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MASTER'S THESIS

Teaching English Through English: Giving Instructions at A1-A2 Level Students

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Odevzdáním této diplomové práce na téma ‘Vyučování angličtiny skrze angličtinu: Zadávání instrukcí v hodinách u studentů na úrovni A1 – A2’ potvrzuji, že jsem ji vypracovala pod vedením vedoucího práce samostatně za použití v práci uvedených pramenů a literatury. Dále potvrzuji, že tato práce nebyla využita k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

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Abstract

This diploma thesis aims at presenting principles and techniques of giving instructions during English lessons and their practical use. It stresses the awareness of the importance of delivering clear and understandable instructions and of their influence on students' comprehension. Theoretical part of this thesis describes general rules of giving instructions and focuses on instruction techniques suitable for students' learning styles. It also deals with the language of instruction appropriate for A1 – A2 level students. Practical part consists of applying the theoretical principals in practice through an action research. The aim of the practical part is the improvement of the author's instructions. The findings have shown that modifying the language of instruction as well as using various verbal and non-verbal instruction techniques promotes the students' comprehension of instructions.

Key words:

Language acquisition, comprehensible input, language of instruction, students' comprehension, learning styles, gestures, action research, instructions

Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce si klade za cíl představit zásady a techniky instruování v hodinách angličtiny a jejich praktické použití. Připomíná důležitost jasných a srozumitelných instrukcí a to, jak ovlivňují porozumění studentů. Teoretická část této práce popisuje obecná pravidla zadávání instrukcí a zaměřuje se na techniky zadávání instrukcí vhodné pro učební styly studentů. Také se věnuje tomu, jak jazyk instrukcí přizpůsobit studentům na jazykové úrovni A1 – A2. Praktická část se zaměřuje na akční výzkum, ve kterém autorka aplikuje výše uvedené principy. Cílem praktické části je autorčino zdokonalení se v zadávání instrukcí. Výsledky akčního výzkumu ukazují, že studenti lépe rozumí instrukcím, když je vyučující přizpůsobí jejich jazykové úrovni a když instrukce zadává pomocí rozmanitých verbálních i neverbálních technik.

Klíčová slova:

Osvojování jazyka, *comprehensible input* – srozumitelný jazykový vstup, jazyk instrukcí, porozumění studenty, učební styly, gesta, akční výzkum, instrukce

Contents

Introduction

How can I improve myself in delivering instructions in English language teaching so that my students understand me? And how can I make sure that they really understand me? Does it always have to be me, the teacher, who gives the instructions? Those were the very questions I asked myself and my interest in this matter led me to choosing this to be the topic of my thesis. Firstly, I wanted to explore instruction techniques which would promote my students' autonomy and cater for their learning styles. Secondly, I wanted to discover more revealing ways of finding out whether my students understand my instructions rather than just asking the classical teacher question *'Do you understand?*'.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to explore the theory of teaching English as a foreign language with the focus on providing instructions and to find out whether I have improved in delivering instructions, and to what extent, and how students comprehend all issued instructions in the lessons.

Theoretical part of this thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one explores the role of instructions in learning English as a foreign language giving reasons why students benefit from being exposed to instructions in English. Chapter two focuses on how to effectively use verbal instruction techniques. Chapter three deals with non-verbal instruction techniques and how to combine them with the verbal ones. Chapter four explores verbal and non-verbal instruction techniques in connection with students' learning styles. Chapter five focuses on techniques of checking understanding of instructions. Chapter six concludes the theoretical part.

Practical part introduces an action research which was realized in my own class. For the purpose of evaluation I have created a student questionnaire and an observation sheet for my mentor. I also reflect on my teaching after each lesson. With the use of these questionnaires, I go deeper under the surface and find out whether my students understand my instructions. The aims of the practical part are to find out about their opinions, reservations and possible benefits or problems they may encounter.

I hope to have gathered valuable data and information regarding me giving instructions which will help me to improve in my future teaching practice.

THEORETICAL PART

1 The Role of Instructions in Learning English as a Foreign Language

We use instructions to control and direct situations where unambiguous directions or prohibitions are necessary. A good example of this would be introducing a learning task which involves some degree of independent student activity. The question is whether to introduce the task in Czech, in English or in both languages and methodologists' views differ in this respect (Cohen & Manion, 1995, p. 228). Meanwhile Prodromou (1992, p. 63) views the use of Czech as a support and security for less confident students, Scrivener (2005, p. 90) suggests that it is possible to use only English even though it may be problematic sometimes due to the quantity and over-complexity of the language used. At the same time, however, he supports the use of both languages if the teacher can speak the mother tongue of her[1] students (2014, p. 69). Ur (2012, p. 16) on the other hand, prefers the use of English considering the teacher checks understanding of the instructions.

This chapter, however, focuses only on the benefits of delivering instructions in English in order to expose our students to as much English as possible and to maximise English acquisition and learning.

1.1 The importance of English instructions

This sub-chapter focuses on the main reasons why students benefit from being exposed to classroom instructions in English.

We do not exactly know how people learn foreign languages although many researchers such as H. Douglas Brown, Merrill Swain and Lydia White have done a great deal of research into the subject. One of the researchers is also Stephen Krashen[2] who has introduced Theory of Second Language Acquisition which involves five hypotheses originating in studies of how we learn our mother tongue. These hypotheses have had a great impact on the practice of language teaching (Harmer, 1996, p. 31). In the following sub-chapter, however, I am going to deal only with his three hypotheses which are relevant to giving instructions in the target language. These are the acquisition/learning hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis.

[1] For simplicity's sake, I am going to refer to a teacher in a female gender throughout this thesis.
[2] A teacher of Spanish in California. He introduced his hypotheses in 1977 and called them the Natural Approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 261).

1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses

I have chosen Krashen's hypotheses because I find them highly inspirational for the delivery of instructions and they make me think about what is going on inside my students. For example, they lead me to asking myself the following questions: *'How do my students feel when I deliver instructions? Do they understand me? What can I do to help them cope with this crucial moment?'*

The acquisition/learning hypothesis

This hypothesis argues that people have two different and independent ways of becoming foreign language users: they can acquire and they can learn. Even though the sections below explain each process separately, it should be noted that in real life learners tend to combine them (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 26).

Acquisition

We can define acquisition as the process children use to 'pick up' their mother tongue. It is subconscious because learners are under the impression that they are doing something else than acquiring, such as listening to the teacher's instructions (ibid.). Furthermore, Krashen and Terrell (1983, p. 26) argue that the results of language acquisition are also subconscious. For instance, we are usually not aware of the grammar rules or vocabulary which we have acquired. Instead, we have a 'feel' for what is correct and what is incorrect. For example, we often use a certain expression or grammar in appropriate context without realizing why we have used it. However, somehow we 'know' that what we have said is correct.

Learning

Learning, on the other hand, is defined as conscious, or explicit knowledge about language. In this case learners study items of language in isolation (Harmer, 1996, p. 33). For example, this opposite process focuses on learning grammatical rules, vocabulary, pronunciation and orthography. It also involves being able to talk about the language and obtaining error corrections from the teacher (Long & Richards, 1987, p. 28).

All in all, the acquisition/learning hypothesis claims that our students can still acquire English as a second language and that the ability to 'pick up' English does not disappear at teenage years. Instead, students can still acquire language even if they are teenagers. The acquisition/learning hypothesis, however, does not state that teenagers can acquire perfectly

or that they can speak like native English speakers[3]. Moreover, it also does not specify what aspects of language teenage speakers acquire or learn (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 26).

The acquisition/learning hypothesis is relevant to giving instructions since it raises awareness of the importance of using English for 'real' authentic communication in the classroom. Then this 'real' communication becomes part of the curriculum since our students start to subconsciously acquire the language. And this happens before the students start working on a task during which they consciously learn. In other words, this particular hypothesis makes me realize that when I deliver English instructions I promote acquisition in my students. As a result, I should not only concentrate on explicit teaching but what also matters is how I communicate with my class.

The input hypothesis

If we want an acquisition to be successful, we need to expose our students to the language. The term input represents the language that the learners hear or read. The input hypothesis argues that learners can acquire language on their own if they are exposed to a great deal of *comprehensible input*, i. e. input that is very slightly above their language level. The purpose of comprehensible input is that students are most likely to acquire new language if it is understandable and at the same time a little above their current level. That way they have to think and try to figure out the form, meaning and use of any unfamiliar items. We can also call this *roughly-tuned input* [4] (Harmer, 1996, pp. 33-34). But how do the learners understand? Long and Richards (1987, p. 38) argue that what helps the learners is their knowledge of the world and the extra-linguistic context. Therefore, they suggest that it is necessary for a learner to receive comprehensible input in situations which involve genuine communication. While it is true that instructions are genuine communication, the question is whether to deliver them in comprehensible input and methodologists' views differ in this regard. For instance, whereas Long and Richards (ibid.) support giving instructions in the comprehensible input (i.e. roughly-tuned input), Scrivener (2014, p. 70), Ur (2012, p. 16), Harmer (1999, p. 4) and Prodromou (1992, p. 92) suggest using the simplest and clearest graded language so that the instructions are fully understood (i.e. finely-tuned input). They

[3] According to the critical period hypothesis it is possible to acquire a language flawlessly only before puberty (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 26).

[4] The opposite is finely-tuned input, i.e. language which is precisely at the learners' level. This finely-tuned input is used in conscious learning (see section The acquisition/learning hypothesis above, passage Learning) (Harmer, 1996, p. 34).

support their argument by saying that students' misunderstanding of the activity could cause great difficulties and it would hinder the lesson's procedure.

In addition, Long and Richards also argue that giving instructions in the target language is most suitable for lower level students who are not yet able to understand the foreign language outside the class. In other words, '[…] the goal of instructions is not to produce advanced native-like speakers but to bring students to the point where they can begin to take advantage of the natural input available to them […]' (1987, p. 40).

From my perspective this hypothesis is closely related to giving instructions. It is because it stresses the importance of exposing our students to as much English input as possible and instructions lend themselves easily to it. In other words, it would be a pity not to make use of them and deliver them only in Czech. I personally prefer issuing instructions in finely-tuned input so that my students fully understand them and this moment does not hinder the activity the instructions are for. However, I am aware of the fact that even though students in one class are labelled to be on the same level, every class is in fact a mixed ability class, i.e. there are stronger and weaker students there. As a result, when I deliver instructions in finely-tuned input, there will be students who will feel them as rather roughly-tuned. Consequently, there will always be students who will either benefit from acquiring or practising.

The affective filter hypothesis

This hypothesis argues that our emotions play an important role in acquiring a foreign language. The affective filter can be either low or high. Learners with a low affective filter tend to seek and acquire more input than those with a high affective filter, i.e. those who feel any kind of emotional discomfort such as fear or embarrassment (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 266). Krashen (1986, p. 13) suggests that teenagers tend to experience a mental block due to the emotional and physiological development which they go through. Therefore, the acquisition process is not as smooth as it is in the childhood and this poses a great challenge for teachers.

However, while it is true that low or zero anxiety may be best for acquisition, Krashen (1986, p. 25) argues that moderate anxiety may be optimal for language learning (see section The acquisition/learning hypothesis above, passage Learning). He supports this opinion by suggesting that a certain degree of anxiety is part of a school life and that it can positively stimulate students' learning process.

Cohen and Manion (1995, p. 228) also suggest that the manner in which we deliver instructions is important as it can positively contribute to a low affective filter. If we phrase instructions in a positive, rather than a negative manner, the students tend to accept them more gracefully. Accordingly, *'Leave the room as tidy as you found it'* in preference to *'Don't leave the room in such a mess this week.'* Or *'Don't worry, this exercise is easy and I'm sure you will manage it very well'* rather than *'This exercise is difficult and you will need to concentrate a lot.'* In other words, it is important to develop a firm warmth, or a warm firmness because teachers should avoid inducing fear.

Moreover, another important factor in reducing our students' anxiety and fear is the extent to which they understand our instructions. In particular if we give instructions simply, clearly and calmly we can significantly lower our students' anxiety and fear and improve the classroom's atmosphere (ibid., 298).

It is very important to consider this hypothesis when it comes to delivering instructions because teachers are responsible for classroom atmosphere. Therefore, it is up to the teacher to create a safe learning environment in which students can easily follow instructions. That is to say that issuing instructions in finely-tuned input to make students feel at ease should be a priority (see section The input hypothesis above).

2 Verbal Instructions: Language Modification and its Role in Giving Instructions

If we want English acquisition to be successful, it is not enough to just expose our students to as much English as possible in a stress-free environment. We also need to consider the level of English we expose our students to. Therefore, this chapter deals with three approaches to language modification – the input modification, the interaction modification and modification of information choice. These are commonly used by English language teachers to help their students better understand the instructions (Lynch, 2016, p. 54).

By language modification we mean adjusting teacher classroom language to the language level of the students, i. e. finely-tuned input (see footnote number 4 on page 12). In other words the teacher should use appropriate classroom language so that her students understand her (Lynch, 2016, p. Introduction). Furthermore, modified i. e. graded language is still real English. That is to say that when the teacher modifies her own language, she still uses a version of English which is recognisably accurate and acceptable (Scrivener, 2014, p. 66).

Moreover, some teachers adopt a language level which is very slightly higher than the perceived general level of the class, i.e. roughly-tuned input. This idea is influenced by Professor Stephen Krashen's theory of comprehensible input (see sub-chapter 1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses, section The input hypothesis) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 68).

2.1 The input modification

The input modification focuses on forms of modified, i.e. usually simplified level of specific aspects of communicative competence the teacher exposes her students to. It may be used in a spoken or written form. Concerning e.g. spoken instructions, it is a simplified level of specific aspects of communicative competence the teacher uses when she talks to her students. Main aspects that the teacher modifies are those of organizational competence (Bachman, 1990, p. 87). Thus the modifications are: modifications of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation (Lynch, 2016, pp. 40-41) and modifications of noise and quantity of message (Scrivener, 2014, p. 66). Moreover, it is also advisable to increase the use of gestures and facial expressions (see chapter 3 Non-verbal Instructions: Combining the Language of Instructions with Gestures) (ibid.).

Modification of vocabulary

Not only should the teacher be aware of the specific vocabulary needs of her students, but also she should be aware of her students' vocabulary knowledge. That is important so that she knows how to modify the vocabulary she wants to use. In other words, the teacher should pay attention to the difficulty of the chosen items of lexis and find the right expressions the students will understand (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 180).

Consequently Scrivener (2014, p. 66) suggests avoiding lexis that the teacher has not yet covered with the students. Similarly, Lynch (2016, p. 42) suggests using more common vocabulary the students are familiar with and he gives the following example of a modification of the word 'weaver':

Native: 'a weaver'
Advanced: 'a weaver + he used to weave straw hats'
Intermediate: 'a weaver + he made hats and baskets'
Elementary: 'an old man who made hats and sold hats'

Furthermore, Lynch (ibid., pp. 42-43) argues that the teacher should avoid the use of idioms and he gives the following example of a modification of the idiom 'the penny dropped':

Native: 'the penny dropped'
Advanced: 'it dawned on him'
Intermediate: 'and then he realized'
Elementary: 'he thought + and he realized + it was easy'

Modification of grammar

Scrivener (2014, p. 66) and Willis (1993, p. Introduction xiv) both suggest avoiding grammar that the students are not familiar with i.e. grammar in the students' textbook that is yet to be covered. Moreover, Cohen and Manion (1995, p. 87) argue that when teaching students with a low level of communicative competence the teacher should avoid using complex sentences which involve subordinate clauses. For example, such clauses are introduced by words like 'but', 'if' and 'although'. Instead she should use simple grammatical constructions such as a subject and a predicate.

Furthermore, Lynch (2016, p. 41) argues that the teacher should increase the use of present tense so that even the weakest students in class are able to follow what she says (see Appendix 1a, Lesson plan number 1, Activity column, 'Find someone who', 'What a teacher does' column).

Modification of pronunciation

When the teacher issues instructions, she should also modify her pronunciation so that her students find her speech intelligible. In other words, the teacher should help her students to perceive sounds in a way that she modifies the following aspects of her pronunciation: sounds, stress, rhythm, connected speech and sentence stress (Kenworthy, 1994, p. 1).

Linkage of sounds

It is important that that the teacher slightly pauses between each word instead of moving smoothly from one word to the next. For example, if she pronounced the phrase 'not at all' hastily, students might perceive the last word of the phrase as 'tall' and that could hinder her instructions (ibid., pp. 9–10).

Word stress

When pronouncing a stressed syllable, the teacher should say it slightly louder by holding the vowel a bit longer or pronouncing the consonant very clearly. That way she gives the syllable stress i. e. prominence (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994, p. 38).

Rhythm

The teacher should follow the natural rhythm English has. That involves respecting the tendency for the strong beats to fall on words which carry a semantic meaning and for the weak beats to fall on words with a grammatical function (Kenworthy, 1994, p. 10). For instance, the instruction *'**What** do you **think** of it?'* has a 'waltz rhythm': **DA** da da **Da** da da (Hughes, 2005, p. 26).

Features of fluent connected speech

The teacher's speed of delivery should be slower and clearer than normally. That is to say that we should limit using features of fluent connected speech, such as assimilation[5], elision[6] and weak forms[7]. This section focuses on these three features of connected speech because they are most likely to confuse A1 - A2[8] level students (Scrivener, 2014, p. 66). Students of this English language proficiency are in my action research in the practical part.

[5] Assimilation means a change of a sound in continuous speech (Volín, 2002, p. 67).
[6] Elision means dropping a sound (ibid., p. 28).
[7] Weak forms are syllable sounds which become unstressed in continuous speech and are often then pronounced as a schwa sound, i.e. /ə/ (ibid.).
[8] These levels of a foreign language proficiency are two of the six levels of proficiency, which are accepted as a European standard for grading a learner's language proficiency. It has been established by the Council of Europe in the document the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Europe, 2001, p. 1).

