

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES**

**CREATING AND PILOTING ADDITIONAL LISTENING MATERIAL
FOR YEAR 9 STUDENTS**

MA thesis

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Abstract

The aim of this Master's thesis is to create and pilot additional listening material for year 9 students. The motivation to research listening skills and create a set of listening tasks came from the dissatisfaction with the listening tasks in the most commonly used study materials in Estonia.

Listening is one of the four language skills, in addition to reading, writing, and speaking. In language learning, listening should have more attention, since it is the first language skill that people engage with. The importance of listening is addressed by a number of researchers who are also mentioned in this thesis.

The thesis begins with a theoretical overview of listening skills, teaching listening, and creating study materials. The first chapter is followed by empirical study in which the creation of the listening material, the data collection and analysis and the results of the study are described.

The results of the study show that the listening material created for this thesis is suitable for year 9 students and is a useful tool for English teachers.

Main terms used in the thesis

EFL - English as a foreign language

CEFR - The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (an international model for describing language proficiency levels)

Language skills - reading, writing, listening, speaking

Listening skills - putting effort into making sense of aural input

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Introduction

The purpose of this MA thesis is to create a set of additional listening tasks for year 9 students and to collect feedback from teachers after having piloted the tasks in their English classrooms. The research questions of this MA thesis are: How do teachers evaluate the created listening tasks? What suggestions for improvement do the teachers make?

In this MA thesis, the created listening materials are considered to be materials that have been compiled on the basis of real-life imitating audio recordings found online that have colloquial grammar and vocabulary use and in which the speakers are native speakers of different varieties of English.

As year 9 students have the opportunity to take the English examination as their examination of choice, they could benefit from listening tasks that include different varieties of English (British, American, Australian, etc) as an additional means for them to revise for the examination's listening part. In the National Curriculum of Basic School (Põhikooli riiklik õppekava 2011) it is stated that at the end of basic school, the student has to be able to understand and communicate with people whose mother tongue is the target language (in this case English). To achieve the learning output, real-life imitating audiovisual materials could be used. The set of listening tasks created under this MA thesis serves as a ready-made toolkit for teachers of English in the year 9 classroom, and not just as a way of preparing for an English exam, but for overall improvement in the skills of listening to and understanding native speakers of English. By the end of year 9, students should understand B1 level texts. According to the CEFR (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*) level descriptions, B1 level students should be able to confront most situations that might take place while travelling in an area where the

language is spoken and understand texts that include everyday or job-related vocabulary (Council of Europe n.d.).

Since English has become an international lingua franca and listening is an essential part of communication skills, it is vital to be able to understand not only the standard American and British English but to also understand other varieties of English (Flowerdew & Miller 2005). Devi (2014) states that listening is considered the most vital part of communication because it gives communicators the input to respond to. Listening skills are vital for the students to develop their other language skills because they start to understand another language by listening to the spoken version of it.

One way to offer students possibilities to hear native speakers communicating in English is using listening tasks where the speakers are native. Song and Kim (2010) emphasise that if the students do not have the opportunity to improve their understanding of authentic speech naturally, it can be done by teaching with materials that have recordings of native speakers.

1. Theoretical overview

Research on listening skills, teaching listening and material creation

1.1. CEFR level descriptors and the National Curriculum of Basic School

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) is a tool that can be used to connect language teaching, learning and assessing around the world. The aim of the framework is to have common descriptors that language learners and teachers can use in order to describe levels of language proficiency and compare them to other systems of qualifications. The framework is not language-specific, so it can be used to describe different languages. Based on the framework, there are three language proficiency levels in total: basic user (A1-A2), independent user (B1-B2) and proficient user (C1-C2) (Taylor & Weir 2008).

In the National Curriculum of Basic School (Põhikooli riiklik õppekava 2011) it is established that by the end of year 9, students' English proficiency level should be B.1.1 - B2.1. The proficiency levels can differ within the language skills (listening, writing, reading and speaking). Basic school graduates are expected to understand everything relevant within the topics familiar to them; to be able to understand and communicate with native speakers, and use information sources in the target language (the Internet, etc).

If year 9 students' listening skills were to be described based on the CEFR self-assessment grid levels B1-B2 (Council of Europe n.d.), it could be done as follows. By the end of basic school, the students should: be able to understand clear standard speech on familiar topics or extended speech on reasonably familiar topics; be able to understand the main points of television programmes and radio or most television news and current affairs programmes; be able to understand films in standard English varieties (see Appendix 1).

1.2. Listening skills

There are four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. In this MA thesis, the main focus is on listening skills.

Brown (2011) explains that the definition of listening has changed through time but the best way to define listening as putting effort into making sense of aural input. Graham and Santos (2015) define listening skill as competencies that native speakers already have but non-native speakers have to acquire. Flowerdew and Miller (2005) explain that in recent decades, listening has been viewed as an interpretive process. Bailey (2020) elaborates that the listening skill is a receptive skill, since learners receive language input and interpret it instead of producing the input (like with writing and speaking). Vandergrift and Goh (2012) have stated that listening is an important skill because it enables the emergence of other language skills and allows learners to engage with foreign language input.

Language skills in general must be developed in order to be able to express oneself in written or oral form. Field (2009) emphasises that developing listening skills are arguably more important because they improve the learner's own spoken language more. Brown (2006) points out that successful and not so successful language learners can be differentiated by their ability to guess the follow-up of conversations based on the context (e.g. when ordering at a restaurant, the waitress comes back for a second time, she probably asks you for your drink preferences).

There are a number of differences between spoken and written language, which is why it is important to enable students to engage with spoken foreign language through listening. According to Flowerdew and Miller (2005) there are distinctive linguistic features of spoken and written language. As it is noted in *Figure 1*, in general, spoken language is easier, less structured, and has more pauses caused by a number of reasons

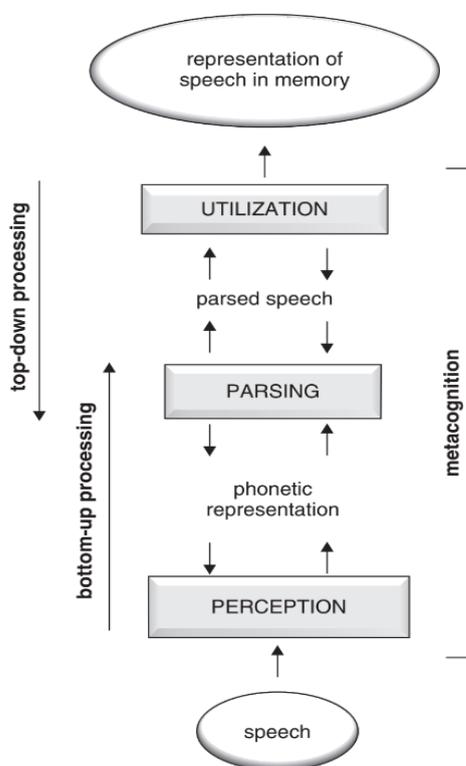
(hesitations, false starts, etc). Written language, on the other hand, is characterised by more complex structures, longer words, and more emphasis on creating a coherent and well-structured text.

<i>Linguistic Features of Spoken Text</i>	<i>Linguistic Features of Written Text</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • phonological contractions and assimilations • hesitations, false starts, and filled pauses • sentence fragments rather than complete sentences • structured according to tone units rather than clauses • frequent occurrence of discourse markers at beginning or end • tone groups • high incidence of questions and imperatives • first and second person pronouns • deixis (reference outside the text) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • longer information units • complex relations of coordination and subordination • high incidence of attributive adjectives • wider range and precise choice of vocabulary • high lexical density (nominalization) • longer average word length • more frequent use of passive voice • high use of coherence and cohesive devices

Figure 1. Distinctive linguistic features of spoken and written language (Flowerdew & Miller 2005: 48)

Bailey (2020) divides listening skills into two general processes: decoding and meaning building. Decoding starts as soon as the listener hears sound waves; meaning building starts when sounds are formed into words and words formed into sentences, and one must interpret the meaning of the words and sentences, since there can be more than

one meaning to the words and sentences. Vandergrift and Goh point out that (2012) listening competence is built on interrelationships between various cognitive processes. There are a number of cognitive processes that regulate what the learners do while



listening (*Figure 2*).

Figure 2. Cognitive Processes in L2 Listening and Their Interrelationships (Vandergrift & Goh 2012:17)

Firstly, top-down and bottom-up processing. **Top-down processing/model** enables students to apply context and prior knowledge to interpret a message. It is assumed that the interpretation and comprehension of a message begins with the application of appropriate knowledge sources to comprehend the sound stream. **Bottom-up processing/model** is a more mechanical process, during which the learners segment the sound-stream into meaningful units to interpret the message. Listeners form meaning based on their knowledge of segmentals (phonemes) and suprasegmentals (tone, stress, rhythm, intonation, etc) (Vandergrift & Goh 2012; Flowerdew & Miller 2005; Brown 2006). These

two processes are most often used together rather than individually. Secondly, controlled and automatic processing. *Controlled processing* essentially means that conscious attention is paid to processing the elements of speech. It is said to be inefficient because it is not possible to keep up with the flow of the language input. *Automatic processing*, on the other hand, means that if listening is fluent, most of the cognitive processing is done automatically. In the case of EFL learners, the extent to which their cognitive processes are done automatically, varies on their language level and the familiarity with the topic (Vandergrift & Oh 2012).

