

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Developing Test Taking Strategies for Students Taking
Cambridge English: B2 First, Speaking Exam
Bachelor Thesis

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2019/2020

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

Jméno a příjmení: **Vladana Hnátková**
Osobní číslo: **H20325**
Studijní program: **B0231A090018 Anglický jazyk**
Specializace: **Anglický jazyk pro vzdělávání**
Téma práce: **Rozvoj testových strategií pro studenty skládající ústní zkoušku Cambridge English: B2 First**
Zadávající katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Zásady pro vypracování

Studentka se v této bakalářské práci zabývá problematikou rozvoje zkouškových strategií u studentů skládajících jazykovou zkoušku *B2 First*. V úvodu teoretické části zasadí problematiku do kontextu modelu hodnocení komunikační kompetence podle *Společného evropského referenčního rámce pro jazyky*. Po stručném představení několika systémů hodnocení dovednosti mluvení bude následovat diskuse o možnostech přípravy studentů z hlediska strategií používaných při testech. V praktické části studentka zrealizuje výzkum kombinací dotazníků, focus groups, a vstupního a výstupního hodnocení využití strategií v testování pro studenty. Výstupem budou materiály k výuce osvojení zkouškových strategií pro část *Speaking* zkoušky *B2 First*.

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:
Rozsah grafických prací:
Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**
Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

Seznam doporučené literatury:

Burges, Sally, Katie Head. 2005. How to Teach for Exams. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
Cambridge English Language Assessment. 2013. Cambridge English: First. Cambridge: Cambridge English. Choděra, Radomír. 2013. Didaktika cizích jazyků. 2nd ed. Praha: Academia. Council of Europe. 2001. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Harmer, Jeremy. How to Teach English. 1998. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Limited. Harmer, Jeremy. 2007. The Practice of English Language Teaching. 4th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited. Kenny, Nick, Lucrecia Luque-Mortimer. 2014. Cambridge English First Practice Tests Plus 2. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited. Nolasco, Rob, Lois Arthur. 1987. Conversation. Edited by Alan Maley. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Scrivener, Jim. 2011. Learning Teaching. Edited by Adrian Underhill. 3rd ed. Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Limited. Thornbury, Scott. 2006. An A-Z of ELT. Edited by Adrian Underhill. London: Macmillan Publishers Limited. Thornbury, Scott. 2005. How to Teach Speaking. Edited by Jeremy Harmer. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited. Thornbury, Scott. 2017. Scott Thornbury's 30 Language Teaching Methods. Edited by Phillip Kerr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Underhill, Nick. 1987. Testing Spoken Language. Edited by Penny Ur. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ur, Penny. 2012. A course in English Language Teaching. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Woodward, Tessa. 2001. Planning Lessons and Courses. Edited by Scott Thornbury. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Kateřina Keplová**
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **30. dubna 2020**
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **31. března 2021**

doc. Mgr. Jiří Kubeš, Ph.D.
děkan

Mgr. Olga Roebuck, Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2020

Prohlašuji:

Práci s názvem Developing Test Taking Strategies for Students Taking Cambridge English: B2 First, Speaking Exam jsem vypracovala samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využila, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

Byla jsem seznámena s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše.

Beru na vědomí, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb., o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, a směrnicí Univerzity Pardubice č. 7/2019 Pravidla pro odevzdávání, zveřejňování a formální úpravu závěrečných prací, ve znění pozdějších dodatků, bude práce zveřejněna prostřednictvím Digitální knihovny Univerzity Pardubice.

V Pardubicích dne 22. 2. 2022

Vladana Hnátková

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Mgr. Kateřina Keplová, for her guidance, time, and valuable comments throughout the process of writing this thesis.

I am extremely grateful to the group of students for their active participation in the research.

ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis deals with the topic of developing test taking strategies for students taking Cambridge English: B2 First, Speaking exam. The theoretical part introduces the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which defines the common reference levels and communicative language competences. Then, the skill of speaking is briefly explored, together with a short introduction of the approaches to its assessment by major awarding bodies, international and Czech. Finally, the theoretical part discusses test taking strategies and their importance, focusing specifically on those suitable for B2 First speaking exam. The main aim of the practical part is to conduct the research on employing test taking strategies in a speaking exam by using a combination of a questionnaire and focus groups. Based on the data, teaching materials are designed to develop students' test taking speaking strategies for B2 First, Speaking Paper.

KEYWORDS

Cambridge English B2 First, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), speaking skills, assessment of speaking, oral exam, test taking strategies

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem rozvoje zkuškových strategií u studentů skládajících ústní zkoušku Cambridge English: B2 First. Teoretická část představuje Společný evropský referenční rámec pro jazyky, který definuje jednotlivé společné referenční úrovně a komunikační jazykové kompetence. Dále je krátce prozkoumána dovednost mluvení, spolu se stručným představením přístupů k hodnocení této dovednosti hlavními mezinárodními i českými organizacemi. Na závěr jsou diskutovány testové strategie a jejich důležitost, se zaměřením konkrétně na ty, které jsou vhodné pro ústní zkoušku B2 First. Hlavním cílem praktické části je provést výzkum o využívání testových strategií při ústní zkoušce kombinací dotazníku a ohniskových skupin. Na základě těchto údajů jsou vytvořeny materiály k výuce za účelem osvojení testových strategií pro ústní část zkoušky B2 First.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Cambridge English B2 First, Společný evropský referenční rámec pro jazyky, dovednosti mluvení, hodnocení mluvení, ústní zkouška, testové strategie

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND SCHEMES	10
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	11
INTRODUCTION	12
THEORETICAL PART	14
1. CEFR	14
1.1 General overview	14
1.2 Levels and competences	14
1.2.1 Common reference levels	14
1.2.2 Communicative language competences	15
2. Speaking skill and its assessment	16
2.1 Theoretical background of speaking	16
2.2 Assessing speaking ability	19
2.2.1 Organizations and examinations	20
2.2.1.1 CERMAT and School Leaving Examinations	20
2.2.1.2 Trinity College London and Graded Examinations in Spoken English	21
2.2.1.3 Cambridge Assessment English and Cambridge English Qualifications	22
3. Test taking strategies	24
3.1 Productive skill test taking strategies	26
3.1.1 Test taking strategies for speaking	26
3.2 Test taking strategies for B2 First Speaking Paper	27
3.2.1 Test taking strategies for Part 1	27
3.2.2 Test taking strategies for Part 2	27
3.2.3 Test taking strategies for Part 3	28
3.2.4 Test taking strategies for Part 4	29
4. Conclusion of the theoretical part	29
PRACTICAL PART	31
5. Aim of the practical part	31
5.1 Research question	31
5.2 Research sample	31
5.3 Research method	32
5.3.1 Questionnaire	32
5.3.1.1 Data collection procedure	33

5.3.1.2 Data analysis method	33
5.3.2 Focus groups	34
5.3.2.1 Data collection procedure	34
5.3.2.2 Data analysis method	35
6. Research findings.....	35
6.1 Test taking strategies used for Part 1	35
6.2 Test taking strategies used for Part 2	37
6.3 Test taking strategies used for Part 3	39
6.4 Test taking strategies used for Part 4.....	43
7. Designing teaching materials.....	44
7.1 Objectives	44
7.2 Material One	45
7.3 Material Two.....	51
7.4 Material Three.....	59
8. Final assessment and its implications	66
CONCLUSION.....	68
RESUMÉ	70
BIBLIOGRAPHY	76
APPENDICES	80

LIST OF TABLES AND SCHEMES

Figure 1: The easiest part of the Speaking Paper in respondents' view	36
Figure 2: The most challenging part of the Speaking Paper in respondents' view	40
Figure 3: The importance of reaction to their partner's suggestions in respondents' view	41

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CERMAT – Centre on Measurement in Education

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

ELT – English Language Teaching

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

GESE – Graded Examinations in Spoken English

ISE – Integrated Skills in English

TTS – Test taking strategies

INTRODUCTION

English has undoubtedly become a global language. It is the prevailing language used in various areas of our lives, for example trade and business, diplomacy, science, information and communication technology, tourism, media, and education. English has also been included in national curricula as a compulsory foreign language in many non-English speaking countries worldwide and the ability to use the language is frequently tested by various organizations.

Every year, a high number of students are preparing for English language exams, some of which are compulsory, such as secondary school leaving examinations, and some of which are optional, taken because learners of English aim to obtain a certificate that proves their level of English language proficiency. All candidates wish to achieve the best test results they can. Learners' success in testing situations depends on several factors, such as the quality of education, schools and teachers, learners' motivation, teaching methods and learning styles, as well as the pursuit of effective test taking strategies. Research conducted in the field of test taking strategies has proved that the adoption of fruitful test taking strategies significantly improves performance as well as contributes to higher scoring (e.g., Dodeen 2015).

Due to considerable impact of test taking strategies on the successful performance of a test taker, this thesis aims to provide suggestions for developing test taking strategies suitable for students taking English language exams, particularly Cambridge English: B2 First, speaking exam.

A selection of B2 First is mainly given by the fact that Cambridge Assessment English, a part of the University of Cambridge, is the world leader in offering qualifications for English language learners with more than 4 million candidates taking their exams around the world annually and B2 First is their most popular exam (Cambridge English Language Assessment 2019). The reason for choosing the speaking paper of this exam is that Thornbury (2005),

among others, considers the language skill of speaking to be one of the most challenging skills to teach and master.

The theoretical part provides a brief introduction of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which defines the common reference levels and communicative language competences. Then, the skill of speaking is briefly explored, together with a short introduction of the approaches to its assessment by major awarding bodies, international and Czech. Next, the theoretical part discusses test taking strategies and their importance, focusing specifically on those suitable for B2 First speaking exam.

