

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU**  
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**STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING LISTENING TO FORM 5 STUDENTS:**

**BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF *I LOVE ENGLISH 4***  
**AND DESIGNING ADDITIONAL STUDY MATERIAL**

**MA thesis**

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## ABSTRACT

Listening was considered a passive skill for a long time, but recently the approach to teaching listening has evolved and systematically developed. Nowadays listening is acknowledged as a macro skill in foreign language learning which provokes awareness of the target language (Renukadevi 2014). Thus, listening is a skill which needs to be taught consistently. Many scholars, for example Vandergrift (2004), Rost (2009), Masalimova (2016) and Gilakjani (2016) claim that listening comprehension is an interactive process and needs to be taught with the help of special strategies. They have brought out the advantages of using the strategies in foreign language classrooms to improve students listening comprehension.

The main purpose of the thesis is to answer the question whether these strategies can be used to improve listening comprehension of form 5 students, to facilitate student confidence and self-efficacy. It also tries to find, whether the suggested strategies can be used to improve the existing study material, suggesting activities which can be used to upgrade textbook listening tasks.

Within nine months the author of the thesis used the strategies for improving listening comprehension with the target group in her English language classroom. The target group consisted of 15 students from form 5 and they had not been familiarised with the strategies before. Making use of research papers done in the field and her own findings, the author of the present thesis suggests activities, which can be used to upgrade listening tasks in *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015). In addition to that, the author of the thesis presents additional study material she designed for the target group. The thesis consists of an introduction, two chapters and a conclusion. Chapter one contains the review of pertinent literature and chapter two talks about study methodology and analysis. The conclusion summarises the results of the thesis. The appendices provide supplementary activities and additional study material.

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## INTRODUCTION

The author of the thesis planned and carried out the study to better meet her students' needs and to follow some of the principles of the National Curriculum for the Basic Schools of Estonia, 2011 (henceforth the National Curriculum). According to the National Curriculum (Riigiteataja 2011), the learning outcomes of the second stage of education reflect students' good performance in completing tasks based on listening activities within the themes studied. Secondly, the National Curriculum states that students should have an active role in learning and the teacher assists and guides the process. Thirdly, diverse materials designed in accordance with students' level of language and interests should motivate them to learn the target language. Finally, according to the National Curriculum, group and pair work and classroom discussions should be encouraged.

Furthermore, the author supports the principles of communicative approach. Teaching should be focused on developing social skills and promoting efficient team work. While students should be actively engaged in the learning process, the teacher's duty is to motivate, encourage and develop students' ability to express themselves diversely and correctly. In addition to that, the teacher establishes welcoming and safe environment and provides students with constructive feedback. To maximise students' opportunities to speak, the approach favours student-student interaction and collaborative work.

Listening is one of the four major skills in language acquisition. According to Renukadevi (2014), learning to listen to a foreign language improves language ability and forms the basis of complete language proficiency. Renukadevi (2014) claims that when students understand spoken language by listening, it is easier to improve reading, speaking and writing skills. Gilakjani (2016) asserts that suitable teaching in listening comprehension provides a good basis for becoming independent learners who can successfully use listening process for mastering the target language. The scholars discussed in Chapter 1 of the thesis suggest different strategies for classroom usage helping to improve students listening comprehension.

The present thesis aims at answering the following question: are the strategies suggested by

scholars effective in the foreign language classroom while teaching listening to form 5 students? Despite the age of the target group examined, the author of the current paper thinks that the strategies used and described could give an English teacher at every level useful and practical knowledge. The textbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) is analysed and the suggested strategies by the authors in Chapter 1 are tried out with the target group. The textbook was chosen because it is used in the school where the author of the thesis works. Additional study materials presented in the thesis are designed for the target group but can be used in other foreign language classes as well.

## CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1. The importance of teaching listening comprehension

One of the most prominent figures, the author of numerous studies in the field of teaching listening Larry Vandergrift (2004) claims that times when listening was considered a passive skill are over and the approach to teaching listening has not only evolved but has also systematically developed. According to Vandergrift (2004), listening is considered most explicit of the four language skills involving cognitive and physiological processes and thus the most complicated skill to learn. Liu (2016) reminds us that the whole teaching-learning system changed already in the 1970s when communicative language learning approach was developed that triggered changes in foreign language classroom. Renukadevi (2014) claims that until the late 19th century more attention was paid on writing in foreign language teaching and Renukadevi (2014) is glad that researchers have developed new strategies to enhance effective listening skills of foreign language learners. Furthermore, he reminds us that listening provokes awareness of the language as it is a receptive skill that first develops in human being (Renukadevi 2014). Masalimova (2016) adds that although listening comprehension is the first kind of speech activity a child takes up, it still takes time to acquire it completely.

According to Renukadevi (2014), listening has to be considered a macro skill in learning a foreign language, which helps to improve other skills and helps to understand the beauty of the foreign language one is learning. According to Rost (2009), listening helps us to understand the world around us and is one of the necessary elements for creating communication. Thomlison (1984) and Hamouda (2013) define listening as an ability to understand and recognize what the other person is telling. Jafari and Hashim (2015) claim that listening is a channel for comprehensible input and that 50% of foreign language learning should be devoted to listening. According to the authors listening comprehension means that a person has actually understood the message. Jafari and Hashim (2015) suggest that listening comprehension is a product of teaching methodology. Rost (2002) and Hamouda (2013) claim that listening comprehension is an interactive

process and listeners should be involved in constructing meaning by employing the most effective strategies. The authors suggest that listeners comprehend the oral input through previous knowledge, grammatical structures, stress and intonation and the other linguistic and non-linguistic clues.

The author of the thesis agrees that listening comprehension means that a student has actually understood the message (Jafari and Hashim 2015) and acknowledges that it is a product of using different teaching and learning strategies. Furthermore, she recognises listening comprehension as an interactive process (Rost 2002, Hamouda 2013) and supports the claim that listeners should be involved in the process as much as possible.

Flowerdew and Miller (2005) suggest that in accordance with the changes in teaching methodology and syllabus design the strategies of teaching listening have changed. All the authors agree that listening has always been a crucial part of interaction and claim that it is not only hearing the other side, but also giving the right response. We have to understand the speaker's accent, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary and grasp his or her meaning. Furthermore, an able listener is capable of doing all this simultaneously. Osada (2004) clarifies in his study what has and has not been revealed in the literature so far to gain a better understanding of the nature of listening comprehension. He admits that although listening is now recognised as an important dimension in language learning, it still remains one of the least understood processes. Nevertheless, Osada (2004) admits that much work has been done in both theory and practice. Nunan (2010) suggests that listening is a Cinderella skill and has been ignored by its elder sister, speaking. Nunan (2010) is glad that teaching listening comprehension is assuming greater and greater importance in foreign language classroom. Vandergrift (1999) claimed already in 1999 that listening was hard work and deserved more analysis and support. He saw listening as an important component of language learning and claimed that placing speaking before listening was like placing a cart before a horse (Vandergrift 1999).



## **1.2. Top-down, bottom-up and metacognitive strategies for teaching listening comprehension**

According to Vandergrift (2004), most important in teaching listening is to develop strategies of listening. Learners should be able to assess and guide their answers and understanding. Goh (2002) agrees and points out that teachers should increase students' knowledge in grammar, vocabulary and phonology while teaching their students listening strategies. According to Rost (2001) and Kurita (2012), a major difference between less successful and more successful listener is related to their ability to use listening as an important instrument of learning. The authors strongly agree with Yavuz et al (2015) that English teachers very often do not know what to do with listening skills or are too obedient to the course books they have selected.

Two most supported views have dominated in foreign language listening pedagogy over the last twenty years: the bottom-up processing view and the top-down processing. Top-down listening happens when learners' prior knowledge (what they already know) is used while completing listening activities. Bottom-up listening, on the other hand, happens when learners understand the language word by word or sound by sound and less background knowledge is involved. Lingzhu (2003) supports top-down processing in listening, explaining that learners often predict the probable theme and that teachers only think that students recognize linguistic elements – vowels, consonants, words, sentences. Lingzhu (2003) suggests that in order to access the prior knowledge, the content schemata or the background knowledge of the topic or text must be activated. He suggests different activities to stimulate students' prior knowledge such as word association tasks, questioning, making a list of possibilities, suggestions, ideas or looking at pictures before listening. Lingzhu (2003) asserts that in our native language we do not listen to the speaker word by word, sometimes we are even one step ahead of the speaker. Renandya (2003) on the other hand, counts the benefits of bottom-up listening in his study. In addition to that, Renandya (2003) argues for repeated playing of audio material and micro listening. He claims that students should be sensitised to the speech blending phenomena like assimilation (a sound change where some phonemes change to be more similar to other nearby sounds), contraction (a shortened version of the written and spoken forms of

a word, syllable or a word group created by omission of internal letters and sounds) and resyllabification (a phonological process in which consonants are attached to syllables other than those from which they originally came). These phenomena cause problems while listening to authentic foreign language speech. Renandya (2003) also suggests simultaneous reading-while-listening activities to help lower proficiency learners achieve greater comprehension. He admits that learners are very often unable to recognise the words they already know, and this will help them to match the spoken words with the written ones. Yavuz et al (2015) also stress the importance of concentrating on the word level at the early stages of learning. They suggest that students must hear and repeat words and decide if they hear the same or different utterances.