The process of listening can be divided into different phases: perception, parsing, and utilisation. In the *perception* phase, listeners decode the text, note and categorise distinctions of a target language. *Parsing* involves segmenting sound streams into meaningful parts and forming word candidates that are represented in the listener's long-term memory. Lastly, in the *utilisation* phase, listeners attach meaning to the sounds and interpret the text they have heard. Metacognition is enabled in the case of proficient learners because they are aware of the cognitive and are able to regulate and control them (Vandergrift & Goh 2012; Flowerdew & Miller 2005).

Unfortunately, listening skills, being as vital as they are claimed to be, are still under taught in schools. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), improvement of listening gets much less systematic attention and instructional materials compared to writing, reading and speaking.

1.3. Teaching listening skills

The Council of Europe has set a list of principles of learning and teaching languages. (1) Language learning should be for everybody because in today's world multilingualism is a necessity. (2) It should be based on materials that are relevant and suitable for the learners. (3) Language learning is the key to intercultural communication. (4) Learners' responsibility and motivation to learn through life should be developed. (5) Language learning and teaching should be dynamic and adaptable to change through well planned lessons, coordinated between the best materials and methods. (6) Coherence and transparency are important, which means that education related people and resources should have similar aims and goals (Taylor & Weir 2008).

Richards (2011) brings another aspect of language teaching to light. He emphasises the importance of pre-learning. Teachers can do a pre-listening activity to activate students' prior knowledge. Pre-teaching vocabulary is of great importance since it is said that the learners should know about 95% of the vocabulary present in the listening task before-hand. That way the students understand the content better and can find meaning in what they are hearing. Pre-teaching grammar is also important, so that the students are familiar with the structures that might occur in the recording. It is necessary to limit the teaching of grammar, though, since the focus should still be on listening. Grammar structures can be taught with useful phrases or other lexical bundles.

Teaching listening is a vital part of language learning in general. Field (2009) emphasises that language teachers must provide for the learners' life after school. Learners should be prepared, so they could take advantage of the linguistic aspects the real world provides. Thorn (2013) explains that listening is the key to prepare the learners for using English outside of the classroom. Language teachers can give learners the benefit of being exposed to different varieties of English. There are three general features of listening

lessons that are identified by Field (2009). Firstly, listening lessons are teacher-centred, which means that the teacher leads the study process by playing and stopping the recordings, asking guiding questions, deciding how much time is spent on different activities, and so on. Secondly, listening might have an isolating effect on a group of students because the teachers cannot be sure if the students are actually listening, whether they understand the recording, and so on. Thirdly, listening takes place in real time, which means that the learner must keep up with it and will not be able to check the spelling of a word from a previously read text or a dictionary.

The teacher can have a supporting and guiding role in listening lessons. Chung and Read (2006) explain that listening support can have an effect on listening comprehension. Two ways of supporting the students' listening were pointed out. One method is previewing questions before doing the listening activity. That way the students are more aware of what they are going to hear and can change their listening strategies if necessary. It is said that previewing questions can improve the understanding of the listened text. Another way of supporting is repetitive listening. Listening more than once can have a great impact on the students' successful listening. Repetitive listening can be done in two ways - repeating the text as a whole or listening to certain parts of the recording where the students can gather information from.

Funk and Funk (1989) have created guidelines for developing listening skills. In the guidelines they point out four suggestions to create good listeners. Firstly, they advise to provide a purpose for listening, which means that students have to be made aware of what is expected of them. It can be, for example, listening for the main idea, finding certain information, differentiating facts from fiction, and so on. Secondly, the stage for listening should be set, in other words, students should be prepared for listening and the atmosphere should be suitable for listening. Distracting factors should be eliminated, previous

activities should be ended and interesting introductory activities should be used. Thirdly, follow-up activities should be provided. It means that immediately after listening, the students are enabled to use their gathered information and knowledge to check comprehension, right the inaccurate concepts and clarify questionable learning. Fourthly, positive listening habits should be encouraged by using the right methodology. It essentially means that the time that teachers spend on listening has to be well proportioned and proven to be effective. When students spend too much time on listening, the result may not be effective and even have negative effects on the students' attitude towards listening.

1.3.1. Problems of teaching listening

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) point out that even though students are taught how to prepare for oral presentations, teaching how to deal with listening tasks has been left on the backburner. When listening, the emphasis is often on the outcome not the process, which makes students anxious to do the tasks. Richards (2011) explains that students are not taught how to listen but are expected to understand the text they hear and just do the tasks. Bailey (2020) talks about another problem that can occur in listening lessons. The materials used do not have the characteristics of spoken language. The speech is smooth, without pauses and hesitations, whereas real life spoken communication has overlaps, reduced forms, hesitation pauses and so on. That results in the students not engaging with actual spoken language they might encounter in the real world. Richards (2011) adds that students are taught dictionary forms of words and it is difficult for them to understand spoken language where the words might be said differently.

1.3.2. Learning outside of the language classroom

Learning a language takes place everywhere. Field (2008) explains that after school, learners often engage with the foreign language they are learning through reading and with

the spoken version of the language through listening. Listening is considered more important, since it contributes to improving the learners' speaking skills, too. Bailey (2020) elaborates that one learns a language when listening to music or news, watching films and television programmes. Listening to songs can be used as a method in language classrooms but many of us listen to music in our free time. From the listened songs one learns new vocabulary and hears the correct pronunciation of words (provided the song is performed by a native speaker). While watching a film, students also have to listen to it, so it becomes a form of multimodal processing. If subtitles in the learners' mother tongue are available when watching a film, the understanding might be easier, especially for lower proficiency students.

This MA thesis' author's own experience is that students nowadays engage with English more often via computer games and Youtube videos. They still read news or watch films in English but most of the exposure to the language comes through their smartphones or computers. Listening is the first and the most inadvertent method of learning a language but for some reason, teaching it can be difficult.

1.3.3. Audio input

When choosing the audio input for language lessons, it is important that it suits the students' needs and the topic at hand. According to Field (2008), before choosing the audio input, one must think of the following ideas: (1) the texts should be relevant to the students' needs and related to the course syllabus; (2) the topic should be interesting for the listener; (3) the content of the text should be culturally appropriate; (4) the linguistic demands of the text should be appropriate to the students' language level; (5) the density and complexity of the ideas should be cognitively demanding enough, neither too easy nor too difficult; (6) the quality of the recording should be as high as possible; (7) the passage should be of suitable length; (8) the text should be usable for a range of different listening

tasks. Bailey (2020) elaborates that there are at least four different types of audio materials that can be used in listening lessons: it is possible to use recordings that accompany textbooks; recordings that are self-made by students or teachers; authentic recordings taken from the Internet (films, podcasts, songs, radio, television broadcasts, etc.); authentic materials that have been made suitable for the students' levels by the teacher. Rost (2011) adds that language input should have emphasis on the current needs of the learner and present language as it is used in the real world, which means involving the features of natural speech (intonation, rhythm, speed, etc).

1.3.4 Types of listening

There are multiple ways to identify listening types. Listening can be classified by the purpose of listening, the text that learners listen to, or by the role that the listener has (Nunan 1998). Richards (2005) adds that listening can mean generally two things - listening as comprehension and listening as acquisition. The first means that learners get to meaning through listening and they focus more on the message than the form. The latter means that learners' strongest emphasis while listening is on the development of noticing different aspects of language.

The planning of listening lessons should be done with different phases of the lessons kept in mind. The phases of listening lessons are ***pre-listening***, ***while listening*** and ***post-listening***. In the pre-listening phase, the vocabulary relevant to the listening activity is presented to students or the structure of the activity is introduced. The while listening phase is the actual listening. The post-listening phase consists of answering comprehension questions about the listened text (Field 2009; Bailey 2020).

There are different types of listening, depending on the purpose of the listening task. One can listen for general information, specific knowledge or just for entertainment. Based on Bailey (2020), there are four types of listening. Firstly, there is ***intensive listening***, which

essentially means listening attentively for specific linguistic elements, such as words and phonemes. Secondly, *selective listening*, which enables students to listen with a specific focus, for example focus on numbers, directions, places, and so on. For guiding the students in selective listening, pre-listening activities are vital. The third listening type is *extensive listening*, which involves listening for a longer time period and trying to focus on more general meaning, comprehension building and critical thinking. Lastly, *autonomous listening* is the type of listening where students get to decide what they listen to and how they respond. Brown (2000) suggests three more types of listening: reactive, responsive, and interactive. *Reactive listening*, which allows the learners to pay more attention to pronunciation. *Responsive listening* is a type often used in language classes because through that immediate responses can be elicited. *Interactive listening* is a type that combines selective, intensive, extensive, reactive and responsive listening types.

Gu (2018) adds two more types to categorise listening by. These are *transactional* and *interactional listening*. The former is described as listening for the content of the message, which involves one-way listening (announcements, lectures, broadcasts, etc). The purpose is to understand the message and content. The latter connects listening to social relations and is a two-way listening. With this type of listening, interpersonal conversations are used to establish and maintain social relationships and to negotiate meaning.

Funk and Funk (1989) differentiate between exposures to different experiences when listening. One of the experiences is *listening for appreciation*, during which the students are expected to listen to music, poetry or humorous stories. The other experience of listening is *listening for information*, which means that students have to listen to different reports, announcements, films, and so on. In addition students can be expected to apply critical analysis or creative elaboration. The first means that students have to “explain speaker's purpose, determine bias, or separate fact from fiction” (Funk & Funk 1989:663),

when listening. The latter suggests that storytelling, choral reading or creative writing should be used when listening.