The practical part starts with identifying its main aim. Then, the methodology of the research is explored. First, the research sample is described and subsequently, selected data collection instruments, a questionnaire and focus groups, are introduced and justified. Secondly, research findings are interpreted. Having analysed the data obtained in the research conducted on using a variety of test taking strategies by students taking B2 First speaking exam, a set of teaching materials is designed. These materials aim to help teachers improve their students' performance in speaking exams by suggesting ways to develop their test taking strategies. Finally, the concluding summary of research implications is provided.

THEORETICAL PART

1. CEFR

1.1 General overview

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has been created by the Council of Europe. It provides common basis for curriculum development and planning and therefore has become an invaluable tool for elaboration of language syllabuses, examinations, and qualifications across Europe. Given standards are utilized not only by professionals such as teachers, course designers, examining organizations, etc., but they also help English language learners who can self-evaluate their learning efforts and see what knowledge and skills they have mastered so far and then set further attainable goals in terms of learning English (Council of Europe 2001).

The framework was launched in 2001 and subsequently, the CEFR Companion volume was published in 2020 that provides the links and references to chapters of the 2001 edition of the framework, which remains valid. To bring the CEFR closer to real-life language use, the 2020 Companion volume introduced new terminology and replaced the traditional model of four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Currently, “[a]ctivities are presented under four modes of communication: reception, production, interaction, and mediation” (Council of Europe 2020, 33). In this thesis, the original term speaking is used referring to the qualitative aspects of spoken language according to the CEFR, which specifically are range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, coherence, and phonology (Council of Europe 2020).

1.2 Levels and competences

1.2.1 Common reference levels

The CEFR (2001) describes language ability on a scale consisting of six levels, from A1 for beginners to the highest level of C2. The reference levels are grouped in broader categories from Basic User (A1 & A2 levels) through Independent (B1 & B2 levels) to Proficient User, which comprises C1 and C2 level (Council of Europe 2001). A new band of proficiency labelled Pre-A1, particularly appropriate for young learners who have not fully reached the A1 level yet, was introduced in the updated Companion volume (Council of Europe 2020).

All six common reference levels are defined through independent illustrative “can do” descriptors, which provide “examples of typical language use in a particular area”, as Council

of Europe (2020, 41) states. It means that descriptors specify progressive mastery of each skill as they characterize expected language ability at each level of the CEFR.

According to the Council of Europe (2020), “the main function of descriptors is to help align curriculum, teaching and assessment” (Council of Europe 2020, 42). In other words, the CEFR descriptors can also be used for developing assessment criteria to assess the quality of English learners’ language use. Assessment of language skill of speaking is dealt with in chapter two.

To summarize, the CEFR plays a key role in language learning, teaching and assessment because it clearly defines international standards by giving detailed information about what knowledge and skills EFL learners are expected to gain in order to use the language for communication in an effective way.

1.2.2 Communicative language competences

The CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 9) defines communicative language competences as “those which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means”. It means that English learners need to develop these competences to use the language for communication. The CEFR distinguishes three main components of communicative language competences, which comprise of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences (Council of Europe 2001, 13).

Linguistic competences are related to knowledge of the language as a system and ability to use the language in communication, whereas sociolinguistic competences refer to language use in a social context. The components of linguistic competences are general linguistic range, vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary control, phonological control, and orthographic control (Council of Europe 2020, 129). It means that linguistic competences represent the knowledge in terms of vocabulary and word meaning, grammatical structures, sound systems, such as pronunciation, intonation, etc., as well as a written form of language, e.g., spelling. Therefore, gaining linguistic competences enables English language learners to form well-structured sentences and utterances to convey a message.

On the other hand, sociolinguistic competences represented by sociolinguistic appropriateness refer to aspects of politeness conventions that may vary according to cultural background, different dialects and accents, and the level of formality, which is reflected in register (Council of Europe 2020, 136–137).

The concern of pragmatic competences, the final listed component of communicative language competences, is actual language use in terms of organization, structure and arrangement of messages known as discourse competence, the ability to use functional language appropriately, termed functional competence, as well as design competence represented by the principles of sequencing messages. The components of pragmatic competence are flexibility, turn-taking, thematic development, coherence and cohesion, propositional precision, and fluency (Council of Europe 2020, 137–142).

To conclude, it is crucial for English language learners to gain and develop a wide range of skills and knowledge to use the language for communication. It includes not only language-related knowledge, such as grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and discourse, but also awareness of how to use linguistic means appropriately in different situations to reach their communicative aims. Therefore, the components of communicative language competences cannot be viewed individually and isolated from each other, but as a complex system.

2. Speaking skill and its assessment

It is a priority for many learners to improve their spoken-language proficiency. As mentioned in chapter 1.1, speaking is one of the language skills. They are divided into two main groups according to the use of language – productive skills represented by speaking and writing and receptive skills represented by listening and reading. Even though all four language skills are inseparable and practicing productive skills cannot be executed apart from receptive skills, and vice versa, productive skills are thought to be more challenging to be mastered in English as a foreign language.

ELT specialists (e.g., Ur 2012) are in full agreement that speaking is deemed to be the most important skill. Goh and Burns (2012, ix) conclude that “learners often evaluate their success in language learning, as well as effectiveness of their English course, on the basis of how well they have improved in their spoken-language proficiency”. Therefore, mastery of a speaking skill in a foreign language is believed to be a priority for many language learners.

2.1 Theoretical background of speaking

Thornbury (2005), among others, claims that speaking is one of the most difficult skills to teach and master because of its distinctive features he examined. Brown and Yule (1983, 25) concur that “[s]poken language production, learning to talk in the foreign language, is often considered to be one of the most difficult aspects of language learning for the teacher to help

the student with”. The reasons are specificities of spoken language which are discussed in this part.

Thornbury (2005) defines essential elements of an authentic oral production in English which, together with grammar and vocabulary, also include pronunciation dealing with aspects of phonology and fluency. Pronunciation includes the components divided in two groups: segmental and suprasegmental. Segmental features of pronunciation include individual sounds and sounds in connected speech, whereas suprasegmental features represent word and sentence stress, rhythm, and intonation. Fluency is not only the ability to speak fast, as speed is not the only crucial factor, but also the ability to make pauses. The frequency of pauses and their appropriate placement distinguishes a proficient speaker from a beginner speaker (Thornbury 2005).

Harmer (2007) discusses paralinguistic features of spoken language that accompany formal language systems, e.g., sounds. These features are related to the voice and its tone (vocal paralinguistic features) and body (physical paralinguistic features), that involve body language, such as gestures and postures, physical distance between speakers, and also facial expression. These paralinguistic signals applied in face-to-face communication can contribute significantly to a better conversation. To conclude, the role of paralinguistics in communication can be neglected as it may change the message completely by adding emphasis or shades of meaning to what people say.

However, they are not the only demands English language learners encounter in terms of speaking as a skill. It is important to bear in mind that one of the most serious challenges stems from its linearity, the fact that speaking takes place in real time (e.g., Thornbury 2005). In other words, speech is produced at the same time as we speak, as the words are expressed. “Speakers are trying to communicate ideas that listeners need to comprehend in real time, as they are being spoken, and this means working within the parameters of the speakers and listeners memory” (Luoma 2004, 12). Therefore, a decision what to say and how to say it, and its understanding from listeners takes place simultaneously. This is closely connected to another constraint of speaking, which is time pressure.

Bygate (1983), Goh and Burns (2012) and Thornbury (2005) find the time factor and spontaneity to be another challenge for speakers. The reason is that speakers very often lack in time to prepare as planning and production usually overlap, and an immediate reaction is required or expected. “Under time pressure when speaking, language learners experience

limited cognitive capacity for processing meaning and linguistic knowledge at the same time” (Goh and Burns 2012, 42). Therefore, time pressure may affect spoken grammar and vocabulary and lead to making more mistakes and not using the correct forms when speaking, even though learners theoretically know the grammatical rules. Bygate supports this view and states that “[i]n speech we make syntactic mistakes because we lose our place in the grammar of our utterances. Mistakes are also made in both the message and wording” (Bygate 1987, 11). Therefore, it is necessary to use different means to compensate for the constraints such as lack of planning time in order to facilitate oral production (Bygate 1987).

Another specificity of spoken language is the fact that it is mainly interactive which requires speaking in turns (e.g., Bygate 1987). Yule and Brown (1983) and Thornbury (2005) distinguish between interactional language which is primarily listener-oriented and transactional language which is primarily message-oriented. Primary function of spoken language is to establish and maintain social relationships, whereas transactional spoken language aims to convey information. Harmer (2007, 343) also adds that speakers of English as a second language meet demands of being able to speak in “different genres and situations, and they will have to be able to use a range of conversational and conversational repair strategies. They will need to be able to survive in typical functional exchanges, too”.

According to Thornbury (2005, 1), speaking confidently “involves both a command of certain skills and several different types of knowledge”. Thornbury (2005) suggest that the knowledge comprises linguistic knowledge that includes knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, phonology, functions, and discourse markers on the one hand, and extralinguistic knowledge including sociocultural and topical background on the other hand. Thornbury agrees with Bygate (1987, 3) who differentiates between “*knowledge* about a language, and *skill* in using it”. According to Bygate (1985), learners not only need knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, but they also need to apply their knowledge in practice, they need the skill, which he divides in two categories: motor-receptive and interaction skills. As Bygate (1987, 5) states, “[m]otor-receptive skills involve perceiving, recalling, and articulating in the correct order of sounds and structures of the language”. Motor-receptive skills involve facilitation and compensation, and they need to be adopted because they help learners to express themselves as accurately as possible and compensate for drawbacks in oral production. However, to achieve communication, motor-receptive skills need to be transferred to the environment where the language is used. That is the reason why other skills, interaction skills, are used. Bygate (1987, 6) concludes that interaction skills are essential for communication as

they “involve making decisions about communication, such as: what to say, how to say it, whether to develop it, in accordance with one’s intentions, while maintaining the desired relations with others”. To summarize, what Thornbury and Bygate postulate is that linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge of the language is practically performed by using the required skills in various situations and under different circumstances and this enables speakers to convey the message clearly, make themselves understood as well as respond to their communication partner(s).