Firstly, let us compare an instruction pronounced with and without assimilation. For instance, if we want to say *'Would you look at me, please?'* we had better pronounce the words 'would' and 'you' separately and say /**wʊd jʊ** lʊk æt miː pliːs/ rather than run them together and say / **wʊdʒʊ** lʊk æt miː pliːs/ (Willis, 1993, p. 88).

Secondly, let us compare an instruction pronounced with and without elision. For example, if we want to say *'Do the next exercise, please'* we should pay attention to pronouncing the consonant "t" in the word "next" and say /duː ðə neks**t** eksəsɑɪz/ rather than omit the sound and say /duː ðə neks**(t)** eksəsɑɪz/ (ibid.).

Thirdly, here is a comparison of an instruction which can be pronounced with or without weak form. For instance, if we say *'Look at me'* we should pronounce 'at' in its strong form and say /lʊk **æ**t miː/ rather than pronounce its weak form and say /lʊk **ə**t miː/ (ibid.).

Sentence stress

The teacher should give more prominence to instruction key words in order to highlight them. Conversely, she should give less weight to words which are less important (Kenworthy, 1994, p. 11). For example, in the instruction *'Get together in groups of five'* the teacher may give extra stress to 'five' meaning 'not three, not four but five' (Hughes, 2005, p. 27).

Modification of noise

What is meant by noise is any unnecessary wrapping around the key message that may cause comprehension problems and lead to confusing our students. In other words, the clarity of what the teacher says is affected by language she uses that is not central to the core message. Noise could be words such as '*you know*' or whole sentences which add nothing to the message such as '*Well, what I want you to do is…*'. Moreover, even commands about other things, such as discipline issues, may add distracting pieces of information (Scrivener, 2014, p. 67).

Modification of quantity of message

If the teacher decides to modify the quantity of message, she should aim to give very brief instructions and avoid much longer ones (ibid.). With reference to the above section Modification of noise, this section gives an example of two different ways of giving instructions for the activity 'Find someone who'. The first example is an unmodified version of instructions and the second one is a modified one. What the teacher wants her students to do is to mingle and ask one another questions to fill in 'Find someone who' questionnaires

(Prodromou, 1992, p. 92) (for a modified version of the instructions for the activity 'Find someone who', see Appendix 1a, Lesson plan number 1, Activity column, 'Find someone who', 'What a teacher does' column).

Unmodified instructions

'*So, could you please – what I wanted you to do was to mingle and ask other students in the class the questions in the chart, and write their name in the 'name' column'* (ibid.).

Modified instructions

'*OK everyone. Stand up and walk around the classroom. Ask other students in the class the questions on this paper, and write their name in the 'name column'* (ibid.).

2.2 The interaction modification

The interaction modification approach focuses on the interaction between the teacher and her students to increase the students' comprehension. Specifically it deals with the general interaction patterns between the teacher and her class. Consequently this approach emphasizes the process of communication in which both the teacher and her students play their part (Lynch, 2016, p. 43).

The section below discusses types of interaction modifications from the teacher's point of view: confirmation check, comprehension check, clarification request, repetition, reformulation, completion and backtracking (ibid., pp. 43–49).

Confirmation check

It is important that the teacher makes sure that what she has understood is what the student means. For instance, the teacher may ask *'Are you asking me where to fill in the information from the tape?'* (ibid.).

Comprehension check

The teacher should make sure that the student has understood what she means. For example, the teacher can ask *'ok?', 'are you ready', 'right?', 'all right?'* (for further details see chapter 5 Checking Understanding of Instructions) (ibid.).

Clarification request

It is a good idea to ask the student to explain or rephrase what the teacher has just said (for further details see sub-chapter 5.3 Getting students to summarise the instructions) (ibid.).

Repetition

The teacher may repeat her words or those of her student. This is very common with low-proficiency students (ibid.).

Reformulation

The teacher can rephrase the content of what she has just said. It tends to be the most frequent with elementary students. Here is an example of how the teacher can paraphrase what she has just said: *'If there is a problem, call "stop" immediately.'* Or *'If you don't understand you must say "stop" immediately'* (ibid.).

Completion

The teacher may complete the student's utterance. For example, a student may point to a fill-in exercise and ask: *'Excuse me, what we will…*(pause)*?'* And the teacher may complete the student's question: *'You mean write?'* (ibid.).

Backtracking

The teacher returns to a point in the conversation, up to which she believes the student has understood her. Then she explains what is unclear to the student. For instance, '*You have to listen to the tape and finish these diagrams. Is that clear?'* If the student says 'yes' then she continues with a clarification of what has not been understood by the student (ibid.).

2.3 Modification of information choice

This modification approach focuses on the kind of information the teacher uses when she talks to her students. Specifically she selects more concrete and more immediate topics in the classroom conversation in order to increase her students' comprehension. Also, she provides her students with more background detail and she selects what she will tell them about the language (Lynch, 2016, p. 49).

The section below deals with the following four types of modifications of information choice: increasing the quantity of descriptive detail, stressing logical links, filling in assumed gaps in socio-cultural knowledge (ibid.) and using the metalanguage (Harmer, 1999, p. 46).

Descriptive detail

Increasing the quantity of descriptive detail means that the teacher delivers the instructions in more detail to help her lower-proficiency students follow them. Also, it is useful to repeat the instructions more often. However, this type of modification has one disadvantage: offering detailed instructions may not fulfil its aim of increasing our students'

comprehension. It is because we may overload our students with too much information. One way of avoiding this danger is to encourage our students to follow our instructions step by step (see appendix 2a, Lesson plan number 2, Activity column, Comprehension sentences, 'What a teacher does' column) (ibid., pp. 49-51).

Logical links

The teacher needs to focus on making logical links explicit when delivering instructions. One way of achieving this is to deliver the instructions in a sequence i.e. the order in which we want our students to follow them. Another option is to explicitly say why we want our students to do a certain step in the instruction. For example, we can say '*Open your exercise books so that you can write'* (ibid., pp. 51-52).

Assumed socio-cultural gaps

What we mean by this is providing extra socio-cultural information for students. Let us take the case of gestures, for example. Whereas some gestures are universal i.e. they mean the same thing all over the world, others differ in their meanings based on the country in which they are used. Since gestures are often used when delivering instructions to lower-level students, it is important to pay attention to the cultural background of our students and provide an explanation if necessary (ibid., pp. 52-53).

The use of metalanguage

When teaching students with a low level of communicative competence we need to carefully decide what piece of metalanguage to bring attention to. Let us have a look at the issue of forms and meanings, for example. The present continuous can refer to:

- The present – e.g. *'I'm not listening'*
- The future – e.g. *'I'm seeing him tomorrow'*
- A temporary uncompleted event – *'They are enjoying the weather'*
- A series of completed events – *'He's always putting his foot in it'*

As we can see from the examples above, we use the same basic form i.e. the present continuous to express different notions of time and duration. However, the teacher should not tell her A1-A2 level students about all these concepts. Instead she should tell them only that we use the present continuous tense to talk about a temporary uncompleted event (Harmer, 1999, p. 46). Similarly, a word may mean more things, too. The word 'book' can for example mean:

- Something to read
- To reserve
- A list of bets

The teacher, however, should mention only the primary meaning of this word in order not to confuse or overload her A1-A2 level students (Scrivener, 2005, p. 234).

3 Non-verbal Instructions: Combining the Language of Instructions with Gestures

While it is true that adjusting the teacher's speech to the language level of her students plays an important role in the students' comprehension, it may not always be enough. Gestures may also enhance our students' understanding of instructions and they should not be neglected. Therefore, this chapter focuses on selected gestures which the teacher may accompany with her verbal language instructions to make them clearer and more affective for A1 – A2 level students. In other words, the teacher usually uses verbal language instructions together with her gestures. Consequently, she can save time by using gestures for the following two reasons. Firstly, they allow her to say less and that may help to make the instructions clearer. Secondly, gestures provide visual support which helps the students to understand what she says (see sub-chapter 4.1 Visual learners). However, while it is true that the teacher tends to use oral instructions and gestures simultaneously, there are moments in which just using a gesture is sufficient enough and that brings three advantages. Firstly, the teacher may save herself repeating basic instructions. Secondly, she increases opportunities for learner talk (Harmer, 1996, p. 53). Thirdly, she does not interrupt her students when they are talking. For example, a student may talk about the past and instead of using the past participle 'went' he or she says 'go'. In this moment the teacher may just use her hand/finger and point back over her shoulder to indicate past. In case of a mistake the student corrects himself or herself and continues talking. In case of an error he or she just continues talking without any interruption (Scrivener, 2014, p. 63).

Not only do gestures promote comprehension of instructions, but also they play another important role. They intensify communication between the teacher and her students. Specifically, students are very sensitive to nonverbal signals such as gestures and teachers may not always be aware of how much they communicate with their bodily behaviour. For example, gestures may indicate the extent to which the teacher is involved or uninvolved, likes or dislikes or feels superior. Therefore, teachers should pay as much attention to gestures as they pay to oral instructions (Cohen & Manion, 1995, p. 259).

3.1 General guidance for using instruction gestures

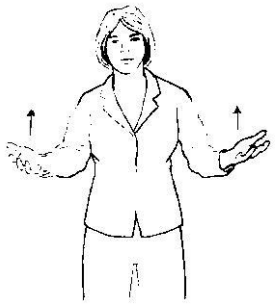
- We should make sure that our gestures are clear and we should make them confidently (Prodromou, 1992, p. 58).

- It is advisable to select bigger, wider gestures, rather than closed-up ones. That way even the students in the back rows will be able to see them (ibid.).
- We need to remember that students see our gestures from the opposite viewpoint from the one we have. Therefore, it is important to visualise what the students can see from their angle, and adapt our gestures if it is necessary (Scrivener, 2014, p. 64).
- Our gestures should communicate interpersonal closeness and warmth that contribute to creating a positive classroom atmosphere (see sub-chapter 1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses, section The affective filter hypothesis). Specifically, we should make our gestures in a way which signals that we are approachable and available for communication (Moskowitz, 1978, p. 24).
- With reference to the point made above, both Scrivener (2014, p. 129) and Ur (2012, p. 17) suggest planning the gestures in advance. This is particularly helpful if we are not comfortable using them i.e. if we half do them or even if we feel embarrassed when using them. A good preparation will help us build our confidence. Ur (ibid.) even recommends practising them in front of a mirror and supports this by saying that '[…] teachers' gestures may not always be as clear to their students as they are to themselves.' Moreover, Scrivener (2005, p. 95) also encourages teachers to come up with their own gestures when preparing them in advance together with verbal instructions.
- Making gestures involves three basic stages: (1) Making the gesture, (2) Holding it for a while and (3) Stopping the gesture. As far as the stage number two is concerned, it is important that we allow enough time for our gestures to be seen before we stop them. This is particularly important for key gestures which we should hold for at least four or five seconds (for an example, see sub-chapter 3.1.10 Signposting gestures) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 64).
- We need to be patient and allow our students time to get used to our gestures so that they can associate them with instructions. For example, after we have used a gesture a few times together with the oral instruction, we will notice that we can reduce the words we need to say – or even say nothing at all. For instance, the gesture for 'make pairs' together with the word 'pairs' may be sufficient enough to get our students organized (see sub-chapter 3.1.5'Get into pairs') (ibid).

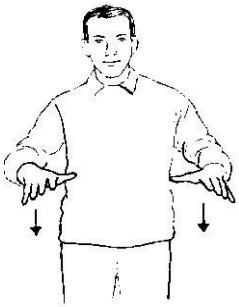
The sub-chapters below focus on examples of gestures which have been selected based on the most common verbal language instructions used with A1 – A2 level students[9] (Harmer, 1996, p. 53). The examples of gestures have been selected from Scrivener (2005, 2014) and Willis (1993) because they have presented them in a way which is very useful and inspiring for teachers.

3.1.1 'Stand up' and 'Sit down'

When the teacher enters the classroom and expects her students to stand up she may accompany her oral instructions by holding her hands out in front with palms up, pushing upward (see Picture 1 below). Conversely, when the teacher wants the students to sit down she may hold her hands out in front with palms down, waggling downwards (see Picture 2 below) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 57).



Picture 1: meaning Stand up (ibid.)



Picture 2: meaning Sit down (ibid.)

3.1.2 'Open/close your books'

When the teacher wants her students to open or close their books, she may take a book in her hand and open/close it to physically demonstrate what she wants her students to do (see Picture 3 below) (Willis, 1993, p. 1).

Picture 3: meaning Open/close your books (ibid.)

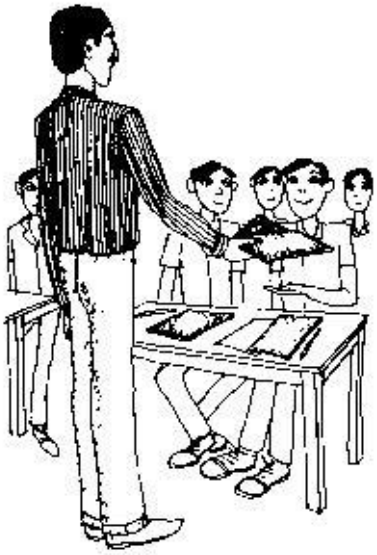
3.1.3 'Give out/collect the books'

If we want a student to help us with distributing books to the class, we may hold the books in one arm meanwhile taking the top book in our hand, making a distributing movement with

[9] The students of this proficiency level are in my action research.

it. It is important that we face the relevant student so that he or she can comfortably see our gesture (see Picture 4 below) (ibid., p. 25). Conversely, if we ask a student to collect the books, we can collect one or two books from the student's desk, demonstrating what we want him or her to do (see Picture 5 below) (ibid., p. 2) (see sub-chapter 4.3.1 Students assist the teacher).

Picture 4: meaning Give out the books (ibid., p. 25)



Picture 5: meaning Collect the books (ibid., 2)

3.1.4 'Work on your own'

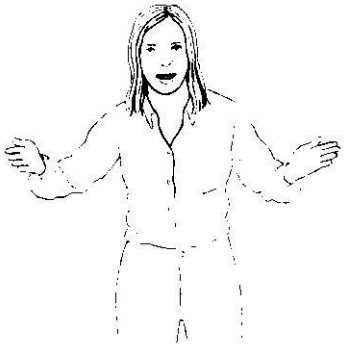
We bring our hands apart and make sure that our palms face in. In order to make this gesture clearly and easily we may imagine that we want to 'fold' our hands around the individual (see Picture 6 below) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 57).

Picture 6: meaning Work on your own (ibid.)

3.1.5 'Get into pairs'

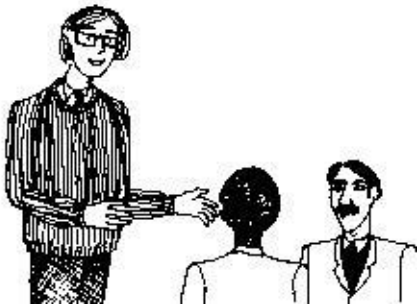
There are three possible non-verbal ways of getting our students into pairs. Firstly, we may bring our hands wide apart to shape a pair. This gesture is convenient for teaching larger classes where even the students in the back rows need to comfortably see our gestures (see Picture 7 below) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 57). Secondly, we can indicate the same idea with our index fingers which is suitable for teaching only a few students in a small class (see Picture

8 below) (Scrivener, 2005, p. 95). Moreover, if we want to choose two particular students to work together, we need to approach them from the front first and then direct our arms toward them (see Picture 9 below) (Willis, 1993, p. 59).



Picture 7: meaning Get into pairs (Scrivener, 2014, p. 57)

Picture 8: meaning Get into pairs (Scrivener, 2005, p. 95)



Picture 9: meaning You two get into pairs (Willis, 1993, p. 59)

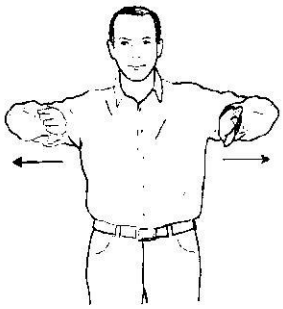
3.1.6 'Make groups of eight'

If we want to organize our students into groups of eight, we may raise our arms to the sides, keeping our elbows bent. At the same time we show eight fingers which indicate the number of the students we want to have in one group. If we want our students to form a smaller group we adjust this gesture by showing less fingers (see Picture 10 below) (Willis, 1993, p. 58).

Picture 10: meaning Make groups of eight (ibid.)

3.1.7 'Get into two teams'

In order to get our students into two teams quickly and efficiently, we can use our arms to divide the class down middle (see Picture 11 below) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 57).



Picture 11: meaning Get into two teams (ibid.)

3.1.8 'Write/speak your answers'

If we want our students to write their answers we can pretend to be holding a pen midair and wiggle with it (see Picture 12 below) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 58). Alternatively, we may hold an exercise book and a pen and pretend to be writing into the exercise book (see Picture 13 below) (Willis, 1993, p. 14). Conversely, if we want our students to speak their answers, we can place our hand in front of our lips so that we make an imaginary mouth. Then we flap our hand in a 'talking' manner (see Picture 14 below) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 57).

Picture 12: meaning Write your answers (Scrivener, 2014, p. 58)

Picture 13: meaning Write your answers (Willis, 1993, p. 14)

Picture 14: meaning Speak your answers (Scrivener, 2014, p. 57)

3.1.9 'Keep/do not keep your handout(s) secret'

A hiding handout gesture may be used if we distribute handouts before an activity but we do not want our students to show them to their classmates. We hold a handout very near our chest with the printed size of the handout toward our body (see Picture 15 below) (ibid., p. 58). Conversely, if we want our students to show their handouts to their classmates, we may neatly organize them first and then hold them in front of our chest with the printed size of the handouts toward our class (see Picture 16 below) (Willis, 1993, p. 40).