1.3.5. Types of listening tasks

According to Rost (2002) listening tasks can be either one-way or two-way. One-way listening tasks get input only from external sources and the learner has to do something with the given information (write down vocabulary or key ideas). In a two-way listening task, some of the information comes from an external source (a partner) and the learner has to process the information and produce an output for the partner in order to complete a collaborative task.

As mentioned before, there are types of listening that identify the part of the listening lesson. These were: pre-listening, while listening and post-listening. Rost (2002) explains that pre-listening tasks can include teaching vocabulary, aspects of grammar, pronunciation or main ideas before doing the main listening task. The while listening tasks are the most difficult ones for teachers to compile because they have to have minimal reading and writing in order to manage doing everything while listening. The post-listening tasks are considered to be the most important because during that the students form mental representations and build motivation to listen to the recording more than once. Post-listening tasks can consist of reading, writing, speaking and interaction (comparing notes, creating a summary with a partner, etc).

Rost (2011) also lists several types of intensive listening activities. These include dictation, a traditional testing procedure, which has language learning value as well; elicited repetition, which is used for assessment, research, and teaching; finding particular words; and locating errors.

1.4. Creating materials

One of the main reasons EFL teachers create materials themselves is that the commonly used study materials are generic and do not engage the learners with any specific context. The materials are often not made for one type or group of learners and do not deal with topics that learners might actually face in real life situations. Teacher created materials are rather more personalised and address the individual needs of language learners (Howard & Major 2005).

According to Howard and Major (2005) the first aspect teachers should pay attention to when creating materials is the learner. Teachers must know their students' skills, interests, motivation, and needs. Another aspect to bear in mind is the fact that materials have to be in accordance with the curriculum. It is vital that the aims and outcomes stated in the curriculum are the aspects that created materials guide the students towards. Context is something that has to be thought of, since different groups of learners need an emphasis on different aspects of a language. It might be also useful to think about what kind of resources teachers have in their classrooms, to make sure that the created materials can be used effectively.

The materials should be visually attractive and unambiguous (Tomlinson 2011). They should contain topics and themes that are relevant to the students and based on situations that the students might face in real life. The created materials should enable the students to understand and communicate in the target language in an authentic way (Howard & Major 2005). In accordance with Tomlinson (2012), study materials should enable the students to use language authentically, as it is used in real life situations; make students more interested in the topic; assist the students to understand the function of the aspect of the target language at hand; and provide opportunities to measure and assess the results. Tomlinson (2013) also adds that the input the students use should give them an idea

of how the language is actually used. Richards (2006) explains further that study materials should motivate the students to learn. Strategies of motivation can be connected to creating study materials. One of the motivating strategies is creating and maintaining interest, which can be done by creating materials that have relevant and modern topics. Another motivating strategy is promoting success, which can be done by giving students enough preparation time and assistance during the study process. By including diverse tasks in the materials, the fun of learning can be enhanced.

Howard and Major (2005) list ten guidelines for creating English learning materials:

- 1) English teaching materials should be contextualised (based on curriculum, learners' experiences, realities and first languages);
- 2) The materials should be generative in terms of language and stimulate interaction (should create situations that can happen in real life);
- 3) Students should be encouraged by the materials to develop their learning skills;
- 4) The materials should put emphasis on both form and function;
- 5) The materials should enable the students to use language integratedly (improving all language skills - reading, writing, listening and speaking);
- 6) The materials should be authentic (using real unscripted language; natural interactions and visual texts)
- 7) The tasks of created materials should be connected and form a whole (stating the outcomes clearly will result in coherent materials);
- 8) The materials should be attractive - physical attractiveness (font, pictures, colours); user-friendliness (enough space to write and enough time between recordings to write); durability (are the materials meant to be used more than once or by more than one student); reproducing ability (if pages are colourful, will they be user-friendly when printed in black and white);

- 9) The instructions should be appropriate (clear and easy to understand based on the learners' language levels);
- 10) The materials should be flexible (allowing students and teachers to make choices and not having only one correct answer but offering a number of inputs).

2. Empirical study

Creating and piloting the listening material

2.1. Creating the listening materials

For this Master's thesis, a set of listening tasks was created (Appendix 1). The aim of the created set of listening tasks is to give year 9 students the opportunity to improve their listening skills using materials that have diverse tasks and real-life imitating recordings with multiple varieties of English used. The process of creating the material consisted of six steps that are described below:

Step 1: Thinking of the target group of the listening materials. Year 9 students were chosen due to the fact that they need to practise listening if they take English as their examination of choice. Year 9 students were also selected because they have been studying English for several years, they have presumably acquired the basic knowledge of the language, and year 9 is mainly spent on revising what they have already learnt. In the revising process it is handy to use materials that they are not familiar with to prepare them for their further studies and enable them to engage with the language out of their comfort zone. Due to that, the 9th graders are, in my opinion, the target group that can benefit the most from a set of additional materials.

My experience with the study materials that are most commonly used in Estonia, the I Love English series (Kurm & Soolepp 2018), is that they have rather monotonous listening exercises. Students have to fill in gaps, answer questions or finish sentences, i.e. tasks that improve the students' listening skills only to some extent. In this created material, there are also gap filling tasks and students are requested to answer questions but there are differences within the sections that the students have to fill in. For example, in the study materials they have to write one to three words into the gap based on the recording. In the created materials, they have to fill in the gaps of a conversation, which

means that simultaneously with the gap filling they also improve their vocabulary. My colleagues have had experiences in doing listening tasks with gap filling, but discussing the topic afterwards has revealed that the students have not known what the task was about. The created materials try to make the students think about what they are listening to. Diversity is needed when developing any of the language skills. That is why it was decided to create a set of listening tasks for those who could benefit from the materials the most, bearing in mind that year 9 students are set to start studying at a higher level school.

Step 2: Thinking of the topics presented in the listening tasks. When choosing the topics for the listening tasks, it was important to have topics that are relevant to the students and also connected to real life. Howard and Major (2015) name connection to real life as an important characteristic of study materials (see chapter 1.4) as well. The choice of the topics also depended on whether the topics had videos or sound bites available on the Internet. The topics that were chosen in the end were the following: at the doctor's, client-customer communication, airport announcements, introducing oneself, asking and giving directions, ordering at a restaurant, booking a hotel, job interview, and weather forecast.

Step 3: Finding audio materials for the listening tasks. The audio recordings were searched for on the Internet. The material was searched based on the topics that were thought of in the previous step. The videos and sound bites were collected into one document and the best ones were chosen to serve as the basis for the listening tasks. The larger number (8) of appropriate recordings were found on Youtube (Youtube n.d.) and two were found on an online platform called Audio Lingua (Audio Lingua...n.d.). When searching for audio recordings, there were a number of features that were taken into account. Firstly, the audios should be in more than one variety of English, so the students engage with multiple accents. Based on the conversations I have had with the teachers who

teach 9th graders, it can be said that study materials often have listening tasks in “perfect British English” and not in a way that real spoken language is used, i.e. with background noises, etc. Authenticity was also emphasised as a vital part of study materials by Howard and Major (2015) (see chapter 1.4). Another aspect that came out in the conversations was that the tasks should not be based on a text from a book or a dialogue but the students should be expected to get all the information from the recordings. Another aspect was to find level-appropriate material, which was chosen based on the use of vocabulary, the speed of the speech and the difficulty of grammar structures.

The appropriateness of the recordings and tasks was verified by comparing them to the listening tasks and reading texts in the *I Love English 7* (Kurm & Soolepp 2018) study materials, which is meant for year 9. It was also important to make sure that the sound quality was good enough for the students to understand. To find out to what extent the levels match in the study materials and the recordings that were chosen for creating the additional material, the transcripts of the study material’s listening exercises were analysed. The main things that were compared were grammatical structures and vocabulary. It was important that the grammatical structures and vocabulary in the created materials were familiar to the students. According to Howard and Major (2015), created study materials should be contextualised, which can be done by following the curriculum (see chapter 1.4). So, the National Curriculum’s appendix 8 (Põhikooli Riiklik Õppekava 2011) about foreign languages was also consulted, which states that by the end of basic school, the students should be able to understand different announcements, for example at an airport. That is why a task involving an airport announcement was created. A basic school graduate is also expected to understand different kinds of monologues on various aspects of everyday life when the tempo is average and the accent easily understandable.

Step 4: Creating listening tasks for the chosen audio material. In this step, the hardest part was to think of the task type that would suit the audio the best. To get ideas, the descriptions of IELTS (The 10 types of...n.d.) task types were consulted because the proficiency test also includes diverse tasks. The tasks that were created first were the ones that the author had a clear idea about and already knew what kind of task would suit the particular listening situation best (e.g. ordering at a restaurant and job interview). The main aim was to have as diverse tasks as possible. The author did not want any repetition in the task types and tried to think of a different task type for each topic. According to Howard and Major (2015), the study materials should be flexible, which means that the students should be expected to suggest answers independently instead of simply choosing from given answers. The author of this thesis bore that in mind and tried to create tasks that had open questions which the students can answer fully themselves. The tasks were also created with the purpose of offering the students the chance to use language integratedly, which was also pointed out in the Howard and Major (2015) guidelines (see Chapter 1.4). Not all the language skills were represented in the tasks but, for example, there were some writing tasks that accompanied the main listening tasks. After doing the listening tasks, teachers can decide for themselves whether they would like to add a speaking task as well, for example in the form of discussing the topic that the listening task was about. The additional speaking tasks were not added to the created materials to avoid making the tasks too long for the students.