To conclude, speaking as a skill has some distinctive features that make it challenging for English language learners to master and develop. There are more elements involved in speaking, which combines knowledge, e.g., grammatical, lexical, and phonological and skills in using this knowledge. These skills enable English language learners to produce speech and manage turn-taking by using appropriate register and discourse in order to reach the communication aim. Oral English production and interaction is not a single process of producing the speech but a combination of different skills and knowledge of the language in various contexts and situations and none of the elements can be neglected.

2.2 Assessing speaking ability

Assessment refers to any form of evaluating language users’ proficiency. Many distinctive types of assessment have been listed, according to their function and form of obtaining information about language learners’ knowledge, abilities, progress, or the level of proficiency, e.g., language tests.

The CEFR, which serves as a resource for assessment, specifies tasks for a communicative assessment in tests and examinations (Council of Europe 2001). Council of Europe (2001, 178) states that “valid assessment requires the sampling of a range of relevant types of discourse”. Therefore, an adequate speaking test should have specific features according to the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001). First, it should contain a spontaneous interactive stage, which comprises a simulated conversation with the aim to warm up a test-taker, then an informal discussion of topical issues and goal-oriented co-operation containing a task in which candidates achieve consensus. There should also be a prepared stage focusing on production represented by a description of test-takers academic field and plans (Council of Europe 2001, 179). Both, oral production and oral interaction are assessed, focusing on several qualitative aspects of spoken language use: range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, coherence, and phonology, according to the CEFR (Council of Europe 2020, 183).

As mentioned above, there are many types of assessment. Harmer (2007) and Ur (2012), among others, differentiate between summative and formative assessment. Formative assessment is designed to monitor and provide feedback with suggestion for future improvement and involves tests carried out during a course, such as end-of-unit tests or progress tests, whereas summative assessment is deemed to be more formal, giving only a grade or mark, instead of feedback on the performance. This type of assessment mainly focuses on summarising and concluding a particular period of learning. The Council of Europe (2001, 186) makes it clear that formative assessment is “an ongoing process of gathering information on the extent of learning, on strengths and weaknesses, which the teacher can feed back into their course planning and the actual feedback they give learners.” In contrast to it, summative assessment “sums up attainment at the end of course with a grade. It is not necessarily proficiency assessment. Indeed, a lot of summative assessment is norm-referenced, fixed-point, achievement assessment” (2001, 186). As the descriptions postulate, while formative feedback helps learners to make progress and can be held in a form of consultations or ongoing tests, summative assessment is a one-time evaluation or measurement.

This part focuses on summative assessment of speaking ability because a wide range of international exams or school leaving examinations belong to this group. Summative assessment is primarily conducted by official external authorities, nationally or internationally recognised, for example Cambridge Assessment English and Trinity College London, which are international in scope, or Centre of Measurement in Education (CERMAT) operating in the Czech Republic.

2.2.1 Organizations and examinations

2.2.1.1 CERMAT and School Leaving Examinations

Centre of Measurement in Education (CERMAT) is an organization directed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport that is responsible for preparation and implementation of a reformed school leaving examination in the Czech Republic.

As of October 28, 2021, CERMAT’s Maturita website informed its readers that the objective of school leaving examination in English, is to test all candidates’ language skills that refer to B1 level of the CEFR.

As of October 28, 2021, Statnimatorita-anglictina’s website informed that the speaking exam is held in front a panel of examiners. The speaking part lasts approximately 30 minutes, of

which 15 minutes are dedicated to speaking and the remaining time to preparation. Oral exam consists of four main parts, in which candidates demonstrate their level of spoken production and interaction. The striking difference compared to the other discussed examinations is that candidates are allowed to use a dictionary for the third part of preparation, and they are also allowed to use their notes from the preparation stage in the actual exam.

As of October 28, 2021, CERMAT's Maturita website, Catalogue of test requirements of the common part of the school leaving examination, provided the readers with the following information about the speaking paper: The exam begins with an interview task, in which a candidate provides general personal information, a candidate answers examiners' questions related to general everyday topics that are listed in three main groups: personal and social life, everyday life and the world around us. A presentation task is assessed in the second part, represented by a photo description, a comparison of two photographs and providing information on a given general topic. The third part focuses on a presentation of a topic drawn from a selection of 20–30 specific topics (depending on a school type), with oral production being assessed. The last part assesses student's oral interaction with an examiner in a negotiating task, which simulates a real-life situation. Communicative situations are set in the context of different areas, such as personal, public, educational, and working. They discuss a situation with the aim to reach a decision. A 3-minute dialog aims at reaching a decision through making suggestions and discussing suggested alternatives.

To conclude, this exam evaluates communicative skills and language requirements of candidates at B1 level of the CEFR. A variety of tasks and topics that are not related to each other focus on all components of communicative competence. Each part of the exam introduces a different task type aiming at different aspects of speaking ability, oral production, and interaction. The tasks are an interview, a photo description and photos comparison, a topic presentation, and a goal-oriented co-operative task. In summary, knowledge and practical usage of lexis, language functions, grammatical rules as well as basic of morphological and syntactical rules, as well as phonology in oral production and interaction in terms of accuracy, appropriacy and fluency are assessed.

2.2.1.2 Trinity College London and Graded Examinations in Spoken English

Trinity College London is an international exam organization and independent education charity, which provides assessment of English language in various countries worldwide.

As of October 28, 2021, GESE's page of Trinity College stated that Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) are internationally recognised exams for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Speaking is one of the tested skills, together with listening. There are 12 grades of GESE qualifications that reflect 6 levels of the CEFR, from pre-A1 to C2. The grades are divided into 4 stages of proficiency, from Initial, through Elementary and Intermediate to Advanced.

As of October 28, 2021, Trinity College's GESE page informed the readers that the objective of GESE exams is to test candidate's communicative skills demonstrated in authentic dialogues and by using some prompts. The speaking exam is taken in a one-to-one form, and it varies in length and demands according to the stage, starting from 5–7 minutes and consisting of conversation for Initial stage to 25 minutes for Advanced stage, at which candidates demonstrate the ability to use the communicative skills in four tasks. They simulate real-life communication with the aim to provide information, share ideas and opinions as well as discuss some topical issues. The first listed phase, Conversation, represents an authentic exchange of views and ideas on two topics selected by an examiner. In the Topic phase, candidates discuss a topic of their choice and personal interest, which they prepare in advance by presenting facts and opinions and from grade 8 also explaining viewpoints. The Interactive phase is directed by a candidate who takes initiative and control over the phase, during which information and opinions are exchanged. To sum up, the tasks to be assessed comprise a conversation, which differs from an interview in form, a topic presentation, a topic discussion, and an interactive task.

To summarize, linguistic knowledge of language functions, grammar, lexis and phonology in oral production and interaction in terms of accuracy, appropriacy and fluency is assessed. Assessment also focuses on the ability to maintain and control the interaction with an examiner independently and actively.

2.2.1.3 Cambridge Assessment English and Cambridge English Qualifications

Cambridge Assessment English is a part of the University of Cambridge. This institution organises internationally recognised exams and tests generally called Cambridge English Qualifications. To guarantee reliability and validity of Cambridge English Qualifications, all four language skills are tested: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Cambridge Assessment English 2019).

As of October 28, 2021, Cambridge English Qualifications' page of Cambridge English informed its readers that speaking tests vary in length and demands according to levels and most of them are taken in pairs with another candidate, apart from those for young learners, which are taken individually. Speaking tests last from 8–10 to 16 minutes and consist of 2, 3 or 4 parts, depending on the Cambridge English Qualification, which reflect the common reference level according to the CEFR. Oral production as well as interaction are assessed as test takers demonstrate their spoken language proficiency in authentic situations, in which they talk on their own, with an examiner and the other candidate. The speaking tests, apart from those designed for young learners, comprise an interview with an interlocutor and a discussion between candidates. Speaking exams at higher levels also consist of long-turn and collaborative tasks.

Candidates are assessed on their individual performance only, with no respect to the co-candidate's level of oral proficiency. There are two sets of assessment criteria. Apart from global achievement, which is the first criterion, the following areas of oral performance are assessed: grammar and vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation, and interactive communication (Cambridge Assessment English 2019). Engagement in conversation or discussion is characterized by interactive communication, which comprises turn-taking conventions, initiating interaction by asking questions or giving suggestions, and responding to a speaking partner adequately (Burgess & Head 2005).

As of October 28, 2021, Cambridge English Qualifications' page of Cambridge English provided the following information about speaking tests that always begins with an interview task, in which candidates get the opportunity to give information about themselves as they answer the interlocutor's questions focusing on general interactional and social language. Oral production in a larger unit of discourse is assessed in a presentation task, whose aim is to describe, compare, speculate, and express opinions as candidates talk individually, usually about a photograph or a set of photographs. The next part of the speaking test, represented by a collaborative task where students take part in a discussion with another candidate, focuses not only on sustaining an interaction, but also on exchanging ideas, expressing and justifying opinions, making and responding to suggestions by agreeing or disagreeing, discussing other alternatives, evaluating as well as coming to a final decision. The final part, a discussion, focuses on expressing and justifying opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, and speculating.

To summarize, candidates are awarded marks on their individual performance by applying descriptors from the assessment scales. The components of linguistic competences, which are evaluated, are vocabulary range and control, grammatical accuracy, and phonological control. Both features of pronunciation, segmental and suprasegmental, are assessed. Sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences are also assessed, by applying discourse management and interactive communication descriptors.

