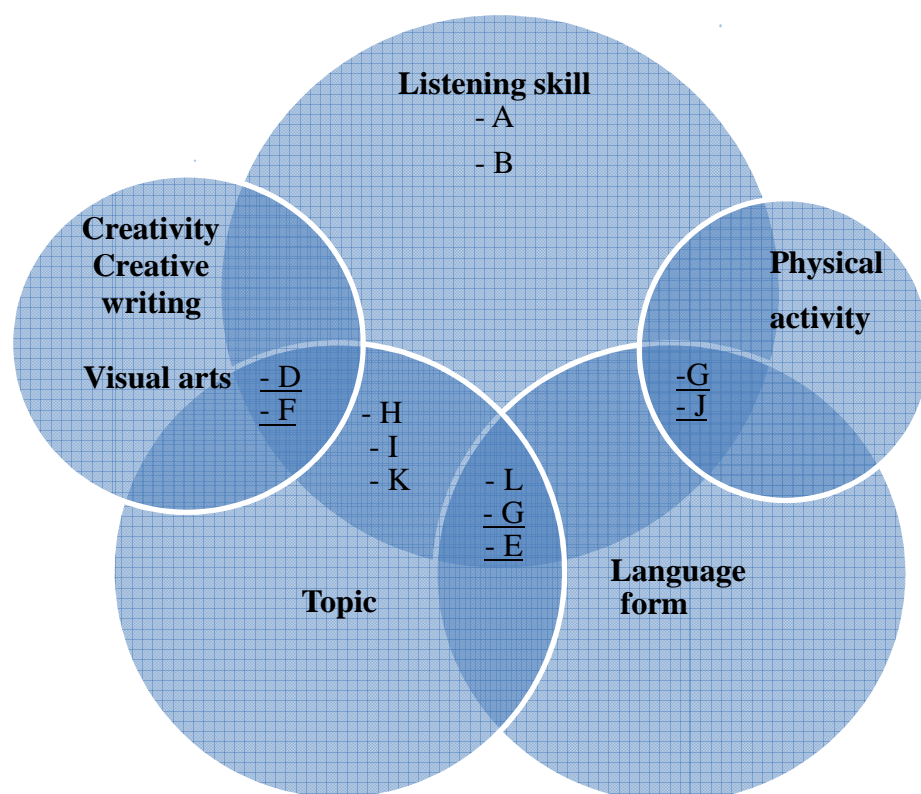
○ Lazy song (F)

- topic used for discussion – students discuss the joke about laziness and what they do when they have a lazy day
- listening skill activity – listening for specific information – what does the singer do on a lazy day
- creativity – creative writing – students create their own version of the song by filling in the gaps

○ Lego house (G)

- listening skill activity – students are divided into three different groups – each listens for something else – for grammar (tense selections), for word stock (unusual words, structures, slang, etc.), for meaning
- focus on language form and topic used for discussion – students discuss in groups and present their results and findings to the whole class
 - Stereo hearts (J)
- listening skill activity – listening for detail – each student has a phrase of the song and lines up according to the succession in the song – physical activity involved
- focused on language form – rhythm – students practice the rhythm when rapping along with the singer

In the following graph 3 it can be seen that song activities which were created from sources other than the coursebooks (underlined) are all in the intersection of three areas – not only they develop listening skills, but further exploit the songs in the areas of language form, topic and involve physical activity or develop students creativity. On the other hand, song activities taken from the coursebooks are mostly aimed at developing listening skill and/or use the topic of the song for discussion.



Graph 3: Categorization of the song activities used in the research

5.5 Process of the research

As it was mentioned above, the actual research was composed of four parts – carrying out the song activities, evaluating them in written form, ranking them according to the preference and the degree of difficulty and finally evaluating them in oral interview.

5.5.1 Processing of the song activities in the classroom

This chapter will describe the processing of the song activities that were carried out in the classroom one by one. The processing will be described based on Scrivener's stages of listening activity in the task-feedback circle.¹⁰⁰ The complete worksheets that were used can be found in the appendices 3-14.

¹⁰⁰ SCRIVENER, J. *Learning teaching: A guidebook for English language teachers*. Oxford: Macmillan Education, 2005. ISBN 1-4050-1399-0. 431 p.

○ *Why does it always rain on me(H)*

-lead-in – students filled in the questionnaire about their pessimistic or optimistic tendencies, then interviewed the partner with the same questions and compared their answers and checked the questionnaire key for results

- while listening activity – students listened to the song for the first time – looked for the answers to the question about singer’s pessimistic or optimistic attitude

- feedback on task – students discussed their answers with each other in pairs, then presented their ideas to the whole class

- while listening activity – second listening – students chose the right word from the pair written to fill in each gap

- feedback on task – students were called on to read the correct answers

- follow-up activities–students were asked to explain three different lines of the song – individual work, then voluntary presentation of their ideas to the whole class; students read the example opinions about singer’s attitude and expressed their opinions on the topic – whole class discussion

○ *California Dreaming(I)*

- lead-in – students were asked to close their eyes and imagine some warm place where they would have liked to be, then they shared their imagined places with the rest of the class

- pre-listening – students were asked to explain the connection between the words chosen from the song; prediction – students were asked to predict if the singer sings about his home town and what are his feelings and then chose the best word from the pairs in the lyrics based on rhyming