An important aspect of creating the tasks was to draw up instructions that were not too long yet informative enough. Good instructions should be unambiguously understandable and leave the students with no questions. It is useful to add examples, so that even if the instruction is somewhat confusing, the students can do the task based on

the examples. Howard and Major (2015) elaborate that when forming instructions, the level appropriateness should be considered as well (see Chapter 1.4).

Step 5: Creating an answer key and list of audio material for the teachers. Forming the answer key was an important element of coming up with a comprehensive material. Its purpose is to make using the material easier for the teachers, since they do not have to figure out the answers themselves and can just consult the answer key. In addition, having all the audio material in one list makes the material more user-friendly and it is easier to find the right recording if they are listed in the same order as the tasks.

Step 6: Creating the illustrations. According to Howard and Major (2015), study materials should be physically attractive and user-friendly, durable and reproducible (see Chapter 1.4). To follow that guideline, illustrations were added to the tasks. They were done by hand on pieces of paper and then scanned into the computer. The listening tasks were sent to the illustrators and the topics were described. The author explained what kind of illustrations would be appropriate in certain places, and the illustrators followed the instructions. The illustrations were made in black and white, since most teachers use black and white printouts. The layout of the pages was created so that students had enough space to write, while no space was used ineffectively. Considering the different types of students' handwriting (height, length, width) enables the material creators to offer students a feeling of success while doing the tasks, no matter what their handwriting is like.

2.2. Participants

The participants giving feedback to the created material were three basic school teachers. The participants were chosen because they were approachable, known to the author, and agreed to take part in piloting the listening tasks. Two of the teachers are teachers in a basic school in Jõgevamaa and the other two in Tartumaa. They all teach year 9 students and

showed an interest in trying out the listening material. The teachers were between 23 and 30 years of age. All of the participants were women. The schools where they teach have around 700 students. In addition, the participants were chosen because the author had previously had conversations with them regarding the gaps that the commonly used study materials have, and it was known to the author that they would be interested in trying out different additional materials. The opinions of the chosen teachers are relevant because they have been teaching 9th graders for years and know what their biggest difficulties in English language learning are, including difficulties in preparing for or taking the English examination.

The interviews were voluntary and the participants were free to end or not participate in the interviews. Their confidentiality was guaranteed by using pseudonyms, instead of their real names (Hea teadustava 2020).

2.3. Data collection

The data was collected with semi-structured interviews. Data collection was done using interviews because interviews are flexible, answer order can be controlled, and the return rate is high (Alshenqeeti 2014). Semi-structured interviews were used because they are more free. There is an outline and questions prepared but the interviewer can ask additional questions if the answer is not as detailed or informative as needed. Semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to go more in depth into the topic (Adhabi & Anozie 2017). In addition, Lepik *et al* (2014) explain that conducting semi-structured interviews with a small sample group helps the researcher get more detailed opinions and attitudes towards the topic.

To collect data, one interview was conducted with each of the interviewees. The interviews were in English. The questions were the same in all interviews and were asked

in the same order. There were 25 questions in total, which were divided into six categories: (1) General feedback on the created material; (2) Feedback on the created tasks; (3) Feedback on the topics; (4) Feedback on the physical appearance and user-friendliness; (5) Characteristics of good listening tasks; (6) Comments and suggestions for improvement (Appendix 2). Interview questions were formed bearing in mind the research questions: (1) How do teachers evaluate the created listening tasks? (2) What suggestions for improvement do the teachers make?

Before the interviews, the questions were sent to the teachers, so they could familiarise themselves with them, allowing for less time-consuming and more effective interviews. All interviews were carried out by physically meeting with the interviewees and recording the conversation with a mobile phone recorder. The interviews went smoothly, no technological problems occurred, and the interviewees answered all of the questions.

2.4. Data analysis

The interviews were transcribed using an online transcription platform called Happy Scribe (Happy Scribe n.d.). The recording is uploaded to the platform and the programme creates the transcription of the recording in minutes. The correctness of the transcription was checked by reading the text while listening to the interview again. The results were very good: the transcript did not have any mistakes in it. The first interview was 16 minutes long, the second was 18 minutes long, and the third one was 15 minutes long. The length of the transcript of the first interview was 1892 words; the length of the second one was 2033 words, and the length of the third transcript was 1669 words. The interview transcripts were analysed in a programme called QCAmap (Mayring 2000). The programme allows the researcher to highlight and group units based on the research

questions and interview questions. Answers for the research questions were found by analysing the participants' responses to the interview questions; from the answers, relevant and meaningful parts were picked out. Qualitative and inductive content analysis was used to analyse the interviews. It means that the text was analysed by searching for meaningful units, such as sentences, phrases or words, which were grouped into more general groups, using suitable codes for them (usually a phrase that characterises all of the units), and dividing them into subcategories (Kalmus, Masso & Linno 2015).

The interviews were analysed in one section. Both research questions (*How do teachers evaluate the created listening tasks?*) (*What suggestions for improvement do the teachers make?*) were focused on and analysed under the same section to make the process of analysing more effective.

Firstly, more detailed codes were created for the interviews separately. The codes of the three interviews can have a similar meaning but are worded differently. Then the detailed codes from all the interviews were divided into more general subcategories. After coding the interviews, tables were made to show the change of the meaningful units (Table 1). For example, the code *the task types were diverse and different from the types usually used for preparing for the examination* was formed from the following interviewee's answer (the name is a pseudonym):

I really like the types because when you are preparing for the English exam, usually the listening tasks are all the same type, kind of. I mean, there are four different types, but usually when you practise you go through all of the same types and this time you could write a bit about yourself or in general find, I don't know, directions, whatever filled in the CV. So I really like that all the tasks were different. (Ingrid)

The codes were sub-categorised based on the similarity of meaning (Table 1). During the analysis 64 codes were formed, which were divided into 19 subcategories, which were divided into 5 main categories. In the analysis of the first research question, 11

subcategories and 3 main categories were formed. In the analysis of the second research question 6 subcategories and 2 main categories were formed.

<i>Created codes</i>	<i>subcategory</i>
the varying difficulty of the tasks; the task types were diverse and different from the types usually used for preparing for the examination; the level of the tasks was suitable	diversity of the tasks
the topics were diverse and relevant; there were multiple topics presented that the students seemed to be interested in	diversity of the topics

Table 1. Example of the sub-categorisation of codes.

The reliability of the data analysis was ensured by using a co-encoder who would analyse one of the interviews. The results of the analyses of the co-encoder and the author were compared and the wording of codes and subcategories were changed to align the analyses. The categories of the author and co-encoder were rather similar, so there was a small number of changes that needed to be made.

2.5. Results

The purpose of this Master thesis was to create and pilot a set of additional listening tasks for year 9 students. The created tasks consisted of ten different tasks. Different varieties of English were used in the chosen sound recordings (see Appendix 2). The research questions that were answered with the data collection and analysis were: (1) *How do teachers evaluate the created listening tasks?* (2) *What suggestions for improvement do the teachers make?* The results of the data analysis are presented as categories that were formed in connection to the two research questions. In addition to the categories and

subcategories, quotes from the interviews are used to illustrate the feedback given by the participants. Irrelevant parts of the quotes are replaced with (...). The names used with the quotes are pseudonyms.

2.5.1. Teachers' evaluation of the created tasks

The first research question was *How do teachers evaluate the created listening tasks?*

There were three main categories formed during the data analysis and coding process: diversity of the material; suitability of structure, level and user-friendliness; suitable level of contextualisation (relevancy and connection to the curriculum) (see Table 2).

<i>Subcategories</i>	<i>Main categories</i>
diverse topics; diverse recordings (accents, locations); diverse tasks (difficulty, type, real life situations)	diversity of the material
the material is (not) flexible; suitable instructions; positive sides of the instructions; appropriateness of the material (level, age, cohesion); the wholeness of the material; the logicity of the task order; suitable structure of the material; suitable illustrations	suitability of structure, level and user-friendliness
relevancy of the material; connection to the curriculum	suitable level of contextualisation
usefulness of the material	usefulness of the material

Table 2. Categorisation of the first research question.

2.5.1.1. Diversity of the material

The first main category, **diversity of the material**, was formed from three subcategories (see Table 2). In the first subcategory, *diverse topics*, the teachers pointed out that in the listening materials, the topics were diverse. It was said that the topics presented were interesting for the students and varied from ordering at a restaurant to going to the doctor's.

The second subcategory, *diverse recordings*, was formed because all of the participants thought that an important aspect of the created materials was that recordings of native speakers were used, especially with different varieties and accents of English used. In addition, it was said that using recordings with background noises makes the listening more challenging for students but in a good way.

Thirdly, the subcategory, *diverse tasks*, covers different types of diversity. The aspect of diverse task types, diverse difficulty level of the tasks and diverse real-life imitating situations were brought out.

2.5.1.2. Suitability of structure, level and user-friendliness

The second main category, **suitability of structure, level and user-friendliness**, was formed from eight subcategories. *The material is (not) flexible*, divided the participants into two groups. One of the participants said that the material was flexible because it can be used as a whole but also as separate tasks in addition to the used study materials.