Recent studies in the field of teaching listening comprehension have shown that top-down and bottom-up processing rarely operate independently, but rather interactively and that fluent, accurate listening lies on listener's metacognitive knowledge. Vandergrift (2004) claims that top-down and bottom-up processes interact and can form parallel processes. According to Vandergrift (2004), the degree to which one of these processes is used depends on the purpose for listening. He suggests that native speakers process automatically what they hear. Beginners of foreign language learning on the other hand have a rather limited knowledge of language and therefore are not able to process automatically what they hear. Vandergrift pointed to the potential role of metacognitive strategies for enhancing success in second language listening already in 1999. He claimed that students can be instructed in strategy use to enhance their performance in listening skills. Vandergrift (2004) suggests that all pre-listening, listening and post-listening activities are effective only when used consistently and students should be taught to predict, plan, monitor and evaluate their listening process. In the following table activities are presented supporting metacognitive strategies suggested by Vandergrift (2004). He claims that when the activities are applied in the foreign language classroom, the teacher initially has a greater role, but platform should be gradually removed until students work themselves and the process can become automatic. Vandergrift (2004) claims that the activities are promising and have theoretical support from other scholars.

	<b>Stage of listening instruction</b>	<b>Related metacognitive strategies</b>
<i>Planning/predicting stage</i>	1. When students know the topic and the text type, they can predict possible information and words they hear	1. Planning and directed attention
<i>First verification stage</i>	2. Students verify their initial predictions, correct them if necessary, they note additional information understood	2. Monitoring
	3. Students compare their notes with peers, modify and decide on details that need further attention	3. Monitoring, planning and selective attention
<i>Second verification stage</i>	4. Students verify disagreements, correct and write down additional details understood	4. Monitoring and problem solving
	5. Class discussion where everyone contributes. Discussion of the main points, relevant details, reflections how everyone reached the details	5. Monitoring and evaluation
<i>Final verification stage</i>	6. Students listen to the information they could not decode earlier in the discussion	6. Selective attention and monitoring
<i>Reflection stage</i>	7. Students write goals for next listening activities based on strategies they used. The aim is to compensate what was not understood this time.	7. Evaluation

Table 1. Stages of Listening Instructions and Related Metacognitive Strategies. Adapted from Vandergrift (2004: 11).

Vandergrift (2004) emphasises that when teachers put more effort in raising student awareness of the process of listening, they help students through the same stages which model real-life listening. In addition to that, Vandergrift (2004) believes that the activities can help less skilled listeners to comprehend information related to student level and interest. He affirms that the strategies have been used successfully with students at different ages.

Renukadevi (2014) agrees that top-down and bottom-up processes are interacting in current approaches to teaching listening skills. According to Renukadevi (2014) listeners should apply both their prior knowledge and their linguistic knowledge in order to understand messages. In addition to that, he claims that metacognitive awareness is a conscious development of person's awareness and control of one's learning. Renukadevi (2014) also suggests that using metacognitive strategies helps to improve learning in general. Thus, students are able to maximize the information they receive,

which also helps them to improve their listening skills. Nunan (2010) also points out the importance of recognising both bottom-up and top-down strategies in teaching listening. He stresses the importance of teaching learners to bring their prior knowledge and experience into the classroom. On the other hand, Nunan (2010) claims that students should be taught to decode sounds that they hear, from phonemes to complete texts. In addition to that, Nunan (2010) suggests that teachers should encourage students to develop metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring, self-reflection and self-assessment.

Approaches to listening instruction have evolved and are evolving. The more recent approach is real-life listening which involves communicative tasks and often interaction with native speakers. Furthermore, listening tasks are expanding from a focus on a product to a focus on a process. Most researchers suggest mixed method approaches, incorporating top-down and bottom-up strategies with metacognitive approaches. Which strategies the teacher decides to use depends on students' level of language proficiency and the degree of their metacognitive awareness. Rahimirad and Reza Shams (2014) suggest that although earlier researchers have pointed out the significance of process-oriented approach in teaching listening, referring to Vandergrift (2004), teachers still tend only test listening tasks and neglect paying enough attention to teaching students to be actively involved in listening process. In addition to that, Rahimirad and Reza Shams (2014) claim that in spite of the recognition of process-oriented listening there are no actual studies carried out to support the knowledge. They carried out a study to find out the relationship between metacognitive strategy instructions and students' listening performance. The findings showed that metacognitive instructions (see Table 1) can improve students' listening performance significantly. In addition to that, students claimed that they felt support while doing the tasks and thus they were more confident. Mulyadi et al (2017) claim that in spite of the studies carried out in the field of listening comprehension, many teachers still consider listening a passive skill compared to other three skills. In addition to effective listening strategy instruction, the authors also suggest that learners' individual differences should be considered. According to Mulyadi et al (2017), learners have

different ages, personalities and motivation. Knowing their students better allows teachers to adapt the best suitable teaching strategy.

### **1.3. Factors that influence students' listening comprehension**

Gilakjani et al (2016) claim that the reason why students have difficulties in listening comprehension is because schools and universities pay more attention to writing, reading and vocabulary teaching. In their research they point out possible reasons why students face problems with listening comprehension. The authors suggest that one of the reasons can be a bad quality of recorded materials. They suggest that teachers should use only high-quality sound systems, otherwise students' listening comprehension can suffer. In addition to that, the authors claim that not knowing enough about the cultural materials involved in listening activities can also influence students' comprehension. They suggest that teachers should familiarise students with necessary cultural background in advance. According to Gilakjani et al (2016), also unfamiliar vocabulary and accent can influence students' listening comprehension. Knowing the meanings of the words in the tasks give students confidence and arouses their interest and motivation. On the other hand, unfamiliar accent can interrupt the comprehension process or make the understanding impossible for students. The authors also indicate that the length and speed of listening can influence students' comprehension. Gilakjani et al (2016) admit that the length and speed of recordings should depend on learners' age. Lower level students are not able to listen for more than three minutes to complete the tasks. Gilakjani et al (2016) warn that too fast speaking on the recordings can cause children serious problems and influence critically their further listening comprehension. The authors provide teachers with useful suggestions how to overcome students' listening comprehension difficulties. Firstly, they consider beneficial to provide students with authentic listening tasks so that they could hear natural speech. Secondly, the authors suggest that teachers design interesting listening tasks to motivate students to use various listening strategies. Teachers could use TV programs, radio, films, etc. for the input. Thirdly, lower level students (our target group) should listen to simple texts and

gradually move on to listening to the more complicated authentic texts. Finally, teachers should encourage students to develop different listening strategies and let their students participate in the feedback and assessment process. In addition to intensive listening activities found in text books, Gilakjani et al (2016) remind teachers to encourage extensive listening, watching documentaries and films, listening to news and music or talking face to face with native speakers on the Internet.

#### **1.4. Classroom activities to promote students' listening comprehension**

Wang (2015) claims that many studies have been carried out looking into connection between lexical knowledge and reading comprehension, but there is a gap in relevant studies concerning listening comprehension. He carried out a study to find out the connections between students' vocabulary knowledge (breadth and depth) and listening comprehension. Wang (2015) explains that vocabulary breadth relates to the size of a student's vocabulary and vocabulary depth refers to how well he or she knows a word. The findings showed significant connection between vocabulary depth and listening comprehension. According to the findings, Wang (2015) suggests that teachers should pay more attention to teaching not only the literal meaning of words but concentrate on lexical collocations, semantic field, etc. He assures that teaching vocabulary to enhance students' listening comprehension is only one of many factors influencing the comprehension together with metacognitive processing strategies, motivation, attention, emotion, etc.

Nguyen and Abbott (2016) also agree that successful listening is an interactive strategic process and teachers and textbook writers should adopt both process- and product-oriented listening instructions. They claim that most listening tasks tend to be product-oriented, where the primary focus is on learner's ability to answer questions. The authors analysed six textbooks and found out that product-oriented approaches were adopted much more frequently, and planning/predicting was most common and problem solving least common from metacognitive strategies suggested. Nguyen and Abbot (2016) stress that the results of the textbooks reviews were not entirely discouraging and that teachers should not abandon product-oriented approaches but should be smart enough to

combine the activities with at least one process-oriented approach. This enables learners to develop both their listening skills and strategies. The authors show several example listening activities for planning for listening, for monitoring comprehension, for solving comprehension problems and for evaluating listening and problem solving. They also suggest different follow-up activities, which can be categorised as follow-up speaking, reading, writing or grammar/vocabulary activities.

Vandergrift (2004) also describes different activities suitable for beginner level students. Furthermore, he assures that a well-prepared strategy-based listening instruction helps beginner-level students gain confidence and all in all raises awareness of the listening process already from the very beginning. He suggests that short, authentic texts on topics related to the student level and interest can be announcements and advertisements and proposes different activities for related metacognitive strategies. Vandergrift (2004), one of the pioneers of the researches in the field suggests different activities for different metacognitive strategies (see table 1) which are used with our target group.