3. Test taking strategies

It is the aim of test takers, people who take a test or examination, to achieve the best test results they can. For this reason, they implement test taking strategies (further referred to as TTS), which help them improve their exam performance as well as maximize scoring. A positive effect on test performance and higher scores was confirmed by a number of academic studies (e.g., Amer 1993; Bicağ 2013). The studies also suggest that students who pursue TTS reduce their level of test anxiety that normally interferes with the ability to perform well in tests (e.g., Dodeen 2015).

Dodeen (2015, 108) asserts test taking strategies as “cognitive abilities to deal with any testing situation in appropriate manner and to know what to do during tests.”. Cohen (2011, 305) perceives test taking strategies as “consciously-selected processes that the respondents use for dealing with both the language issues and the item-response demands in the test-taking tasks at hand”. Cohen (2011) also explains that TTS is an umbrella term covering different kinds of strategies used by test takers as he classifies them into three main categories: language learner strategies, test-management strategies and test-wiseness strategies. The first category is related to the linguistic aspect represented by language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking together with vocabulary and grammar, while the latter strategies are determined by knowing test formats and skills to respond to test tasks. They do not primarily rely on language proficiency (Cohen 2011, 305–306). To summarize, TTS are intentional mental processes that test takers go through to deal with various task types in testing situations. Test taking strategies involve deliberate actions and thoughts that help test takers handle test tasks in a meaningful way as well as knowledge about test format and skill in completing different tasks. Test-wiseness strategies are independent of learner’s language ability.

In general, TTS can be classified according to different aspects, for example language skills, task type, question-type, or time of using them in relation to the allotted test time

(Mohammed 2021). Division according to stages, in which TTS are adopted, whether before, during or after answering the test questions are discussed in the next paragraphs, specifically pre-test, during-test, and after-test TTS.

Dodeen (2015, 108) postulates that “one of the most important test-taking strategies is to know how to study and to prepare well for the test.” Mohammed (2021) points out that apart from preparation in class, test takers should create a systematic plan of revising. Furthermore, it is vital to be familiar with test format (e.g., Rozakis 2003) because knowing what to expect in the exam makes test takers feel more confident and relaxed. Other strategies before the start of answering the test include for example reading or listening to instructions carefully to avoid confusion, surveying all questions before responding and budgeting time as the amount of time spent on questions may be affected by the number of points awarded per answer (Rozakis 2003).

Rozakis (2003), Cohen (2006) and other ELT specialists find the following strategies used during the test to be successful: effective time management and utilizing allotted time limit wisely to avoid making careless errors, underlying key words in questions, answering easier questions first and then figuring out more difficult ones, eliminating wrong options and distractors, paraphrasing, and others. Test takers should also bear in mind that no answer is left blank unless there is a penalty for an incorrect answer (e.g., Rozakis 2003).

Careful checking and after-test review of answers in terms of content and language, for example spelling and grammatical mistakes, including avoidance of last-minute changes are examples of TTS used after answering the test (e.g., Rozakis 2003).

Test takers use different strategies for different purposes. Cohen (2011) admits that the same strategy proved to be effective in one test does not necessarily guarantee success if it is used in another test. Therefore, it is necessary to choose a different set of strategies depending on testing formats, task demands and test takers’ language proficiency.

To summarize, test taking strategies undoubtedly play a very important role in English language learning, teaching and assessment as they help examinees improve their performance and obtain higher scores on tests and consequently, reduce high levels of stress that test takers experience. Therefore, different kinds of TTS used before, during and after the test should be taught to students, who then consider what specific strategies they employ in test situations to achieve success.

3.1 Productive skill test taking strategies

As mentioned above, test takers need to employ different TTS depending on a test type. TTS for productive skills are not the same as for reading or listening comprehension, nor multiple-choice test strategies, for example. This section focuses on productive skills test taking strategies, particularly for speaking.

3.1.1 Test taking strategies for speaking

EFL exam candidates who adopt test taking strategies for speaking effectively can benefit from them when undertaking various tasks in speaking exams.

First of all, test takers should have full awareness about the speaking test format and structure as well as the type of questions they face in each speaking task, which gives them an opportunity to prepare fully for each part of the paper by practicing in simulated speaking tasks. This, however, does not mean memorising answers or preparing fixed answers beforehand as they may sound unnatural or might be illogical to the given questions (Harrison 2014).

Secondly, in order to make a strong impression, test takers focus not only on linguistic features of complex answers they deliver, but also on physical paralinguistic features of language, such as tone of voice, facial expression and gestures accompanying utterances. Test takers should bear in mind that paralinguistic signals play an important role in verbal communication, because body language, proximity and posture convey meaning, too and their aim is to send a positive message to their speaking partners (Harmer 2007). In other words, it is vital not only to make a good impression on the examiner by confident initial presentation, but also on another candidate by keeping an eye contact and generally positive body language.

During the exam, it is vital to listen to questions carefully and ask for repetition to avoid misunderstanding (Brook-Hart 2014) and consequently fully answer the questions, so that all the information expected to be given is covered. ELT specialists are in full agreement that answers should be developed by adding more detail or giving specific examples, reasons or opinions (e.g., Bell and Thomas 2014).

Finally, test takers should monitor what they say to balance fluency and accuracy, show a wide range of vocabulary in appropriate and complex sentence structures including discourse markers to make the talk attractive. Bell and Thomas (2014) suggest using compensation

strategies to check understanding, correct oneself, paraphrase by using different words to express themselves, and give themselves time to think.

To summarize, to succeed in speaking tests, test takers should not only focus on linguistic features and use a wide range of language but also on paralinguistic features of the language. Compensation strategies help them to compensate for potential restrictions. Careful listening to the examiner and the partner is a prerequisite for a successful interaction, together with turn-taking skills.

3.2 Test taking strategies for B2 First Speaking Paper

The Speaking Paper consists of four parts with strictly given timing, each of which focuses on different aspects of oral production and interaction that therefore requires specific test taking strategies.

3.2.1 Test taking strategies for Part 1

Apart from comforting test takers, the main aim of the initial part, called Interview, is a general interaction in a form of a social and personal conversation as each candidate individually responds to everyday life related questions on familiar topics that an interlocutor asks, for example about their home and family, habits and routines, education and work, entertainment, etc. (Burgess & Head 2005).

The effective test taking strategies for this part are practicing answering questions about candidate's life, interests, experiences, plans, etc. with a partner and practicing how to develop them by giving examples or reasons (Harrison 2004). This is beneficial for several reasons. Firstly, they practise talking about various areas of their life and giving some personal information in an extended way and secondly, they become more skilled at interacting with an interlocutor and responding to their questions openly, adding interesting information when necessary. However, Harrison (2014), Brook-Hart (2014) and other ELT specialists warn against preparing fixed answers beforehand for several reasons. Apart from not being natural, this strategy leads to losing marks as examiners recognize memorized answers.

3.2.2 Test taking strategies for Part 2

In this part, called Long turn, each candidate has an opportunity to talk individually for 1 minute without interruption in a presentation type of task with a visual prompt. As Burgess &

Head (2005, 101) postulate, this task is “intended to show the candidate’s ability to speak at length and in appropriately fluent and coherent manner”.

Before comparing a set of two photographs, a candidate should listen to the instructions carefully as well as pay attention to the question stated above the photographs as this question must be answered while talking about the photographs. As test takers are expected to use appropriate vocabulary with correct phrases and grammatical structures to briefly introduce the pictures and then compare the photographs, as well as speculate while expressing ideas connected to the image, Harrison (2014) suggests organising their thoughts before the talk. Apart from having practised useful language for contrasting to talk about similarities and differences between the photos and speculation about the photos, test takers are recommended to monitor what and how they are saying and paraphrase, if necessary, not to waste the allotted time struggling and finding appropriate words. Therefore, it is advisable to keep calm and avoid talking too fast (Harrison 2014), which may negatively affect their fluency and accuracy. In order to estimate the length of the talk and to be able to maintain the flow for a full minute, test takers should practise with a stopwatch or record themselves.

The other candidate, who is not involved in a long turn, is then invited to respond to an additional topic-related question to express preference (Cambridge Assessment English 2019). Candidates should practise using correct phrases for expressing likes and dislikes, preferences, as well as talking about life experience, etc. (Harrison 2014).

3.2.3 Test taking strategies for Part 3

Collaborative task representing Part 3 is a negotiation task, in which candidates are given the opportunity to show “their ability to demonstrate awareness of other points of view and negotiating skills in the tested language” (Burgess & Head 2005, 102).

As test takers are expected to use appropriate functional language to make suggestions, ask for opinion and suggestions, agree and disagree, and give reasons, it is vital to practise a wide range of different expressions not to repeat the same phrases (Harrison 2014). Bell and Thomas (2014) stress the importance of turn-taking skills, avoidance of dominating the discussion by expressing own ideas only but engaging a partner in the conversation. A successful candidate maintains the flow of the discussion for the full time allotted by using appropriate structures and expressions, gives opinions, involves a partner in the talk, listens and reacts to him or her with interest, and speaks for approximately the same amount of time as the other candidate (Brook-Hart 2014).

3.2.4 Test taking strategies for Part 4

The last part, Discussion, relates to the topic in the collaborative task. Burgess & Head (2005, 103) concur that besides the last opportunity given the candidates to “present their speaking abilities at their best”, this is “the most complex of the four task types – candidates are expected to be able to articulate opinions and beliefs”.

As candidates are expected to discuss topic-related issues more in depth by expressing and justifying their opinions (Cambridge Assessment English 2019), they need to use appropriate language for agreeing, disagreeing and reasoning without repetition of the same phrases. They should also practise how to express the feelings, give opinions as well as extend their answers where appropriate by giving reasons, explanations, or examples to provide balanced answers and express their ideas confidently (e.g., Brook-Hart 2014). Bell and Thomas (2014) suggest responding to a partner, asking him or her questions, and making subsequent comments on partner’s opinions to make the discussion more interactive. However, they should bear in mind that even in case of taking the initiative, they should not tend to dominate the discussion.