And I really like that you don't have to use all of them continuously. You can just pick one and do it as an introductory task. And you can even choose a theme like travelling, and then use the airport one. (...) they're very flexible. (Ingrid)

On the other hand, two of the participants said that the material was not flexible because it had a clear and concrete structure and in most cases, there was one correct answer, which would not enable the students to think of the answers fully themselves. One of them did not think that the material being inflexible was necessarily a negative thing.

I wouldn't consider these given exercises flexible. Most of them had a clear structure and only one correct answer. (Liina) Well, there are still certain correct answers, but that's how it should be in my opinion. (Maria)

The second and third subcategory, *suitable instructions* and *positive sides of the instructions*, provided an evaluation by the participants that most of the instructions were

easily understandable and useful. As a positive side, it was mentioned that having detailed descriptions made understanding and following the tasks easier.

Appropriateness of the material (level, age, cohesion), suitable structure of the material and *the logicity of the task order* summarised the participants' feedback on the general suitability of the created materials. The participants elaborated that the material was level- and age-appropriate, which means that the topics were interesting and relevant for the students. The material was cohesive and had varied tasks that put emphasis on both form and function. The overall structure of the created material was evaluated to be suitable; for example the tasks were said to be in a logical order (from easier to more difficult), which made the material user-friendly. Another aspect of the user-friendliness of the material was the fact that in general the students had enough space to write. There were some tasks that had a bit too much space and tasks that had too little space.

I think that the tasks were in order from easy to difficult, so that made it easy to follow. It's good that the tasks, recordings and answers are all in the same file. Everything is easily accessible. (Liina)

Furthermore, the illustrations were evaluated to be appropriate and illustrative, making the use of the materials more fun, which formed the subcategory of *suitable illustrations*.

Subcategory *the wholeness of the material* characterises the created material as a whole: it was easy to use the material because everything (tasks, recordings, answer key) was in the same file. Under this subcategory the material was also described as having a clear structure and similarly styled tasks. Additionally, it was pointed out that the material could be used as a whole but also as separate tasks next to study materials.

2.5.1.3. Suitable level of contextualisation

The third main category, **suitable level of contextualisation**, was formed to summarise two subcategories, *relevancy of the material* and *connection to the curriculum*. The first

outlines the participants' feedback, that the created tasks are connected to real life, are relevant for the students, and are based on their experiences. The latter concludes that the created materials are connected to the curriculum due to the fact that the topics presented in the listening material are also mentioned in the curriculum.

I believe the tasks' context was connected to the curriculum and learner's experiences. It had real life based situations. Most tasks mimicked real life situations and used phrases and structures used in such situations. (Liina)

2.5.1.4. Usefulness of the material

The fourth main category under the first research question is **usefulness of the material**. The category was formed from a subcategory with the same name. The category encapsulates the useful sides of the created material. The main aspects that were pointed out were that the material was useful for revising for the English examination and it enabled the students to engage with real-life imitating situations. The materials were evaluated to fill a void in the more commonly used study materials in Estonia. One of the participants said the material filled a void in certain materials but was definitely useful as additional material. The voids that the created material fills are for example, lack of variation of English accents used (the created material includes several varieties of English), irrelevance of topics (the topics covered by the created material are more relevant), and insufficient variety of task types (the created material expects the students not only to fill in gaps but to do different tasks). In addition, one of the strengths of the recordings used in the created material is having real life background noises.

I think it definitely depends on the used materials, but it is always good to have some extra exercises for further practice. (Liina)

I think commonly used study materials only allow the students to write either a letter or maximum three words, but this study set allowed them to express more. (...) I think it allowed them to practise other skills as well. (Ingrid)

2.5.2. Suggestions for improvement

The second research question was: What *suggestions for improvement do the teachers make?* In the analysis process two main categories were formed from four subcategories (see Table 3). The main categories were *suggestions for the topics and recordings* and *suggestions for tasks and instructions*.

<i>Subcategories</i>	<i>Main categories</i>
suggestions for topics; suggestions for recordings	suggestions for topics and recordings
suggestions for tasks; suggestions for instructions	suggestions for tasks and instructions

Table 3. Categorisation of the second research question.

2.5.2.1. Suggestions for topics and recordings

The first main category that was formed for the second research question was **suggestions for topics and recordings**. It was formed from two subcategories: suggestions *for topics* and *suggestions for recordings*.

The first subcategory summarises that one of the participants suggested adding a topic that was related to school. None of the participants wanted to change or replace the presented topics since they were evaluated suitable for year 9 students.

The second subcategory, *suggestions for recordings*, was formed because although the participants evaluated the recordings to be suitable in general, there were a few changes they would make. It was suggested to use audio recordings that were better to use in classrooms because in some of them, the speech was not as clear as when listening to it with headphones. In addition it was mentioned that it would be even more comfortable and easy to use if the recordings were collected into a Youtube playlist, for example, so that the recordings would not be on different sites or links.

To use audio which is suitable for a classroom, some tasks might have been fine to listen with headphones, but difficult to listen out loud. (Liina)

Here you could think about how to get these recordings in one place so that it would be more convenient to use. (Maria)

2.5.2.2. Suggestions for tasks and instructions

The second main category under the second research question was **suggestions for tasks and instructions**. The category was formed from two subcategories.

Suggestions for tasks was formed because the participants had suggestions for the tasks that were used. It was suggested to remove the map task (Task 1) (see Appendix 2) because it was evaluated to be not so common anymore.

(...) And to remove the map exercise because using maps is not that common anymore (perhaps replace it with another directions exercise because following directions is still necessary). (Liina)

On the other hand it was elaborated that the topic should still be presented in the material. Additionally, it was suggested to add a note taking space in task 2 (see Appendix 2), so that the students could take notes while listening.

The second subcategory, *suggestions for instructions*, includes all suggestions that were made for the instructions of the tasks. The suggestions varied. One of the participants suggested making the instructions shorter, so that academically less capable students were able to understand the instructions better. Another participant suggested the opposite by saying that some of the instructions could have been more specific and detailed. One of the participants evaluated the instructions to be suitable but suggested elaborating in the answer key that in some tasks it was okay to have multiple answers because, for example, some of the names were not very clearly pronounced in the recordings.

To conclude, it can be said that the participants evaluated the listening material to be suitable for year 9 students in all of the aspects (topics, recordings, tasks, user-friendliness, wholeness, usefulness). There were suggestions made for different parts

of the material, which will be taken into account and used in the near future to make the listening material more suitable and useful.

2.6. Discussion of results

According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), listening has been on the backburner of language learning, and when listening is done, it is mostly outcome oriented, not process oriented. Furthermore, Field (2009) stresses that developing listening skills is vital since it improves the learners' own spoken language more.

Taking the above into account, the author of this thesis created the material to enable the students to engage with listening materials that present relevant topics and different varieties of English, and through that fill a void in the listening tasks of the most commonly used English study materials in Estonia. Therefore, the aim of this thesis was to create and pilot additional listening material for year 9 students. To ascertain the suitability of the created material, two research questions were formed: (1) *How do teachers evaluate the created listening tasks?* (2) *What suggestions for improvement do the teachers make?*

In general, the research participants evaluated the material to be suitable for year 9 students. The created material was evaluated to be in accordance with the curriculum and the tasks to be about topics that students were interested in. Howard and Major (2005) suggest that in addition to being in accordance with the curriculum, additional created materials should also be related to the students' interests and skills. For example, in the National Curriculum's appendix 8 (Põhikooli Riiklik Õppekava 2011), it is stated that at the end of basic school, students should be able to understand different announcements, for example an airport announcement. A task about an airport announcement was included in the created materials.

Similarly to Howard and Major (2005) who claim that study materials should be generative in terms of language and stimulate interaction that can happen in real life, the topics chosen for the listening material were assessed to be interesting, relevant for the students, and related to real life situations. Richards (2006) also describes using relevant and modern topics in study materials as a way of motivating students to learn.

It was said in the interviews that the created materials enabled the students to do more in the tasks than just filling gaps with 1-3 words. Howard and Major (2005) also put emphasis on the fact that study material should enable the students to use language integratedly, which essentially means improving all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). In the created material there were tasks where students were expected to write about themselves on a certain topic, correct the sentences that were incorrect and write them out, and so on.

The author of this thesis agrees with Howard and Major (2005) that created materials should be user-friendly, cohesive, and physically attractive. The materials created in this thesis were evaluated to be user-friendly, having enough space to write, easily accessible, and cohesive, with all the parts of the material (tasks, recordings, answer key) in one file. In addition to Howard and Major (2005), Tomlinson (2012) also emphasises the importance of the physical attractiveness of the material. The physical attractiveness was achieved with a number of topic-related illustrations. Understandable and appropriate instructions make created materials user-friendly as well (Howard & Major 2005). The participants evaluated the instructions of the created tasks to be generally appropriate but in some cases shorter or longer instructions were suggested.

The participants said it was vital to have diverse recordings for listening tasks, so that students would be able to engage with different varieties of English (e.g. American, British, Australian). The diversity of audio input is also highlighted by Bailey (2020), who

elaborates that there are a number of different types of audio materials that can be used. One of them is recordings taken from the Internet. In this listening material, all of the recordings were found online, mainly from Youtube (Youtube n.d.) but also from Audio Lingua (Audio Lingua...n.d.). In addition, Field (2008) explains that when choosing audio input for listening tasks, one should find level-appropriate recordings that are in suitable length and have as high quality as possible. In the created material, the participants evaluated the recordings to be suitable, with only one having poorer quality than is suitable for a classroom.