Yavuz et al (2015) suggest non-response exercises which are used to enrich the learner's listening comprehension skills. These types of exercises may include following a written text to see how words are pronounced. The authors also suggest that students can choose a picture according to the topics mentioned in the recording. The same way diagrams, maps and family trees can be used. In addition to that, a film or TV program can be watched keeping in mind that they are not too long for students to lose concentration. In accordance with Yavuz et al (2015), true/false exercises are suitable for elementary level students thus helping to make connections between listening and responding. The authors suggest different activities such as problem solving, where students can discuss listening activity in groups and suggest that teachers give students opportunities to discuss speakers' personalities, their relations, etc. Yavuz et al (2015) stress the importance of using authentic recordings and applying the tasks at the appropriate level. Liu (2016) advocates for authentic materials as well and claims that good teachers are able to adapt the materials to meet their students' needs. He claims that although authentic materials are often too difficult for language

learners, teachers should be able to adapt either the text or the task. They should replace a difficult word with the one within the learners' vocabulary, give further explanation or examples, be creative in designing tasks on their own to serve a different purpose rather than intentions of material designers. He also gives examples how to make original materials more effective and engaging for students. Liu (2016) claims that English teachers, apart from their teaching job should develop a habit of reading the latest literature in second language teaching to find the possible answers to the problems encountered via authentic materials. Thus, improving their teaching skills they can also improve their students' learning skills.

Summing up, the most important ideas the author of the thesis, as a practising teacher, took to her English classroom are as follows. Firstly, the teacher should be familiar with the strategies for improving students' listening skill suggested by the authors. Secondly, it is the teacher's task to choose the appropriate activities when planning her classes and introduce the strategies to her students. Thirdly, the teacher has to be able to complement the existing study material with necessary activities to meet her students' needs. Finally, the teacher has to be creative in designing effective and engaging additional study material. The author of the current paper acknowledges the instructions by the authors from the literature review and uses the suggested strategies in her English language classroom.



## **CHAPTER 2. ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTBOOK AND WORKBOOK *I LOVE ENGLISH 4* (KURM AND SOOLEPP 2015) AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE EXISTING STUDY MATERIAL**

### **2.1. Research question**

The purpose of the present research is to find out how the teaching and learning strategies suggested by the authors in the literature review can be integrated in the process of teaching listening to form 5 students. The aim is to encourage more student engagement in the learning process. The topic was chosen because the author of the thesis is a practising teacher and has seen that listening comprehension is difficult for students. According to the National Curriculum (2011), the learning outcomes of the second stage of education should reflect students' good performance in completing tasks based on listening activities within the themes studied. In addition to that, the author has to prepare her students for the national exam in English. Familiarising herself with different studies carried out in the field helps the author of the thesis find out how to give learners practical help – teach her students to adopt a flexible range of listening strategies and become better listeners.

### **2.2. Methodology of the research**

Firstly, the listening activities in *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) textbook and workbook are analysed. The listening activities are chosen from *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) because teachers in the author's school use the set to teach English in form 5. The textbook is organised thematically (see appendix 1). *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) consists of a textbook, a workbook, a teacher's book, a CD with recordings and tests. There are 56 listening activities (and 11 recorded sample sentences) in the textbook and 29 in the workbook. The listening activities in the textbook consist of four different types of exercises: listen and chant, listen and repeat, listen and act and listen to the recorded texts. In addition to that, the workbook provides

three listen for the gist activities, one listen for dictation exercise and 19 listen for specific information activities. Secondly, the listening activities from the textbook and workbook were tested with the target group, using the strategies suggested by scholars in the literature review. The listening activities in *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) are supposed to take only four or five minutes, as there are no pre-, while- and post-listening activities included in the instructions. The author of the thesis realised that her students from form 5 needed more time to understand the interactive nature of listening and to gain more learning experience. Consequently, the author of the thesis evaluated the existing listening exercises before every lesson and planned pre-, while-, and post-listening activities to meet her students' needs. Finally, after realising better her students' strengths and weaknesses, the author of the thesis designed additional study materials to give her students more possibilities to be actively engaged in the listening process.

### **2.3. Participants**

Participants of the study include 15 students from form 5 (one study group). They have started studying English as their first foreign language in form 2, but they have studied in different schools and classes. The group is composed of seven girls and eight boys. Although all the students have studied English for three years, they have had different number of lessons a week.

### **2.4. Analysis of the listening activities in the textbook and workbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) and suggested strategies to improve students' listening comprehension**

Throughout the school year the author of the current thesis has used *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) for teaching the students of the target group and worked with different strategies for teaching listening. The strategies are top-down, bottom-up and metacognitive strategies suggested by the scholars discussed in the literature review. Accordingly, the author of the thesis analyses the listening activities available in the textbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) and proposes different strategies which could be applied with listen and chant, listen and repeat,

listen to the dialogues and listen and act activities. In addition to that, the author of the thesis analyses the possible ways to use recorded texts with lower level students. The listening exercises in the workbook include three different types of activities: listen for specific information, listen for the gist and listen for dictation. The teacher's book provides transcripts but does not give teachers necessary guidance for processing the activities. To equip students with different learning strategies, teachers have to be familiar with possible activities, consider students' previous knowledge, trigger their motivation and, all in all, support students' academic achievement. As the author of the thesis thinks that the textbook and workbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) are outdated in terms of instructional support, she discusses strengths and weaknesses of different types of listening activities included in the books. The proposed activities should help listeners become more aware of how to use what they already know to help them with further studies. Instead of passively waiting for teachers to give answers, students are directed to know, what to do, to carry out different strategies and to solve problems when difficulties occur.

### 2.4.1. Listening activities in the textbook

#### Listen and chant

#### Sample task (Unit 4, p. 23)



Every unit starts with a *Listen and chant* activity. The activities require students to repeat the lines in the exercise using simple melody. This is the last book in series of *I Love English* where

chants are used. They serve as bridges between an elementary school and the second school stage, where students have to face more challenging activities and tasks. Chants are tools that help students relax, they feel a more enjoyable atmosphere at the beginning of the lesson and probably less pressure to learn. Students share rhymes as members of a group and there is no tension of competition. Listening to a chant and repeating it, the fluency comes quickly and children are visibly confident and satisfied. Cameron (2001) claims that the use of rhymes is important for young learners in foreign language classroom. Likewise, Johnstone (2002) suggests that by introducing recorded rhymes and songs teachers make a significant contribution in children's early language education. Music speaks directly to our emotions but still allows us to use our brain effectively. The chants designed for *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) textbook introduce the words and phrases used in the forthcoming unit or serve as a short overview placed at the beginning of the unit. There are two types of chants in the textbook: the chants which present the topic of the unit and familiarise students with some new words and phrases and the chants which either present or revise a grammar structure.

Most of the students do not have enough listening practice in elementary school. *Listen and chant* activities in the textbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) serve as beginner level activities, which can be used either together with the transcript or without one, bearing in mind students' level of proficiency in listening comprehension. *Listen and chant* activities are particularly suitable for introducing students different listening strategies, because students are more relaxed, as there are no concrete answers required. Setting the scene seemed to be the most important for the students from the target group. When the author of the thesis had asked some topical questions, a heated discussion usually followed. Seemingly, students at that age are eager to talk about themselves, their families and personal experiences. It is efficient to use top-down strategy (Lingzhu 2003) while completing *Listen and chant* activities in the textbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015).

At the beginning of the school year the author of the thesis noticed that the students were

desperately trying to understand every single word in a listening activity. *Listen and chant* activities can be used to let students pick up some words and try to construct a sentence that makes sense grammatically. In addition to that, students might pick up some word and guess the overall topic. Thus, bottom-up and top-down processes work simultaneously (Renukadevi 2014). Listening should be an interpretive and interactive process, where both students' prior knowledge and their linguistic awareness are involved (Renukadevi 2014). Combining these two types of processings helps the teacher to experiment with a variety of different activities. Renukadevi (2014) claims that students are either too lazy or simply cannot build up their vocabulary gradually and this could be the reason why children are often low-spirited while doing listening activities. In addition to that, Renukadevi (2014) claims that students do not put enough effort into trying to understand every word while listening. Gilakjani (2016) believes that new data activates bottom-up processing. In accordance with that, the author of the current paper suggests that *Listen and chant* activities in the textbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) can be improved by using different top-down and bottom-up processes which can work simultaneously. Starting a unit with a listen and chant exercise, gives the teacher a chance to combine these two types of strategies and experiment with variety of different activities. The application of background knowledge, contextual information and linguistic material makes comprehension and interpretation easier (Gilakjani 2016).

Furthermore, when students have been familiarised with the topic, they can use their background knowledge to predict the possible information they are going to hear in the listen and chant activity or the words included in the recording. Prediction is one of metacognitive strategies helping students become more aware of how to use what they already know to fill the possible gaps in their understanding (Vandergrift 2004, see Table 1). Students can be encouraged to predict the general theme of the forthcoming unit and topics to be discussed either in pairs or in small groups. Working in pairs or in groups supports the communicative approach and student-centered learning. In addition to that, it gives the students who have a harder time understanding an opportunity to be modelled by other students and help them to better understand the topic. Additionally, pair or group

work gives students a sense of achievement through collaborating with each other and they are proud of reaching a team goal (Nguyen and Abbott 2016).