Picture 15: meaning Keep your handout secret (Scrivener, 2014, p. 58)

Picture 16: meaning Show your handouts to your classmates (Willis, 1993, p. 40)

3.1.10 Signposting gestures

We can support signposting language by holding up one, two or three fingers. Since these are key gestures we should hold them for at least four or five seconds. If we held up our fingers and then immediately withdrew them the students would probably not have enough time to process the instruction (see Picture 17, Picture 18 and Picture 19 below) (Scrivener, 2014, pp. 58-59).

Picture 17: meaning Firstly...(ibid.)

Picture 18: meaning Secondly...(ibid.)

Picture 19: meaning Finally...(ibid.)

3.1.11 'Think'

It is important to allow our students some time to process the instruction. Therefore, if we place our fist to top of our head we signal that we want our students to think about what we have just said. As a result, this gesture increases their chances of understanding the instruction (see Picture 20 below) (ibid., p. 58). Alternatively, we may place our hand to top of our head pretending to be scratching our head (see Picture 21 below) (Willis, 1993, p. 45).

Picture 20: meaning Think (Scrivener, 2014, p. 58)

Picture 21: meaning Think (Willis, 1993, p. 45)

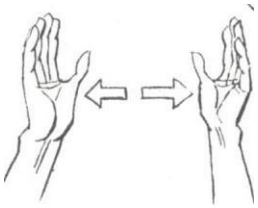
3.1.12 'What do you think?'

With this gesture we may invite our students to join in a discussion. Stretching our arm in front of us with a palm facing up encourages our students to participate in the activity. At the same time pointing our index finger towards our forehead signals that we are interested in what our students think. The overall message may be *'Now I want to hear from you.'* (see Picture 22 below) (Scrivener, 2005, p. 95).

Picture 22: meaning What do you think? (ibid.)

3.1.13 'Give a longer answer'

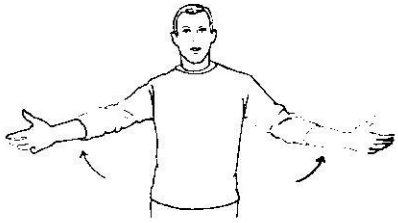
This particular gesture may be especially helpful for two kinds of situations. Firstly, we may encourage quieter students to give us a longer answer. For example, this can be done if we want to invite a student to share his opinion in the open class feedback. Secondly, we may challenge those students who are answering during a controlled grammar practice. For instance, when we practice short answers such as *'Yes, I do'* or *'No, I don't'* students tend to answer only *'Yes'* or *'No'* because they are not used to such a construct in Czech and so it is challenging for them (see Appendix 1a, Lesson plan number 1, Activity column, 'Guess what I did last weekend', 'What a teacher does' column) (see Picture 23 below) (ibid.).



Picture 23: meaning Give a longer answer (ibid.)

3.1.14 'Everybody say together'

We make this gesture by holding our hands out wide in front as if we wanted to 'fold' them around the class. At the same time we move our hands upwards. With this gesture we invite our students to join in and that may encourage them to perform a task (see Picture 24 below) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 58).



Picture 24: meaning Everybody say together (ibid.)

3.1.15 'Five minutes left'

This gesture signals that our class has five minutes left to finish a certain activity. We simply raise our hand and show five fingers. Each finger represents one minute so we may adjust this gesture based on how many minutes we want to give our students. However, the disadvantage of this gesture may be that the students may not notice it if they are drawn in the activity. For example, they may be writing something down or they may be looking at their partners. Therefore, it may be helpful to accompany this gesture with oral instructions as well and say: *'OK, everyone. You have five minutes left.'* (see Picture 25 below) (Scrivener, 2005, p. 95).

Picture 25: meaning Five minutes left (ibid.)

4 Verbal and Non-verbal Instruction Techniques and Learning Styles

This chapter demonstrates how verbal and non-verbal techniques of giving instructions relate to the students' learning styles.

This section explains what a learning style is and why it is important to consider our students' learning styles when giving instructions.

'The term "learning style" has been used to describe an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skill' (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 58). Learning style is a concept which incorporates the following three factors – psychosocial, cognitive and sensory preference. Hence there is a wide range of typologies of learning styles. This chapter, however, focuses only on the sensory preference typology which claims that students tend to have different sensory preferences. It deals with this particular typology because it is most relevant for issuing instructions. This typology claims that some students respond best to hearing things (auditory), others to seeing them (visual), while others need some kind of physical action when they learn (kinaesthetic) (Scrivener, 2005, p. 64). Furthermore, some students prefer to take in new information by touch (haptic), others by taste (gustatory) and smell (olfactory) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 101). In relation to giving instructions, teachers need to realize that students' learning preferences may influence the degree in which they will understand our instructions. In other words, students may respond to each instruction technique differently, based on their learning styles. As a result, the teacher should prepare her instructions carefully so that she accommodates all her students in her class. The sub-chapters below deal only with learning styles which are relevant for giving instructions. They are the following sensory preferences – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. The sub-chapters also focus on techniques of giving instructions which are appropriate for each of the sensory preference. These techniques have been selected based on the level of communicative competence of A1 – A2 students (Hadfield, 2014, p. 32). Students of this proficiency level are in my action research.

4.1 Visual learners

This section describes instruction techniques which visual learners appreciate.

Learners of this type typically find it easy to visualize information. As a result, they often tend to spend a lot of time seeing instructions, and they need to make them stand out more so that they do not become lost in them. Also such learners respond to new instructions best when they are delivered in a visual fashion. Therefore such students prefer visual, pictorial,

and graphic explanations. They also like to watch physical demonstrations such as the teacher's gestures (Harmer, 1999, p. 79).

The following techniques cater for visual learners' needs:

4.1.1 Color-coding

Students prepare a pack of highlighters of various colours and use them to 'code' instructions they are reading. They do that by highlighting or underlining the instructions' key words. For example, the instruction may say *'Read this sentence and underline two words which denote colour'*. A visual learner may highlight or underline the word 'two' in order to follow the instruction more easily. Furthermore, when the instructions are delivered orally, visual learners find it helpful to use coloured pens when taking notes of the instructions' key words. That helps them to keep their attention and to better process and remember the instructions (Willis, 1993, p. 139).

4.1.2 Drawing

Students appreciate drawing instructions they are visualizing. When visual learners 'see' the instructions it helps them to better understand them. Therefore, they should dedicate a few moments to jotting down the image in their mind. That will help them to process the instructions they are visualizing (Prodromou, 1992, p. 96).

4.1.3 Creating mind maps

Both the teacher and her students can create short and simple instruction mind maps. A mind map is a tool which students can create to help them visually organize instructions. These maps center around the main aim of the task and include branches for each step of the instruction. Mind maps may also include, for example, keywords of the instructions, examples and images. Moreover, the use of a mind map is especially helpful if visual learners are faced with a longer paragraph of written instructions which they find overwhelming. In order not to get lost in the instructions, they can use the instructions in their textbook to create their own mind map. That way the instructions will stand out more (Scrivener, 2005, p. 64).

4.1.4 Using graphic organizers

Another useful technique is to organize instructions into a visual format that is easy to understand. For instance, charts and tables are great ways of taking in individual steps of the instructions (ibid.).

4.1.5 The teacher demonstrates the activity herself

The teacher can deliver a monologue of herself doing the activity. That way she makes her actions and thought process explicit. For instance, *'So, now I'm looking at the photographs of different notices. I want to find any words that are wrong. Ah…"Do not walk in the grass" – that sounds wrong. I'm crossing out "in" and writing "on" '* Not only is this technique suitable for visual learners but at the same time it caters for auditory learners' needs. It is because they can make use of the teacher's spoken words (see sub-chapter 4.2 Auditory learners; see Appendix 4a, Lesson plan number 4, 'Activity' column, a test focused on past simple/continuous, 'What a teacher does' column) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 130).

4.1.6 Students demonstrate the activity

A volunteer student can demonstrate an activity with the teacher or with a fellow student. Role playing[10] the activity with a volunteer student or students is especially helpful for pair or group work such as mingling activities. We can do it by getting our volunteer student or students up front with us to perform a live role-play demonstration of the activity. We do not need to do the whole activity though. It is usually enough to show how to start it and then our students will get the idea of what they are supposed to do (see Appendix 1a, Lesson plan number 1, Activity column, 'Find someone who' activity, 'What a teacher does' column). Moreover, this technique is also suitable for kinaesthetic learners when they are the ones who demonstrate the task for others (see sub-chapter 4.3 Kinaesthetic learners) (ibid.).

4.2 Auditory learners

These learners prefer oral instructions to visual ones and so they benefit most from hearing words spoken. Specifically they appreciate listening to the teacher's instructions or giving instructions to other students (Tudor, 1996, p. 205).

The following techniques cater for auditory learners' needs:

4.2.1 Students read from the textbook

Students can read the instructions aloud from their textbook and the teacher can then show an example of the task or check if students have understood the instructions. Not only is this technique suitable for auditory learners but also it caters for visual learners at the same time.

[10] Role play is an activity during which students imagine themselves in a situation outside the classroom. Sometimes they may even play the role of someone other than themselves. The purpose of performing role plays during English lessons is to bring a sense of 'real life' into the classroom, which makes it an interesting activity (Ur, 2012, p. 131).

While the individual student reads out the instructions, the rest of the class may read them in their textbooks (Cohen & Manion, 1995, p. 118).

4.2.2 Students read from cards

We split up the instructions we need to deliver into separate small parts and we put each one on a separate card. Then we number them in order. For example, (1) 'Stand up', (2) 'Find a partner', (3) 'Ask your partner your first question. Write their answer on your paper', (4) 'Find a new partner'.

In class, we distribute the cards by giving each one to a different student. Then we ask the first student to read out card number one, and his or her fellow students do what they are asked to do. When they are ready, we indicate that the second student can read his or her card. When the students have followed that instruction we ask the third student to read his or her card and so on (Scrivener, 2014, p. 132).

4.2.3 Students prepare instructions

This particular technique is suitable for stronger students. For instance, we may have some early finishers of the previous task and we may like to keep them occupied. Therefore, we can ask these students to prepare to deliver instructions to their fellow classmates for the next task. Ideally we should give them enough time to practise the instructions with us and also we should give them any necessary feedback before they do it for real. The advantage of this particular technique is that both sides benefit from it – the students who prepare and deliver the instructions and the students who listen to the instructions. It is because auditory learners love to use their own voices to speak and at the same time they love to listen to others (ibid.).

With reference to the last two techniques mentioned above, Tudor (1996, p. 28) is of the opinion that such approach leads to learner empowerment. That is to say that we train our students to be more autonomous in their English language learning. As a result, we build their confidence and motivation. He supports this argument by saying that '[…] students should assume responsibility for their learning in an active and self-directive manner and should not expect the teacher […] to organise their learning for them'. If we relate this to giving instructions, teachers do not always have to be in control when delivering them. They can let go and give their students the opportunity to do the work.

4.2.4 Playing background music

Because auditory learners are positively stimulated by music we may play soft background music when giving instructions. However, it is important that we choose instrumental i.e. lyric-free music so that the students pay attention to our instructions and not to the lyrics of the song (Murphey, 1992, p. 25).

4.3 Kinaesthetic learners

Kinaesthetic learners absorb and process instructions best when they are physically involved in them. Specifically such learners prefer to be familiarized with new instructions by physically showing them to their fellow classmates (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 338).

4.3.1 Students assist the teacher

Since English classes tend to be more stationary in their nature, it is important to engage kinaesthetic learners in as much motion as possible. One way of doing this is to let them help with preparations for a certain activity. These preparations are often part of the teacher's instructions such as distributing handouts or moving chairs. The teacher may invite volunteers to help her out (Tudor, 1996, p. 100).

4.3.2 Touching and manipulating study materials

The teacher tells her students what materials they are going to need for the following activity and the students physically show them to her. At the same time they show what they will do with the materials. For example, the teacher says *'worksheet'* and the students take them in their hands. Then she says *'pens'* and the students take them in their hands and pretend to be writing with them. Then comes *'feet'* and the students start walking around the classroom. Upon hearing *'partners'* they pretend to be looking for a partner to work with (Prodromou, 1992, p. 105).

4.3.3 Tying instructions to various motions

This particular technique is especially useful for checking understanding of instructions (see chapter 5 Checking Understanding of Instructions). After the teacher has delivered instructions orally, she may check understanding by obtaining feedback from her students not orally but by means of hops, jumps, claps or other motions. For instance, the teacher may ask *'How many sentences will you write? Jump.'* and if the answer is three her students jump three times. Or she may ask *'How many minutes have you got? Clap your hands.'* and her students clap their hands five times. Later on when it is time for the students to conduct the actual activity, kinaesthetic learners may be able to access the instructions by recalling them

for example as *'the one that I was thinking of while clapping my hands'* or *'the one that I went over during jumping'* (Cohen & Manion, 1995, p. 121).

It is important, however, that the teacher helps her class to start making the movements at the same time. It is appropriate to say, for example, *'one, two, three, go'* so that everybody claps their hands at the same time. The advantage of this technique is that it may bring fun into the lesson and it may break the classroom routine (ibid.).

5 Checking Understanding of Instructions

While it is true that modifying our language and using gestures increase students' comprehension of instructions, it may not always be enough. We also need to make sure that our students have understood our instructions and therefore, this chapter focuses on techniques which allow us to find out if our students have really understood our instruction. Unfortunately, the common teacher question '*Do you understand?*' does not reveal if our students have really understood us. The reason being is that students may answer '*yes*' because they do not want to admit that they have not understood our instructions. That could be because they do not want to be impolite or they do not want to lose face. Sometimes they may even think they know what they are supposed to do, but have in fact not understood us (Ur, 2012, p. 17). It is for these reasons that the following sub-chapters deal with more useful and revealing methods of checking understanding of instructions.

5.1 Concept checking questions[11]

With reference to the issues mentioned in the introductory paragraph above, both Ur (ibid.) and Scrivener (2014, p. 129) suggest that it is not enough to ask '*Do you understand?*' but rather they recommend asking about specific points which have been mentioned in the instructions. For example, we can ask '*How many questions are you going to answer?*' and we want to hear a short response from the students, e.g. '*Three*'. Furthermore, Scrivener (ibid., p. 146) argues that if we use concept checking questions effectively they become central to classroom life since they give us immediate feedback on whether our students understand our instructions or not. In other words, when the teacher listens to the response, she does not hope to learn a new answer, but she wants to discover if her students know the answer she already knows. That way she finds out if her instructions need further explanation (ibid., p. 147) (for an example of a prepared concept checking question, see Appendix 5a, Lesson plan 5, Activity column, 'Vocabulary presentation', 'What a teacher does' column).

5.1.1 Pitfalls in concept checking questions

This section deals with two common mistakes which should be avoided when asking concept checking questions because they lead to confusing our students and then they lose their purpose. The two common mistakes leading to misunderstanding are embedded questions inside concept checking questions and reworded concept checking questions (ibid., p. 148).

[11] Also known as 'check questions', 'display questions' or 'test questions' (Scrivener, 2014, p. 147).

Embedded questions

Embedded questions are questions packed inside concept checking questions. Embedded questions can be very hard for lower-level students to unpack. For example, if we ask '*Have you got any idea how many sentences you will write?*' the students may be confused. However, if we ask '*How many sentences will you write?*' we will make it easier for them to understand (ibid.).

Reworded concept checking questions

This paragraph deals with what to do if we ask a concept checking question but our students seem confused. A common reaction of the teacher would be to reword the question in order to give our students a new chance to understand it. While rewording concept checking questions may seem helpful, it can actually cause new problems because the students are already trying to understand the original question. Therefore, the best solution may be to simply repeat the original question in a slower pace so that we give our students a new chance to unpack it (ibid.).

5.1.2 Who can the teacher ask concept checking questions?

The teacher can ask concept checking questions to:

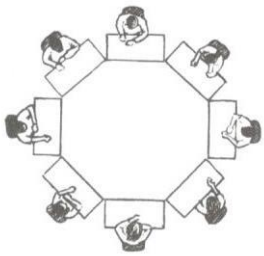
- The whole class – in this case the teacher expects either a choral answer[12] or she expects volunteers to offer answers by putting their hands up (ibid.).
- Specific nominated students – the teacher does this by saying names of specific students or she uses her gestures to indicate what students she wants to answer her (see the following section 5.1.3 When to nominate the students) (ibid.).
- Location-restricted students – this can be done by calling on students in a small section of the classroom. For example, '*I'd like someone in this part of the room to answer.'*(ibid.). Harmer (1999, p. 19) is of the opinion that it is especially important to use this technique when we teach a class where the students sit in orderly rows (see Picture 26 below). It is because the teacher needs to remain in contact with all the students in order to keep everyone involved. In other words, if the teacher asks a concept checking question, she should not forget to ask students at the back, the quiet ones perhaps, rather than just the ones nearest to her. In order to do this, the teacher must move around the classroom so that she can see all the students and maintain her eye contact with them.

[12] By a choral answer we mean lots of students speaking simultaneously (Scrivener, 2014, p. 148).