4. Conclusion of the theoretical part

The first chapter of the thesis introduces the CEFR as a crucial document in language learning, teaching and assessment which becomes the basis for national curricular documents. It also explores the reference levels and communicative language competences defined by this European framework.

The second chapter discusses speaking as a skill and its characteristic features. It also deals with assessment of speaking ability, paying particular attention to summative assessment by major awarding bodies operating both, nationally and internationally. A brief overview of speaking exams by the Czech CERMAT and internationally recognized Trinity College London and Cambridge Assessment English is provided. Their selection is given by the fact that CERMAT is the organization responsible for implementation of the Czech school leaving exam in English and Trinity College London as well as Cambridge Assessment English represent major awarding bodies operating worldwide.

Finally, the third chapter of the theoretical part concentrates on the role of test taking strategies in various testing situations and suggests strategies that test takers use. As the thesis focuses on developing test taking strategies for speaking, this chapter also deals with productive test taking strategies for speaking. First, they are discussed in general and

subsequently, they are explored in greater detail in connection to each part of the speaking paper of Cambridge English: B2 First to provide the basis for the practical part of the thesis.

PRACTICAL PART

5. Aim of the practical part

The main objective of the practical part is to conduct research focusing on employing test taking strategies, generally discussed in the theoretical part, in the speaking exam B2 First. The research is conducted by using a combination of self-administrated questionnaire and focus groups, whose selection is justified in this chapter. Based on the collected data, teaching materials are designed to develop students' test taking strategies for the Speaking Paper of Cambridge English: B2 First. Ready-to-use materials are proposed for teachers, who may use in class them with the aim to help their students develop their test taking strategies for the above mentioned examination.

5.1 Research question

Švaříček, Šed'ová et al. point out (2014, 69) that research questions “perform two basic functions: they help to focus research so that it provides results in line with the set aims, and they also show the way how to conduct the research”. As research questions are syntactically interrogative, I have formed the following main and two additional questions:

- Which test taking strategies do candidates use and find effective in the Speaking Paper of B2 First?
- How do the strategies differ in the various parts of the exam?
- Are candidates aware of the appropriate strategies for each part?

5.2 Research sample

The sample for the purpose of this research comprises a deliberately selected sample of fourteen EFL students with solid background knowledge of Cambridge English Qualifications. Most of them (86%) have previous experience with Cambridge exams at different levels of the CEFR, the vast majority of whom have obtained a B1 Preliminary qualification (83%). All the participants have a good grasp of Cambridge English: B2 First exam format and requirements as they are all attending exam preparation language courses with the intention of taking B2 First examination this academic year. All of them have done some B2 First mock tests and watched a video of candidates taking the Speaking test released by Cambridge Assessment English. The students, aged 18 to 33, participated in the research

conducted in November and December 2021 voluntarily. All of them are Czech native speakers and in terms of gender, six (43%) are female and eight (57%) are male.

As stated above, this research sample was selected deliberately. Chráska (2016) describes deliberate sampling as a method in which research participants are selected on the basis of researcher's judgement without applying a change. Deliberate sampling is in line with research specialists' opinion (e.g., Miovský 2006) who say that the specific feature or status of a respondent becomes the sampling criterium in the sampling process. Miovský (2006, 135) concludes that only individuals who meet the criteria and are willing to participate, are selected. The selective criterion here, which also influences the size of the sample, is taking B2 First this academic year with the goal of passing it with the best possible results.

5.3 Research method

Gavora (2000, 70) defines research method as a used procedure, whose typical features, validity and reliability, need to be maintained. Several research methods have been listed in two main types of research, quantitative, represented by figures and qualitative, represented by words.

To answer the research questions, empirical research is applied in the practical part of the thesis, using mainly qualitative and partly quantitative data collection instruments. Having studied relevant sources, a combination of a self-report questionnaire and focus groups is selected for the reasons justified in the following paragraphs.

5.3.1 Questionnaire

The first research method used in the practical part is a questionnaire. According to Gavora (2000), a questionnaire is one of the most frequent quantitative research methods of acquiring written answers to written questions, which are divided according to the degree of openness to closed, semi-closed and open questions (Gavora 2000, 102).

Pilot testing was conducted before a distribution of the questionnaire as it is highly recommended by research specialists (e.g., Chráska 2016) to ensure that a questionnaire contains questions, which are clear and easy to follow, and potential misleading of respondents is avoided. Pilot testing, which involved two students, resulted in a slight adjustment of a questionnaire in terms of reformulating some questions to avoid metalanguage, which was found unclear and therefore caused misunderstanding.

5.3.1.1 Data collection procedure

The questionnaire for the purpose of this research contains thirteen, mostly open questions, three questions are closed, one is semi-closed, and one question with the Likert-type scale rating. This scale uses a statement and a rated scale for respondents to specify their level of agreement or disagreement (Gavora 2000, 92). While closed questions require yes/no answers, open questions do not provide alternatives and need a great deal of respondents' concentration. Semi-closed questions are assumed as combination of the previous types as they offer alternative answers and then explanation or clarification is expected (Gavora 2000, 104). Inclusion of different types of questions was considered when designing the questionnaire because Gavora (2000) suggests that some questions are closed or semi-closed to avoid stereotype and to maintain the respondents' attention high. He (Gavora 2000) also recommends that a questionnaire sent by mail should be shorter as answering should not last longer than 15 minutes. Therefore, the questionnaire does not exceed one page.

In terms of administration, the questionnaire with instructions on how to complete it was sent to direct e-mail addresses in November 2021 and returned by the same means within 10 days on average. The response rate, which represents the ratio of distributed to responded and subsequently returned questionnaires, is 87% as 16 respondents initially obtained the questionnaire.

The questionnaire sample is available in Appendix A of the thesis.

5.3.1.2 Data analysis method

Each question type is measured and analysed differently by using various tools, which are specified further.

Quantitatively oriented research questions are processed by using mathematical-statistical procedure. Chráska (2016) suggests grouping metrical data and creating tables, a tool used for analysing closed questions in the questionnaire, which aim to find frequency of a phenomenon. In the questionnaire, closed questions are number 6, 7 and 13 and question 11 is semi-closed. Number 10 is a Likert scale question.

On the other hand, open questions are considered to be qualitatively oriented questions. In the questionnaire, open questions are number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 12. Gavora (2000) finds striking similarities between a non-structured interview with freedom of responses and an oral questionnaire. Therefore, an instrument used for analysing open questions in the questionnaire

does not differ from analysing a non-structured interview. Gavora (2000) suggests coding to group answers in broader categories and subsequently dividing them in smaller units. Miovský (2006, 219) defines coding as “assigning keywords or symbols to parts of the text to allow easier and faster work with those parts and to easily work with larger meanings through codes at any time”. In other words, a qualitative instrument of coding answers to open questions is used as they are deemed to be a written interview.

5.3.2 Focus groups

Focus groups are considered (e.g., Miovský 2006) to be one of the most progressive qualitative methods in which the data is obtained by employing a group interaction. Miovský (2006, 175) highlights one of the greatest benefits of this research method, which is the support of spontaneity and immediate reaction of the respondents. The researcher is enabled to observe and understand how a group forms and changes an opinion on the given topic.

5.3.2.1 Data collection procedure

The goal of focus groups in this research is to provide an alternative source of information besides another research method, a self-report questionnaire. The reason is to have greater insight and better understanding of students’ views. Miovský (2006) concludes that in case of combining focus groups with other quantitative methods, two or three focus groups are sufficient. Research specialists (e.g., Chráska 2016) agree that focus groups should consist of six to ten respondents maximum to provide sufficient scope for each respondent to express their opinions and avoid feeling of extreme pressure on each respondent at the same time.

Therefore, two focus groups are created, one consisting of nine respondents who have taken B1 Preliminary (PET) and the other group comprising five students with B2 First mock tests experience.

Miovský (2006, 177) divides focus groups into three main categories, based on their structuring rate to non-structured, semi-structured and structured with each category having its advantages and disadvantages. Having studied relevant resources, semi-structured focus groups were selected. Miovský (2006) suggests using this type of focus groups if researchers wish to provide enough scope for respondents to express their opinions while enabling the moderator to adjust the discussion according to the actual situation to make sure that relevant answers to all important questions are obtained. In this research, the questions asked in the focus group discussions stem from the questionnaire with the aim to gain a considerable insight into the strategies used by the students.

In terms of organization, virtual environment is deemed to be the most efficient way for focus groups to take place due to COVID-19 epidemic prevention measures, specifically the Zoom platform. All the students agreed with their responses being anonymously analysed and interpreted. The meetings lasted 40 and 50 minutes and after overcoming the initial embarrassment of the participants by introducing themselves, they all showed willingness and openness to share their thoughts.

5.3.2.2 Data analysis method

Transcribed data collected in the focus groups are then analysed by categorizing, coding, and classification. Chráska (2016, 171) concludes that classification is the procedure which helps to identify the number of respondents sharing one or more common features. The method used for analysing data obtained in focus groups is similar to the instrument for analysing an open-question questionnaire (Chráska 2016), as described in section 5.3.1.2.

6. Research findings

As the two above mentioned research methods are used in a combination, the findings are interpreted together. Each subchapter of this section deals with answering the research questions in relation to the particular part of the speaking exam. Each subchapter discusses the TTS according to the stages, when they are used, whether before or during the speaking exam.

6.1 Test taking strategies used for Part 1

The vast majority of respondents (86%) find Speaking Part 1 the easiest as shown in the following graph. The reason for Part 1 being considered the least problematic is tightly connected with question types and used test taking strategies. There are two test taking strategies employed by the students before this speaking part and four TTS are used during the exam.