At the time of predicting students can work in pairs, thenceforth they can join in groups of four to compare their findings. Comparing their ideas with peers and establishing what still needs attention refers to metacognitive strategies specified as monitoring, planning and selective attention (Vandergrift 2004, see Table 1). As stated earlier, *Listen and chant* activities can be used to introduce students necessary listening strategies. Accordingly, the teacher has to plan the lesson carefully and realise that a listening activity can be more time-consuming than initially calculated. Further strategies used in the lesson can be derived from various factors, such as students' language proficiency and previous learning experience. The author of the thesis could not use the evaluation strategy (Vandergrift 2004, see Table 1) with listen and chant activities within the first months, as the students in the target group were more eager to communicate in smaller groups than to participate in classroom discussions. The more confident they became, the more willingly they were involved in general discussions and brainstormings.

The author of the current thesis noticed that at the beginning of the school year she needed to put more effort into building student confidence, encouraging her students to communicate, brainstorm, feel free to ask questions and not to be afraid of making mistakes. Consequently, not very challenging *Listen and chant* activities in *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) textbook naturally help to build student confidence and let students connect and collaborate. The author of the thesis has detected that in form 5 fear of failure, hesitancy and indecisiveness are common characteristics and the teacher has to apply all necessary strategies to encourage her students to expand boundaries, initiate and be active. Furthermore, students can see that they get help with sample questions and key words. In addition to that, students understand that the teacher assists, whenever a pair of students has a question, needs a word or phrase to be translated or is short of ideas how to continue the discussion.

Additionally, the author of the current paper suggests teaching students how to take notes while

listening with the help of *Listen and chant* activities (Vandergrift 2004), as she noticed that her target group had not had relevant experience in elementary school. Students can be encouraged to prepare their notes in an organised fashion. The questions can differ a bit, in accordance with the particular activity, but the suggestions are: What do I already know about the topic? How do I feel about this topic (excited, bored, curious, etc.)? What questions do I have about the topic or what do I want to know? The strategy worked well with the target group, eventually the students opened their journals without asking and were ready to support their listening activities with note-taking. (See appendix 2 for detailed pre-, while- and post-listening activities for listen and chant exercises).

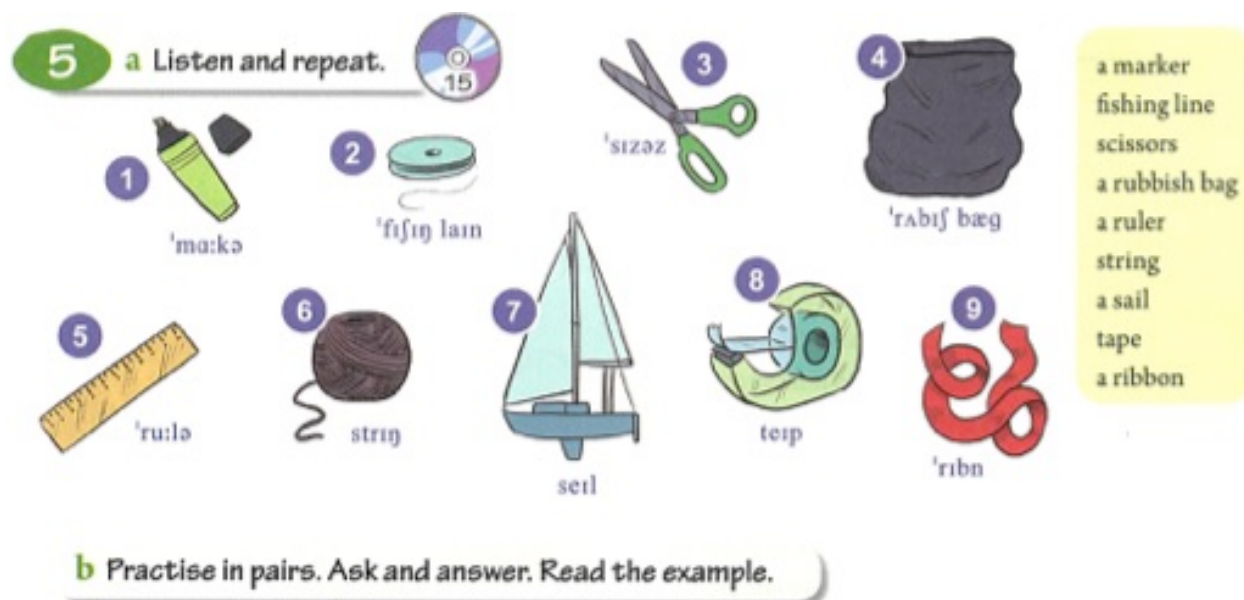
In some chants grammar structures are either introduced or revised. The author of the thesis appreciates the approach as students in form 5 can perceive how the new grammar structures work. Introducing students grammar structures through chants is a good base from which to start further learning. The chants in units 1, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18 and 19 (pp.7, 33, 64, 70, 75, 81, 88, 105, 110) encourage students to revise question words and ask and answer questions, the chant in unit 2 (p.18) introduces the present perfect tense. The chant in unit 9 presents *so do I* and *neither do I* phrases. These exercises encourage students to study grammar within a meaningful communicative context. The listen and chant activities show how grammar is actually used in communication and broaden learners' understanding and use of the target language.

The author of the current thesis uses diverse activities for teaching grammar in her foreign language classroom but does not pay too much attention on presenting grammar in isolated sentences. Nevertheless, these chants can be used, providing a meaningful framework for the classes, where the focus is on using different grammar structures to communicate meaning in the target language. The types of exercises support learner's spontaneous need for a grammatical structure and therefore lead to increased communication. The teacher can add information to isolated bits in the chants to support more efficient processing. For example, in the chant on page 18 the traditional knowledge of the present perfect tense is transferred to its functional use in the form of questions. The teacher can ask students to answer the questions and create a new chant using the

information.

## Listen and repeat

### Sample task (Unit 3 p. 20)



In the early stage children need to practise saying and hearing the sounds of isolated words ideally pronounced by a native speaker, without the blurs which commonly occur within the context of speech

(Yavuz et al 2015). Although the textbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) is meant for the students of the second stage of education, the same *Listen and repeat* exercises are presented as in elementary level textbooks. The author of the current thesis is not sure what has determined the choice of words included in the activities. There are approximately 30 new words in every unit, whereas six to nine words are included in *Listen and repeat* exercises. The activities are illustrated and pronunciation symbols are used under the pictures. Visual support maps meaning automatically into long-term memory and is helpful for learning vocabulary (Vandergrift 2004). The author of the thesis has experienced in her English language classes that students benefit from visual support and highly recommends supporting oral input with pictures. *Listen and repeat* activities can be accompanied by flash cards drawn by students; furthermore, the teacher can bring real life items to the classroom.



*Listen and repeat activities* in *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) allow students to notice differences and variations of pronunciation. Furthermore, separate words can serve as the basis for introducing the general topic of unit. The teacher might use the words and ask students to predict the topic and ask some questions about their personal experience related to the topic to activate their knowledge of the current unit (top-down strategy). As an alternative, the teacher might ask students to predict the vocabulary included in the exercise. The activity refers to metacognitive strategy called planning and directed attention (Vandergrift 2004, see Table 1). While listening, students check their answers. Finally, students discuss in pairs (or with the whole class) why they thought the vocabulary suggested by them would suit the topic (monitoring, evaluation, Vandergrift 2004, see Table 1).

The target group being active and creative, they always waited for *Listen and repeat* activities knowing that the teacher had prepared pictures, a creative activity or a song where the new words occurred. Thus, the students understood all the meanings and nuances of every word better and became more confident using the words themselves (See for detailed pre-, while- and post-listening activities for *Listen and repeat* exercises in appendix 3).


## Listen to the dialogues and practise reading

### Sample task (Unit 11, p. 65)

**3** Listen and read the dialogues. Find two English words or phrases for **surema** and **haige**.

**1**

**Anne:** Hey, Chloe. You look upset. What's wrong?  
**Chloe:** Diva, my cat, she died yesterday.  
**Anne:** Oh no! I'm sorry to hear that.  
**Chloe:** I miss her so much. I can't stop crying.  
**Anne:** What happened? Was she sick?  
**Chloe:** Sort of. Mum took her to the vet a week ago.  
 They said she was just old. She passed away last night.  
 I found her in her bed.  
**Anne:** How terrible!



As the author has perceived in the classroom, form 5 students need controlled speaking practice, thus they can gain confidence in speaking through scripted dialogues. Recorded dialogues

can be used differently in the classroom. The more confident the students become the more ``acting out`` and emotions can be added. The dialogues in the textbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) are topical, they introduce different social situations, how to behave on a trip, in a shop or ask the way. In addition to that, the conversations reveal what is polite or impolite or improper, how to give sad news or express sympathy. In the dialogue in unit 6 students are asked to fill in the gaps with possessive pronouns. Students are asked to find two synonyms for ``surema`` and ``haige`` from the dialogue in unit 11 and the dialogues in unit 18 have to be completed with missing words.