2.7. Conclusion

Listening is an important part of language learning. Unfortunately, it has been secondary to other language skills (reading, writing, speaking), having less emphasis put on it. The same is claimed by Vandergrift and Goh (2012) who described listening as being on the backburner of language learning but also as outcome, not process-oriented, as it should be. In addition, it was said that developing listening skills is vital in language learning because it improves the learners' speaking skills more and enables the emergence of other language skills.

Thus, the aim of this thesis was to create and pilot additional listening material for year 9 students. The grounds for creating additional listening material was the desire to offer students the opportunity to engage with listening materials that present relevant topics, different varieties of English, and through that fill a void in the listening tasks of the most commonly used English study materials in Estonia. Two research questions were formed for the empirical study: (1) *How do teachers evaluate the created listening tasks?* (2) *What suggestions for improvement do the teachers make?*

The term “listening skills” is defined differently by different scholars. Brown (2011) defines listening as putting effort into making sense of aural input. On the other hand, Graham and Santos (2012) describe listening skill as a competency that native speakers already have but non-native speakers need to obtain. To be able to express oneself orally or in written form, language skills must be developed.

Bearing the aim of this thesis in mind, the author created a set of additional listening tasks for year 9 students (see Appendix 2). The creation consisted of 6 steps: (1) thinking of the target group of the listening materials; (2) thinking of the topics presented in the listening tasks; (3) finding audio materials for the listening tasks; (4) creating listening tasks for the chosen audio material; (5) creating answer key and list of audio material for the teachers; (6) creating the illustrations (see Chapter 2.1).

For the purpose of answering the research questions, feedback was collected through three semi-structured interviews with teachers of English who teach year 9 students. The interviews were analysed using qualitative and inductive content analysis, which combines searching for meaningful units (sentences, phrases, words), grouping the meaningful units into more general subcategories and main categories (see Table 1:30). The results were presented by explaining and describing the subcategories and main categories that were formed in the analysis process. Additionally, quotes from the interviews were added to illustrate the results (see Chapter 2.5).

The piloting of the additional listening material showed that the material was suitable for year 9 students. The chosen topics were evaluated to be appropriate for the target group, it was elaborated by the participants that the topics were interesting and relevant for the students. The importance of diverse recordings was also mentioned, the participants appreciated the fact that the created material used recordings with a number of varieties of English, which is useful for students because in real life situations they are

exposed to more than just standard British English. The task types used in the created material were evaluated to be suitable for the target group. The participants approved of the diversity of task types, claiming the material to be interesting for the students and for the teachers as well. The coherence and cohesiveness of the created material was also emphasised, specifying that the fact that all parts of the material were in one place, made it user-friendly.

Although the material was generally evaluated to be suitable for year 9 students, a number of suggestions were made to improve the listening material. The participants suggested changing the length of the instructions, replacing one of the tasks with a more modern one, and creating a playlist of the recordings, so that they would be available in one place, not via different links on the Internet.

To sum up, the created material was evaluated to be suitable for year 9 students. The participants would use the material again and would recommend it to other teachers as well, emphasising the usefulness of the material. Generalisations cannot be made, since the number of participants was small. On the other hand, through semi-structured interviews, more detailed feedback was collected. In the future, in addition to following up on the suggestions made by the participants, the material could be supplemented with other topics and tasks that are relevant for the learners and could be linked to topics in the study materials used at schools.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The CEFR self-assessment grid

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
W R I T I N G	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate needs. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

Appendix 2. Set of listening tasks

Additional listening tasks *9th grade*



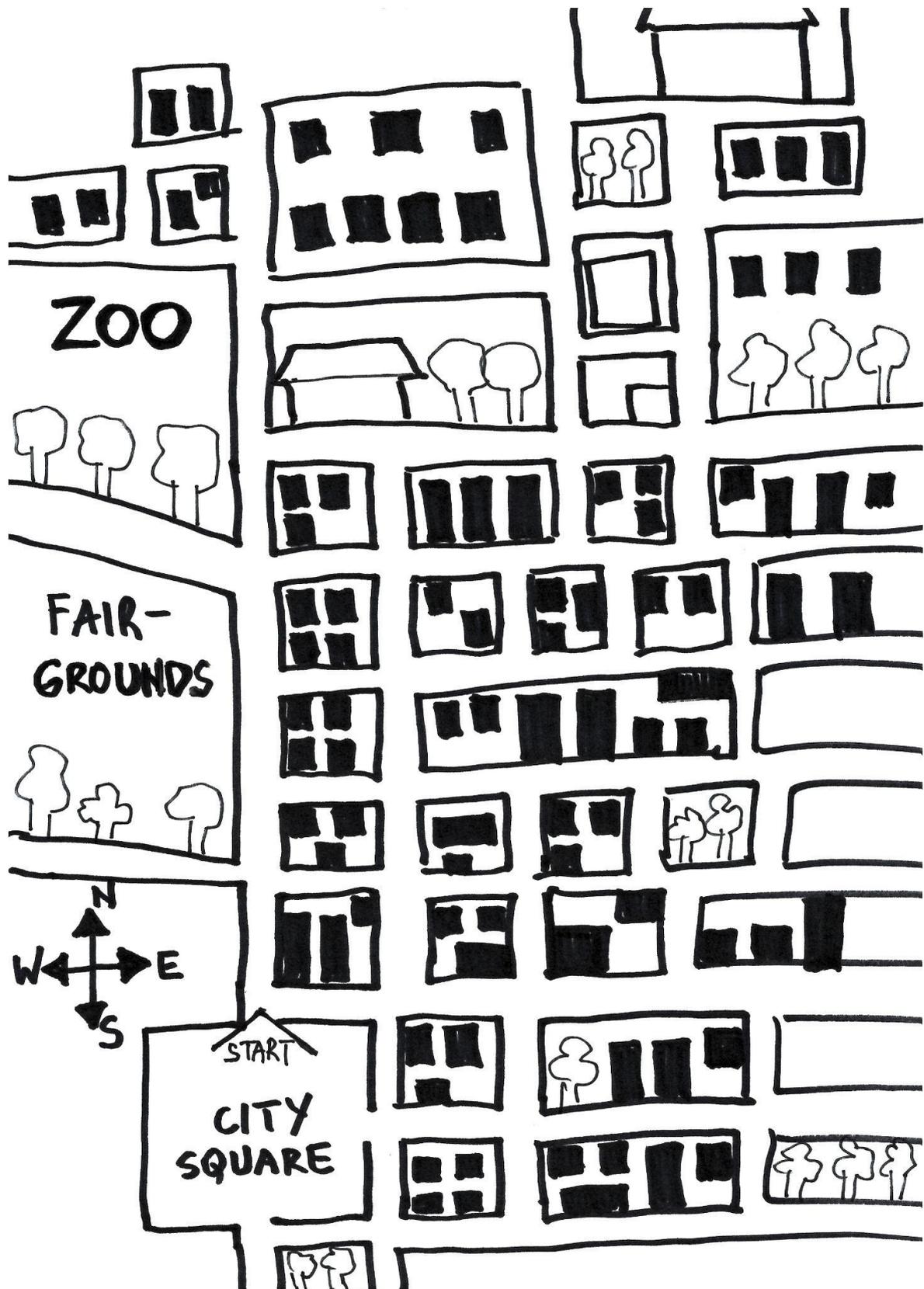
Author: Sofia Valk
Illustrations: Heinz Valk and Madli Valk

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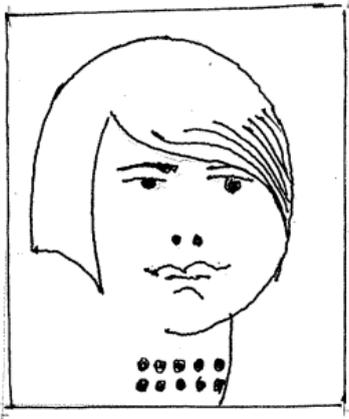
Task 1

Listen to the recording and complete the map, adding the missing places and highlighting the correct route to get from your location to the Museum.



Task 3

Listen to the job interview and fill in the job application of the candidate.



NAME:

APPLYING FOR:

WORKING EXPERIENCE:

RESUME: YES / NO

REASONS FOR LEAVING THE PREVIOUS JOB:

CANDIDATE'S STRENGTHS:

Task 4

Listen to the weather forecast and tick (✓) the correct answer.

What is the name of the radio station?

- weather on the day
- weather on the minute
- weather on the hour

What is the frequency of the radio station?

- 97.1
- 99.6
- 96.9

The weather today will be...

- windy with wind gusts up to 50 mph
- windy with wind gusts up to 15 mph
- windy with wind gusts up to 5 km/h

The highest temperature of the day will be...

- 90°C
- 90°F
- 90°

Where does the thunderstorm come from?

- the south-north
- the south-west
- the south-east

What time is the sunset and sunrise?

- 8:19 p.m. and 6:19 a.m.
- 8:09 p.m. and 6:09 a.m.
- 9:18 p.m. and 9:16 a.m.

What will the weather be like the next day?

- snowy
- sunny
- stormy

Task 5

Listen to the airport announcements and answer each question in one full sentence.