Picture 26: A seating arrangement in class - orderly rows (Harmer, 1999, p. 18)

- Category-restricted students – for example, *'Girls only'* or *'Only those who haven't answered a question so far'* or *'Only students whose name begins with "s" can answer.'* (Scrivener, 2014, p. 148).
- Random students – the teacher picks names one by one out of a bag for each question (ibid.). The advantage of this technique is that it keeps the students guessing what name will be picked and so it brings a playful element into the lesson (Harmer, 1999, p. 19).
- Sequences of students – each question is answered by the next student sitting around the classroom. This procedure can be conducted when students sit in orderly rows (see Picture 26 above), a horseshoe or in a circle (see Picture 27 andPicture 28 below) (Scrivener, 2014, p. 148). However, Harmer (1999, p. 19) argues that this procedure is not very engaging for the students. While it is true that this procedure is easy for the teacher, it is very predictable and tedious for the students. It is because they know when they are going to be asked and, once they answer, they know that they are not going to be asked again and so they switch off. It is for these reasons that Harmer suggests asking students from all parts of the classroom in a random order to keep them on their toes.

Picture 27: A seating arrangement in class - horseshoe (Harmer, 1999, p. 18)



Picture 28: A seating arrangement in class - circle (Scrivener, 2014, p. 8)

5.1.3 When to nominate the students

It is important to nominate our students after the concept checking question and not before. If we said a name first and then a question, all the other classmates would probably stop paying attention because they would know that they do not have to answer our question. An example of this would be *'Marcel, how many sentences are you going to write?'* (Scrivener, 2014, p. 149).

As opposed to the example above, a better way of nominating is to say a question first, wait a few seconds to give the students a chance to process the question and then say a name. That way we make all the students think about the question because we could ask anyone in the class so the students cannot switch off. For instance, *'How many sentences are you going to write? ...* (pause) … *Marcel?'* (ibid.). Moreover, Cohen and Manion (1995, p. 205) argue that knowing and using the students' names produces good, positive relationships between the teacher and her students. As a result, this will promote a healthy classroom climate which is so much important for a foreign language acquisition (see sub-chapter 1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses, section The affective filter hypothesis).

5.1.4 Encouraging students to feel that a wrong answer is OK

How should the teacher react if she asks a concept checking question and a student does not give the correct answer? Moskowitz (1978, p. 15) argues that the teacher's goal should be to create an atmosphere in class where students feel that it is absolutely fine to try out answers without worrying too much about whether they are correct or incorrect. The teacher achieves this by not criticising her students' wrong answers. Instead, she should enjoy the mistakes and encourage an atmosphere of experimentation where getting things wrong is a perfectly normal way of moving forward (see sub-chapter 1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses, section The affective filter hypothesis).

5.2 Noticing the students' reactions

Another way of finding out if our students have understood our instructions is to notice facial expressions. Students' facial expressions may look positive or we may notice faces looking down at desks avoiding eye contact. If the latter happens it is important to encourage our students to feel that not understanding is OK and normal and we should calmly repeat our instructions (see sub-chapter 5.1 Concept checking questions, section 5.1.1 Pitfalls in concept checking questions, paragraph Reworded concept checking questions) (ibid., p. 152).

5.3 Getting students to summarise the instructions

Another helpful method of checking understanding of instructions is to ask students to summarise what the teacher has just said. For example, the teacher can ask *'So what are the most important things you need to think about when writing a note?'* (Scrivener, 2014, p. 152).

Moreover, Scrivener (2005, pp. 84-85) is of the opinion that allowing our students to summarise the instructions is a good way of increasing opportunities for Student Talking Time[13] i.e. time students spend talking in class. He supports this opinion by saying that if we allow students to summarize our instructions, we give them the opportunity to speak and listen to each other rather than have them listen to us all the time. As a result, this technique encourages students to be more involved in a lesson and that seems to be the most efficient way of learning. On the contrary, when the teacher gives long explanations of what students are expected to do the students tend to get bored and they often stop paying attention. In other words, giving instructions to our students by talking to them does not necessarily mean that they are absorbing the instructions. In many cases it is actually time when the students switch off and they are not very involved.

[13] The opposite of Student Talking Time is Teacher Talking Time, which is the time the teacher spends talking to her class (Harmer, 1999, p. 4).

6 Conclusions of the theoretical part

The aim of the theoretical part was to gather theoretical foundations connected to giving instructions in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. Attention was paid to selected areas which are particularly important for the action research realized.

Firstly, the thesis concentrated on the importance of issuing instructions in the English language and it gave reasons why students benefit from being exposed to instructions in the target language. The reasons were supported by Stephen Krashen's theories which are relevant to delivering instructions in English. Even though the work touched on Krashen's idea of comprehensible input, teaching practice showed that when it comes to issuing instructions, modifying the teacher's language to the language level of her students seems to be more appropriate.

Secondly, this work raised the awareness of the importance of obeying basic principles when issuing instructions. In order for the instructions to be clear and understandable, it claimed the necessity of modifying the teacher's verbal instructions to the language level of her students. Also, combining gestures with verbal instructions was emphasized. As far as the verbal instructions are concerned, the thesis introduced approaches to language modifications and their various types in order to facilitate a smooth delivery of instructions. With reference to the non-verbal instructions, the thesis concentrated on the benefits of combining them with the verbal ones. It also covered basic principles which should be followed when using instruction gestures. Moreover, for the reader's convenience and inspiration, it presented pictures with instruction gestures which are useful for A1- A2 level students.

Thirdly, it suggested the importance of selecting instruction techniques based on our students' sensory preferences. It covered types of sensory preferences which are relevant to delivering instructions and it also described appropriate instruction techniques for each of them.

Last but not least, it presented techniques of checking understanding of instructions. It stressed their vital part in issuing instructions and it suggested that they should not be neglected or underestimated. The main focus in this matter was on the proper use of concept checking questions which proved to be a very useful tool during teaching practice which is going to be discussed below in the practical part.

PRACTICAL PART

7 Action Research

Based on my research into the topic of delivering instructions, I wish to employ the action research in my classroom to improve myself in issuing instructions to A1 – A2 level students who are in the second year of their eight-year course at grammar school.

Action research is 'a means by which teachers can experiment with and reflect on their own teaching and in doing so resolve problems and develop a deeper understanding and knowledge of their students' needs and their teaching practice. For many this is a way that teachers can explore and develop themselves independently and ask questions such as *"What am I doing? Do I need to improve anything? If so, what? How do I improve it? Why should I improve it?"* ' (McNiff & Whitehead, 2008, p. 7).

This chapter is divided into five sub-chapters which describe the stages of the action research. In the first sub-chapter, the aim of the research is stated. In the second one, the intervention plan, which was planned in October 2016, is described. The third chapter focuses on the data collection, which was conducted in November and December 2016. The fourth chapter deals with the outcomes and their interpretations. The last sub-chapter is concerned with the evaluation of the research.

7.1 Action research aims

The aims of the action research are:

1.) To see whether I am able to modify my verbal instructions according to my students' language level.

2.) To find out whether I use my gestures effectively when delivering instructions.

3.) To focus on whether my students comprehend issued instructions.

7.2 Intervention plan

In relation to the aims stated above, the intervention plan for each of the three aims is as follows:

1.) Modifying my verbal instructions according to my students' language level

- I will modify my verbal instructions according to my students' language level. At the same time, however, I will aim at using modified language which is recognisably

accurate and acceptable (see chapter 2 Verbal Instructions: Language Modification and its Role in Giving Instructions).

- I will avoid elision and assimilation in my pronunciation. I.e. I will focus my attention to pronouncing each word separately, rather than running them together (see sub-chapter 2.1 The input modification, section Modification of pronunciation).
- I will repeat my instructions calmly and in a slower pace, if necessary (see sub-chapter 2.2 The interaction modification, section Repetition).

2.) Using my gestures effectively when delivering instructions

- I will use my gestures to support my verbal instructions (see sub-chapter 3.1 General guidance for using instruction gestures).
- I will concentrate on using those gestures which the students will be most likely to associate with my verbal instructions. I will also continuously teach my students some of the gestures so that they know what they mean (see sub-chapter 3.1 General guidance for using instruction gestures).
- I will try to save time during the lesson by using gestures (see sub-chapter 3.1 General guidance for using instruction gestures).
- I will allow enough time for my gestures to be seen before I stop them. Especially if those are key gestures (see sub-chapter 3.1 General guidance for using instruction gestures).

3.) Focusing on whether my students comprehend issued instructions

- I will try out more revealing techniques of checking understanding of instructions (see chapter 5 Checking Understanding of Instructions).
- I will cater for the students' various learning styles when issuing instructions to find out whether that increases their understanding of them (see chapter 4 Verbal and Non-verbal Instruction Techniques and Learning Styles).
- I will actively involve my students in delivering instructions to see whether they are able to comprehend them more easily if they are in charge of issuing them (see chapter 4 Verbal and Non-verbal Instruction Techniques and Learning Styles).
- I will promote positive atmosphere by encouraging my students to let me know if they do not understand my instructions (see sub-chapter 1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses, section The affective filter hypothesis).

7.3 Data collection techniques

I used four main instruments of data collection. Firstly, I used an in-lesson structured observation sheet for my mentor. Secondly, I used a post-lesson individual student questionnaire, which was to monitor the feelings and attitudes of the students upon being instructed in English. Thirdly, I kept the teacher's journal so that I could note down my lessons and reflect on them with the lapse of time. Finally, I recorded myself on a video and then I analysed the video recording. I did that because witnessing my delivery of instructions is an eye-opening experience. Specifically video points out some of my flaws but at the same time it highlights my strengths.

7.3.1 In-lesson mentor observation

This observation was conducted within the class by my mentor and focused on my verbal and non-verbal instructions which I used during the lessons. In order to discover as much as possible, and to inform my action research, I asked my mentor specific questions in the structured observation sheet with the possibility to add her own comments (see Appendix 7). Getting feedback from the mentor was very useful for my research because she noticed things which I did not realize or did not see on myself.

This sub-chapter describes the observation sheet from two aspects. Firstly, it focuses on its structure and on the types of questions used. Secondly, it deals with the actual content and it specifies its observational focus.

Structure of the observation sheet

I divided the observation sheet into three sections which I constructed in English because my mentor's level of English is high and I knew that she would not have any comprehension problems. Also I incorporated relevant linguistic terminology into the questions because I knew that my mentor would understand it.

The first section explains the purpose of the observation sheet so that my mentor knows why I am asking her to fill it in. In other words, I included this explanation to motivate her and give her a reason for cooperation. I also included instructions on how to fill in the observation sheet.

The second section consists of the questions themselves. For an easier orientation I divided them into two parts. The first part is dedicated to verbal instructions whereas the second part deals with non-verbal ones. Gavora (2000, pp. 99-100) suggests using the following

sequence of the questions to motivate the mentor and to help her to fill in the observation sheet with ease:

- We should write the easiest questions at the beginning so that we do not discourage the respondent from completing the observation sheet.
- We should make sure that the questions flow logically from one to the next.
- We should make sure that the answer to each question is not influenced by previous questions.
- We should make sure that the questions flow from the more general to the more specific.

In the third section I thank my mentor for her cooperation because it is important to appreciate her time and effort.

Types of questions

This part deals with closed ended and open ended questions which I used in the observation sheet. In addition, it gives reasons why I decided to use them and why they are suitable for the mentor's observation.

Closed ended questions

Closed ended questions mean that respondents' answers are limited to a fixed set of responses. All the questions in the observation sheet are scaled questions, which means that the responses are graded on a continuum. Specifically, the mentor rate her opinion on a scale of 1 to 5. However, I also asked the mentor to state why she has chosen such a number on the scale so that I can better understand her answer (Gavora, 2000, p. 102).

I decided to use scaled questions for two reasons. Firstly, they are easy for the mentor to understand. Secondly, they allow the mentor to be neutral should she choose so and that is to say that she is not forced to use either-or opinions. In other words I have used a scale of 1-5 with 3 allowing a neutral answer, instead of 1-4 where the mentor would have to be either positive or negative (ibid.).

Open ended questions

Open ended questions mean that no options or predefined categories are suggested. In other words the respondent gives their own answer without being constrained by a fixed set of possible responses. I accompanied each scale question with an open ended one because it has four major advantages. Firstly, it allows an unlimited number of possible answers.

Secondly, the respondent can answer in detail and can clarify responses. Thirdly, it permits creativity and self-expression. Last but not least, if my mentor specifies why she has chosen a certain number on a scale, I will obtain more precise feedback. As a result, I will benefit more from her responses (Gavora, 2000, pp. 103-104).

Observational focus

In relation to the research aims stated in sub-chapter 7.1, the observational focus for each of the three aims is as follows:

1.) Modifying my verbal instructions according to my students' language level

- Ask for feedback from the mentor on the language I produce
    - Observation points 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (Appendix 7)

2.) Using my gestures effectively when delivering instructions

- Ask the mentor to judge my body language critically
    - Observation points 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Appendix 7)

3.) Focusing on whether my students comprehend issued instructions

- Ask the mentor to notice whether I check understanding of instructions effectively
    - Observation points 6 and 7 (Appendix 7)

7.3.2 Post-lesson individual student questionnaire

I designed this questionnaire to obtain immediate feedback in the form of the students' imminent feelings about how I delivered instructions during the lessons. The students' spontaneous and anonymous reactions allowed me to get an insight into whether they were able to comprehend my instructions and into what extend.

This sub-chapter describes the student questionnaire from two aspects. Firstly, it focuses on its structure and on the types of questions used. Secondly, it deals with the actual content of the questionnaire and it specifies the questions.

Structure of the questionnaire

I divided the questionnaire into three sections so that it adequately reflects the views and opinions of my students. I constructed all the three sections in Czech to make my students feel comfortable about filling it in. That is to say that I wanted them to fully concentrate on the meaning of the questions and I did not want them to worry about the language. I also told them that they could answer in Czech so that I did not waste too much of their time.

Moreover, I constructed the questions in simple language which means that I purposely did not use any linguistic terminology. The questionnaire was anonymous so that the students could freely express their opinions.

The first section explains the purpose of the questionnaire so that the students know why I am asking them to fill it in. In other words, I included this explanation to motivate them and give them a reason for cooperation. I also explained what I mean by the word instructions so that the students fully understand what I am asking them about. Moreover, I told my students to assess my instructions the same way the teacher assesses her students so that they can easily imagine what I want them to do. Finally, I included instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire and I also included an example of how to do it.

The second section consists of the questions themselves. Gavora (2000, pp. 99-100) suggests using the following sequence of the questions to motivate the students and to help them to fill in the questionnaire easily:

- Writing the easiest questions at the beginning so that the students are not discouraged from completing the questionnaire.
- Making sure that the questions flow logically from one to the next.
- Making sure that the answer to each question is not influenced by previous questions.
- Making sure that the questions flow from the more general to the more specific.

In the third section I thank the students for their cooperation.

Types of questions

This section gives reasons why I decided to use closed ended and open ended questions and what their advantages are (for the difference between them, see sub-chapter 7.3.1 In-lesson mentor observation, section Types of questions). It also specifies where they can be found in the questionnaire.

Closed ended questions

Questions 1 to 5 are scaled questions, which means that the responses are graded on a continuum. Specifically the students rate their opinion on a scale of 1 to 5 - 1 being the best mark and 5 being the worst one like they are used to it in their everyday school life. However, I also asked the students to state why they have chosen such a mark on the scale so that I can better understand their answer (Gavora, 2000, pp. 102-104).

I decided to use scaled questions for two reasons. Firstly, they are easy for the students to understand because they can relate to this kind of assessment. As a result I did not have to give a long explanation and it was enough for me to say *'Mark me'*. Secondly, they allow the students to opt for the mark 3 should they choose so and that is to say that they are not forced to use either-or opinions. In other words the classical scale of 1 – 5 allows the option 3 which is a 'neither the best nor the worst' answer. That allows the students to stay somewhere in the middle should they choose so as opposed to being forced to use either-or answers (ibid.).

Another type of a closed ended question is a 'yes/no' question. The biggest advantage of this type of a question is that the respondents can arrive at their conclusions quickly and efficiently. In particular these types of questions do not waste my students' time in arriving at their conclusions (ibid.).

The last question number 6 is a 'yes/no' question. I have divided it from the other questions by a line because this question is not central to my research but still it is related to my topic.

Open ended questions

I accompanied each scale question and the last 'yes/no' question with an open ended one because it has four advantages. Firstly, it allows an unlimited number of possible answers. Secondly, respondents can answer in detail and can clarify responses. Thirdly, it permits creativity and self-expression. Last but not least, it reveals a respondent's logic and thinking process (Gavora, 2000, pp. 102-104).

Questions used

In relation to the research aims stated in sub-chapter 7.1, I focused the questions on the following aspects:

1.) Modifying my verbal instructions according to my students' language level

- I asked the students to comment in the questionnaire on whether my verbal instructions were clear and understandable.
    - Questions 1, 4 and 5 (Appendix 6)

2.) Using my gestures effectively when delivering instructions

- I asked the students to fill in a questionnaire to comment on whether they found my gestures helpful.
    - Questions 2 and 3 (Appendix 6)

3.) Focusing on whether my students comprehend issued instructions

- I asked the students to fill in a questionnaire with questions concerning the overall comprehension of issued instructions.
    - Questions 1, 5 and 6 (Appendix 6)

7.3.3 The teacher's journal

This sub-chapter explains why I kept my teaching reflective journal and what aspects of instructions I focused my attention to when writing into it.

I kept a teaching reflective journal for the following three reasons. Firstly, it helped me to recall the lessons. Secondly, it encouraged me to reflect on the lessons. Thirdly, it allowed me to draw conclusions and make future plans.

Recalling the lessons

- I noted down any important verbal and non-verbal interaction between me and the students during issuing instructions.
- I noted down the balance of me delivering instructions compared with students delivering instructions.
- I listed moments in which I delivered instructions as I planned them.
- I listed moments in which I had to improvise and adjust my instructions to the situation. Then I reflected on what options I chose and rejected when thinking on the spot.