The dialogues in *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) allow the teacher to demonstrate students that they are not passive listeners. To show students that they are actively listening to find out what the person said, the teacher can stop the recording and ask students to predict the next line. Students can be encouraged to take notes and compare their predictions with peers (Vandergrift 2004, see Table 1). The teacher can support the strategy by working through the activity out loud, helping students to understand, how to solve problems. The activity demonstrates students that they have a reason to listen, they listen actively. Furthermore, the teacher can encourage students to evaluate their performance. Students can ask: How well I did I do? Is there anything I still do not understand? The author of the thesis appreciates the recorded dialogues in the textbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) as helpful support to promote students' metacognitive awareness.

The dialogues in the textbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) serve as the good basis for students to proceed from recited dialogues to casual conversation. Accordingly, apart from listening and reading, speaking skills can be practiced. In addition to that, when students read or act the dialogues out, their voices can be recorded. The teacher can record students' dialogues at the beginning of the course and towards the end of the year and revisit the earlier recordings to show the improvement.

The target group enjoyed working with dialogues, when they could read the text and act the

parts out. Contrarily, dialogues while listened without the transcript were too fast for the students, they wanted to listen to the recording again and again and still missed some information. In addition to applying different teaching strategies, the author of the thesis drew some audio controls on the board (stop, rewind, play), but the strategy did not work with her students. The rest of the group got distracted when the recording was stopped for one student and thus the author of the thesis decided not to use the strategy any more. All in all, the target group enjoyed working with the dialogues and were looking forward to acting them out. Students were eager to guess characters and appearances of the people talking in the dialogues and sometimes tried to imitate the personalities while reading or acting out. Consequently, the author of the thesis designed some dialogues as additional study material. (See appendix 4 for detailed descriptions of the activities for *Listen to the dialogues* exercises and appendix 10 for additional study material).

## **Listen and act**

### **Sample sentences from a *Listen and act* activity**

Stand up if you have worn a mask at a party. (U.5, recording 24)

Stamp your feet if you have seen a talking parrot. (U.10, recording 49)

Clap your hands if you have seen a traffic accident. (U.15, recording 75)

Snap your fingers if you prefer raspberries to strawberries. (U.20, recording 98)

*Listen and act* activities are included in *Show what you know* units as in textbooks for elementary level. Students hear a statement and have to react following the instructions. The topic is chosen from the previous four units, so are the words and phrases used. While doing the activity, the border between the students who clearly enjoy acting together, use their imagination, pantomime or overdramatise a bit and those who feel uneasy and do not enjoy the task as they do not understand what they are asked to do is very clear. Nevertheless, *Listen and act* activities in *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) give the teacher an opportunity to observe students and their reactions. In addition to that, the activities give students an opportunity to be physically active for some minutes.

As *Listen and act* activities involve topics covered within several units, the teacher can arrange pre-listening activities already at the end of the preceding lesson. Using top-down strategy (Linghu 2003) to activate students' previous knowledge, the teacher can ask students to think about the four topics at home and encourage them to use their knowledge to help them understand the content of the commands at the lesson. Secondly, with low level students, bottom-up strategy has to be used, as knowing the topic may not be sufficient for understanding what is happening. When the teacher sees that students do not understand a sentence in *Listen and act* activity, she can read the sentence herself and ask students to write down how many words they hear. The teacher has to dictate the sentence in a very natural way, rather than say it word-by-word. The activity can be supported by metacognitive strategy – monitoring, as students can compare their numbers in pairs before listening and checking. While listening to the third time, they can try to build up the sentence together (monitoring and problem solving, Vandergrift 2004, see Table 1). (See appendix 5 for more detailed activities for *Listen and act* exercises).

### **Recorded texts**

Listening materials in the textbook include three recorded texts in units 7,8 and 16. While listening to *The Mary Celeste* story in unit 7 students are asked to correct the sentences. In unit 8 students have to put the paragraphs in the right order and listen and check. The recorded texts give the teacher a chance to engage students in prediction, monitoring, problem solving and evaluation (Vandergrift 2004). Nevertheless, the limited number of recorded texts does not allow the educator to teach students the skills necessary for processing an activity where both written and recorded texts are available. Furthermore, given that most of the students in the target group found listening difficult, the teacher kept their listening experience brief and focused. (See activities in appendix 6).

#### **2.4.2. Listening activities in the workbook**

The workbook is written to supplement the textbook to give students more practice and polish

their skills in English. The coverage of topics matches the ones in the textbook. Thus, students have gained already some context and background knowledge from the material in the book. While designing the listening tasks for the workbook the authors have relied on product-oriented approaches (Vandergrift and Goh 2012). Learners abilities to answer questions, finish sentences or match parts of the sentences in accordance with the text they hear are checked. The author upgraded the activities in the classroom considering process-oriented approaches. Compared to the listening activities designed for the textbook where the elementary school pattern was followed, the activities in the workbook are complicated and need special attention and approach from the teacher.

### Listening for specific information

#### Sample task (Unit 4, p. 25)

7

Listen to Helen's story about her great-grandmother.



a Complete the list of countries where Helen's great-granny lived as a child.

Estonia,

Germany,

b Finish the sentences.

- 1 Great-Granny's family left Estonia when she was .....
- 2 They left by .....
- 3 She had ..... brothers.
- 4 The youngest brother was ..... old.
- 5 They lived in Germany till .....
- 6 She went to school not ..... from Boston.
- 7 Helen's great-grandfather was also from .....
- 8 Helen's great-granny worked as a .....

There are altogether 23 listening tasks in the workbook. Most of the tasks can be categorised as *Listening for specific information*. Students are asked to fill in the gaps, finish sentences, fill in charts, complete texts with missing words or complete dialogues. Although the topics in *Listening for specific information* activities follow the general subjects of discussion already covered during

previous classes, they are somewhat more specific in the workbook compared to the textbook. For example, the workbook *Listening for specific information* activity matching the unit about Graifriar's Bobby introduces a visit to a dog shelter. Consequently, this completely new information triggers high levels of learner anxiety and the teacher has to be ready to give necessary instructions and help students to focus on the listening process. The author of the thesis suggests to pre-teach additional vocabulary as the words and phrases used in the listening activities do not match the textbook's vocabulary. Most of the *Listening for specific information* activities in *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) workbook consist of two different tasks – finish the sentences and match the names with parts of sentences.

According to Nation (2009) every teacher has to support her students while doing the activities when she perceives that the material is too difficult for them. Liu (2016) suggests that teachers should be aware of strengths and weaknesses of the material they are using and be ready to adapt it to meet her students' needs. Regarding that the activities in the workbook are mainly product-oriented where learners have to demonstrate their knowledge or skills, the teacher has to pay even more attention to diverse activities while planning the lesson. The students in the target group were very motivated, eager to receive new experiences, but, as every other class, they had different abilities and interests. Although the topics covered in the workbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) reproduce the ones in the textbook, the author of the current paper recommends to preview main ideas before listening (top-down interpretation). Firstly, depending on the theme, the teacher might have to specify the narrower topic of interest. For example, if the general theme of the unit is Christmas and the *Listening for specific information* activity focuses on the history of crackers, students might need additional and more precise information. At the beginning of the school year, when the teacher does not know students sufficiently, she has to put more effort on helping students to construct meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge. The teacher has to realise the importance of clustering new information with existing related ideas. Students forget information, if they do not work with integrating it into existing framework (Gilakjani 2016).

In addition to that, Gilakjani (2016) suggests that top-down activities motivate students to initiate discussions on what they already know about the topic. Furthermore, Gilakjani (2016) recommends using non-verbal cues for improving learners' listening comprehension ability. The author of the current thesis gave the necessary cues by drawing on the board, showing pictures or even miming some objects or situations.

Considering that students in form 5 have either changed schools or have new classmates and teachers at the same school, additional support, encouragement and motivation is needed. In addition to that, it is the teacher's duty to create a supportive and caring new learning environment, fostering positive relationship among peers and establishing sense of community. In addition to the top-down strategy, the author of the thesis suggests using more bottom-up strategies for helping students to complete *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) workbook *Listening for specific information activities* during the first half of the year, allowing students to gain more confidence and get used to their new peers. To develop the ability to identify the key words, the teacher can write the words from a sentence on the board, play the recording sentence by sentence and ask students to determine the words they hear and number them in the order they hear them.

As the target group grew in confidence, their attitude towards learning improved. Apparently, the question ``What does the teacher want me to do? `` changed to ``What shall I do to better complete the activity? ``. Their metacognitive awareness was rising, they became more aware of themselves as learners and, in addition to that, they became more conscious of the aspects of the current task and the strategies needed to accomplish the task. Additionally, to the *Listening for specific information* exercises in the workbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015), the author of the thesis recommends teachers to provide students with different types of supplementary input, such as extracts from films, TV pays, news, announcements or everyday conversations (Gilakjani 2016). (See appendix 7 for more specific activities and appendixes 9 and 11 for additional study material).

## Listening for dictation

The purpose of this type of exercises is to train students to grasp details that are relevant or important. In addition to listening and writing skills, dictation allows practising sub-skills like spelling, punctuation, and lay-out. There is one *Listening for dictation* exercise in the workbook where grasping detailed information is required. In unit 12, exercise 7 students have to write eight sentences they hear. The exercise includes contractions like *what's*, *we've* and a complicated question word *whose*. The author of the thesis recommends contractions to be written on the board and revised previously and the recording to be stopped after every sentence.