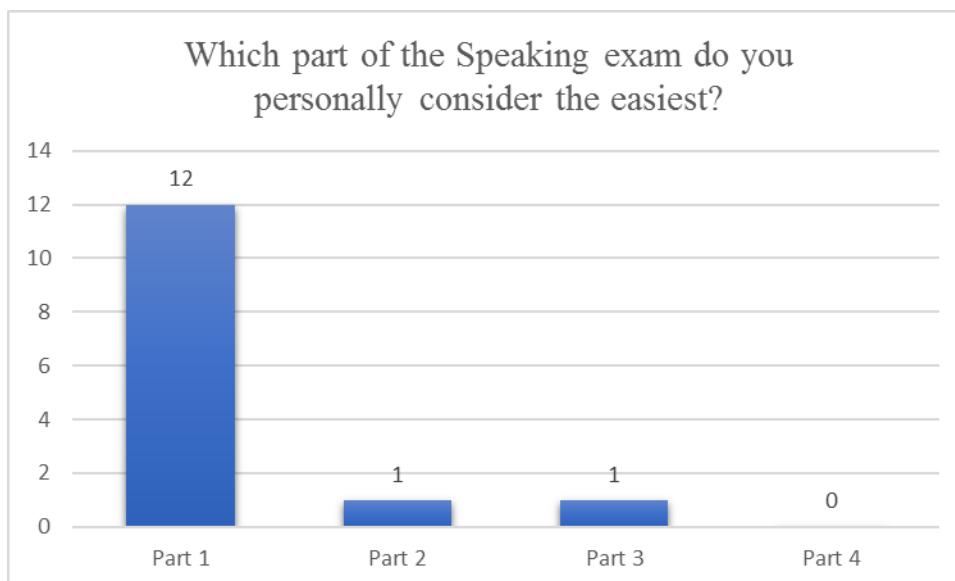


Fig. 1. The easiest part of the Speaking Paper in respondents' view

The most common strategy they find efficient and intentionally employ, is spending a lot of time practicing answers before the exam. They feel more confident about succeeding in this part when they know what type of questions they may expect and consequently, do not find it difficult to talk about one's life and other related topics ('for this part you can prepare more easily than for the others').

Listening to podcasts or songs in English prior to the speaking exam to get more concentrated and "start thinking in English" proved to be a very effective strategy that helps them overcome initial anxiety as they feel rather stressed before the Speaking Paper.

Even though the initial part of the speaking exam is deemed to be a pleasant conversation with an examiner, they can hardly manage without the following deliberately used strategies during the exam:

- being and sounding natural ('be self-confident but not arrogant', 'don't be afraid of talking')
- using complex structures and advanced expressions to balance fluency and accuracy ('use advanced vocab and phrases, grammatically correct')
- extending their answers by giving additional information ('don't be brief', 'examiner's questions aren't hard, you just need to carry on talking until they stop you')
- giving interesting answers

To express oneself in longer sentences consisting of more clauses, they use a variety of linkers, to name some of most used: *and, but, however, because, as, for example, like, also, although*, etc. Some students tend to extend their answers by using a variety of adjectives, adverbs as well as relative pronouns, as revealed in the focus groups.

A slight discrepancy occurs in terms of memorising answers beforehand. Even though the majority of respondents (71%) prefer practicing answers to sample questions from various categories ('You can prepare your answers before the exam, but I don't mean you should learn them like a poem. '), a minority of students (29%), mostly without a B1 certificate, confided memorizing answers and/or phrases beforehand ('I find it helpful to memorise them [answers].') The reason for this strategy is that it helps them to speak fluently and confidently, without unnecessary mistakes and moreover, they avoid situations, in which they "get stuck" or "run out of ideas". However, even these students admit that it is important to answer examiner's questions naturally and not use prepared answers under any circumstances.

To summarize, the respondents are in full agreement that test taking strategies they actively use for this speaking part help improve their performance. The strategies they use before the exam include practicing extended answers to model questions and listening to podcasts in English. Then, the strategies employed during the exam are mainly connected to linguistic competences concerning grammar, vocabulary and phonology, as well as sociolinguistic competences in terms of register. Test-awareness TTS also proved to be efficient as students feel more confident when they know what type of questions they can expect.

6.2 Test taking strategies used for Part 2

Some respondents (29%) find this exam part challenging and one respondent (1%) finds it "enjoyable" as found out in the questionnaire and the focus group discussions.

The reason for Part 2 being found challenging stems from feeling time pressure and suffering from anxiety over organising ideas well enough to answer the question fully and manage to compare the photos relevantly and speculate about them. Half of the students finding this task difficult own it to the speculation, as they are "not good at speculating about things hidden 'behind' the picture". On the other hand, the enjoyment stems from the opportunity to employ one's own imagination.

The respondents are in full agreement that a very important TTS is to be aware of the requirements and keep practicing this task in conformity with them. Most of the respondents

rely on practice in class with the time allotted being measured by a teacher or peers. 29% of the respondents also practise at home, where they record themselves or use a stop-watch.

- ‘At home, I sometimes set the timer to see what it is like to talk for a minute.’
- ‘I record myself on my mobile phone when I do it [this task] at home. Then I listen to it and take notes about the mistakes I made.’

All the students agree that a question stated above the photos helps them feel more relaxed as they can visually perceive the given task. However, a visual perception proved to be more subconscious than a deliberate TTS used during this speaking part.

The respondents, especially those who have taken B1 Preliminary, admit that they need to concentrate more on not starting to describe the photos in detail. To avoid the act of describing the photographs, the strategy of useful language to contrast photos and speculate about them is used. Although some respondents have no B1 Preliminary qualification, they are also aware of the strategy of using appropriate language structures during answering the task and intentionally use it.

- ‘To talk about pictures is not a problem, I use the phrases.’

The students show considerable knowledge of a range of phrases and expressions as they aim to avoid their repetition. To compare and contrast the photos, they named expressions, such as *in both pictures, while, whereas, unlike, on the other hand, another difference is that*, etc. Examples of used phrases for speculation expressed by the respondents are *probably, perhaps, could be, might be, seem to be, look, look like, I think, I guess*, etc.

Most respondents (71%) also acknowledge using the strategy of comparing both of the photos at the same time as they aim to avoid potential problems with the lack of time supposing they talk about one photograph and then the other one. Most of the students (57%) also intentionally employ the strategy of introducing the differences and similarities first and then they continue by answering the question related to the photographs.

- ‘It really helps me when I know how to start because I’m not so nervous then. That’s why I always start with ‘both photos show...’.’

Another vital strategy used by the students for this exam part is organising ideas beforehand, even though only half of them admits using it, despite being aware of its importance. On the

other hand, they are in full agreement that compensation for inaccuracy in their oral production is important and do not hesitate to correct themselves or paraphrase.

- ‘Before I start talking, I look at the photos quickly to see what they have or don’t have in common and make a quick plan in my head what I can say.’
- ‘If I don’t know a word, I try to use different words or describe it.’
- ‘I correct myself if I hear myself saying a mistake.’

To summarize, the participants show that they are conscious of the importance of considerable practice and using the appropriate vocabulary and a range of structures for comparing, contrasting and speculating to avoid repetition of the same words. This strategy is considered one of the most important, together with the strategy of talking about photographs in a complex way, as revealed in the focus group. They are also aware of compensation strategies to compensate for drawbacks in oral production. The strategy of organising ideas before the talk is not widely implemented, nor the strategy of estimating one-minute talk, which causes situations in which students find themselves silent for the remaining seconds. The strategy they use subconsciously and therefore are not aware of, is observing the question stated above the photographs.

6.3 Test taking strategies used for Part 3

Most of the respondents (64%) consider Part 3 as the most challenging to master as shown in the graph below. On the contrary, one respondent (1%) finds this part the easiest because of the pleasure in interactive communication in general.

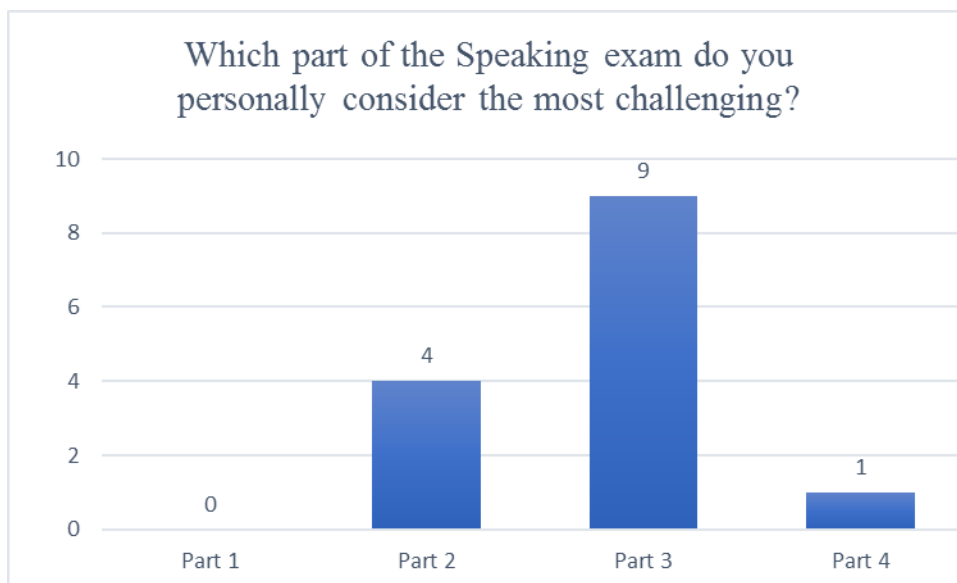


Fig. 2. The most challenging part of the Speaking Paper in respondents' view

Seeing this part as the most difficult is predominantly caused by the task being interactive, and the respondents find oral interaction really challenging, as the focus groups revealed. It is partly given by the fact that young people generally have issues with oral communication on more complex topics as they lack ideas, which was revealed in the focus group discussions ('I don't often know what to say even in Czech'). This opinion was mainly shared by the respondents at the age of 18 and 19, in other words secondary and grammar school students (64%), but also some older respondents as well. Also, while concentrating on ideas, grammar and vocabulary often suffer, of which they are aware ('I make more mistakes and sometimes use simple words in this part.').