- while listening activity – students were listening to the song and checking their answers

- feedback on task – students were asked to read out the correct answers

- follow-up activities – students discussed the meaning of given phrases from the song in pairs

○ *Skater boy* (A)

- lead-in – students were asked if they knew the song and whether they liked it – whole class discussion

- pre-listening – students were explained the words and phrases in the glossary

- while listening activity – students listened to the song and completed the lyrics with the articles in empty spaces

- feedback on task – students were asked if they managed to complete the lyrics

- while listening activity – students listened to the song for the second time for completion

- feedback on the task – students first checked their answers with partner then they are revealed the correct answers

- follow-up activities – whole class discussion – students discussed what the moral of the song was

○ *We are family*(B)

- lead-in – students were asked whether a family member is always naturally a friend as well; they voted for and against and share their arguments with the whole class

- pre-listening – students were explained words and phrases in the glossary

- while listening activity – students listened for the first time and put a tick or a cross next to the highlighted words in the lyrics; students listened for the second time and corrected the words that they had marked as wrong

- feedback on task – students were called on to read the correct answers

- follow-up activities – students were asked to discuss what is the singer's attitude towards the question set in lead-in discussion; students discussed in pairs, then each pair presented their ideas

○ *Manic Monday* (K)

- lead-in – students were asked to work in pairs and answer how they usually feel at different times of the week (Monday morning, Friday afternoon, etc.)
- pre-listening – prediction – students were asked to complete the gaps in the song with the words and phrases in the box
- while listening activity – students listened to the song and checked their answers
- feedback on task – students were called on to read the correct answers
- follow-up activities – students were divided into small groups and discussed the given questions concerning the meaning of the song

○ *Out of Reach* (L)

- lead-in – students were asked to describe the picture of a woman reading a letter – her possible feelings and thoughts
- pre-listening – students were presented a short list of vocabulary and phrases and their meanings were elicited; prediction – students predicted what words were missing in the lyrics
- while listening activity – students listened and checked if their predictions were correct
- feedback on task – students were called on to read the completed lyrics
- follow-up activities – students were asked to write phrases connected with sadness and phrases connected with happiness from the song; students were asked to pair words in the box according to the vowel sound, then practice pronouncing them

○ *Upside down* (C)

- lead-in – the meaning of phrase – to feel “upside down” was elicited and students were asked if they had ever felt “upside down”, the ones who wanted shared their ideas with the rest of the class
- pre-listening – each student was given a card with a word on it (moon, spoon, willow, pillow, sell, tell, sorry, story, town, crown), the understanding of these words was checked

- while listening activity – students listened to the song and every time they heard the word they come in front of the line

- feedback on task – for checking the correctness (who went when to the front of the line and how many times) students were given the complete lyrics and each of them highlighted the word that was given to him/her; then they listened to the song again and stood in the line according to the word while checking it in the lyrics and singing along

- follow-up activities – the whole class discussion – students discussed why it was hard to catch the right word (minimal word pairs)

- *Hard Sun* (D)

- lead-in – students were asked if they knew the movie *Into the Wild* where this song was played, the ones who did explained the plot and the meaning to the rest of the class

- while listening activity – students worked in pairs, they were distributed a blank poster - one for each pair; one member of the pair was asked to write down key words of the song and the other one to draw ideas or images that popped up while listening; students were distributed the lyrics and listened to the song again completing their posters

- feedback on task – students compared the drawings and notes in pairs and discussed their correlations

- follow-up activities – the pairs of students were asked to take photographs outside the class based on the drawings and notes and bring them to the class the following week

- feedback on task – students shared the results of their projects with the rest of the class and explained their outcomes

- *Rasmus Faber* (E)

- lead-in – students were asked about their favorite music style, the answers were written on the board and students described, compared and exemplified them

- pre-listening – prediction – students were shown three pictures of female singers and guessed their music styles

- while listening activity – students listened to the parts of three different songs and wrote down the notes concerning the music styles

- feedback on task – students shared their ideas about the music styles and their guesses about matching the singers with the songs, they explained their choices; they were told the correct matches

- while listening activity – students listened to the third song again and underlined phrasal verbs that they had already known

- feedback on task – students shared the list of the phrasal verbs with their partner and then shared it with the rest of the class

- follow-up activities – students were asked to use these phrasal verbs in short dialogues

o *Lazy song* (F)

- lead-in – students were distributed the worksheets and drawn attention to the joke on the top, they were asked to express their ideas about the statement: “Laziness is nothing more than the habit of resting before you get tired” and about laziness as such

- while listening activity – students listened to the song and underlined unknown words

- feedback on task – the meaning of the unknown words and phrases were elicited

- while listening activity – students listened to the song again and fill in their own lyrics in the gaps of the uncompleted text, they were asked to keep the lyrics funny and rhymed when possible

- feedback on task – students shared their lyrics with the rest of the class

- follow-up activities – the brainstorming was performed on the question – how to overcome laziness and students vote for the best idea

o *Lego house* (G)

- lead-in – students were asked to brainstorm the ideas what can a lego house represented when talking in metaphors, then they explain the concepts

- while listening activity – students worked in three groups, the first group focused on grammar (prevailing grammar structures, tenses used), the second group focused on vocabulary stock (slang, phrasal verbs, ...), the third group focused on the meaning of

the song (their interpretation of it); the first listening was performed without the lyrics, the second listening was performed with lyrics