The author of the current thesis has re-discovered dictation as a valuable language learning device and uses the activity in her English language classroom to enhance beginner level students' listening. The author of the thesis considered dictation an out-of-date approach and did not use the technique in her classroom. However, applying mixed strategies while doing listening for dictation activities convinced her that the exercises are useful for training connected speech, specific language phrases, contractions and even grammar structures. The author of the thesis was surprised to find out that her students had developed their own sign system while listening for dictation in their mother tongue and used it in their English language classes as well. The students raised their hand with the pen when they had finished the sentence, they were very quiet and focused and seemed confident as the students were familiar with the type of activity.

As there is only one *Listening for dictation* activity in the workbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015), the author of the thesis suggests designing additional activities for practising listening for dictation. Firstly, the author of the thesis recommends choosing sentences appropriate to the level of students. Secondly, the teacher can choose sentences from the material students have already learned. Teachers should be creative in designing activities on their own (Liu 2016). Sentences for a dictation exercise can be selected from the textbook *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015), ensuring that students are familiar with the language aspects covered. The author of the thesis considers *Listening for dictation* activities versatile and efficient and has designed



additional exercises with suggested teaching strategies (See appendix 8 for additional study material).

### **Listening for gist**

The workbook contains three listening activities, where students have to listen to the text, try to understand and decide whether the sentences are true according to the text. These types of exercises are suitable for beginner level students, helping to make connections between listening and responding (Yavuz et al 2015). The overall topic in unit 3 is *Do it yourself* and the listening task (p. 20) is about a kite festival. The topic enables to link the activity with general theme, continue discussion on the topic, propose a same kind of festival in the students' school, etc. The activity in unit 6 (p. 36) is the last part of the story presented in the textbook. Students have been familiarised with the content already, in addition to that, the continuation in the form of a listening activity gives a good opportunity for prediction and discussion with a partner. The teacher can support students with questions: What do you think is going to happen? What does your partner think? Do you agree? Christmas is celebrated in many ways in unit 8, enabling discussions and personalising, a significant part of the communicative study approach. The listening activity about the history of making crackers gives a good chance for students to relate the newly acquired knowledge to their own experience, express their opinions and thoughts. The activity can also trigger a Christmas *Do it yourself* activity where students can try to make crackers together. As already notified earlier, the author of the thesis works with longer texts step by step, helping her students to encompass the material and manage with the necessary assignments.

### **Concluding remarks**

All in all, the listening activities in *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) allow improvisation and adaption by the teacher. *Listen and chant* and *Listen and repeat* activities are not very challenging and allow the teacher to introduce students metacognitive strategies in a more

relaxed atmosphere. *Listen to the dialogues* activities help the teacher to demonstrate the interactive nature of listening and to create spontaneous interaction in the classroom. However, the listening activities in the workbook develop mostly specific information listening skills. There should be more exercises developing listening for the gist and inferential listening skill to better support students listening comprehension. In addition to that, teachers would appreciate to see a variety of inspiring instructions in the teacher's book, helping them with lesson planning and saving their time.

The author of the thesis suggests supplementing the listening activities in *I Love English 4* (Kurm and Soolepp 2015) with giving students enough exposure to the target language using Youtube videos and available online materials. The exposure to the foreign language in classroom is limited and the teacher should encourage students to encompass everything they hear outside the classroom. All the students in the target group liked music, therefore the author of the thesis encourages them to sing along with the songs, print out the lyrics now and then and learn the words. She showed trailers of numerous films in her classroom and convinced the students that the films were worth watching. In addition to that, the teacher can inspire students to have conversations with people around them while travelling and not to be afraid to make mistakes. While communicating and attending local events students can see, that their new language skills can open doors to new experiences.

The author of the thesis guided her students' metacognitive development within nine months and can affirm that the students in the target group are more skilled listeners and faster in the process and quality of their work than at the beginning of the school year. In addition to that, students have been reminded that they are continual learners who can adapt to new rules and situations. Furthermore, the students' motivation level is higher, and they have noticeably gained confidence. The students in the target group are willing to express themselves in the class and the applied strategies have helped to engage otherwise disengaged students. Working with the study group and helping them become better listeners has been a systematic process, in the course of

which the author of the thesis has planned and structured her activities and teaching strategies to reach the desired goals. She has learned to know her students and thus can be better at supporting their learning. Considering the problems her students typically had with the materials at this level and trying to emphasize their abilities, the author of the thesis designed additional study material for the target group (see appendixes 8, 9, 10 and 11).

## CONCLUSION

Many language students focus on speaking and do not put much effort on listening. However, when we communicate, we spend about 50% of our time listening. One of the components of communication skill is active listening, the ability to correctly receive and interpret messages. Understanding spoken words is considered prerequisite to the other three language skills: speaking, reading and writing. The belief that teaching listening comprehension is important is widespread among scholars. Research has shown persuasive evidence that listening comprehension and language acquisition are closely related.

The studies in the field of listening comprehension prove that listening comprehension skill can be developed by teaching relevant strategies. Scholars have agreed that listening is not a passive skill, but needs students' active and conscious participation. Using appropriate strategies to involve students in listening comprehension process reduces unnecessary anxiety in the classroom, develops language proficiency and improves language usage. When learners' self-reliance in listening comprehension increases, they are not only able to complete a listening activity successfully but are in better control of their learning in general.

In my thesis aims to answer the following questions: Can I improve my form-five students' listening skills by using the strategies suggested by the scholars in the literature review? How to improve the existing study materials by using the strategies? The target group comprised 15 students and they had not been familiarised with different listening comprehension strategies previously. The result revealed that the strategies can be successfully taught to young learners. Compared to the beginning of the school year, they were more confident and self-reliant while completing listening activities in spring. In addition to that, the existing study material can be improved, when the teacher knows how to apply suitable teaching strategies.

However, preparing activities for listening tasks was a time-consuming process. Explicit instructions in the teacher's book, compiled acknowledging complex and interacting nature of

learning and teaching, would have saved the teacher time. Although the teacher is the one who understands his or her students' needs and background best, a choice of related strategies in the teacher's book would treasure the teacher's time. Furthermore, there were some drawbacks to using the strategies for teaching listening comprehension in the classes. Devoting so much time to teaching listening posed problems, since the number of English lessons a week was limited. Some of the students from the target group got bored, as the concentration was on one and the same topic for a long time.

Nevertheless, the students' listening skill improved and they were more active while listening. In addition to sharing their ideas with the peers, they supported each other and received continuous feedback throughout the listening process. Moreover, working in pairs enabled students to correct their mistakes and gain knowledge from their peers.

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## **APPENDIX 1. THE TOPICS COVERED IN THE TEXTBOOK**

Unit 1. Summer activities, playing games, make a spell.

Unit 2. Wise servant. Good/bad behaviour, mother tongue, tongue twisters.

Unit 3. Do it yourself. Making/fixing things, safety rules, abbreviations and step-by-step instructions.

Unit 4. History, future plans and jobs, interviewing grandparents.

Unit 5. Trick or treat, Halloween activities, party preparations.

Unit 6. Department store, going shopping, buying clothes.

Unit 7. Mystery, continents oceans, years, centuries.

Unit 8. Christmas activities, traditions.

Unit 9. Family, family tree.

Unit 10. Scotland, countries, cities. Edinburgh festival.

Unit 11. Greyfriar's Bobby, talking about dogs, receiving/giving bad news.

Unit 12. People, Helen Keller's life, people with disabilities.

Unit 13. Stressed, signs of stress, dealing with stress.

Unit 14. Street, safety in the street, places in town, asking and telling the way. Creating a mind map.

Unit 15. Red Nose Day. Raising money, fund-raising events. Pie charts, per cents.

Unit 16. We care, a country clean-up day, sorting waste, recycling.

Unit 17. Chocolate, dialogues in a shop/cafe.

Unit 18. Chores, home robots, your regular duties.

Unit 19. My media life, digital devices, staying connected, text.

Unit 20. Class trip, a trip to the zoo, losing money.

All the instructions are in English, but they are translated on page 6.

## APPENDIX 2. ACTIVITIES FOR THE LISTENING EXERCISES IN THE TEXTBOOK

### Activities for *Listen and chant* exercises

**Pre-listening activities.** At the beginning of the school year the author of the thesis paid more attention to pre-listening activities than throughout the second trimester. These activities helped to build confidence and generate students' interest. Furthermore, the author was unfamiliar with the ability of the class and their interests.

First, the author of the thesis explained the purpose of the listening activity (the textbooks are closed). It helps the students to focus and enables to achieve success. The author wrote the topic ``Good behaviour`` on the board and informed the students that the listening task would include some rules of good manners. Providing a clear context helps to mitigate the anxiety, but also gives more opportunities for interaction and discussions. (Vandergrift 2004). To activate the previous knowledge the teacher chose to brainstorm in relation to the topic. After the brainstorm the students were asked to discuss with their partners, find out and write down five rules they decided were the most important. Then the students compared the lists with their partners and found out similarities and differences.

**While-listening activities.** The author asked the students to listen to the chant once (the textbooks were still closed) and compare their rules with the ones from the chant. Before listening to the second time the textbooks were opened. The students sang along. The chant was translated by the students. The teacher assured the students that the rules they came up with were as important as the ones in the chant.