Reflecting on the lessons

- I noted down moments when I delivered instructions successfully.
- I noted down instruction points at which I could have been clearer.
- I noted down instruction techniques which the students seemed to appreciate or which seemed to be challenging for them.
- I noted down whether my students comprehended my instructions.
- I noted down instruction moments during which I felt most awkward or uncomfortable

Drawing conclusions and making plans

- If I taught the lesson again, would I deliver instructions in the same way? If not, how would I deliver them?
- What have I learned about my planning of instructions?

- What have I learned about my verbal and non-verbal instruction techniques?
- What have I learned about myself? How did I feel when issuing instructions?
- What have I learned about my students? What instruction techniques did they seem to appreciate most? I listed those techniques in order to use them for my future teaching.

My reflective notes

In relation to the research aims stated in sub-chapter 7.1, my notes in my teaching reflective journal focused on the following:

1.) Modifying my verbal instructions according to my students' language level

- I commented on my feelings prior and after the lesson.

2.) Using my gestures effectively when delivering instructions

- I commented on the degree I felt comfortable/uncomfortable making gestures I have used before and implementing new ones.

3.) Focusing on whether my students comprehend issued instructions

- I commented on my feelings when checking students' comprehension of issued instructions.

7.3.4 Video recording

This sub-chapter explains why I used the self-reflective technique of video recording and how I approached its analysis.

I video recorded a lesson number one (see Appendix 1a) because this lesson in particular lent itself easily for the analysis of my gestures. I roleplayed the activity 'Find someone who' with a volunteer student and I wanted to observe my body language and the reaction of the class upon seeing the physical demonstration.

This self-reflective technique of video recording has three advantages. Firstly, it allows me to see myself as the students see me. Secondly, it shows me the reality. I.e. what I feel and what the reality is can often be two different things. Thirdly, it makes my instruction mistakes more apparent and gives me an opportunity to reflect on how to improve (Scrivener, 2005, p. 385). Even though watching myself on a video and facing my flaws is not easy for me, I believe that being truthful to myself is the first step to improving my instructions.

When analysing the video recording, Scrivener (ibid.) suggests having the following questions in mind when focusing on improving our instructions:

- How loudly do I deliver my instructions?
- Do I get off track when issuing instructions? How often?
- Do I do anything annoying or distracting with my voice, gestures or posture when giving instructions?
- How clear are my instructions for activities?
- Am I interacting with the students effectively during the delivery of instructions?
- What are the students doing as I am issuing instructions?

Video recording approach

In relation to the research aims stated in sub-chapter 7.1, I took the following course of action in order to analyse the recording:

1.) Modifying my verbal instructions according to my students' language level

- I recorded the lesson for closer analysis of the degree and accuracy of modified language.

2.) Using my gestures effectively when delivering instructions

- I recorded the lesson to further analyse the following: the number of gestures used, the way the gestures were performed, the reaction of the students upon seeing them.

3.) Focusing on whether my students comprehend issued instructions

- I recorded the lesson to notice any instances of the students feeling uncomfortable/comfortable when I checked understanding of instructions.

7.4 Outcomes and interpretation

1.) My first aim was to see whether I am able to modify my verbal instructions according to my students' language level.

Based on the analysis of the recording, I could see from my students' positive facial expressions that I managed to modify my instruction language to the language level of my students. I think that this is partly thanks to my lesson plan where I wrote down all the necessary instructions in advance so that I did not have to make them up on the spot. Before I started my action research, I tended to underestimate writing my verbal instructions into my lesson plans because I thought that I would be able to improvise and make them up on

the spot. As a result, I often felt under pressure during the lessons because I found out that producing instructions without a preparation is not as easy as it seems. Based on my post-lesson self-reflective notes in my teaching journal, there are two advantages to having the verbal instructions written down. Firstly, I know exactly what to say to my students in this crucial moment and the instructions are coincide and to the point. Secondly, it allows me to get back on the instruction track whenever unexpected issues arise during the lessons. For example, I got interrupted by the principle's announcement or I had to deal with a discipline problem. When these two unexpected moments were over, I just simply looked into my lesson plan where I had written the instructions in advance and I continued with teaching. Not only was I able to comfortably continue with issuing instructions, but also having the instructions written down had given me a peace of mind. As a result, I was able to react calmly and self-confidently on the unexpected issues because I did not have to worry about the instructions. Furthermore, I believe that when the teacher's affective filter is low during the delivery of instructions or when dealing with unexpected issues in the lessons, it has a positive effect on the students' affective filter and it promotes pleasant classroom atmosphere (see sub-chapter 1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses, section The affective filter hypothesis). Therefore, in the future, I am going to continue with preparing my verbal instructions because doing this has offered me lots of support.

The analysis of the recording has also showed one particular moment in which one of the students was not sure whether he understood what he was supposed to do and he asked me in front of the whole class in Czech. When I heard him speaking Czech I automatically slipped into Czech as well for a moment and I said the first few words in Czech. Then I switched into English and I repeated my instruction calmly and in a slower pace. At this point I also focused on avoiding elision and assimilation in my pronunciation in order to maximize comprehension. After hearing my instruction for the second time, the student understood it and we moved on. However, I feel that it would have been helpful to bring the student's attention to the board where I had written the instruction in advance. I would have saved time and it would also have been more helpful to the student (see Appendix 1a, Lesson plan number 1, Activity column, 'A wrap-up discussion', 'What a teacher does' column).

Even though I personally felt quite nervous before the lesson, my mentor judged my language modification as natural and recognisably accurate, creating positive atmosphere in which the students could easily react on my commands.

Volume of my voice when issuing instructions

Eight students out of sixteen have stated that I could have spoken with a louder voice. As a result, some students felt that they were able to comprehend my instructions only because they were sitting at the front rows. They claimed that if they had been sitting at the back they would not have heard me well. This opinion was also supported by my mentor who has suggested that she could not hear me very well since she sat at the back of the classroom. Similarly, the analysis of the video recording showed that the volume of my voice was in deed rather low especially when the person recording me stood at the back of the classroom. Based on my teaching reflective journal, I did not expect that the loudness of my voice would be an issue and I was surprised reading about this in the students' feedback. My self-reflective notes before the lesson show that I did not realize that I spoke in a low-volume voice. In order to improve, I concentrated on the volume of my speaking voice in the following lesson. In the students' questionnaire, twelve out of sixteen students stated that they could hear me comfortably and that they did not have any problem perceiving my spoken instructions. Similarly, my mentor suggested that she could also hear my instructions well and that she found it much easier to perceive them this time. In the future, however, I will have to be careful to keep it up like this because I may subconsciously lower the volume of my voice again.

Pace of my speech when issuing instructions

Seven out of sixteen students have suggested that they would appreciate if I spoke a bit faster. The rest of the students have stated that I paced my speech well except for one student who has suggested that he/she would like me to speak more slowly. However, my mentor's comments state that the pace of my speech was adequate because the interaction between me and my students was smooth. Furthermore, she suggests that due to the acoustics of the classroom, in which my voice echoed a bit, it is helpful to deliver instructions in a slower pace. Similarly, the analysis of the video recording shows that the acoustics of the classroom was not ideal and therefore it was helpful that I delivered instructions in a slightly slower pace. Based on my teaching reflective journal, I was a bit worried that I may speak too fast because of my nervousness during the lesson. Consequently I wanted to avoid speaking too fast. In order to improve, I concentrated on the pace of my speech in the next lesson to come. Specifically I paid attention to avoiding too much pauses between each chunk of an instruction. Ten out of sixteen students have stated that my speaking rate was just right. Based on my teaching reflective journal, I felt that when I deliver instructions in a slightly

quicker pace, it makes my lesson more dynamic and it also keeps my students 'on their toes'. My mentor's findings suggest that the students were able to comfortably take in my instructions even if I issued them in a slightly quicker pace. Moreover, she also states that this particular class is very hardworking and welcomes challenges. In my future teaching practice, I will have to keep searching for a balance when it comes to the pace of my speech because each class is different.

The language of instructions

The students' questionnaires suggest that the students very much appreciate if I deliver instructions only in English. Specifically fifteen out of sixteen students have stated that they would not like me to speak in Czech when issuing instructions. The students have even supported their answers with several arguments. Here are the most interesting ones:

- There will not be any interpreter in a real life.
- English is very important nowadays and I want as much practice as possible.
- My English is better than my Czech.
- This is the best way of learning English.
- I will become a better communicator.

Similarly, my mentor's findings suggest that the students appreciated having the instructions issued in modified English rather than listening to them in Czech because they listened attentively and were able to react well to all the issued instructions. These findings are also supported by the analysis of the recording. It shows that the interaction between me and my students during the delivery of instructions was effective. That is obvious from the students' reaction time upon hearing my instructions. On average, it took the class only two seconds to react on issued verbal instructions. Before my research, based on my mentor's observation, it took the class up to five seconds to start working on an activity after I delivered the instructions. Based on my teaching reflective journal, that may have been because of two reasons. Firstly, I probably did not sufficiently modify my verbal instructions according to my students' language level. Secondly, I did not deliver all the instructions in English and that may have been demotivating for the students. As a result, they probably did not listen as attentively as they would if they were faced with authentic meaningful language i.e. English instructions. In other words, exposing our students to English instructions may positively stimulate them and it may help them to maintain their attention.

All in all, based on my teaching reflective journal, the students' arguments on my verbal instructions suggest two things. Firstly, they show how highly motivated and hardworking the class is. Secondly, they show that I quite well managed to modify my verbal instructions according to my students' language level. It is because of my opinion that if I did not modify my speech enough, their feedback would be to use more Czech because they would not be able to follow my instructions. Before my research I did not realize that exposing my students to English instructions is not only meaningful for them, but also it boosts their confidence. It is because classroom instructions are genuine communication and I believe that if the students succeed in understanding them in a lesson, they will feel more confident when being exposed to genuine communication outside of the classroom (see sub-chapter 1.1 The importance of English instructions).

2.) My second aim was to find out whether I use my gestures effectively when delivering instructions.

Based on the analysis of the recording, it was clear that I have used up to eleven instruction gestures out of thirteen instructions and that the instruction gestures have caught my students' attention. Not only did my own gestures help to promote understanding of instructions, but also performing a physical demonstration together with the students proved to be very useful and helpful. Firstly, the physical demonstration supported verbal instructions which came simultaneously with it. Secondly, based on the students' reaction time, the students could clearly associate the physical demonstration with the verbal instructions. Thirdly, as a result, the demonstration saved lots of time during the lesson because the students knew straight away what they were supposed to do. This was obvious from their confident reactions upon seeing the demonstration – they started working on the activity independently. In other words, this technique promoted their autonomy. Last but not least, a volunteer student seemed to enjoy to roleplay the activity and others seemed to be interested in watching the student. This was clear from the students' faces which looked positive and confident (see Appendix 1a, Lesson plan number 1, Activity column, 'Find someone who' activity, 'What a teacher does' column). Before my action research, based on my mentor's observation, I did not use many physical demonstrations and I used to use only around four or five instruction gestures out of usually thirteen instructions. As a result I did not cater very much for my students' learning styles. However, my research has proved to myself that respecting students' learning styles when delivering instructions is very

important and that it pays off. For instance, implementing a physical demonstration, which is suitable for kinaesthetic learners, is very rewarding for both the teacher and her students.

My findings from the recording were even supported by my mentor who judged my body language as natural, unthreatening and warm. However, there was a moment when my mentor could not see my gesture from the back of the class because I stood behind the teacher's desk on which there was a computer which blocked the view. This opinion was also stated by one of the students who sat in the first row right behind the computer. Therefore, it would have been useful to properly familiarize myself with the classroom first before I taught the first lesson in it. This comment from my mentor and from my student shows that I should not underestimate familiarizing myself with the classroom in which I am going to teach. Preparing the spot where I will deliver instructions is as important as the instructions themselves. In order to improve in the next lesson to come, I did the following two steps. Firstly, I visualized the place from which I would deliver instructions so that I knew in advance where to position myself. Secondly, before the lesson began I made sure that there was not any obstacle on the chosen spot. After I had carried out these two precautions, all the sixteen students stated that they could see my gestures comfortably from their desks. This opinion was also supported by my mentor who was also able to see my body language without any difficulty despite the fact that she sat at the back of the classroom.

Based on my students' opinions, twelve out of sixteen students found my gestures very helpful and useful because when I said a word they were not familiar with, they could easily work out the meaning of it thanks to my gesture. They also stated that they found watching the physical demonstration of their classmate very enjoyable.

To summarize, based on my teaching reflective journal, prior to my action research I did not feel very confident using gestures and I also felt quite shy trying out new ones. When I reflect on these notes nowadays after my research, I think that there is no reason for feeling awkward when it comes to using gestures. It is because the gestures are for the good of our students and now I know how much they appreciate them. In other words, my research has encouraged me to use more gestures and it has also helped me to perform them more confidently. I am planning to implement even more gestures in my future teaching practice.

3.) My third aim was to focus on whether my students comprehend issued instructions.

Involving the students in issuing instructions

The analysis of the recording shows that when students are actively involved in issuing instructions to their classmates, they comprehend instructions more easily. This is noticeable from the students' reaction time upon seeing me and their volunteer classmate to roleplay the activity 'Find Someone Who'. Before the research, based on my mentor's observation, when I delivered instructions for this activity orally and by myself, it took the students up to seven seconds to start working on the activity. That may have been because they first needed some time to process the oral instructions. However, when I gave the volunteer student a chance to join me in roleplaying the activity, the class initiated the activity after only two seconds. The students immediately got up from their chairs and got down to work. Based on my teaching reflective journal, that may have been thanks to two factors. Firstly, the class obtained a clear visual support and in this case a visual demonstration is worth a thousand words. Secondly, I believe that by providing this support for my students I signal that I myself am involved in the teaching process i.e. that I care for my students and for our lesson. As a result, by showing my own interest, I invite my students to join in and cooperate with me. Consequently, I encourage safe learning environment and that promotes deeper understanding of instructions because the students are then better tuned-in. In other words, I think that understanding instructions is not only about proper techniques but also what plays as important role are the students' emotions. If the students saw me uninvolved in the lesson's procedure how could I possibly want them to follow my instructions (see sub-chapter 1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses, section The affective filter hypothesis)? Moreover, after the visual demonstration was done the students seemed to be confident enough to carry out the activity by themselves and they did not ask me any questions concerning the stages of the activity. Before the research, when I delivered the instructions orally, I got three questions from three different students. The questions concerned the stages of the activity and they were raised during the activity because the students needed to reassure that they understood my instructions well. That may have been because the oral delivery of the instructions was too long and it was hard for the students to visualize the sequence of the activity.

These findings are also supported by the students' feedback. Twelve students out of sixteen have stated that having the opportunity to participate on the delivery of instructions breaks the lesson's routine and it makes the lesson more interesting (see Appendix 1a, Lesson plan

number 1, Activity column, ‘Find someone who’ activity, ‘What a teacher does’ column; see Appendix 3a, Lesson plan number 3, Activity column, Game ‘What were you doing when you first…’, ‘What a teacher does’ column).

My mentor’s findings suggest that giving the students a chance to participate on the delivery of instructions seems to catch their attention. Specifically, the mentor states that such approach is like ‘a breath of fresh air’.

Based on my reflective notes, actively involving my students in the delivery of instructions requires a certain degree of bravery and improvisation. It is because whenever I involve my students I try new things and take risks. It is also necessary to visualize in advance how I will involve my students in the procedure. Before my action research I could not imagine roleplaying an activity with a student because I was too shy and I was afraid that I would embarrass myself in front of the whole class. However, during my research when I risked doing it I was surprised about two things. Firstly, I realized how much the volunteer student was drawn into roleplaying the activity with me and how attentively the class watched us. Secondly, this moment triggered my own school memories and I said to myself: ‘I wish I had the opportunity to do this when I was a little girl at school.’ Moreover, it surprised me how much I actually enjoyed this creative way of the delivery of instructions even though I am an adult person. My students and I were both so drawn in the lesson that we were surprised when the bell rang at the end of our lesson. In other words the lesson just flew by. I personally feel that one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching is that I as a teacher can ‘relive’ my old school days again and include in my teaching things which I missed as a student.

Based on my mentor’s observation, before my research my instructions were not sufficient in two areas. The first area concerns the students’ learning styles and the other one concerns the students’ autonomy. Let us have a look at the learning styles first. I used to cater mostly for auditory learners only by delivering instructions orally. That was a mistake because my research has shown that not all activities require a spoken explanation. My mentor’s findings suggest that on average, I used to deliver ten out of thirteen instructions orally. As a result, I have increased the use of those instructional techniques which accommodate visual and kinaesthetic learners. Based on my mentor’s observation, during the research I delivered, on average, eight out of thirteen instructions by the means of my body language. Based on my teaching reflective journal, the reason for why I tended to facilitate auditory learners only was that I myself am an auditory learner. As a result, I automatically chose those auditory

instruction techniques which worked for me when I was a student and which even work for me nowadays. In other words I thought that what works for me will work for my students as well. However, after my research I came to a realization that that may not always be true. Consequently in my future teaching practice I need to be aware of this tendency of mine so that I accommodate students of all kinds of learning styles. Now let us focus on the second area which I needed to improve – the topic of autonomy of my students. Before my research began, I was in control every time I delivered instructions and I did not give my students an opportunity to actively participate in this crucial moment. In other words I was the authority which gave the instructions and I did not give my students a chance to feel more responsible for the lesson's procedure. In order to improve, I have started actively involving my students into the delivery of the instructions. For example, there was an early finisher and I asked him to prepare instructions for the next activity. Meanwhile the rest of the class was still working on a task, the student rehearsed the instructions with me first so that I made sure that he would give them correctly. When the class was ready with their task, the student delivered the instructions for the following activity himself. During his delivery of the instructions, there was a total silence in the classroom and his peers kept their eye contact with him. Even those students who were sitting in front of him turned towards him so that they could see his face. That is something the students did not do when I delivered the instructions! Therefore, this technique has shown that students tend to receive instructions more willingly and gracefully if they are delivered by their fellow classmates (see sub-chapter 4.2.3 Students prepare instructions; see Appendix 2a, Lesson plan number 2, Activity column, Vocabulary focus, 'What a teacher does' column).