- feedback on task – each group presented their outcomes for the rest of the class

- follow-up activities – students had a chance to object the ideas stated in the presentations from their classmates

- o *Stereo hearts* (J)

- lead-in–whole class discussion –students were asked if they have ever gotten a mixed tape or a mixed CD from a friend – on what occasion and how it made them feel – students freely shared their experiences

- pre-listening – each student was given a phrase from the song and the unknown words were explained

- while listening activity–students arranged themselves in the line according to the order of the phrases sang in the song

- feedback on task – students kept standing in the line and checked if the order is correct while listening to the song again

- while listening – each student rapped the phrase along with the singer to practice the rhythm in English language

- follow-up activities – each student shared his/her thoughts about the meaning of the phrase with the rest of the class

5.5.2 Students' evaluations – free writing

Following the song activities, students were asked to give a general evaluation in written form. No criteria were set. This was done as the pre-research, to find out students' attitudes and feelings about the song activities that were carried out. These evaluations were interpreted through the technique of coding. Each evaluation was labeled with a code and categorized either to positives or negatives. Then the prevalence of codes was summarized and similarities and differences were discussed. The complete texts of evaluations can be seen in the appendix.

On the whole, the evaluations were affirmative. The codes categorized as having positive value were as follows:

- Describing atmosphere in the classroom
 - fun
 - friendly
 - no stress
 - relaxing
 - pleasant
 - delightful
 - friendly approach of the teacher
- Describing the activities
 - familiarity with the songs
 - enjoyable
 - unusual
 - relaxing
 - variability
 - educational
 - positive change
 - more interesting than song activities in coursebooks
 - learn new words
 - learn to pay attention to the lyrics
 - interesting group work
 - interesting physical activities
- Describing motivation
 - positively motivating
 - looking forward to the lesson
 - participation in choosing of the songs
 - will strengthening
 - encouragement of individuality
 - inspiration to further listening at home

The codes categorized as having negative value were as follows:

- Describing the activities

- badly chosen songs
- difficult
- ineffective method
- undemanding tasks

These codes were later used for composing interview questions along with the results of the ranking according to preference and degree of difficulty.

5.5.3 Students' ranking of the activities according to their preference and according to the degree of difficulty

As the third part of the research which was following the written evaluations, students were asked to rank the activities according to two criteria:

1. According to their preference – the one they liked the most was given twelve points, the one they liked the least was given one point.

2. According to the degree of difficulty – the most difficult one was given twelve points and the easiest one was given one point.

In order to better recall the activities, all of the worksheets and written lyrics were spread in front of them. They had enough time to make their decision and they were allowed to talk to each other and discuss.

The following table 2 shows the order of the preference. Each student assigned points to each song. The maximum (the best one) was twelve, the minimum (the worst one) was one. Certain tendencies can be seen in the grading; however three students showed clear deviation from the majority – S1, S2 and S4. This can be seen in graph 4 where the ranking of each student is formed into a curve for better illustration of the differences between them.

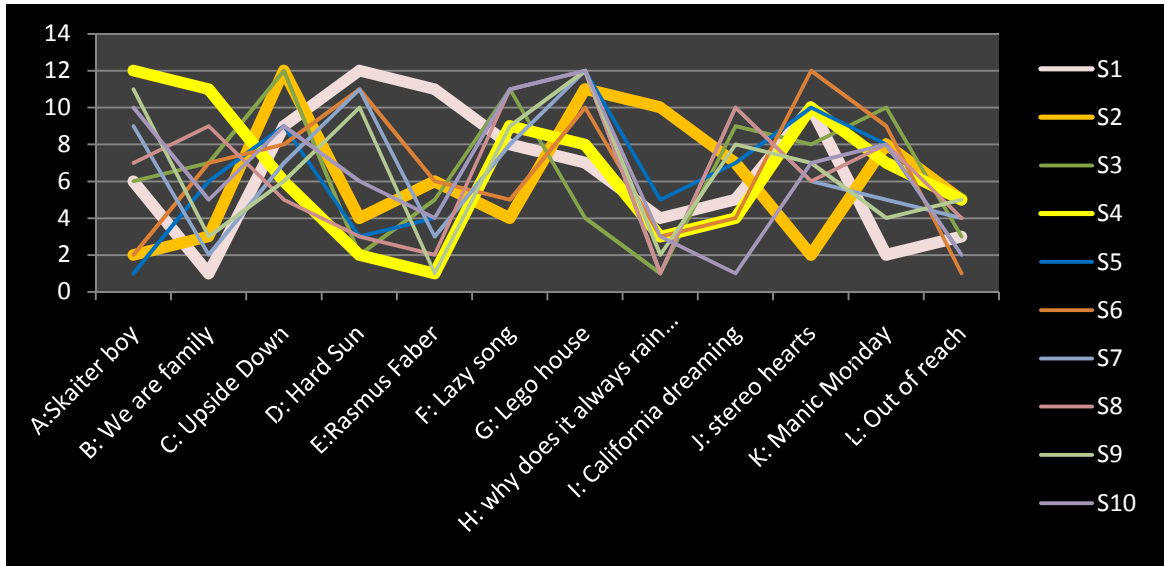
As the subsequent interview suggested, S2 did not like the chosen songs as he/she prefers alternative music. In the case of S4, the deviation from the opinion of the majority might be caused by the fact that this student has immigrated to the Czech Republic and therefore does not share the same cultural background with the rest of the class. The reasons for deviation of S1 are not clear.