What is the name of the airline?

.....

What is the destination of the flight?

.....

What is the number of the flight?

.....

What happened with the planned flight?

.....

Why was the flight cancelled?

.....

Where did the heavy fog occur?

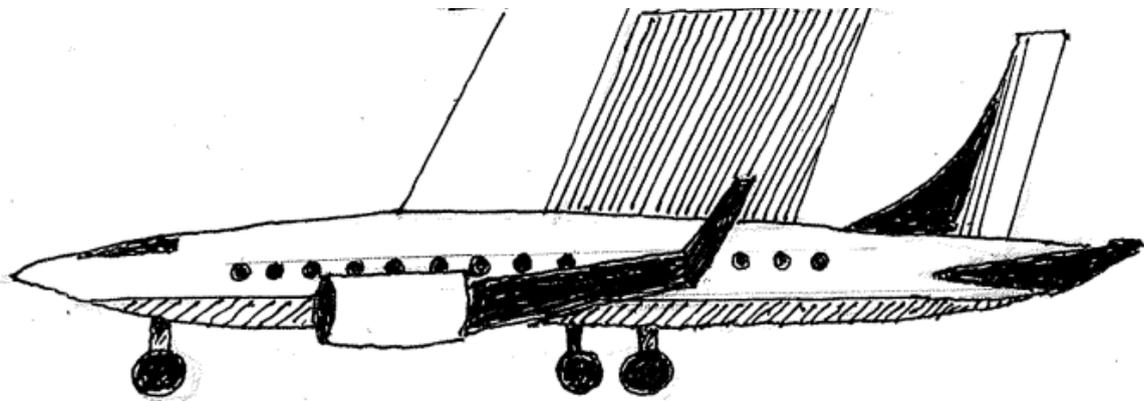
.....

What are the numbers of the assistance counters the passengers need to go to?

.....

What does the airline apologise for?

.....



Task 6

Listen to the customer service dialogue and complete the sentences.

Service (S): Thank you so much. That's not a problem. Have a lovely day. Bye!

(S): Hello, how are you?

Customer (C): Hi. Good, thanks.

(S): Good, thank you.

(C): I'm just wondering if I can.....this please
.....one for my husband on the weekend and
.....

(C): So is it possible that.....for that?

(S): Yeah, absolutely. Had you write something online yet?

(C): I did but nobody seems to.....to me yet. So I thought
I'd just.....the office.

(S): Okay, sorry about that. Usually our turn around is 24 hours, but I can
definitely
.....

(C): Okay great, thank you!

(S): Okay, I'll just.....details
here.

(S): What was your name?

(C):

(S): Perfect. I can see that.....on the weekend
with a credit card. And would like the refund
back.....?

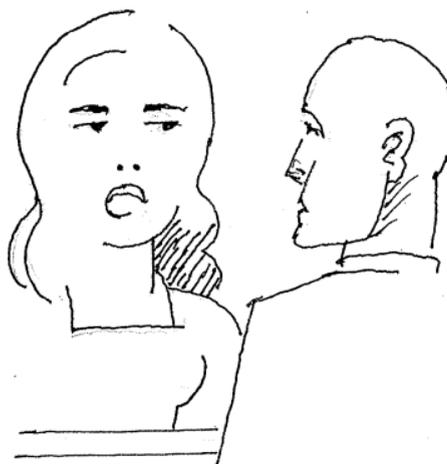
(C): That would be wonderful. Thank you!

(S): Wonderful. I.....from
here. And you will receive this within..... Is
there anything else I can.....?

(C): No, that's been wonderful. Thank you.

(S): Perfect. Have a great day!

(C): You too. Bye!



Task 7

Listen to Kerry introducing herself. You will hear the recording twice. Firstly take notes and when listening for the second time, write a short summary about the person. You should write about 7 sentences.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Now write about 7 sentences about yourself.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Task 8

Listen to a man talking to his doctor. While you listen, match the beginning of the sentence to the correct sentence ending.

1. What.....?
2. Well, I haven't.....
3. My chest hurts.....
4. Yes, I can't.....
5. Oh, let me see.....
6. That's fine.....
7. I'm just gonna take.....
8. Do I need some antibiotics?.....
9. No, antibiotics don't.....
10. Here's a prescription for.....
11. Every.....

seems to be the problem	four hours	work with viruses
stop sneezing	and I keep getting really bad headaches	thanks
been feeling well recently	your temperature	some painkillers
it's three days now	I am allergic to penicillin, by the way	



Task 9

Listen to people ordering at a restaurant. Complete the menu of the restaurant.

MENU

Starters

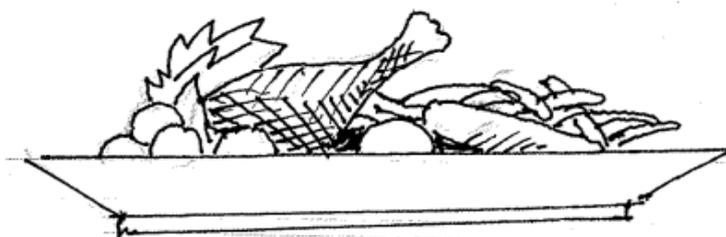
- ★ soup 10\$
- ★ Risotto 13\$

Mains

- ★ Fillet scallop with _____ or _____
25\$
- ★ Spaghetti _____ with _____
20\$
- ★ _____ Amalfi (chicken with a tomato and _____ sauce)
23\$

Desserts

- ★ Italian _____ 10\$



Task 10

Listen to a woman making a hotel reservation. While you listen, take notes. After listening, write the confirmation e-mail the hotel might send you after booking.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

To: [redacted]
From: Our Hotel
Subject: Reservation for

Dear Pauline,

We are writing to confirm your reservation at our hotel for [redacted]. We would like to go over the details of your stay, so that everything would be to your liking.

Number of people: [redacted]
Date: September 5th - [redacted]
Room: premier room ([redacted] \$ per night)

Breakfast:
Names of the guests: Pauline [redacted], [redacted] Smith, Alexis Walsh
Check-in:
Check-out:

Total amount:

Cancellation is free until [redacted] days before the check-in date.

We are looking forward to seeing you in our hotel!

Best wishes,
Our Hotel

Links to recordings

Task 1:  Not Afraid to Ask for Directions | Brain Games 0:12-01:02

Task 2: [Clare introducing herself](#)

Task 3:  Job Interview: I Want to Learn (ESL)

Task 4: [The weather report](#)

Task 5:  [SoundOnly] Airport Announcement at Gold Coast Airport 01:16-02:32

Task 6:  Poor vs Great Customer Service from 01:09

Task 7: [Kerri introducing herself](#)

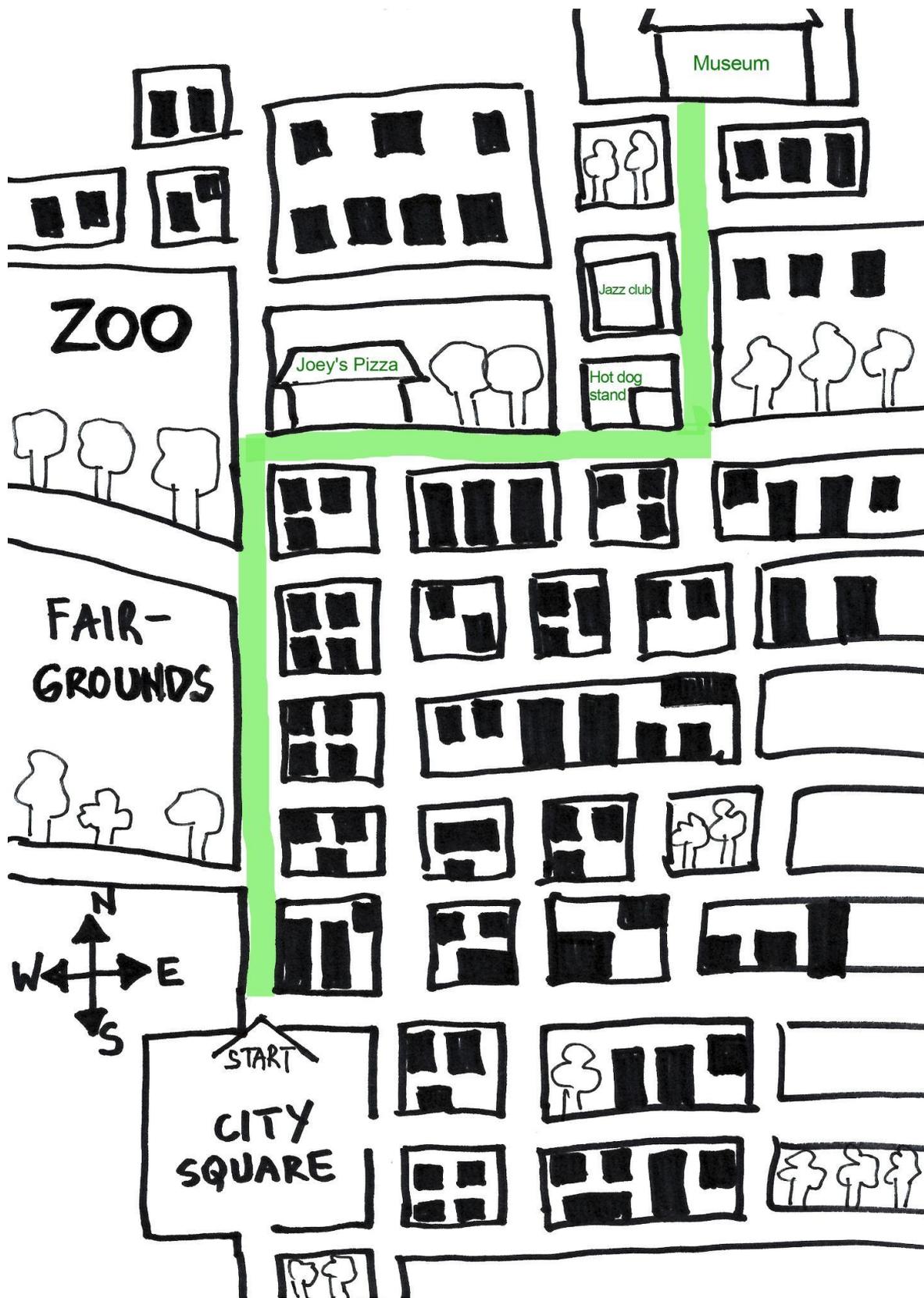
Task 8:  09 At The Doctor's from 01:45

Task 9:  Video 1 - At the restaurant

Task 10:  MOCK CALL PRACTICE: Hotel Reservation | Interactive Session 5 from 02:07