In conclusion, catering for various learning styles of the students when issuing instructions and promoting the students' autonomy during the delivery of instructions have proved to increase the students' comprehension of instructions.

Checking understanding of instructions

As far as checking understanding of instructions is concerned, my mentor's findings suggest that using concept checking questions has proved to be effective for the following two reasons. Firstly, students were able to provide short answers without any major difficulties. Secondly, this technique has shown to be time-saving due to its short answers and 'yes/no' responses.

These findings were even supported by my self-reflective notes. In addition, my notes also suggest that asking a student to summarize my instructions has also shown to be helpful. It was because I did not have to repeat the instructions myself but instead I gave a student an opportunity to talk. I.e. this technique increased student talking time (see sub-chapter 5.3 Getting students to summarise the instructions; see Appendix 4a, Lesson plan number 4, Activity column, A test focused on past simple/continuous, 'What a teacher does' column).

Before my research, based on my mentor's observation, I used no more than two concept checking questions in each lesson. During my research, however, I increased the use of concept checking questions up to five, on average, in each lesson. According to my teaching reflective journal, I did not use enough concept checking questions before my research because of the fear that my students may think that I underestimate their language skills and I did not want to ask them 'silly questions'. In other words, I felt that they may think that I do not consider them clever enough. When I reflect on these notes nowadays after my research, I think that most of the students appreciate concept checking questions and they accept them well because they help them clarify the instructions. Also, the students have a second chance to hear the key information again. For example, when I asked a concept checking question, the majority of the students kept their eye contact with me. Only a few students looked down at desks and avoided eye contact with me. Of course that I nominated those students whose facial expressions looked positive and those students answered my questions. The other students, who avoided eye contact with me, had at least one more opportunity to hear the key information. In other words, I nominated those students who seemed to be likely to know my answer. I did that in order to promote safe learning environment because if I nominated weaker students on purpose i.e. those who would probably not give me the correct answer, I would stress the nominated students and also they may feel that I am against them instead of feeling a mutual cooperation. As a result, the negative atmosphere would hinder instructions' comprehension (see sub-chapter 1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses, section The affective filter hypothesis). Moreover, the purpose of the concept checking questions would be lost because the teacher is not supposed to waste too much time on them i.e. the whole process should be smooth. Furthermore, before my research I did not realize how much my teaching is influenced by my personal memories from my own school days. Nowadays after my research I am aware of the fact that when I teach I tend to avoid things which I found stressful or unpleasant when I was a student in an English class. For example, asking my students concept checking questions

triggered one particular memory of mine. It involved my former teacher who nominated mostly weaker students who then failed in their answers. Meanwhile I understand that involving weaker students has its place in teaching, I think that in case of concept checking questions it is more suitable to get the answer from someone who is more confident.

All in all, in my future teaching practice I will no longer worry about the use of concept checking questions and I will keep using them because they have proved to play an important role in checking understanding of instructions.

7.5 Evaluation of instructional techniques

This sub-chapter evaluates the most frequently used instructional techniques in my research. It describes how the techniques worked and it also suggests further steps which I will follow in my future teaching practice. The evaluation is based on the three research aims stated in sub-chapter 7.1.

1.) Modifying my verbal instructions according to my students' language level

Preparing instructions in advance

Based on my teaching reflective journal, this technique of writing instructions down before each lesson was very helpful because I could prepare the instructions at home where I could think them over and adjust them to the language level of my students. Similarly my mentor suggests that due to the prepared instructions I managed to modify them and at the same time keep them accurate and linguistically correct. Likewise, twelve out of sixteen students stated that overall they found the language of my instructions clear and understandable. Before my research, based on my mentor's findings, my delivery of instructions was not as efficient, smooth and confident as it was during the research when I adopted this technique. However, based on the video recording, the only drawback of this technique was that due to the written instructions I tended to look into my lesson plans quite frequently. As a result, I did not keep my eye contact with the students as much as I would have liked. In the future I will pay attention to this potential problem of mine because Ur (2012, p. 215) suggests that we should teach the students and not the lesson plan. Moreover, I as a beginner teacher am going to keep preparing instructions in advance. It is because Ur (ibid.) argues that this technique is suitable for beginner teachers since writing instructions down is the first step to modifying them according to students' language level and keeping them concise and to the point.

Repeating instructions

This technique of repeating instructions calmly and in a slower pace had a positive effect on the students' comprehension. It was because the class had one more opportunity to process the instructions. The advantage of this technique was that I could ask one of my stronger students to repeat the instructions instead of me. By doing that I promoted my student's talking time and autonomy. However, one disadvantage of this technique was that when I decided to repeat the instructions myself I automatically rephrased the instructions instead of simply repeating the exact same sentence. As a result the paraphrasing confused my class instead of promoting better understanding and three students out of sixteen asked me questions about the activity because they needed to clarify its steps. It was for these reasons that I decided to scaffold by providing written instructions of the board. My mentor's findings suggests that the students appreciated that and they found the written instructions clear because they stopped asking me questions. Based on the video recording, I brought the students' attention to the board by pointing towards the written instructions which seemed to focus the students' attention on the board. In my future teaching practice I will ask my students to repeat the instructions instead of repeating them myself. It is because Tudor (1996, p. 28) argues that we should engage as many students as possible when the situation requires repeating instructions since doing that promotes our students' autonomy and it keeps them engaged during the lesson (see sub-chapter 2.2 The interaction modification, section Repetition).

Backtracking instructions

The greatest benefit of this technique was that I could return to a point in my instructions up to which I believed my students understood me. That then gave me an opportunity to explain what was unclear to the students. Based on my teaching reflective journal, this technique presupposed mutual cooperation between me and my students because the students needed to explain what piece of instruction was clear and what they needed to hear again. My mentor's findings suggests that four out of sixteen students took part in explaining what piece of instruction was clear to them and then another three students continued with what piece of instruction was not so clear to them. The analysis of the recording shows that this technique facilitated a smooth and quick explanation of the unclear part of the instructions as it took only ten seconds to clarify the problematic piece of instruction. Based on my mentor's findings, it was because I could concentrate straight away on the problematic piece of instruction and I did not have to deliver the whole instructions again. Lynch (2016, p. 49)

argues that A1-A2 level students may have problems expressing in English what piece of instruction was clear or unclear. If this happens he suggests giving the students an opportunity to express themselves in their mother tongue i.e. Czech in order to facilitate a smooth flow of the delivery of instructions. Therefore, in my future teaching practice I will be aware of this danger and if my students struggle with expressing what they need to say I will encourage them to say it in Czech (see sub-chapter 2.2 The interaction modification, section Backtracking).

Completing the student's utterance

This technique worked well if a student needed to ask about a specific piece of instruction but in their question they could not remember a certain word and they 'got stuck' and were not able to finish the question. There were two advantages to this technique. Firstly, based on my mentor's observation, I made the situation less stressful for the student because I completed the student's utterance. Secondly, based on the analysis of the video recording, I saved time by helping the student to express what he needed to ask about. Specifically with my help it took the student only five seconds to express what he needed to say. Based on my mentor's observation, before my research when I did not finish the student's utterance, it took the student up to ten seconds to express what he needed to say. Lynch (2016, p. 49) argues that while it is true that the teacher should be patient with her students and she should give them an opportunity to finish their sentences, in case of instructions it is appropriate to help our students out a little bit. Therefore, in the future I am going to use this technique because it has proved to work fine (see sub-chapter 2.2 The interaction modification, section Completion).

Confirmation check

With reference to the paragraph above, I found it also helpful to make sure that I understood what my student was asking me about. Sometimes I was not quite sure and confirming with him/her first contributed to better, quicker and easier communication. In particular, based on my mentor's observation, before my research when I did not use this technique, at least one misunderstanding occurred in each lesson between me and a student. However, during the research when I started using this technique, my mentor did not notice any misunderstanding because I did not hesitate to confirm with the student first before I answered his/her question. Furthermore, Scrivener (2014, p. 67) suggests that when the teacher does not understand what a student is asking her about, it may be also helpful to ask the rest of the class to explain

it to her. Therefore, in my future teaching practice I will remember to include the whole class and invite them to explain to me what the student means (see sub-chapter 2.2 The interaction modification, section Confirmation check).

Using logical links

My mentor's findings suggest that this technique worked well with every kind of instruction because making logical links explicit helped to promote students' understanding. When using this technique, only two students out of sixteen needed to clarify the instructions. Before my research when I did not make logical links explicit, five out of sixteen students asked me clarification questions. However, based on the analysis of the recording, sometimes my instructions tended to be too long because of stressing the logical links. Harmer (1996, p. 46) argues that while the teacher should add why she wants her students to do a certain thing, she should at the same time keep her instructions concise and to the point. Therefore, in my future teaching practice, I will try to balance these two aspects so that my instructions positively contribute to the overall comprehension of instructions (see sub-chapter 2.3 Modification of information choice, section Logical links).

2.) Using my gestures effectively when delivering instructions

Physical demonstration

The utmost benefit of this instructional technique was that it catered for the various learning styles of my students (see chapter 4 Verbal and Non-verbal Instruction Techniques and Learning Styles). Specifically it accommodated kinaesthetic learners if I invited them to perform the demonstration. At the same time it catered for visual learners who could comfortably sit at their chairs and be only the observers. Also, based on my mentor's findings, it was suitable for auditory learners since five out of seven physical demonstrations were accompanied with verbal instructions. However, Scrivener (2014, p. 63) suggests that if we want this technique to work well it is necessary that we do not push our students into performing the relevant activity. Instead it is suitable to look for volunteer students who would like to participate on performing the physical demonstration. That way we can be sure that we will not stress the students and also we can be sure that the physical demonstration meets their learning styles' needs. In other words if the volunteer students were not kinaesthetic learners they would probably not volunteer on this particular delivery of instructions. On one occasion I picked a student myself because waiting for a volunteer seemed to last too many seconds. However, in my future teaching practice I will try to be

more patient and maybe I will try to encourage my students with friendly eye contact so that the students themselves decide to participate on the physical demonstration. Moreover, Moskowitz (1978, p. 15) argues that it is important to realize that those students who decide to only watch the physical demonstration are no less involved in the process because they just simply follow their preferred way of absorbing instructions. In other words the teacher should not consider them 'lazy' or 'uninterested' in the activity for which the physical demonstration is being delivered. The teacher should respect the various students' needs when it comes to their participation on the delivery of instructions. Therefore, in my future teaching practice, I will bear that in mind and I should avoid the tendency of thinking that 'less active' students deserve worse grades. Furthermore, Moskowitz (ibid.) argues that this technique presupposes a well-established group where students know one another well and are not afraid to perform the instructions in front of one another. Therefore, in my future teaching practice I will start using this technique after some time when I get to know the students and when the students know one another a bit more.

All in all, based on my mentor's observation, this technique was easy to conduct after some time of teaching the class because when I asked for volunteer students to participate on the delivery of instructions, the students were happy to do it themselves or to assist me. That was obvious from their response time. It took me only three seconds to get a volunteer student as opposed to six seconds when I was a new teacher to them. When I got to know my students a bit more they cooperated well, watched and listened attentively and it saved time in the lesson. In the future I will aim at incorporating as much physical demonstrations as possible because they have proved to be a very useful tool when it comes to the delivery of instructions.

Using gestures

One of the biggest advantages of this instructional technique was that it saved time because one simple gesture was worth thousand words (see chapter 3 Non-verbal Instructions: Combining the Language of Instructions with Gestures). However, Moskowitz (1978, p. 24) argues that instruction gestures work well only if they are carried out in a warm and unthreatening manner. Therefore, in my future teaching practice I will not only pay attention to the clarity of my gestures but also I will bear in mind that the manner in which I carry them out is also important. Also, this technique facilitated visual and auditory learners at the same time when I accompanied my verbal instructions together with gestures. However, Cohen and Manion (1995, p. 259) argue that this technique presupposes choosing a spot

from which the teacher's gestures will be visible. On one occasion the students could not see my gestures comfortably so in the future I will pay attention to choosing a visible spot from which I will issue my instructions. Moreover, Cohen and Manion (ibid.) suggest that this technique may be easy to conduct for teachers who are used to using gestures but it may be a bit challenging for those teachers who tend to rely mostly on their verbal instructions. Based on my mentor's observation, before my research I used to rely mostly on my verbal instructions and during my research I had to work on increasing the use of gestures. In my future teaching practice I am going to focus on broadening my repertoire of instruction gestures. It is because they proved to catch my students' attention and they increased the students' understanding of instructions.

3.) Focusing on whether my students comprehend issued instructions

Concept checking questions

The utmost benefit of concept checking questions was that they were very short and to the point and they also required only a short answer. As a result they helped me to save time during lessons. Furthermore, Scrivener (2014, p. 146) argues that they are particularly suitable for A1-A2 level students because thanks to their simple grammatical structure they can be easily understood even by lower-level students. However, Scrivener (ibid.) suggests that this technique of checking understanding of instructions requires a written preparation especially if the lesson is taught by a beginner teacher. In particular it is necessary to write down a concept checking question to each of the relevant piece of instruction which the teacher wants to check. Unfortunately, I regret to report that I tended to underestimate preparing concept checking questions in advance and it was not always easy for me to come up with clear concept checking questions on the spot. Based on my mentor's observation, two concept checking questions out of five were too long and I did not structure them clearly enough. Similarly, the analysis of the video recording showed that the students reacted on the two questions with a four-second delay in a comparison with the rest of the well-structured questions after which I obtained a response only after two seconds. Therefore, in my future teaching practice I will not underestimate writing concept checking questions down before a lesson. As a result this technique will require a small preparation before each lesson but at the end it will be worth it because it will facilitate a smooth flow of the delivery of instructions. In other words thanks to these prepared questions I will be able to easily reveal the problematic area of issued instructions and I will return back to the point where

her students did not understand me and I will say the piece of instruction again (see sub-chapter 5.1 Concept checking questions).

Getting students to summarize the instructions

This technique worked well with extroverted students who were not shy to speak in front of the whole class. Also, it was suitable for auditory learners who either liked to listen to their own voice or who liked listening to their fellow classmate's voice (see sub-chapter 4.2 Auditory learners). Moskowitz (1978, p. 15) does not recommend using this technique on an introverted student because he/she may feel uncomfortable with speaking in front of the whole class. Unfortunately, I have to admit that once I nominated a student to summarize my instructions and despite the fact that he belonged to stronger students he seemed to struggle with his task. Later on I discovered that he just simply did not feel comfortable talking in front of a larger group of people. Similarly, my mentor's findings also suggested that I picked a rather shy student who was not suitable for such a task. It is for these reasons that in the future I will try to nominate only those students who do not feel shy or embarrassed when talking in front of their classmates (see sub-chapter 5.3 Getting students to summarise the instructions).

Volunteer students prepare and issue the instructions

The utmost benefit of this technique is that it keeps early finishers occupied and it promotes their autonomy and it boosts their confidence. Furthermore, it works well with extrovert students who feel comfortable talking in front of the whole class. At the same time it seemed to work well even with contemplative type of students because of the moment when the student needs to carefully think the instructions over and is encouraged by the teacher to come up with his/her own way of delivering them. Moreover, this technique is also suitable for creative students who like to approach issuing instructions in their own unique way. My students and I even had a laugh when we listened to a volunteer student giving us instructions and that promoted relaxed classroom atmosphere (see sub-chapter 1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses, section The affective filter hypothesis). Whereas Scrivener (2014, p. 152) suggests that the student who prepares instructions for his classmates should practise the instructions with the teacher first, Ur (2012, p. 17) also argues that the student could practise the instructions with one of the stronger students. That way co-operation between students would be encouraged. While it is true that I let the student to practise the instructions with me first, in my future teaching practice I would like to try out Ur's approach to this technique

as well. It is because I would encourage my students' autonomy and they would feel more responsible for the lesson's procedure (see sub-chapter 4.2.3 Students prepare instructions).

Noticing the students' reaction

This technique of noticing our students' facial expressions proved to be very important and helpful and it should not be neglected. The biggest advantage of it was that students' facial expressions gave me immediate feedback on whether they followed my instructions or not. My research showed that when I notice that my students do not seem very happy about my delivery of instructions, it pays off to simply say something like: 'I can see that you look a bit confused now. Do you want me to say it again?' By asking my students this question I acknowledge the present situation and we work together on improving it. In other words my research showed that being honest with myself as well as with the students pays off and that it promotes mutual trust (see sub-chapter 1.1.1 Stephen Krashen's hypotheses, section The affective filter hypothesis).

7.6 Evaluation

This sub-chapter explains why this research has enriched me, what aspects of it were easy and challenging, what findings have surprised me most and why the instructional techniques mentioned in this work can be applied to other school subjects.

Conducting this action research has been a very interesting and enriching experience for me because it has given me a unique opportunity to explore instructional techniques which I have either never tried before or which I did not use fully or frequently enough. Moreover, not only did I discover how my students reacted on them and how they accepted them, but also going through this process has taught me a lot about myself as a teacher. That was mostly thanks to my reflective teaching journal where I noted down my feelings regarding my teaching practice – something I would not have done if it was not for this research. Specifically now I better understand why I tended to use certain instructional techniques more than others and what made me do that. And I believe that if I want to make a change in my teaching practice, being aware of why I feel uneasy about the use of a certain technique may be the first step to my improvement and personal growth.