Students	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	Sum *	Ran k
Songs												

A:Skaiter boy	6	2	6	12	1	2	9	7	11	10	66	6.
B: We are family	1	3	7	11	6	7	2	9	3	5	54	9.
C: Upside Down	9	12	12	6	9	8	7	5	6	9	83	3.
D: Hard Sun	12	4	2	2	3	11	11	3	10	6	64	8.
E:Rasmus Faber	11	6	5	1	4	6	3	2	1	4	43	10.
F: Lazy song	8	4	11	9	11	5	8	11	9	11	87	2.
G: Lego house	7	11	4	8	12	10	12	12	12	12	100	1.
H: why does it always rain on me	4	10	1	3	5	3	1	1	2	3	33	12.
I: California dreaming	5	7	9	4	7	4	10	10	8	1	65	7.
J: stereo hearts	10	2	8	10	10	12	6	6	7	7	78	4.
K: Manic Monday	2	8	10	7	8	9	5	8	4	8	69	5.
L: Out of reach	3	5	3	5	2	1	4	4	5	2	34	11.

Table 2: Ranking of the song activities according to preference

*Sum – the summary of points that each student assigned to each song. (12-the most likeable song/1-the least likeable)



Graph 4: Ranking of the song activities according to preference – students’ tendencies

The second ranking (table 3) was based on individual perception of the degree of difficulty. Again, each student assigned certain number of points to each song. The maximum was twelve (the most difficult song) and the minimum was one (the least difficult song). The tendencies are clearly visible here as well; however, the students that stand out are S2 and S5. This can be again seen in graph 5 where the ranking of each student is formed into a curve for better illustration of the differences between them.

S2’s deviation from the majority can be explained in the similar terms as in the previous ranking. Due to the fact that this student does not share the same taste in music as the rest of the class it can be assumed that the songs used for the activities were not familiar to him/her and therefore were not at the same level of difficulty.

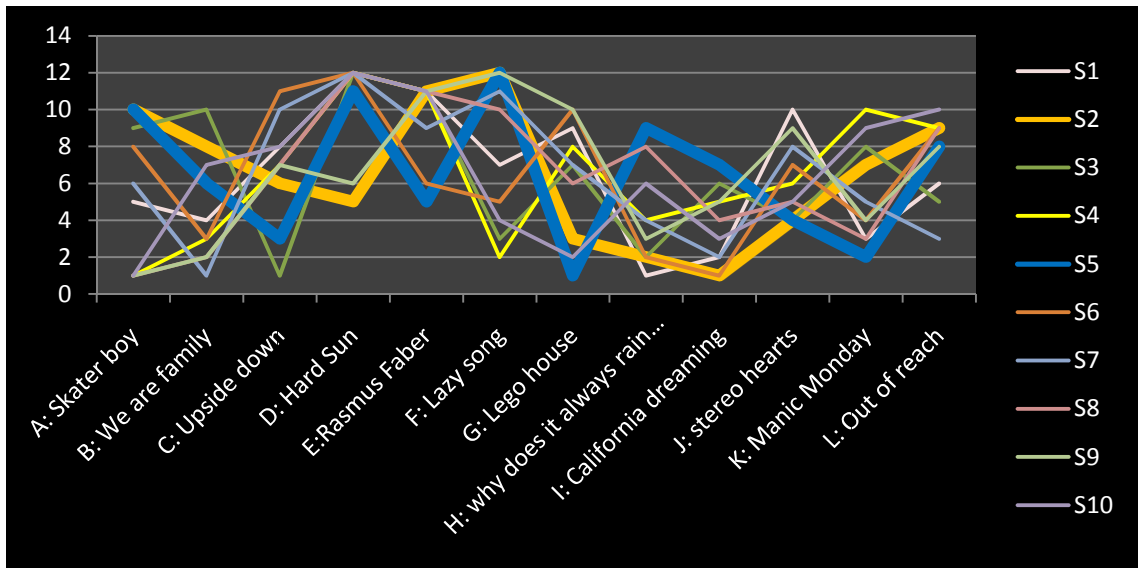
The reason for different ranking of student S5 might again be due to the different cultural background and therefore different learning experience and different perception of the degree of difficulty; it can be also caused by his/her different level of English language comparing to the other students in the class.

Students \ Songs	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	Sum *	Rank
A: Skater boy	5	10	9	1	10	8	6	1	1	1	52	9.

B: We are family	4	8	10	3	6	3	1	2	2	7	46	10.
C:Upside down	8	6	1	7	3	11	10	7	7	8	68	5.
D: Hard Sun	12	5	12	12	11	12	12	12	6	12	106	1.
E:Rasmus Faber	11	11	11	11	5	6	9	11	11	11	97	2.
F: Lazy song	7	12	3	2	12	5	11	10	12	4	78	3.
G: Lego house	9	3	7	8	1	10	7	6	10	2	63	6.
H: why does it always rain on me	1	2	2	4	9	2	4	8	3	6	41	11.
I: California dreaming	2	1	6	5	7	1	2	4	5	3	36	12.
J: stereo hearts	10	4	4	6	4	7	8	5	9	5	62	7.
K: Manic Monday	3	7	8	10	2	4	5	3	4	9	55	8.
L: Out of reach	6	9	5	9	8	9	3	9	8	10	76	4.