The vast majority of respondents give priority to the strategy of using and practicing useful phrases and expressions to suggest ideas, respond sensibly to partner's opinions, as well as agree or disagree. The main reason for their top rank is the fact that memorized phrases give them feeling of security and in case of running out of ideas, they use a phrase to seek their partner's opinion, for example.

Many students prefer starting the conversation by seeking their partner's opinion. They find this strategy fruitful for several reasons. Firstly, they show interest in their partner and secondly, it allows them more thinking time over their own suggestions and answers.

- 'I think it's better to start the conversation because you can start with a question. It's because you get more time to think about what you will say and I think it's also good to be friendly.'

The extent of importance to react to the partner’s suggestions is shown in the graph below. 57% of the respondents find it very important to react to their partner’s suggestions, whereas 43% of them deem it extremely important. The focus groups revealed that it is very important to be a good listener to be able to respond adequately and avoid two parallel individual talks. Another strategy that proved to be efficient can be described as “yes, and” and “yes, but”, as some students pointed out in the group discussions. In other words, they do not simply agree or disagree, but also support one’s agreement or disagreement by adding own ideas.

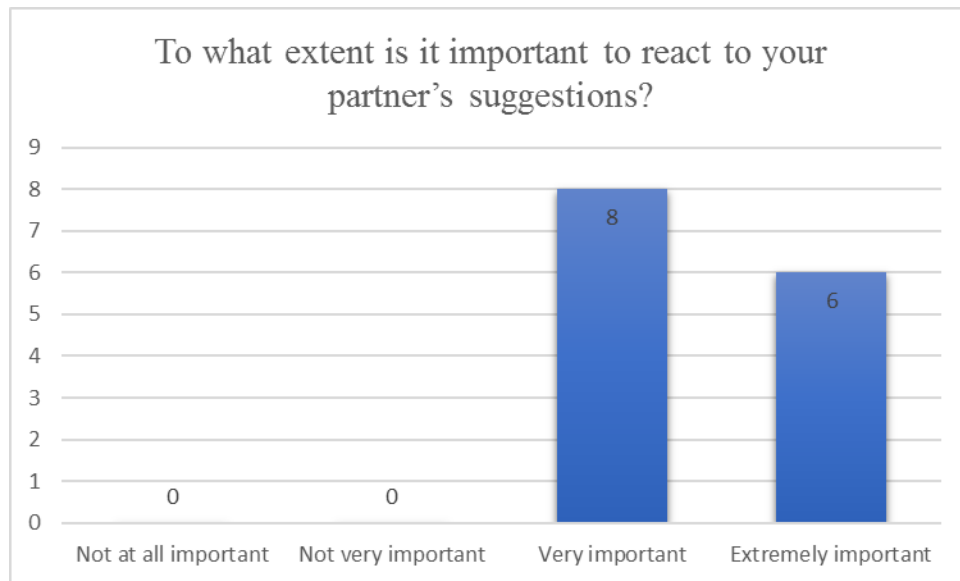


Fig. 3. The importance of reaction to their partner’s suggestions in respondents’ view

The discrepancy in the extent of importance shown in the graph is due to the fact that a response to their partner’s suggestions is not the only strategy employed related to turn-taking skills. It is very important, but it is also vital to maintain the flow of the conversation to avoid long pauses. Long pauses and monologue instead of dialogue are the two most stated points that they should avoid doing in Part 3. To succeed in this, some respondents name the strategy of “a table tennis ball”. Like in the game of table tennis, where a ball goes from one side of the table to the other at a regular frequency, the interactive communication should have regular exchanges to avoid talking for too long. All the students (100%) are consciously aware of the fact that they should not dominate the conversation.

- ‘I must be careful that it isn’t a monologue.’
- ‘It’s important to communicate with a partner and have a conversation, ask questions and react to the ideas of the other one.’

- ‘I think both should talk the same time. Even if one has more ideas, then he or she should give space to the other one and say something like ‘What is your opinion?’ or ‘What do you think about it?’
- ‘I think both should talk the same time. Even if one has more ideas, then he or she should give space to the other one and say something like ‘What’s your opinion?’ or ‘What do you think about it?’.’
- If one of them has a lot of ideas, then he can talk, it’s good for him because he can show bigger vocabulary. But it’s worse for the other one because he may look less clever or smart.’

Although most of them are conscious of the strategy of regular and equal exchanges, they admit occasional struggling how do to it in practice as they lack own ideas which they should promptly supply.

- ‘I feel lost because I don’t have many ideas and I don’t know how to quickly react to the other student.’
- ‘I don’t know what to say, the idea doesn’t come immediately to my mind.’

Apart from linguistic features of oral interaction, the students are in full agreement that they pay attention to paralinguistic features, such as positive body language, especially nodding, smiling and maintaining an eye contact with a speaking partner. These are the most common techniques used by the respondents because they believe it improves the conversation and by doing this, they strengthen the interest in their partner.

On the other hand, a relatively high percentage of respondents (64%) is concerned about their speaking partner, showing worry about equal turn-taking and consequently the anxiety about their partner’s flows having a negative impact on their performance. Considerable anxiety arose in the focus group discussions over the pressure caused by partner’s extreme talkativeness or shyness, unintelligibility, etc. The respondents admit not having a specific strategy to deal with such situations.

- ‘I feel stressed if he doesn’t give me space to talk.’
- ‘I don’t want to be rude to interrupt him.’

To summarize, the most efficient strategy found by the respondents is sufficient practice before the exam which involves using useful functional language to suggest ideas, respond to

partner's opinions, as well as express agreement and disagreement. To respond to their partner, a strategy of extending agreement or disagreement by adding own ideas is vital. They also find the strategy of starting the task beneficial. With regards to turn-taking skills, the strategy to ensure regular and equal exchanges imitating a table tennis ball in a game is found efficient. Therefore, they are aware of avoiding long individual turns and silent pauses. On the other hand, the students are not fully aware of the strategy to deal with anxiety caused by their speaking partner's drawbacks and organising the thoughts beforehand which might result in a situation when they are not able to supply other suggestions.

6.4 Test taking strategies used for Part 4

Similarly to the previous parts of the speaking exam, the respondents agree that practising discussions on controversial topics in class is vital. Not only do they raise awareness of question types in this speaking part, but they also take advantage of these discussions to compare own views with their colleagues' ideas and contribute to them. Moreover, they are enabled to practise useful language to express and justify one's opinion, to introduce general statements as well as to respond to their partner's views.

The strategy used by the respondents during the exam is related to expressing and justifying one's opinion in an extended way, which is deemed extremely important. In order to provide complex answers, they use appropriate linkers to extend ideas and also phrases and expressions to introduce one's point of view and justify expressed opinions. The focus groups revealed their efficient strategy of a mental instruction "always explain why and don't be brief" and "never say I don't know but give personal or general examples". Most commonly used expressions to reach this aim are *I'd say, I personally think / believe, in my opinion, in my view because, as, such as, for example, on the other hand, etc.*

However, this is not the only strategy used and found efficient. The respondents acknowledge applying phrases that help them overcome initial silence and give themselves more time to think as they are expected to discuss the topics they are less familiar with. This is the third most efficient strategy for this speaking part. To think aloud, they use for example:

- 'That's an interesting question.'
- 'That's a tricky question.'
- 'I have never thought about it.'
- 'Let me think for a second.'

To maintain the flow of the discussion in Part 4, the students are aware of involving their partner in the discussion by asking about their experience, for example. This strategy helps them avoid dominating the conversation, for example if the examiner asks a question to both of them.

They are subconsciously aware of the need to listen to their partner answering the questions and paying full attention in course of the whole speaking part even though it is not their turn.

However, also in the speaking part, the students sometimes face problems with being immersed in a vicious circle of repeating themselves instead of developing ideas. The strategy of starting again and organising their speech differently by adding personal experience to the related issue and compensation strategies proved to be very efficient as revealed by the respondents.

To summarize, also this part requires adequate practice in the safe environment of the class, which is the strategy ranked at the top. The next strategy, tightly connected with practising in class, involves learning and active use of phrases and expressions to justify opinions in an extended way following a mental instruction of giving explanations or providing examples. Furthermore, compensation strategies such as allowing oneself enough thinking time by thinking aloud and correcting oneself or explaining something in other words are also found effective in this speaking part. Finally, to involve a speaking partner, enquiring about topic related life experience proved to be fruitful. On the other hand, they subconsciously employ the strategy of listening carefully to the examiner as well as the speaking partner.

7. Designing teaching materials

Based on the research findings, teaching materials are designed to improve test taking strategies with the aim to help students with mainly the most problematic areas, which are parts two and three of the speaking exam, but the materials also help to develop TTS for parts one and four.

7.1 Objectives

The objectives of the teaching materials stem from the research findings. The goal of the materials is to engage students in problematic, but stimulating and achievable tasks that enable them to develop not only test taking strategies focused on a learner, test management and test wiseness but also develop their extralinguistic skills, such as being imaginative and creative.

English language teachers are provided with the student-centred, engaging materials containing a sequence of activities with the attention paid to encouraging their learners to express their own ideas and to adopt an initiate role in using the English language. The materials aim to provide suggestions how to organise thoughts before the actual oral production in Part 2 and interaction in Part 3 as well as to develop ideas during answering the tasks. They also focus on useful functional language required for each task type to reach the communicative aim. Some tasks are also devoted to test-wiseness strategies and time-management strategies, which are as important as language learner strategies. The materials also strive towards building and boosting learners' confidence, one of vital preconditions for exam success.