Some stages of my research were easily conducted whereas others posed a slight challenge. The former included, for example, the data collection and their interpretation because recording myself on a video lent itself easily to the analysis of my body language. Moreover, what I found especially useful was that I could watch the recording several times and each time I watched it I could concentrate on different aspects of my body language. Also, as far as the student's questionnaire is concerned, the students found it easy to assess me because they could easily relate to this kind of assessment. As a result, I was able to obtain valuable feedback within a few minutes at the end of each lesson. However, what I found rather challenging during my research was choosing the right instructional techniques and implementing them for the first time into my teaching practice. That required a certain degree of bravery because I had to be prepared to improvise should the technique go wrong or should it not be well accepted by my students. Luckily, that scenario did not happen because my students were very open-minded, hard-working and they co-operated well.

There were two findings which surprised me most in my research. Firstly, I was very pleased to find out that nearly everybody in my class wanted me to deliver instructions only in English. Nor did I expect that the students would provide me with several reasons why they want to have all the instructions issued in English. Secondly, I did not expect how gracefully and playfully my students will react upon me inviting them to roleplay instructions and I

consider myself very lucky that I have had the chance to be there with them and experience this.

Even though this work deals with instructional techniques suitable for English lessons, I would argue that the majority of the techniques could also be used in other school subjects. For example, techniques in sub-chapters 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 could be used for geography, Czech language or maths to name a few. It is because these techniques concern checking understanding of instructions and that is important in any subject we teach. As far as techniques in chapters 3 and 4 are concerned, teachers of other subjects could get inspired by them and adjust them to the subjects they teach.

Taking everything into consideration, this research has helped me to grow as a teacher and it has helped me to gain new experience. However, it is only the beginning of my life-long learning in the field of teaching English. In other words, it is only the beginning of my journey of a self-education. I believe that I will remain a learner for the rest of my life. I will never reach a point where I will be able to say '*OK, now I know how to teach.*' I will always learn together with my students. And this action research has been a good starting point for me.

8 Conclusion

The purpose of this work was to analyse and present the data gained in a real school environment regarding instructions and their influence on students' understanding of a task.

The aim was to find out whether the author has improved in the delivery of instructions by following theoretical principles of giving instructions during English lessons. This work is divided into two interrelated parts: practical and theoretical part.

The first part of the thesis contains theoretical chapters dealing with general principles and techniques of issuing instructions. This part offers arguments supporting the fact that correct delivery of instructions is necessary if we want to increase students' chances of right understanding of a task. The focus is on the teacher's language of instructions and means of non-verbal delivery of instructions. This part serves as a theoretical basis for the practical part.

The theoretical part is further subdivided into five main chapters. The first chapter focuses on the benefits of delivering instructions in English in order to expose our students to as much English as possible and to maximise English acquisition and learning. This chapter also introduces three Stephen Krashen's hypothesis which are relevant for delivering instructions in the target language. They are the acquisition/learning hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. These inspirational hypothesis offer arguments supporting the fact that students do benefit from being exposed to instructions in English. The second chapter deals with the level of English we expose our students to when issuing instructions. It introduces three approaches to language modification – the input modification, the interaction modification and modification of information choice. These approaches are commonly used by English language teachers to help their students better understand the instructions. The third chapter depicts how gestures enhance our students' understanding of instructions when used simultaneously with verbal language instructions. Moreover, it shows pictures of the most frequently used gestures with A1 – A2 level students. Furthermore, general guidance on how to perform the gestures is provided. The fourth chapter depicts how verbal and non-verbal techniques of giving instructions relate to the students' learning styles. Moreover, it describes various instruction techniques which cater for visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. The fifth chapter focuses on techniques which allow us to find out whether our students have understood our instructions. In particular it depicts the following three revealing methods of checking understanding of

instructions: concept checking questions, noticing the students' reactions and getting students to summarize the instructions. The subsequent chapter concludes the theoretical part.

The practical part introduces an action research and its overall aim is to present obtained data and evaluate whether the author has improved in delivering instructions and to what extent. The action research is subdivided into six chapters. The first chapter defines three research aims. The second chapter depicts intervention plan describing what the author will do differently in order to improve in the delivery of instructions. The third chapter focuses on four main instruments of data collection: an in-lesson structured observation sheet for a mentor, a post-lesson individual student questionnaire, the teacher's reflective journal and a video recording. The fourth chapter deals with outcomes and interpretations which focus on the analysis of the four instruments of data collection. The fifth chapter evaluates the most frequently used instructional techniques in the author's research. It describes how the techniques worked and it also suggests further steps which the author will take in her future teaching practice. The subsequent chapter evaluates the action research itself. Specifically it focuses on why the research has enriched the author, what aspects of it were easy or challenging, what findings have most surprised the author and why the instructional techniques mentioned in this work can be applied to other school subjects.

The research has revealed that modifying the language of instructions as well as using various verbal and non-verbal instructions techniques promotes the students' comprehension of instructions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1a – Lesson plan number 1

Appendix 1b – Flash cards

Appendix 1c – ‘Find someone who…’ worksheet

Appendix 2a – Lesson plan number 2

Appendix 2b – Textbook material

Appendix 3a – Lesson plan number 3

Appendix 3b – Textbook material

Appendix 3c – ‘What were they doing when they first…’activity

Appendix 4a – Lesson plan number 4

Appendix 4b – Textbook material

Appendix 4c – ‘As different as chalk and cheese’ activity

Appendix 5a – Lesson plan number 5

Appendix 5b – Textbook material

Appendix 6 – Students’ questionnaire

Appendix 7 – Mentor’s observation sheet

Appendix 1a – Lesson plan number 1

Class: Sekunda A Level: A2 Textbook: Oxford Heroes Number of learners: 16
Date: 8.11.2016 Time: 12:00 - 12:35 hod (5th hour for the Ss)

Overall aim: At the end of the lesson students can:

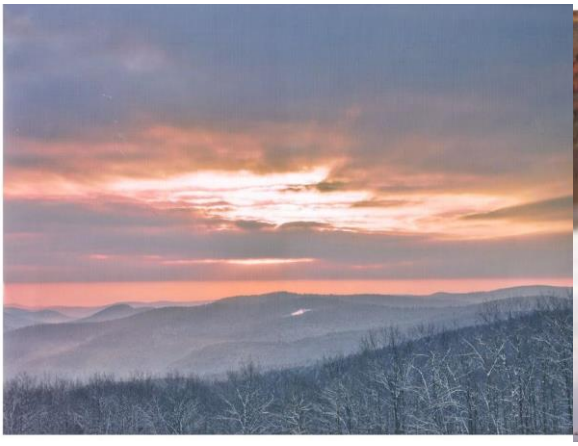
- Ask questions about activities which their classmates did during the last weekend (past simple questions)
- Speak fluently when reporting what they have found out about their classmates (past simple verbs)
- Speak fluently on the topic of choosing the most enjoyable activity from the list

Time needed	**Activity**	**Material and aids**	**What a teacher does** (+ instructions)	**What do learners do**	**Organization forms**	**Objectives** (its relations to the overall aim)
5 mins	'Guess what I did last weekend' activity	A board, a pen, countryside pictures, magnets	*Look at these pictures. What do you think I did last weekend? Ask me.* Elicits questions/answers and writes them on the board: Did you…? Yes, I did/No, I didn't. Were you…Yes, I was/No, I wasn't.	Ask questions to find out what the T did	Open class	Remembering: Ss can recall past simple questions and answers.
20 mins	'Find someone who' activity	handouts	*We are going to play a game to practise past simple questions. I want you to find out about your classmates' weekend. Walk around the classroom and ask them. When they answer you write down their names.* Demonstrates	Watch the demonstration	Open class	

			the activity with a volunteer. *Take a textbook and a pen with you.*			
		A CD player, a CD, a sheet of paper, a pen	Monitors the Ss and writes down interesting mistakes. Plays background music. (Writes a question on the board to prepare for a final discussion activity.)	Mingle and ask their classmates. Write down the names.	Group work	Applying: Ss can apply past simple questions
			Nominates Ss and ask them about what they have found out about their classmates' weekend. *Did you find out anything interesting about Katka's weekend?*	Share what they have found out.	Open class	Applying: Ss can apply past simple verbs in their talk
		A board, a pen	Writes 2 interesting mistakes on the board and corrects them with the Ss.	Share their ideas on how to correct them.	Open class	
5 mins	A wrap-up discussion	A board, a pen	Writes on the board*: Decide with your partner what activity (from the list) is the most enjoyable for you both and why.*	Discuss their views	Pair work	Evaluating: Ss can choose the most interesting activity for themselves from the list
			Asks individual Ss about their opinion	Share their opinions.	Open class	

Anticipated problems: We may have a couple of spare minutes at the end of the lesson. I will put the students in pairs and they will play pelmanism with irregular verbs.

Appendix 1b – Flash cards



Appendix 1c – My homemade worksheet 'Find someone who…'

Find someone who…

Ask other students:	Names:
1. …had breakfast in bed.	……
2. …spoke English.	……
3. …got up before 8 am.	…….
4. …rode a bicycle.	…….
5. …listened to music.	…….
6. …read a book.	…….
7. …went shopping.	…….
8. …visited her/his grandmother/grandfather.	…….
9. …went to the cinema.	…….
10. …had lunch or dinner with parents.	…….
11. …played with a brother or a sister.	…….
12. …played football.	…….
13. …watched TV.	…….
14. …went swimming.	…….
15. …cleaned her/his room.	……..
16. …played with her/his friend.	……..
17. …was at a party.	……..
18. …celebrated their birthday.	……..
19. …went on a trip.	……..

Appendix 2a – Lesson plan number 2

Class: Sekunda A Level: A2 Textbook: Oxford Heroes Number of learners: 16
Date: 9.11.2016 Time: 10:55-11:40 hod (4th hour for the Ss)

Overall aim: At the end of the lesson students can:

- Familiarize themselves with selected vocabulary – a safe, a collector, a statue, a thief, a shadow
- Act out the story of Sam, Kate and Maldo using the selected vocabulary

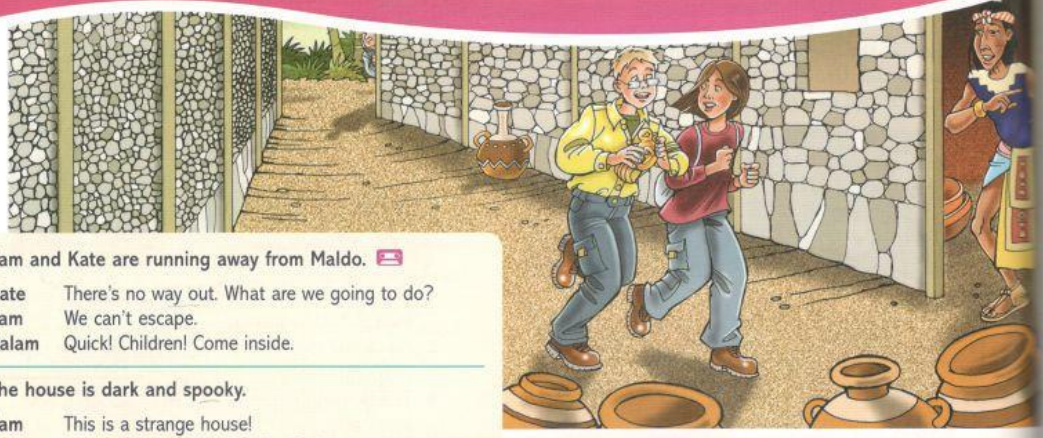
Time needed	**Activity**	**Material and aids**	**What a teacher does** (+ instructions)	**What do learners do**	**Organization forms**	**Objectives** (its relations to the overall aim)
10 mins	Presentation Story – lead in	Textbook, p. 22, pictures	*Look at the pictures. What are Kate and Sam doing in picture 1?* (They're running away from Maldo.) *Where do they go?* (into a house) *What's the man looking at in picture 2?* (the bird) *Who's at the window in picture 3?* (Maldo)	Answer the questions	Open class	Understanding: Ss can infer the main plot from the pictures
	Introduction of key vocabulary	A board, a pen	Writes the following key words on the board: a safe, a collector, a statue, a thief, a shadow *Work with your partner. What do you think these words mean?*	Discuss their ideas	Pair work	Understanding: Ss can discuss their ideas on selected vocabulary
			Elicits answers using CCQs		Open class	
		A CD player, a CD, Track 14	Plays the CD. *Listen and read.*	Listen and read	Individual	

5 mins	Reading through the dialogue	p. 22	Nominates Ss who want to read Kate, Sam and Balam. *Change your voices.*	Read out the dialogue pretending to be the characters	Group work	
5 mins	Comprehension sentences	p.22, ex.1	*All the sentences in the exercise are false. Correct them.*	Correct the sentences	Individual	Understanding: Ss can identify false statements
			Check your sentences with your partner		Pair work	
			Ss nominate one another.		Open class	
5 mins	Vocabulary focus	p. 22, ex.2	*Look at the story again and match the words with definitions.*		Individual	
			Check your answers with your partner		Pair work	
			Checks the answers with the whole class		Open class	
15 mins	Dramatization of the story		Divides the class into groups of four. Asks each group to act out the story. Tells the Ss that they will perform it in front of their classmates. Monitors the class and assists the Ss.	Act out the story	Group work	Applying: Ss can dramatize the story
			Watch your classmates carefully and decide which group you like the best.	Act out the story in front of the whole class.		

Anticipated problems: Ss may be shy to act out the story. I won't push them and offer them an alternative activity in a workbook.

Appendix 2b – Textbook material

3 Ghosts

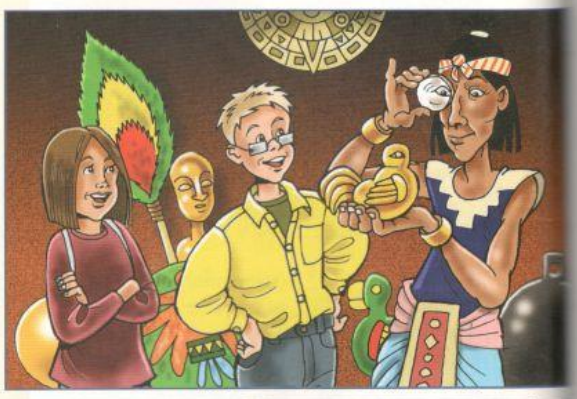


Sam and Kate are running away from Maldo.

Kate There's no way out. What are we going to do?
Sam We can't escape.
Balam Quick! Children! Come inside.

The house is dark and spooky.

Sam This is a strange house!
Balam Don't worry. You're safe. I'm Balam.
Kate I'm Kate. This is Sam. Why did you help us?
Balam I was looking out of my window when I saw you. You were running and Maldo was following you. Maldo is a bad man.
Sam Wow! Look at all these things.
Balam I'm a collector.
Sam Do you know what this is?
Balam Let me see. Yes! This is amazing!
Kate What is it?
Balam It's a very special bird. It's very valuable. Maldo stole it.
Sam Who is Maldo?
Balam He's a thief. A few years ago, he came to our empire. He went to the palace in Perdita and took this bird from a statue. Now there's a curse on the city. Its people cannot live there. They cannot return until a stranger puts the bird back on the statue.
Kate We must take it back for them. We must end the curse.



Sam sees a shadow.

Sam Look! There's a shadow at the window.
Kate It's Maldo!
Balam You must go! This way. There's a door at the back.
Kate Come on, Sam.

1 Correct the false sentences.

The children go into a shop.
The children go into a house.
1 Kate shows the bird to Balam.
2 Maldo put the bird on the statue.
3 The children want to keep the bird.
4 The children run away from Balam.

2 Match the words from the story with the definitions.

1	escape	a	A stone or metal figure.
2	spooky	b	Worth a lot of money.
3	valuable	c	Get away from.
4	thief	d	Strange and frightening.
5	statue	e	This person takes things.

Appendix 3a – Lesson plan number 3

Class: Sekunda A Level: 2A Textbook: Oxford Heroes Number of learners: 16
Date: 11.11.2016 Time: 10:55-11:40 hod (4th hour for the Ss)

Overall aim: At the end of the lesson students can:

- apply past simple and past continuous tense
- ask and answer questions about themselves choosing either past simple or past continuous tense

Time needed	**Activity**	**Material and aids**	**What a teacher does** (+ instructions)	**What do learners do**	**Organization forms**	**Objectives** (its relations to the overall aim)
1 min	Recalling a story from last time		*Can you briefly summarize the story from last lesson?*	Recall the story together.	Open class	Remembering: Ss can recall the story from last lesson
2 mins	Grammar introduction – past continuous vs past simple	Workbook, p.23, Grammar – past continuous A board, a pen	*Look at the blue box. Can you pls read out the first sentence?* (Balam said that.) The T draws a timeline on the board: *Did the speaker start looking out of the window earlier?* (Yes.) *Was this still happening when the main action happened?* (Yes.) *What is the main action?* (When I saw you.)	One Ss comes up to the board and draws a timeline illustrating the two tenses.	Open class	Understanding: Ss can distinguish between past simple and past continuous
10 mins	'Freeze game'	A board, a pen	Rules: The T divides the class into 2 two teams.		Group work	Applying: Ss can apply past simple and past continuous tense

			One team sit down and close their eyes, the other team stand up without tables in the way. The T writes an action verb on the board for the other team: swimming, playing basketball, doing karate, playing football, playing tennis, eating, washing the dishes, writing, walking, singing etc. That team silently act out the story until the T says 'Freeze' – every member of the team freezes their action and holds it. Team one can now open their eyes and see the frozen actors. Each S from the seated team takes a guess at what team 2 was doing: *When you shouted 'freeze', they were….* The teams swop their roles after some time. The T gives the instructions by doing a dry run with the Ss. Ss follow the instructions step by step.			
4 mins	A fill-in exercise – past continuous	p. 23, ex.3	*Working on your own, fill in the exercise 3.* The T shows the textbook and points at the exercise. The T does the 1st sentence with the Ss as an example.	Fill in the exercise.	Individual	Applying: Ss can modify the infinitive form
			Pair check		Pair work	
			Open class feedback		Open class	
6 mins	A follow-up exercise	p.23, ex.4	*Working with your partner, write questions. Let's do the 1st sentence together.* The T writes the 1st question on the board and elicits the answer.	Share their ideas. Write the sentences down.	Pair work	Creating: Ss can arrange words in the right order Applying: Ss can choose the correct form of the past continuous
			Open class feedback		Open class	

			Ask and answer these questions.	Ask and answer the questions.	Pair work	Applying: Ss can produce relevant answers
10 mins	Game 'What were you doing when you first…'	My own handout	*Do you remember the game 'Find someone who' which I did with you the first time? The following activity is similar.*	Tell what they remember about the game.	Open class	Remembering: Ss can recall an activity which we have done together
			Demonstrates the activity with one of the Ss.	Walk around the classroom and find out information about their partners.	Group work	Applying: Ss can choose when to use present continuous and present simple tense

Anticipated problems: Ss may not answer with full sentences during the last game. I will stress this when giving instructions.