Table 3: Ranking of the song activities according to the degree of difficulty

*Sum – the summary of points that each student assigned to each song. (12-the most difficult song/1-the least difficult)



Graph 5: Ranking of the song activities according to the degree of difficulty – students' tendencies

The following table 4 comparing the preference with the degree of difficulty confirms the idea mentioned in the theoretical part about motivation: it is important to set the task which is neither too difficult nor too easy for the students as both of them make the activity less appealing.

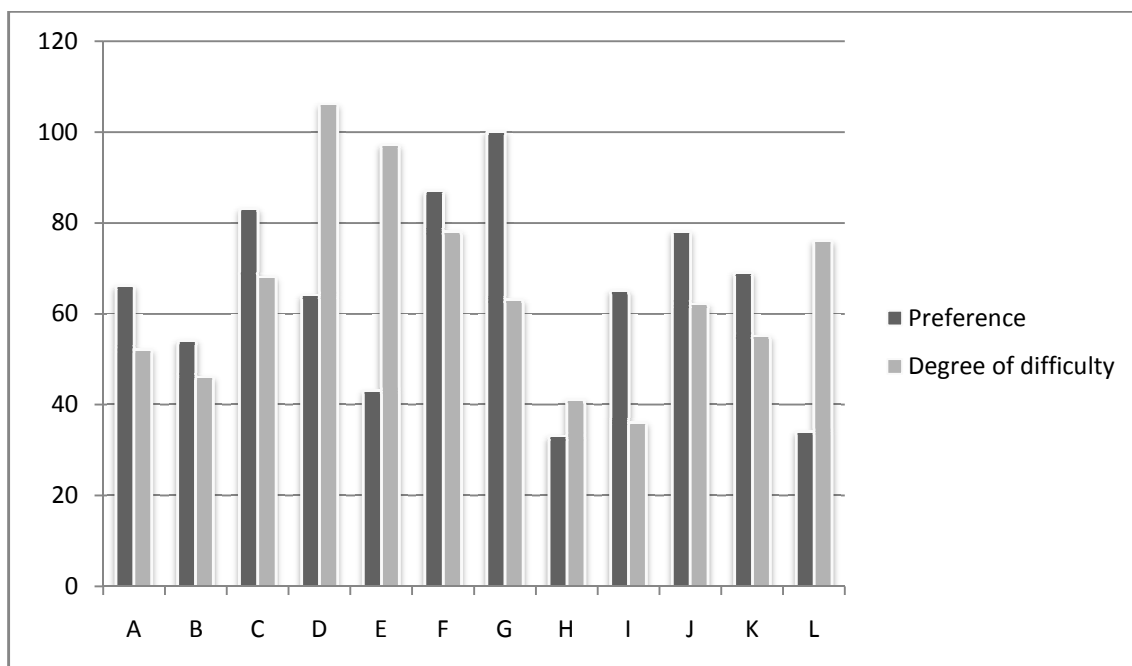
Songs D and E which were both ranked as the most difficult were placed around the average in the ranking of the degree of preference. Also, on the other end of the ranking – the easiest songs H and I were placed below or slightly above the average of the level of preference.

Looking at it from the perspective of preference – the most liked songs F and G were neither too difficult nor too easy. They are placed just slightly above the average of the difficulty level; whereas the least liked song H is also one of the least difficult.

Songs	Preference (summary of points)	Degree of difficulty (summary of points)
A	66	52
B	54	46
C	83	68
D	64	106
E	43	97
F	87	78

G	100	63
H	33	41
I	65	36
J	78	62
K	69	55
L	34	76

Table 4: Relation of preference to the degree of difficulty



Graph 6:Relation of preference to the degree of difficulty

5.5.4 Students' evaluations – interviews

The last part of the research was the interview with the students, concerning the song activities that were carried out. The aim was to find out more about the matters they mentioned in the written evaluations and thus to better understand their perception of the song activities.

Students were freely answering five open-ended questions. In order to create more relaxing atmosphere where they could feel free to share their ideas and attitudes they were allowed to answer in pairs. Also for this purpose, the interviews were held in Czech. The complete transcripts of the interviews translated into English could be seen in appendix 2.

The first two questions were formulated to clarify the concepts of “unusualness” and “fun” as these were used in almost all of their written evaluations to describe the song

activities. The remaining three questions were aimed at investigating the atmosphere which most of the students previously described as “relaxing”, “friendly” and “pleasant”. It also aimed at investigating the influence of this atmosphere on the students.

The questions were as follows:

1. In what way are the activities with songs unusual compared to the activities that you normally do in the English lessons?
2. Which types of song activities were fun for you?
3. What is the atmosphere like in the class during the activities with the songs compared to the atmosphere during normal English lessons?
4. How does this atmosphere influence you?
5. Did the activities with songs evoke any positive feelings in you?

The answers were labeled with codes and then grouped under two headings – song activities and atmosphere. Afterwards, the concepts connected with the song activities were categorized into the ones explaining “unusualness” and the ones describing “fun”. The concepts describing the atmosphere were formed into the table comparing the atmosphere during usual activities and the atmosphere during the song activities that the students carried out for the purpose of this research. The coding of the answers can be seen in the appendix.