**Post-listening activity.** The teacher asked the students to write another verse for the song in pairs using their own rules of good behaviour. Finally, the students took turns in singing their interpretations.

### Activities for *Listen and repeat* exercises

**Pre-listening activities.** The teacher informed the students that they would be making a kite, following step by step instructions. She asked the students to discuss with their partners and guess the words they would hear in accordance with the topic.

**While-listening activities.** The teacher asked the students to listen to the recording and compare their words with the recorded ones. While playing the recording the second time, she told the students to repeat the words very happily and the third time very sadly.

**Post-listening activity.** Two pairs were asked to join in a group of four and with the help of the vocabulary they were asked to predict the step by step instruction for making a kite. In addition to the vocabulary heard from the recording, the students were encouraged to use the words they

themselves predicted.

### **Activities for *Listen to the dialogues* exercises**

**Pre-listening activity.** The teacher printed the dialogue out and cut into pieces. She asked the students to read the dialogue and decide on the correct order.

**While-listening activity.** While listening, the students had to check whether their decision had been correct.

**Post-listening activities.** In pairs, the students were asked to discuss, what the children in the dialogue were like. Secondly, the students had to decide which part they were going to act out. Finally, the dialogue was acted out and the students tried to sound as similar to the kids in the dialogue as they could.

### **Activities for *Listen and act* exercises**

**Pre-listening activity.** At the end of the previous lesson the teacher gave the students a home assignment to come up with three listen and act commands. She asked the students to keep in mind the topics covered within four previous units.

**While-listening activity.** When the teacher noticed that some students did not understand the command, she stopped the recording and let somebody translate the command. The reactions were commented and discussed.

**Post-listening activity.** All the students presented their commands and the rest of the class reacted. Although it is more time-consuming, students' commands can be recorded previously, as children usually enjoy hearing their voices from the tape.

### **Activities for *Listen to the text* exercises**

**Pre-listening activities.** To give her students more chances to hear a story first without the transcript, the teacher told the children not to open the textbooks. For activating the schemata the teacher asked the students to come up with what they already know about the topic. She asked the children to discuss in pairs and write out the key-words. Secondly, the key words were written on the board. Finally, the students had to come up with what they would like to know about the topic and discuss the possible questions in pairs.

**While-listening activity.** The teacher applied different while-listening strategies. When listening without the transcript, she stopped the recording now and then and asked the students to predict which of the key words comes next. Sometimes the teacher stopped the recording and asked the students to repeat the last word (or words) they heard.

**Post-listening activities.** The teacher had planned different post-listening activities without the

transcript. She asked the students to come up with 5 true or false statements, short answer questions or prepare a multiple-choice quiz. Nevertheless, the target group was not able to construct perfectly correct sentences or questions yet, thus the teacher decided to leave listening and applying the relevant strategies to longer text for the next study year. This year the texts were read and the new information discussed and analysed.

### APPENDIX 3. ACTIVITIES FOR THE LISTENING EXERCISES IN THE WORKBOOK

#### **Activities for *Listening for the specific information* exercises**

**Pre-listening activities.** Although the general topic of the study unit was connected with dogs, the teacher wanted to find out whether the students come up with the key word *animal shelter* in the pre-listening stage. She wrote the word *dog* on the board and asked the students to come and add the words which relate to dogs. The teacher tried to give some hints about the animal shelter, but finally she had to write the word on the board herself. Nevertheless, it triggered a brainstorm, as the students had visited an animal shelter with their class and some of the students occasionally visited the local shelter, took some food or supplies there or provided needed help. In addition to that the teacher asked the students to predict additional words, phrases or ideas they were likely to hear in the exercise (Vandergrift 2004). With a partner, they made a list of five different activities that could help the dogs in the shelter (Nguyen and Abbott 2016).

**While-listening activities.** The teacher decided that these types of product-oriented activities require problem-solving stage (Nguyen and Abbott 2016), as she saw that the students needed some further help. She pointed at the words *lick* and *keeper* on the board, informed the students that these were important key words and asked them to identify the names of the persons and the dogs first. After listening to the first time the students compared their answers with their partners. While listening for the second time the students filled in the rest of the missing information. As they still missed some facts, the teacher played the recording once more.

**Post-listening activities.** For evaluation and feedback the teacher showed the students the transcript and encouraged them to reflect on difficulties encountered. In case they had missed some information, she asked if the students could suggest which strategies could help them in future listening tasks (Vandergrift 2004).

## APPENDIX 4. ADDITIONAL STUDY MATERIAL

### Listening for dictation and listening to other learners

**Pre-listening activities.** Firstly, the teacher praised her students to inspire them and reinforce positive behaviour. She informed the learners that they had performed well while completing listening to the dictation activity earlier in the class. Secondly, she asked the students to reflect on the strategies they use in their mother tongue classes and which of these strategies could be transferred into their English classroom. The teacher asked the students to discuss in pairs and write down why each strategy would be useful and how they would use it, thus mapping out the plan for the activity. The teacher encouraged the students to deploy their study resources and the children enjoyed brushing up their dictation activities' techniques. Finally, the necessary words, phrases, question words and contractions were discussed and written on the board.

**While-listening activities.** The students kept themselves concentrated throughout the activity. They showed their understanding or non-understanding the sentence by raising their pen when they had finished. The teacher interpreted these activities differently, occasionally she had the students say the sentences immediately after hearing them to make sure they got the information right. There were more emotions involved when the students were reading out the activities themselves. The students who were writing used body language and facial expressions to show how satisfied they were with the reader's tone of voice or speed of speech. Consequently, the teacher had to remind the rules for cooperation and helped the students to explore some of the skills they needed for working together.

**Post-listening activities.** Firstly, the students compared their sentences with their partner and discussed. Secondly, the teacher showed the correct answers on the board. Thirdly, the students were asked to write 5 sentences with the same words and phrases to be confused as a home assignment.

### Transcript 1

1. Whose are these shoes?
2. Who's there? I think I heard a noise!
3. Who can answer the next question?
4. Whose idea was it to bring flowers?
5. Who's your favourite actor?
6. Whose dog is that?
7. Who's drunk my juice?

**Transcript 2**

1. There's a fly in the classroom.
2. Their mother tongue is English.
3. They're good at singing.
4. They got a five in Estonian.
5. There are two new buildings next to our school.
6. There's a letter on your desk. I think it is from Martin.
7. They are funny people.

**Transcript 3**

1. It's Mary's cat. Its tail is long.
2. Well, it's got to be true.
3. It's a lovely day!
4. The house is missing its doors and windows.
5. Has your chewing gum lost its flavour?
6. The tree has lost all its leaves.
7. It's starting to snow.

## APPENDIX 5. ADDITIONAL STUDY MATERIAL

### Listen and draw. Listen to other learners

To differentiate the listening activities the teacher has designed one activity, where the students can draw what they hear. She asked her students to suggest a character the story could be about, and it turned out, that the students had watched *Alice in Wonderland* together with their class and thus the main hero was chosen.

**Pre-listening activities.** Firstly, the teacher told the students that they were going to hear a description of Alice's imaginary room in Wonderland. To activate the previous knowledge, she triggered a brainstorm and helped with some warm-up questions.

1. How did Alice enter Wonderland?
2. Whom did she meet first?
3. Name the characters you remember.
4. Which of them did you like most? Why?
5. Do you remember why *A Mad Tea Party* lasted the whole day?

Secondly, the teacher wrote the incomplete phrases on the board and asked the students to add the correct prepositions.

(in) front (of), next (to), (on) the left, (on) the right, (in) the middle (of), (in) the corner, (in) the left corner, (in) the right corner, (on) top of

Thirdly, the teacher asked the students to discuss in pairs and predict what could be seen in this Alice's imaginary room.

**While-listening activities.** Firstly, the students listened to the recording without pauses to imagine the whole picture. While listening to the second time the teacher stopped the recording now and then to give the children enough time to draw and colour the picture. She played the recording for the third time to let the students finish their pictures. Finally, the teacher told the students to add three items to the picture, which they had in their own rooms.

**Post-listening activities.** The students were asked to describe their pictures to their partners and compare their drawings.

### Transcript

This is Alice's imaginary room in Wonderland. You can see a table in the middle of the room. There is a bottle on the table with the label *Drink me*. There is a cake next to the bottle with the words *Eat me* written on top of it. White Rabbit has left his pocket watch on the table. There is a huge rocking chair in front of the table. Alice's cat is sitting on the chair. There is another table in the right corner. It is smaller than the table in the middle of the room. The famous mushroom from the story is on



the small table. The mushroom is blue. There are five mirrors on the walls. The mirrors are of different sizes and colours. The room has no windows or doors, but you can see the rabbit hole in one of the the walls.

## APPENDIX 6. ADDITIONAL STUDY MATERIAL

### Listening to re-order jumbled dialogues. Acting out the dialogues

While having a classroom conversation with the target group the teacher discovered that most of the students travel a lot. Four of the students admitted that they were the only ones in the family knowing English and were very proud they could use it while travelling. The teacher could see that the students had instantly enjoyed the benefits of learning a foreign language since they had been able to communicate with the people around them. Accordingly, the teacher chose to design additional study material covering some real-life situations. In addition to that, the students themselves suggested the situations they were interested to practise.