Appendix 3b – Textbook material

1 LESSON

Grammar

Past continuous

was/were + verb + *-ing*
I ***was looking*** *out of my window when I saw you.*
The boys ***weren't playing*** *football.*
Was *Maldo* ***following*** *the children?*
Yes, he ***was****. No, he* ***wasn't****.*

Remember the spelling rules for *-ing* forms!

Stative verbs

We don't usually use the past continuous with these verbs:
love like want hate understand know mean remember need

3 **What was happening in Jack's house at twelve o'clock last night? Complete the sentences with the correct form of the past continuous.**

1 Jack _____ (have) a scary dream.
2 Sarah was in bed, but she _____ (not sleep).
3 Tom _____ (read) a scary story.
4 Jack's parents were in the kitchen, but they _____ (not eat).
5 It was a cold night, but it _____ (not rain).
6 The dog _____ (look) out of the window.

4 **Write questions. Use the correct form of the past continuous.**

you/watch TV/at six o'clock this morning?
Were you watching TV at six o'clock this morning?

1 What/you/do/at twelve o'clock last night?
2 What/you/do/ten minutes ago?
3 your teacher/talk/five minutes ago?
4 What/you/do/at three o'clock yesterday afternoon?
5 your mother/driving to work/at nine o'clock this morning?

5 **Ask and answer the questions in exercise 4.**

Vocabulary

Scary things

6 **Match the pictures with the words in the box.**

haunted house nightmare midnight
skeleton ghost shadow

Listening

7 **Listen to the radio programme about ghosts. Correct the false sentences.**

1 Nobody lives in the spooky house.
2 On the first night, James saw a skeleton in one of the windows.
3 James called the police.
4 The police found a child in the house.
5 On the second night, James didn't see a shadow.

Writing

8 **What were the people in this family doing when a ghost appeared? Complete the sentences.**

1 Mark ...
2 Sarah ...
3 Mum ...
4 Dad ...

Appendix 3c – My homemade worksheet 'What were they doing when they first…'

What were they doing when they first…

Ask other students: Names + what they were doing:

1.) …saw an elephant? …….

2.) …tasted Coca-Cola? …….

3.) …ate chocolate? …….

4.) …got scared? …….

5.) …got to know their good friend? ……..

Appendix 4a – Lesson plan number 4

Class: Sekunda A Level: A2 Textbook: Oxford Heroes Number of learners: 16
Date: 15.11.2016 Time: 11:50-12:25 hod (5th hour for the Ss)

Overall aim: At the end of the lesson students can:

- Write their own love story choosing either past simple or past continuous

Time needed	**Activity**	**Material and aids**	**What a teacher does** (+ instructions)	**What do learners do**	**Organization forms**	**Objectives** (its relations to the overall aim)
2 mins	Checking homework	Workbook, p.20-21	Asks if the Ss had any difficulty with the exercises.	Share their difficulties with their homework if there are any.	Open class	
10 mins	Grammar focus: past simple/continuous	Textbook, p.25 – Grammar box	*Look at the box.*	Read out the rules and examples.		Understanding: Ss can distinguish the difference between past simple/continuous
			Focuses on the 2nd example: *Does 'was talking' describe a background activity?* (Yes.) *Does this activity start first? (Yes.) Was this activity still happening when the speaker saw the ghost?* (Yes.) *Do we use 'while' only with the past continuous?* (Yes.)	Answer T' questions.	Open class	
	Past simple/continuous exercise	Textbook, p. 25, ex. 5	*Underline the correct verbs.*	Underline the correct alternative.	Individual	

			Checks the answers with the class. *Can we start a sentence with the past continuous?* (Yes. Sentence 1.) *Can we start a sentence with the past simple?* (Yes. Sentence 2.)	Read out the answers	Open class	Understanding: Ss can select past simple/continuous
25 mins	A test focused on past simple/continuous	Handouts from Reward Resource Pack, ex 6	Gives instructions and then distributes a handout to each S. *Answer in full sentences.*	Create a story by inventing answers to questions and writing them down.	Group work	Applying: Ss can write their own sentences using past simple/continuous
			Displays the writings on the board and on the desks. *Read through your stories and decide which one you like best. Draw a heart on top of your favourite story.*	Mingle and read their stories.	Mingling	Valuing: Ss can appreciate their stories
			Counts the number of hearts and shows the winner story.	1 S reads the winner story out.		Receiving Phenomena: Ss can listen attentively to their classmate
			Read through the stories again and correct any mistakes. If the sentence is correct use a tick. If you see any mistake, correct the sentence	Read through the story again and correct any mistakes.	Individual	Understanding: Ss can identify correct and incorrect sentences

			by writing the correct answer above the mistake. The T demonstrates the task herself by delivering a monologues of herself doing the task. The T distributes the pieces of writing.			
			The T checks the correct answers with the class. The Ss check how they have corrected the stories.		Individual	
			The T collets the stories and corrects them at home.			

Anticipated problems: The writing activity may take a longer time than I expect. I will collect the stories and we will correct them at the beginning of our next lesson.

Appendix 4b – Textbook material

LESSON 2

Grammar

Past simple and past continuous

We use the past simple for completed actions or events in the past.
*It **was** summer, but I **felt** really cold. I **decided** to get up.*

We use the past continuous for actions in progress in the past.
*While I **was talking** to some friends, I **saw** a ghost on the stairs behind them.*

5 Choose the correct alternatives.

1 I *walked/was walking* upstairs when I heard a strange noise.
2 The lights went off while I *watched/was watching* a ghost film on TV.
3 What *did you do/were you doing* at midnight?
4 I *saw/was seeing* a ghost while I was walking home last night.
5 He *wasn't/wasn't being* frightened when he stayed at the haunted hotel.
6 I *slept/was sleeping* when the telephone rang.

6 Complete the text. Use the correct form of the past simple or past continuous.

Last year, I [1] started (start) a new job in a hotel in Dublin. On my first evening, I [2] was walking (walk) along a corridor when I heard footsteps behind me. I [3] turned (turn) round, but there was nobody there. Later, while I [4] was cleaning (clean) Room 16, I heard the footsteps again. This time, I [5] saw (see) a woman. She was very tall and she [6] was wearing (wear) a long white dress. I [7] was (be) frightened because she looked very strange, but then she disappeared. I asked some people about the woman. They told me that Room 16 was haunted. After that, I [8] left (leave) the hotel and found another job!

Vocabulary

Buildings

7 Complete the words with *a, e, i, o* or *u*.


1 p_l_c_


2 f_rmh_ _s_


3 fl_t


4 h_t_l


5 c_tt_g_


6 c_stl_


7 t_w_r


8 l_ghth_ _s_

8 Complete the sentences. Use words from exercise 7.

1 The captain of the ship saw the lighthouse and sailed in the other direction.
2 My parents were living in a farmhouse when I was born. They had cows and sheep.
3 We live in a large flat in the city. We're on the fifth floor.
4 We were looking for somewhere to stay for the night, when we found a cheap hotel.
5 The Queen lives in a big palace in London.
6 It's an old cottage in the country with two bedrooms and a small garden.

Writing

9 Write five sentences about places you know.

Last year, we stayed in a really nice hotel in Prague.
Bodrum Castle is on the Aegean coast of Turkey.

Appendix 4c – 'As different as chalk and cheese' activity

6 *As different as chalk and cheese*

Reward Intermediate Resource Pack

When they first met, they never imagined they would become the best of friends because they were so different from one another.

Who was the woman?

fold

Who was the man?

fold

Where did they meet?

fold

Where was she living, what was she doing and how was she feeling when they first met?

fold

Where was he living, what was he doing and how was he feeling when they first met?

fold

What did they talk about?

fold

What did she like about him?

fold

What did he like about her?

fold

How long have they have been friends?

Photocopiable

Appendix 5a – Lesson plan number 5

Class: Sekunda A Level: A2 Textbook: Oxford Heroes Number of learners: 16
Date: 22.11.2016 Time: 11:50-12:35 hod (5th hour for the Ss)

Overall aim: At the end of the lesson students can:

- speak fluently on the topic of ghosts
- explain selected vocabulary to their classmates (selected vocabulary: a way out, spooky, quick, safe, a collector, valuable, a thief, a statue, a stranger, a shadow, to keep, a haunted house, a nightmare, a midnight, a skeleton, a ghost, a noise, to appear)

Time needed	**Activity**	**Material and aids**	**What a teacher does** (+ instructions)	**What do learners do**	**Organization forms**	**Objectives** (its relations to the overall aim)
1 min	Clarification of the pronunciation of "Hotel" from last lesson	The board, a pen	Clarifies the pronunciation of the word "hotel" by pronouncing it and making a movement with her arm on the stressed syllable.	Practice the pronunciation in a choral drill repeating the same movement after the teacher.	Open class	Remembering: Ss can reproduce the pronunciation of the word
5 mins	Correction of the story "As different as chalk and cheese" from our last lesson	Handouts with the story	*Sign your story. Correct the sentences.* Distributes the handouts.	If the sentence is correct, they make a tick. If it is incorrect, they correct it.	Individual	Understanding: Ss can distinguish correct sentences from those which are incorrect.
			Check with your partner.		Pair work	
			Checks the sentences with the Ss.		Open class	
5 mins	Lead-in: a discussion on the topic of ghosts	The board, a pen	*Now we'll get back to the unit about ghosts.* The T writes on the board: Do you think that ghosts exist? Why yes/not? Are you afraid of them? Why yes/not?	Discuss it with their partners.	Pair work	Understanding: Ss can discuss their experience with ghosts.
			Gets feedback.		Open class	

5 mins	Vocabulary presentation	Textbook, p.23, ex.6	*Working on your own, match the pictures with the words in the box.* CCQs': *Will you work with your partner? (*No.)	Match the pictures with the words in the box.	Individual	Remembering: Ss can match the pictures with the selected vocabulary.
			Pair check		Pair work	
			Open class feedback		Open class	
5 mins	Listening about ghosts	Ex. 7, track 15	Plays the recording several times.	Correct false sentences.	Individual	Understanding: Ss can recognize mistakes in the sentences.
			Pair check		Pair work	
			Open class feedback		Open class	
8 mins	Writing	Ex.8	*Look at the picture. Where is the ghost? Who are the four people?*		Open class	Remembering: Ss can identify the four people in the picture.
			Working on your own, complete the sentences, using ***past continuous*** *only.* ***Write your answers****.*	Complete the sentences.	Individual	
			Pair check		Pair work	
			Open class feedback		Open class	
10 mins	Vocabulary practice – game 'Hot seat'	The board, a pen	Explains the rules and divides the Ss into 2 teams. Uses the following words: a way out, spooky, valuable, thief, statue, appear, nightmare, skeleton, haunted house, stranger.	Form teams.	Group work	Understanding: Ss can explain selected vocabulary to their classmates.

Anticipated problems: The Ss may be finished earlier than I expect. I will fill in the last remaining minutes with exercises in their workbooks on p. 20.
Homework: none

Appendix 5b – Textbook material

1 LESSON

Grammar

Past continuous

was/were + verb + *-ing*
*I **was looking** out of my window when I saw you.*
*The boys **weren't playing** football.*
***Was** Maldo **following** the children?*
*Yes, he **was**. No, he **wasn't**.*

Remember the spelling rules for *-ing* forms!

Stative verbs

We don't usually use the past continuous with these verbs:
love like want hate understand know mean remember need

3 **What was happening in Jack's house at twelve o'clock last night? Complete the sentences with the correct form of the past continuous.**

1 Jack _____ (have) a scary dream.
2 Sarah was in bed, but she _____ (not sleep).
3 Tom _____ (read) a scary story.
4 Jack's parents were in the kitchen, but they _____ (not eat).
5 It was a cold night, but it _____ (not rain).
6 The dog _____ (look) out of the window.

4 **Write questions. Use the correct form of the past continuous.**

you/watch TV/at six o'clock this morning?
Were you watching TV at six o'clock this morning?

1 What/you/do/at twelve o'clock last night?
2 What/you/do/ten minutes ago?
3 your teacher/talk/five minutes ago?
4 What/you/do/at three o'clock yesterday afternoon?
5 your mother/driving to work/at nine o'clock this morning?

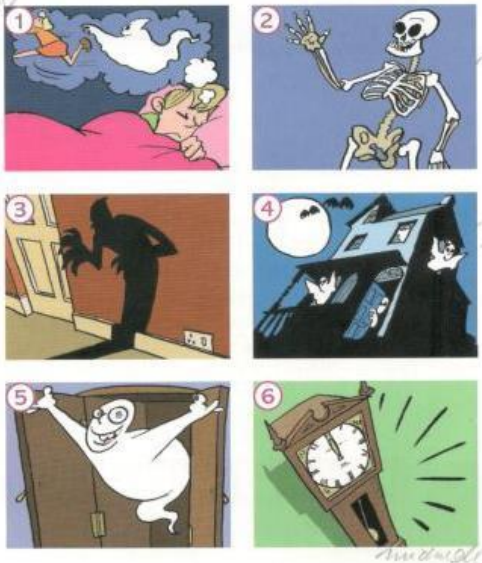
5 **Ask and answer the questions in exercise 4.**

Vocabulary

Scary things

6 **Match the pictures with the words in the box.**

haunted house nightmare midnight
skeleton ghost shadow



Listening

7 **Listen to the radio programme about ghosts. Correct the false sentences.**

1 Nobody lives in the spooky house.
2 On the first night, James saw a skeleton in one of the windows.
3 James called the police.
4 The police found a child in the house.
5 On the second night, James didn't see a shadow.

Writing

8 **What were the people in this family doing when a ghost appeared? Complete the sentences.**

1 Mark ...
2 Sarah ...
3 Mum ...
4 Dad ...

Appendix 6 – Students' questionnaire

Dotazník pro studenty

Milí studenti, účelem tohoto dotazníku je zjistit, zda jste během naší hodiny rozuměli mým instrukcím. To znamená, zda jste rozuměli tomu, jak vysvětluji, co máte při hodině dělat. Oznámkujte mě tak, že zakroužkujete jedno číslo u každé otázky.
Pokuste se prosím stručně vysvětlit, proč jste mi danou známku dali.

Příklad:
Slušelo mi to dnes? Proč ano/ne?
1 2 (3) 4 5
Měla byste se více učesat.

1.) Byl jazyk, který jsem používala, srozumitelný? Proč ano/ne?
1 2 3 4 5

2.) Když jsem vám zadávala instrukce, snažila jsem se je doprovázet gesty a ukázat vám, co dělat. Šlo mi to? Proč ano/ne?
1 2 3 4 5

3.) Byla moje gesta dobře vidět z lavice, kde sedíte? Proč ano/ne?
1 2 3 4 5

4.) Bylo mě dobře slyšet? Proč ano/ne?
1 2 3 4 5

5.) Bylo tempo mojí řeči přiměřeně rychlé? Proč ano/ne?
1 2 3 4 5

6.) Uvítali byste, kdybych při zadávání instrukcí používala více češtinu? Zakroužkujte „ano" či „ne". Proč ano/ne?
Ano Ne

Děkuji vám za spolupráci☺.

Appendix 7 – Mentor's observation sheet

An observation sheet for a mentor

Dear mentor, the purpose of this observation sheet is to develop my professional skills in the area of giving instructions.
I would very much appreciate if you could fill in this observation sheet and write further comments to each question if possible. Please circle one of the options. (1 = a lot, 5 = not at all)

Verbal instructions

1) Does the teacher modify her language according to the students' level? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

2) Is the teacher's modified language correct, i.e. recognisably accurate and acceptable? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

3) Does the teacher avoid elision and assimilation in her pronunciation? I.e., does the teacher pronounce each word separately, rather than running them together? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

4) Does the teacher keep the instructions simple, concise and to the point? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

5) Does the teacher chunk her instructions and give one piece of information at a time? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

6) Does the teacher use appropriate i.e. revealing techniques of checking understanding of instructions? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

7) Does the teacher use Czech only in those occasions when it is faster, simpler or more efficient than using English? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

Non-verbal instructions

1) Does the teacher use her gestures and facial expressions to support her verbal instructions? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

2) Does the teacher use gestures which the students can associate with verbal instructions? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

3) Does the teacher save time during the lesson by using her gestures? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

4) Does the teacher allow enough time for her gestures to be seen before she stops them? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

5) Does the teacher keep her eye contact with most of the class? Why yes/not?
   1 2 3 4 5

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill in this observation sheet.