The outcomes were as follows:

Song activities

- unusual

positives:

- familiar
- activity with a real meaning (authentic)
- being active
- moving around
- sitting in the circle
- participations in choosing of the songs
- creative
- different way of perception

- creating associations
- paying attention the whole time
- correcting the lyrics
- lining up with the phrases
- interesting
- amusing
- diverse
- creative
- pleasant
- employing other perceptions of learning
- better retention (through creating associations)
- funny
- appealing

negatives:

- not very effective (should be combined with drills and other teaching methods)
- undemanding tasks
- tasks too difficult when the songs were unknown

- fun

positives:

- enjoyable
- physical activities
- group work
- well-chosen songs
- creating lyrics
- filling in the missing words
- taking pictures
- analyzing song from different angles

Atmosphere

- *comparison*

During the usual activities	During the song activities
○ tense	○ relaxing

○ formal	○ friendly
○ strict	○ enjoyable
○ stressful	○ loss of fear to speak
	○ loss of fear of making mistakes
○ being passive	○ being active
○ not trying hard	
○ sitting quietly	
○ students do not try	○ students are eager to work
	○ positive feelings generated by positive songs
	○ positive memories generated by positive and known songs

Table 5: Comparison of the atmosphere during the usual activities and during the song activities

These answers can be correlated with the ranking of the song activities according to the preference and according to the level of difficulty.

The results of the ranking of the song activities according to the preference showed in table 6 reveal that the first four most popular song activities were the ones that were inspired by the sources other than the coursebooks (all of the activities I formulated are underlined in table 6). The interviews showed the reasons why:

- Lego house (G)

Students were working in groups, they were actively involved. It was diverse – each group was analyzing different aspect of the song (grammar/vocabulary/meaning). They had to be creative – prepare a short presentation of the aspect for their classmates.

- Lazy song (F)

Students were actively involved, they were also creative – they had to create their own lyrics. It was amusing– they were composing the lyrics with hidden funny meanings.

- Upside down (C)

Students were active – moved around – physical activity involved (each student went in front of the queue every time he/she heard the specific word assigned to

him/her). They also had to pay attention the whole time in order to catch the specific word.

- Stereo hearts (J)

Students were active – moved around – physical activity involved (students lined up according to the phrase assigned to them). It was diverse – rap song (there are no song activities using rap songs in the scrutinized coursebooks).

Correlating the results of the other end of the ranking with students' answers, the reasons can be interpreted as follows:

- Why does it always rain on me (H)

The song was not positive (the lyrics are rather negative), there was no physical activity involved. It was rather passive, students did not have to create anything on their own, they got the lyrics and had to choose the right word (already written) to fill in each gap. It was rather an undemanding task.

- Out of reach (L)

The song was not positive (the lyrics are rather negative), there was no physical activity involved and the task was rather undemanding – students got the lyrics, they had to fill in the missing words.

- Rasmus Faber (E)

The tasks were quite demanding and students were not given the lyrics at the beginning. These were unknown songs for them (there were three songs involved in this activity). Also, there was no physical activity involved.

- We are family (B)

It was rather undemanding and uncreative task – students were given the lyrics, they had to correct the mistakes. Also, there was no physical activity involved.

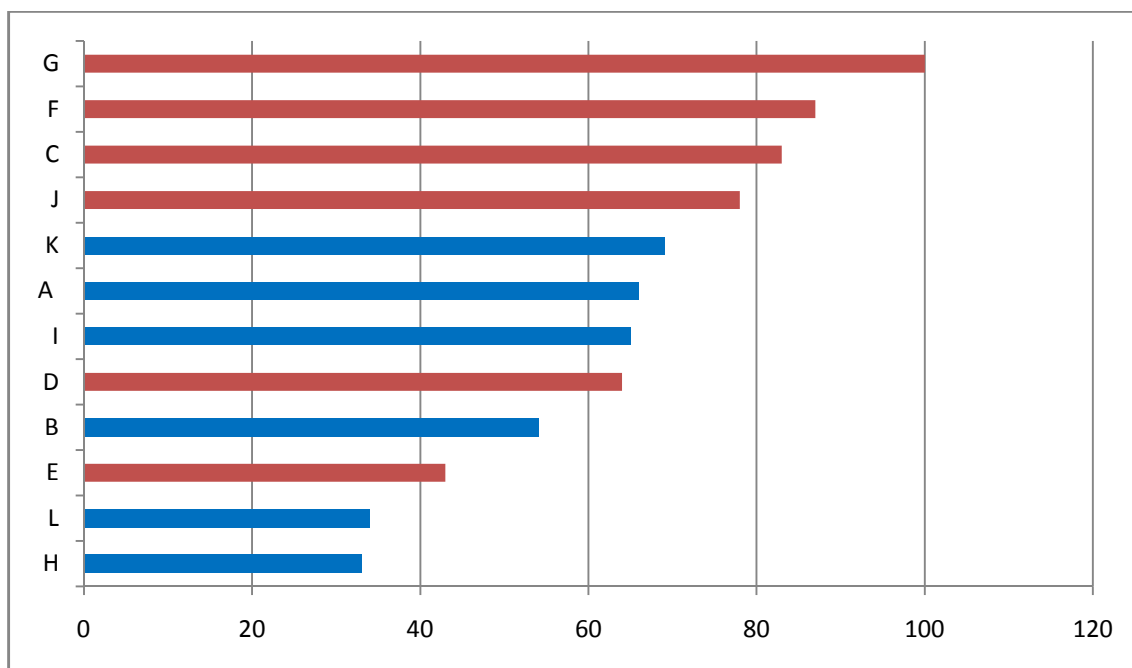
To summarize, it can be deduced that the students preferred the activities, which were more demanding, creative, diverse, involved physical activity and group work. All of these were considered to be unusual and fun, amusing and interesting. It is obvious that the songs inspired by other sources (these are underlined in table 6) were more

appealing to the students which might be due to the fact that the song activities presented in the coursebooks are often repetitive, use the same structure of tasks which are not very demanding and creative.