**Pre-listening activities.** The teacher informed the students that they were going to hear and act out the dialogues about buying clothes and ordering in a cafe. Firstly, the teacher chose to activate her students' previous knowledge with a brainstorm in relation to the topic. She had prepared the questions to help her students with brainstorming, if necessary.

#### Dialogue 1

How often do you shop for clothes?

Whose advice is important?

Which are your favourite shops?

Do you order clothes online?

#### Dialogue 2

How often do you buy drinks or snacks from cafes?

Which are your favourite cafes or restaurants in our home town?

Describe the most exotic food you have ever tasted?

Do you drink coffee?

Is there anything you do not eat at all?

Secondly, every student got a list with questions from the dialogues and they had to put the questions into the correct order. After rearranging the questions, the students compared their answers with their partners.

#### Dialogue 1

How much is it?

Where are the changing rooms?

Can I help you?

What size are you looking for?

Do you need a bag?

Can I pay by credit card here?

## **Dialogue 2**

How much is it?

Can I have freshly squeezed juice, please?

How big is large?

Regular or large?

Can I have some ice in it?

Can I have an apple juice, please?

**While-listening activity.** The students listened to the dialogues and checked their answers.

**Post-listening activity.** The students chose one dialogue and acted it out with the partner. They could change the items of clothing and food or drinks they would like to order.

### **Transcript 1. Shopping for clothes**

**Shop assistant:** Hello, can I help you?

**Customer:** Yes, please. Do you have this T-shirt in white?

**Shop assistant:** Yes, just a moment. What size are you looking for?

**Customer:** I think I need small.

**Shop assistant:** Here you are.

**Customer:** Where are the changing rooms?

**Shop assistant:** They are over there.

**Customer:** How much is it?

**Shop assistant:** It is 12 euros.

**Customer:** Can I pay by credit card here?

**Shop assistant:** Yes, of course. Do you need a bag for that?

**Customer:** No, thank you. Good buy!

**Shop assistant:** Good buy! Have a nice day!

### **Transcript 2. In a cafe**

**Customer:** Can I have an apple juice, please?

**Waitress:** Regular or large?

**Customer:** How big is large?

**Waitress:** This is large. This is regular.

**Customer:** I'll have regular then. Can I have some ice in it?

**Waitress:** OK, coming up.

Customer: Sorry, can I freshly squeezed juice, please?

Waitress: I am afraid we only have bottled juices.

Customer: OK, I'll take one. How much is it?

Waitress: That's 2 euros please.

Customer: Thank you.

## APPENDIX 7. ADDITIONAL STUDY MATERIAL

### Listen, follow the step by step instructions and make chocolate

The teacher told the students that they were going to hear a step by step instruction for making chocolate at home. Although the topic of cocoa trees and the history of making chocolate had been discussed during the previous lessons, the teacher asked some questions to activate the schema.

1. Who gave chocolate its original name?
2. Where do cocoa trees grow?
3. Where do cocoa beans grow?
4. How long is the history of cocoa?
5. Why does chocolate have a ``lift`` effect on people?

Secondly, the teacher asked the students to discuss with their partner and make predictions.

1. How many ingredients are used to make chocolate?
2. Which ingredients are used?

In addition to that, the teacher asked the students to predict the possible words they would hear. The words used in the recording were shown on the board and the students were asked to compare them with their initial predictions. Finally, the teacher told the students to guess the meanings of the words used in the text. She asked the students to use the synonyms in English first or try to explain the words in English.

**ingredients** – components

**roast** – fry, cook

**peel** - skin

**crush** – smash

**grind** – mill

**stir** – mix

**liquid** – watery

**powder** – flour, dust

**due to** – thanks to, because of

**contain** – consist of, include

**mold** – form, shape

**solid** – hard

**While-listening activity.** The students listened to the recording and tried to understand and compare their predictions with the text.

**Post – listening activities.** Firstly, he teacher provided each student with the copy of the transcript

so that the students could underline the parts they had had some uncertainty about. Secondly, the students were asked to write on the board any phrase they still did not understand. The teacher went over the phrases with the class. Finally, the teacher gathered the transcripts and asked the students to work in pairs and try to take turns recalling one bit of information from the recording. The teacher challenged the students to continue as long as possible. A class discussion followed where everyone contributed.

### **Making chocolate**

The teacher booked the domestic science class and arranged making chocolate together. The students bought the necessary ingredients and enjoyed preparing home – made chocolate.

#### **Transcript 1. How to make a chocolate bar at home**

You want to know how to make chocolate without the big machines? You actually need only three ingredients to make a home – made bar of chocolate: cocoa beans, sugar and milk. First you have to roast the cocoa beans. Do it on a small pan until the beans turn dark brown. It is the same in the factory, only on a much bigger pan. Then peel the beans and crush them. After that grind the beans and stir the mass until it looks almost like liquid chocolate. This is due to the high amount of cocoa butter in the cocoa beans. But it isn't chocolate yet. It is a pure cocoa mass and quite bitter. Now it is time to add other ingredients to the cocoa mass - sugar and powdered milk. By the way, the idea of using powdered milk is already a hundred years old. Powdered milk does not contain water and it is easy to mix with the cocoa mass. Now stir, and stir, and stir. And stir and stir. You can now fill the chocolate into a mold. Pour it in and shake it. Then cool the chocolate until it becomes solid. When it is ready, turn the mold over, give it a little shake and there it is – your hand-made chocolate! So – let's have a taste! Yes, it's delicious!

## APPENDIX 8. RECORDINGS

Recording for appendix 4

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/6s7e1zrprskgvyg/Listen%20for%20dictation.m4a?dl=0>

Recording for appendix 5

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/v86a6dnrzyf7xop/Listen%20and%20draw.m4a?dl=0>

Recording for appendix 6 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/873ws85stqxlfbvj/Dialogues.m4a?dl=0>

Recording for appendix 7

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/g5wuis1jwczzq2g/How%20to%20make%20a%20chocolate%20bar.m4a?dl=0>

## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

**Sylvia Maatee**

**Strategies for teaching listening to form 5 students: based on the analysis of *I Love English 4* by Ü. Kurm and E. Soolepp (2015) and designing additional study material**

**Strateegiad viienda klassi õpilastele kuulamise õpetamiseks, põhinedes õpiku ``I Love English 4`` analüüsil ja lisamaterjalide koostamine.**

Magistritöö

2019

Lehekülgede arv: 57

Annotatsioon:

Selle magistritöö eesmärgiks on analüüsida erinevaid strateegiaid inglise keele kuulamisülesannete õpetamiseks 5. klassi õpilastele, kasutades neid strateegiaid sihtgruppi õpetades.

Töö koosneb sissejuhatusest, kahest peatükist ja kokkuvõttest. Sissejuhatuses kirjeldatakse uurimistöö teema aktuaalsust, töö autori isiklikku motivatsiooni ja magistritöö struktuuri. Esimeses peatükis kirjeldatakse varasemaid uuringuid, mis puudutavad erinevaid strateegiaid võõrkeele kuulamisülesannete õpetamisel. Strateegiad määratletakse, analüüsitakse nende tõhusust ja võimalikku rakendamist teises kooliastmes. Teine peatükk tutvustab uurimismeetodit ja sihtgruppi, kelleks olid 15 5. klassi õpilast koolist, kus töö autor õpetab. Magistritöö autor kasutas üheksa kuu vältel teoorias käsitletud autorite poolt esitatud kuulamisõpetamise strateegiaid sihtgruppi õpetades. Lisaks sellele sisaldab peatükk *I Love English 4* õpikus ja töövihikus olevate kuulamisülesannete analüüsi. Kirjeldatakse olemasolevate kuulamisülesannete liike, õpiku ja töövihiku ülesannete erinevust ja nende sobivust sihtgrupile. Samuti soovitatakse autori kogemusest lähtudes olemasolevate kuulamisülesannete kohandamist ja täiendamist vastavalt õppija vajadusele. Magistritöö autori koostatud lisaülesanded on kavandatud olemasolevat õppematerjali täiendavateks ja autentses inglise keeles, toetades õpilaste keeleoskuse omandamist tasemel, mis võimaldab inglisekeelses keskkonnas iseseisvalt toimida.

Kokkuvõttes sedastatakse, et rohkema tähelepanu pööramine õpilastele erinevate kuulamisstrateegiate õpetamisele on oluline ja tarvilik, rõhutamaks kuulamise mittepassiivset olemust. Lisaks sellele tõdetakse, et olemasolev õppematerjal on eakohane ja vajadusel õigete õpetamisstrateegiate abil parendatav. Samas puudutatakse tõsiasja, et õpetajaraamat võiks sisaldada tänapäevaseid juhiseid õpetajale, mis kergendaks tunniplaneerimist ja säästaks õpetaja aega. Magistritöö autor tunnustab sihtgrupi õpilaste kuulamisoskuse järk-järgulist paranemist, õpilaste enesekindluse tõusu ja õppeprotsessi õpilaskesksemaks muutumist õpetamisperioodi jooksul, mil



erinevaid kuulamisoskust arendavaid strateegiaid kasutati.

Märksõnad: kuulamisoskuse arendamine, inglise keel, keeleõpe, kuulamisstrateegiad keeleõppes.

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