Answer keys

Task 1



Task 2**Statement about Clare****True (T) or false****(F)**

Clare was born in Sydney.	F
She is from Australia.	T
Clare lives in the capital of Australia.	F
She lives next to a very popular beach.	T
Sydney is the second largest city in Australia.	F
Her younger brother's name is Patrick.	T
Clare's younger brother is 3 years younger than her.	F
Clare is living together with her brother and her parents.	F
Clare is studying political science in the University of Sydney.	T
She can't swim and doesn't like surfing.	F
She has been to the Great Barrier Reef.	T

- Clare was born in the Blue Mountains.
- Clare doesn't live in the capital of Australia./Clare lives in the biggest city of Australia.
- Sydney is the largest city in Australia.
- Clare's younger brother is 2 years younger than her.
- Clare is living by herself in Sydney./Clare's brother lives with her parents.
- Clare can swim but she has never been surfing.

Task 3NAME: **Mary Hansen**APPLYING FOR: **(one of the) kitchen job(s)**WORKING EXPERIENCE: **no previous working experience**RESUME: **YES** / **NO**

REASONS FOR LEAVING THE PREVIOUS JOB:

She had to work at night (graveyard shift) and she wants to work during the day.

CANDIDATE'S STRENGTHS:

- Loves to learn new things.
- Follows directions exactly.
- Comes to work on time.
- (Values self-improvement (improves her writing skills with an English class)).

Task 4

What is the name of the radio station?

- weather on the day
- weather on the minute
- weather on the hour

What is the frequency of the radio station?

- 97.1
- 99.6
- 96.9

The weather today will be...

- windy with wind gusts up to 50 mph
- windy with wind gusts up to 15 mph
- windy with wind gusts up to 5 km/h

The highest temperature of the day will be...

- 90°C
- 90°F
- 90°

Where does the thunderstorm come from?

- the south-north
- the south-west
- the south-east

What time is the sunset and sunrise?

- 8:19 p.m. and 6:19 a.m.
- 8:09 p.m. and 6:09 a.m.
- 9:18 p.m. and 9:16 a.m.

What will the weather be like the next day?

- snowy
- sunny
- stormy

Task 5

What is the name of the airline?

The name of the airline is Virgin Australia.

What is the destination of the flight?

The destination of the flight is Adelaide(, Australia).

What is the number of the flight?

The number of the flight is 1448.

What happened with the planned flight?

The planned flight was cancelled.

Why was the flight cancelled?

The flight was cancelled due to heavy fog.

Where did the heavy fog occur?

The heavy fog occurred on route 2.

What are the numbers of the assistance counters the passengers need to go to?

The passengers need to go to assistance counters numbers 9 and 10.

What does the airline apologise for?

The airline apologises for any inconvenience.

Task 6

Service (S): Thank you so much. That's not a problem. Have a lovely day. Bye!

(S): Hello, how are you?

Customer (C): Hi. Good, thanks. **How are you?**

(S): Good, thank you.

(C): I'm just wondering if I can **return** this please. **I bought** one for my husband on the weekend and **he's already received it**.

(C): So is it possible that **I get a refund** for that?

(S): Yeah, absolutely. Had you write something online yet?

(C): I did but nobody seems to **have gotten back** to me yet. So I thought I'd just **pop into the** office.

(S): Okay, sorry about that. Usually our turn around is 24 hours, but I can definitely **help you with that**.

(C): Okay great, thank you!

(S): Okay, I'll just **look up some of your** details here.

(S): What was your name?

(C): **Cherie/Sherry Montgomery**.

(S): Perfect. I can see that **you purchased that** on the weekend with a credit card. And would like the refund back **onto the credit card**?

(C): That would be wonderful. Thank you!

(S): Wonderful. I can **take care of that** from here. And you will receive this within **10 business days**. Is there anything else I can **help you with**?

(C): No, that's been wonderful. Thank you.

(S): Perfect. Have a great day!

(C): You too. Bye!

Task 8

1. What *seems to be the problem*?
2. Well, I haven't *been feeling well recently*.
3. My chest hurts *and I keep getting really bad headaches*.
4. Yes, I can't *stop sneezing*.
5. Oh, let me see, *it's three days now*.
6. That's fine, *thanks*.
7. I'm just gonna take *your temperature*.
8. Do I need some antibiotics? *I am allergic to penicillin, by the way*.
9. No, antibiotics don't *work with viruses*.
10. Here's a prescription for *some painkillers*.
11. Every *four hours*.

Task 9

MENU

Starters

- ★ Bean soup 10\$
- ★ Risotto 13\$

Mains

- ★ Fillet scallop with salad or vegetables 25\$
- ★ Spaghetti bolognese with salad 20\$
- ★ Chicken Amalfi (chicken with a tomato and mushroom sauce) 23\$

Desserts

- ★ Italian ice cream 10\$

Task 10

To: Pauline Sue

From: Our Hotel

Subject: Reservation for

Dear Pauline,

We are writing to confirm your reservation at our hotel for September 5th-7th. We would like to go over the details of your stay, so that everything would be to your liking.

Number of people: 3

Date: September 5th - 7th

Room: premier room (99\$ per night)

Breakfast:

Names of the guests: Pauline Sue, Andrea Smith, Alexis Walsh

Check-in:

Check-out:

Total amount:

Cancellation is free until 15 days before the check-in date.

We are looking forward to seeing you in our hotel!

Best wishes,

Our Hotel

Appendix 3. Interview questions

Interview questions

General feedback on the created material

1. In general, do you think that the created material is suitable for year 9 students?
Why or why not?
2. How would you evaluate the topics presented in the listening material?
3. How would you evaluate the types of listening tasks used in the material?
4. How would you evaluate the recordings used for the listening task?
5. To what extent do the created materials fill a void in the most commonly used study materials?

Feedback on the created tasks

1. Was the overall level suitable for year 9 students? Explain.
2. What was the most difficult task for the students? Why?
3. What were the tasks that were too easy? Why?
4. How would you evaluate the instructions of the tasks?

Feedback on the topics

1. What were the topics that the students seemed to be most interested in?
2. What were the topics that were not relevant for students?
3. What topics did you find the most relevant and interesting from students' perspective?
4. What topics would have you changed, removed or added to the listening materials?

Feedback on the physical appearance and user-friendliness

1. How would you evaluate the illustrations of the listening materials?
2. How would you evaluate the user-friendliness of the tasks?
3. What made using the material easy or difficult?
4. How would you evaluate the order of the tasks? Was it logical?
5. How would you evaluate the wholeness of the material?

Characteristics of good listening tasks

1. How contextualised do you consider the created tasks to be (based on curriculum, learners' experiences, realities and first languages)?
2. How generative, in terms of language and stimulating interaction (should create situations that can happen in real life), the created tasks are?
3. To what extent do the created materials put emphasis on both form and function?
4. How would you evaluate the flexibility of the tasks (allowing students and teachers to make choices and not having only one correct answer but offering a number of inputs)?

Comments and suggestions for improvement

1. What suggestions for improvement would you like to make?
2. Would you use this material again? Why?
3. Would you recommend this material for other English teachers as well? Why?

Resümee

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Sofia Valk

Creating and piloting additional listening material for year 9 students.

[Lisakuulamisülesannete kogumiku loomine 9. klassi õpilastele ja selle piloteerimine].

Magistritöö

2023

Lehekülgede arv: 71

Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärgiks on luua ja piloteerida lisakuulamisülesannete kogumikku 9. klassi õpilastele. Kuna kuulamine jääb tihtipeale keeleõppes tahaplaanile ja seda on keeruline planeerida ning läbi viia, siis pidas töö autor oluliseks anda enda panus kuulamise rolli suurendamiseks keeleõppes.

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Piloteerimise käigus hinnati õppematerjal sobilikuks tööks 9. klassi õpilastega, kuid sellegipoolest tehti ka parendusettepanekuid tulevikuks. Lisaks hinnati loodud materjali kasulikuks töövahendiks inglise keele õpetajatele.

Märksõnad:

Näiteks: kuulamisoskus, kuulamise õpetamine, materjalide loomine, EFL, CEFR

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