1.	G: <u>Lego House</u> (100*)
2.	F: <u>Lazy song</u> (87*)
3.	C: <u>Upside down</u> (83*)
4.	J: <u>Stereo Hearts</u> (78*)
5.	K: <u>Manic Monday</u> (69*)
6.	A: <u>Skeiter boy</u> (66*)
7.	I: <u>California Dreaming</u> (65*)
8.	D <u>Hard Sun</u> (64*)
9.	B <u>We are family</u> (54*)
10.	E <u>Rasmus Faber</u> (43*)
11.	L <u>Out of Reach</u> (34*)
12.	H <u>Why does it always rain on me</u> (33*)

Table 6: The results of the ranking of the song activities according to the preference

*The summary of points that each student assigned to each song. (12-the most likeable song/1-the least likeable)



■ - song activities from coursebooks
 ■ - song activities inspired by other sources

Graph 7: Comparison of preference between the songs activities from coursebooks and songs activities inspired by other sources

The correlation between the students' answers and the ranking according to the degree of difficulty can also be used to interpret their perception of the activities. As it is clear from table 7 students considered the song activities inspired by sources other than coursebooks (all of these are underlined in the table 7) to be more difficult than song activities from the coursebooks.

The reasons for choosing them as the most difficult ones were as follows:

- Hard Sun (D)

The song was unknown for the majority of the class and they were not given the lyrics for the first task. The follow-up task was in a form of a project (one week duration) – students had to take pictures based on the drawings and notes they took while listening to the song in the class.

-Rasmus Faber (E)

There were three songs used for this activity and the songs were unknown for the students. Also, the lyrics were not provided for the first task.

- Lazy Song (F)

Students had to create their own lyrics based on the actual lyrics of the song. They were told to try to make their lyrics funny and stick to the rhymes.

- Out of reach (L)

Students had the lyrics, but the text was not complete. They had to fill in the missing words, but it was not indicated in the text where were the words missing.

The reasons for choosing the least difficult ones were:

- California Dreaming (I)

The task was rather easy and undemanding – students had to circle the right words in the lyrics, but the pairs of words were completely different (such as: blue/brown) and that made it very easy to detect the right one.

- Why does it always rain on me (H)

This song activity was composed of the same task as the previous one - the task was rather easy and undemanding – students had to circle the right words in the lyrics, but the pairs of words were completely different (such as: close/open) and that made it very easy to detect the right one.

- We are family (B)

The task was rather undemanding – students had the lyrics with some of the words highlighted – they had to correct the wrong ones. Also, it was a notoriously known song; students have heard it many times before.

- Skater Boy (A)

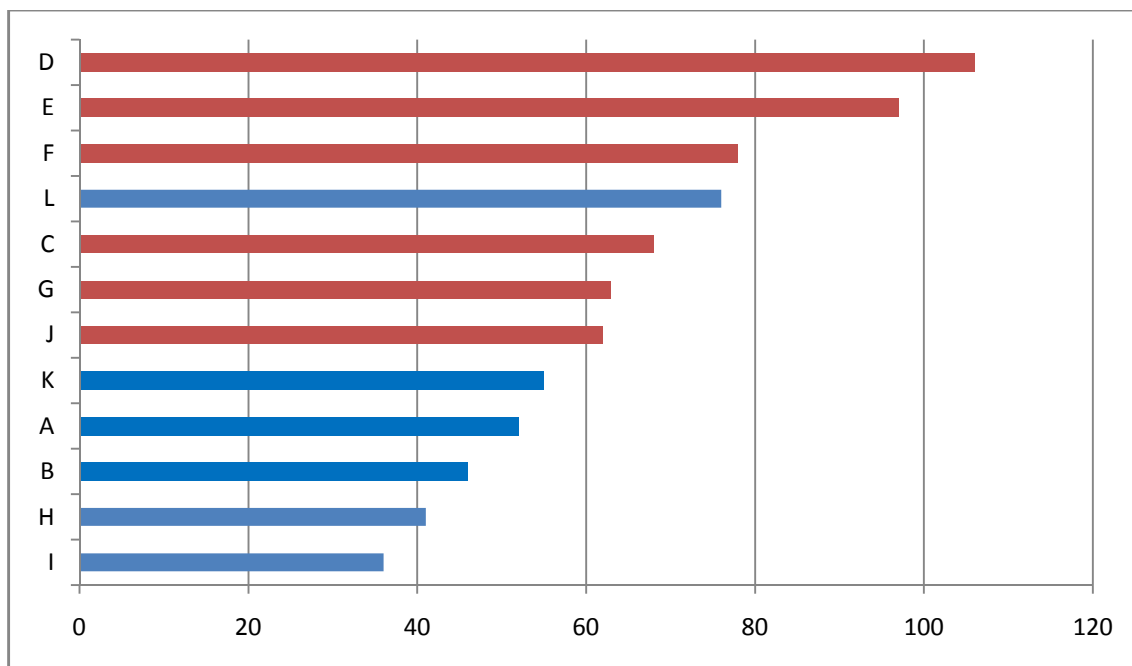
This was another notoriously known song, students have heard it many times before, and many of them knew the lyrics by heart.

To summarize students’ perception of the degree of difficulty of the song activities, it can be said that if they knew the songs, the tasks were easier for them, whereas if they did not know the songs, they considered the tasks as more difficult. Furthermore, they found it easy to circle the correct word or to correct the words already written. These were the most common tasks in the song activities presented in the coursebooks, which presupposes that the students are used to them and therefore developed a certain degree of proficiency in this type of the tasks.

1.	D <u>Hard Sun</u> (106*)
2.	E <u>Rasmus Faber</u> (97*)
3.	F <u>Lazy Song</u> (78*)
4.	L Out of reach (76*)
5.	C <u>Upside down</u> (68*)
6.	G <u>Lego House</u> (63*)
7.	J <u>Stereo Hearts</u> (62*)
8.	K Manic Monday (55*)
9.	A Skater Boy (52*)
10.	B We are family (46*)
11.	H Why does it always rain on me (41*)
12.	I California Dreaming (36*)

Table 7: The results of the ranking of the song activities according to the degree of difficulty

*The summary of points that each student assigned to each song. (12-the most difficult song/1-the least difficult)



- - course books' activities
- - song activities inspired by other sources

Graph 8: Comparison of the degree of difficulty between the songs activities from the coursebooks and the songs activities inspired by other sources

5.6 Analysis of results

Several interesting findings were reached in the process of the practical part. Six song activities were chosen from the course books and another six were created (with the inspiration from other sources) and then tried out with a group of ten students evaluated them afterwards.

The student course books for intermediate level contain some song activities – maximum one song activity per unit. However, all the activities are structured quite similarly and aim mostly at developing listening skill with addition of their topic used for discussion or the focus on language form. They seem not to exploit the song to the fullest.

On the other hand, other sources such as Music and Song by Murphy and Singing Grammar by Hancock provide the outline for almost unlimited potential that songs have when they are creatively transformed into activities. They involve physical activity, develop students' creativity and are aimed at several areas of language development at the same time.

As the results of the research suggest, song activities generate positive atmosphere in the class because students are more actively involved, more eager to work and lose the fear to speak. These all together assure better learning. However, students declared their preference of those song activities that were created for the purpose of this research as they found them more amusing, innovatory, creative and appealing than the song activities from course books.

Furthermore, students' evaluations showed that the level of difficulty should be carefully set because every demanding or undemanding activities which are either very demanding or undemanding are demotivating.

This research has a great potential to be expanded. Throughout the process of writing and researching, some questions that should be further explored appeared. For example, the effectivity of this method or the possibility of unconscious language acquisition through the use of songs. It seems that the field has only been examined in a rather narrow extend so far.

Conclusion

The thesis deals with the use of songs and music in teaching English as foreign language and its effect on the chosen group of students at intermediate level. Its aims were the analysis of the song activities presented in various sources, the creation of the song activities, their pilotage in the classroom and subsequent evaluation. All of these were successfully fulfilled.

In the theoretical part of the research the background of listening comprehension skill is presented. Furthermore, the language development at intermediate level is defined, as it is the level of the chosen group of the students. The last section of the theoretical part is essential, since it deals with the use of songs in teaching English, specifically with the reasons for using them. The most important ones for the purpose of this research were the potential to enhance positive learning atmosphere and thus the increase in students' motivation. The classification of song activities is also provided – for better orientation in the vast possibility of their formulation. All of these parts contributed to better understanding of listening comprehension as such and of the great potential that song activities have when integrated in the teaching of listening comprehension.

The practical part covers the analysis of the song activities presented in three different course books at intermediate level and compares them with the song activities presented in other sources. This comparison shows that the activities from other sources are more versatile and involve physical activity, develop students' creativity and are aimed at several areas of language development at the same time. Whereas, the song activities from course books are rather uniformly structured, aimed mostly at developing listening comprehension and language form or use the topic of the song for discussion. This leads to the realization that the songs have wider range of possible use than it is commonly known among students and teachers.

Six song activities from the course books were chosen for the succeeding research along with another six which were formulated based on the theory presented in the other sources. These twelve song activities were then carried out by the chosen group of students and subsequently evaluated by them. Their evaluation shows that the reasons for using song activities, provided in the theoretical part of this diploma thesis can be successfully applied in practice. The group of students viewed the song activities

very positively, highlighting the positive atmosphere, innovativeness and the increase of the motivation to learn.

In addition to all of the above mentioned, it is important to highlight that this work had a great impact on my personal teaching experience. The creation of the song activities was especially enriching and the possibility to carry them out in the classroom was very beneficial for my personal growth as a teacher trainee. The feedback I received shows that the students highly appreciated that they were given the chance to become enthusiastically and authentically involved. I can surely benefit in my future carrier as an English teacher from the knowledge I gained and the findings I reached in the process of creating this diploma thesis.

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