7.2 Material One

This teaching material focuses on developing test taking strategies mainly for Part 2. The visual material is available in appendix B of the thesis. This subchapter provides EFL teachers with instructions and guidelines how to deal with the designed material.

Teaching objective: To help students develop test taking strategies for Part 2 in the context of eating food.

Activity: Individual and collaborative tasks

Focus: Developing test taking strategies, language processing, interacting

Arrangement: Pairwork

Level: Upper Intermediate (B2 level)

Age: Any

Time: 60 minutes

Preparation:

- Make a sufficient number of copies of handouts: one copy per student.
- Familiarise yourself with the material and activities.

Lead-in:

- Open class discussion. Open the discussion by asking: Which is more important to you – the food you eat or where you eat it and who with? Encourage the students to give reasons for their answers.

- Conduct open class feedback. Elicit answers from the students and their reasons.

Setting up activity 1:

- Focus them on the photograph in activity 1 on your handout you are facing towards them. Ask: What does the photo show? How do you think the people are feeling? What might they find difficult about eating in this situation?
- Put the students into pairs and ask them to discuss the questions.
- Ask if there are any questions regarding the task, if so, answer them.
- Distribute the handout.

Running activity 1:

- While they are discussing the questions, walk around unobtrusively, do not join or interrupt them. Monitor the pairs if they are following the instructions.

Closing activity 1:

- Conduct open class feedback, elicit some ideas from the students.

Setting up activity 2:

- The students work individually. Focus them on the set of photographs of people eating in different situations and ask them to complete the table below with the similarities and differences they noticed and also take notes about how the people might be feeling.

Closing activity 2:

- Ask them to compare their answers in pairs before conducting open class feedback. Then elicit ideas in class feedback.

Setting up activity 3:

- The students work individually. Draw their attention to the sentences and the phrases in the box. Remind them that the sentences are about the set of photos in activity 2 to compare the photographs. Ask them to complete the sentences with one suitable phrase.

Closing activity 3:

- Ask them to compare their answers in pairs.

- Conduct open class feedback, ask different students to read a sentence, one each. Confirm the answer or elicit other suggestions.

Setting up activity 4:

- The students work individually. Ask them to match the beginnings and endings of the sentences to speculate about the photos to answer the question that is printed above the photographs.

Closing activity 4:

- Open class feedback. Read the model answer aloud to the students and ask them to check their answers.

Both photos show people eating food together. In the first picture, we can see a group of friends who look pleased and relaxed because they're all hanging out together, maybe after school or another activity. However, in the other picture, there's a family sitting around the table and they having a big meal, perhaps lunch or dinner. I guess they are sitting in the garden. They look as if they're having a good time, too.

One difference is that in the first picture the teenagers are eating junk food, like burgers and chips, whereas in the second photo they're having a traditional, home-cooked meal. It must be a lot healthier than fast food. The people in this photo are probably feeling happy about spending time with other family members and seem to be enjoying a home-made meal.

In contrast, the group of friends is away from the family, so they can relax and have fun with other people their age or people who they have something in common with. Maybe the teenagers are talking about their day at school or problems they're having, for instance. I bet they're enjoying the fast food, too, even though it's unhealthy. But if you don't eat it very often, I think it's fine.

- After you have finished reading, delegate a student to read the full sentence from activity 4. They read all the sentences in turns.
- Optional: Read the model answer again for students to listen and borrow ideas when doing the speaking task later.

Setting up activity 5:

- The students work in pairs. Focus their attention on the handout you are facing towards them and say that there are ten statements about what they are expected to do in Part 2 of the exam. Some of the statements are false. Ask them to tick the correct box.
- Allow enough time to read the statements and tick the checklist.

Running up activity 5:

- While they are working, walk around unobtrusively and monitor them.

Closing activity 5:

- Conduct open class feedback. Elicit answers and reasons for their answers. Provide further explanation (see the answer key).

Setting up activity 6:

- The students work in pairs. Focus them on the speaking tasks on a separate handout and ask them to do the speaking tasks in turns. While student A is doing the task, student B times him/her. Then, student A asks a question, which student B answers in about 30 seconds. Then, it is turn for student B to do the speaking task and student A times him/her and after a minute-talk of their partner answers the follow-up question.
- Distribute the handout (preferably double-sided with each task on one side).

Running activity 6:

- While they are working on the tasks, walk around unobtrusively, do not join or interrupt them. Monitor the pairs if they are following the instructions and using appropriate language.

Closing activity 6 and setting up a follow-up:

- Give feedback.
- Tell the students that they will do the speaking tasks one more time to improve their performance, this time they use the photographs of their partner.

Follow-up on activity 6:

- The students work in pairs. The students do the speaking tasks in activity 6 again, now student A becomes student B and vice versa. Student A does the speaking task related

to the photographs and student B records him/her on one's mobile phone. After a minute is finished, student B stops the partner by saying 'thank you'. Then the students swap their roles and student A records and times student B.

- While they are working on the tasks, walk around unobtrusively and monitor the pairs if they are following the instructions and using appropriate language.
- After their individual turns, both students listen to each recording in turns and take notes about phrases used for comparing and speculating. They can use the checklist to evaluate each performance.

Answer key:

- Activity 1: Students' own answers.
- Activity 2:

Similarities: people eating together, a relaxing atmosphere

Differences: a group of friends hanging out together, eating unhealthy junk food (burgers and chips), a family sitting in the garden, having a big meal (traditional, home-cooked, healthy)

How are they feeling?

Photo 1: enjoying time away from the family and hanging out with friends, having fun with people their age who they have something in common with

Photo 2: happy about spending time with their extended family, being with family members of more generations (children, parents, grandparents), enjoying a home-made meal, eating outside

- Activity 3:
 1. Both photos
 2. In the other picture
 3. One difference ..., whereas
 4. In contrast
- Activity 4:
 1. They look pleased and relaxed.

2. I guess they're sitting in the garden.
3. They look as if they're having a good time, too.
4. It must be a lot healthier than fast food.
5. The people are probably feeling happy about spending time with other family members.
6. They seem to be enjoying a home-made meal.
7. Maybe the teenagers are talking about their day at school or problems they're having, for instance.

- Activity 5:

1. No

Candidates listen carefully to the examiner giving instructions and then get the task sheet with the two photographs on a similar topic and the question printed above the photographs to visually check what the second part of the task is (the first part is to compare the photographs).

2. No

They should not answer the question immediately. First, they should talk about what is similar and different in the photographs before answering the question.

3. No

They should not simply describe what they can see in each photograph but compare and contrast the two photographs by talking about the similarities and differences by using comparatives and other ways of expressing similarity and difference (remind them of the phrases used in activity 3).

4. No

The task consists of two parts, to compare the photographs and answer the question. First, they should compare the two photographs, point out similarities and differences and then move to the next task written above the photos. If they do not answer the question, they do not fulfil the task in Part 2 fully.

5. Yes

They should focus equally on both photographs rather than talking about one of them. They should make it clear which photo they are talking about.

6. Yes

In the second part, they should speculate about what is happening in the photos and how the people are feeling. They need to guess what they think is probably true.

7. No

They should talk about ideas that are entirely related to the photos.

8. No

If they do not know a specific word, they should explain what they wish to say in other words, they should use paraphrases.

9. Yes

The examiner says 'thank you' when the minute is finished. There is no need for candidates to watch the time as the examiner times them.

10. Yes

They should listen carefully while the other candidate is speaking but do not interrupt or join in the talk. When the examiner asks the listening candidate a question related to the photos, this candidate gives a short answer in approximately 30 seconds.

- Activity 6: Students' own answers.

7.3 Material Two

This teaching material focuses on developing test taking strategies mainly for Part 3. The visual material is available in appendix C of the thesis. This subchapter provides EFL teachers with instructions and guidelines.

Teaching objective: To develop students' test taking strategies for Part 3 in the context of part-time jobs.

Activity: Collaborative tasks

Focus: Developing test taking strategies, interacting with others, language processing

Arrangement: Small groups of three people (pairs in case there are not enough students to form small groups)

Level: Upper Intermediate (B2 level)

Age: Any, preferably young adults

Time: 60 minutes

Preparation:

- Make a sufficient number of copies of handouts: one copy of activity 1 per group of three, one copy of activities 2–4 (preferably a double-sided copy) per student, one copy of activities 5 and 6 per group of three.
- Familiarise yourself with the material and activities.

Lead-in:

- Open class discussion. Ask the students to think about the kind of jobs people often do part-time. Write their ideas on the whiteboard (e.g., waiter, babysitter, fast-food restaurant worker).
- Put the students into small groups and ask: What do you think the advantages and disadvantages of doing these part-time jobs might be? The students brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of doing the part-time jobs written on the whiteboard.
- Conduct open class feedback, elicit ideas.

Setting up activity 1:

- Refer the students to the photos on the handout with activity 1 you are facing towards them and ask them to discuss the questions in small groups, encourage them to give reasons for their opinions.
- Hand out the copies, one for each small group.

Running activity 1:

- Walk around unobtrusively to check if they are following the instructions.
- After that, continue with discreet monitoring, write down examples of good and problematic sentences.

- Do not join in or interrupt the students.

Closing activity 1:

- Once the students have discussed the questions, conduct class feedback. Find out which of the jobs are the most and least popular with the whole class and why.

Setting up activity 2:

- The students work in small groups. Focus them on the task question and ask them to think about the benefits of part-time jobs in general. They make notes on the points in the diagram.
- Distribute the handout (one copy per student).

Closing activity 2:

- Conduct class feedback. Elicit ideas of small groups to each point in the diagram.

Setting up activity 3:

- The students work individually. Focus them on the box with phrases on the handout you are holding, facing towards them. Ask them to match the phrases to the numbered prompts and say that there may be several possible answers. Point out that the mind map with prompts is on the reverse side of their handout.
- Explain that the points in the box are there to give them some ideas to have a discussion, and there are not “right” or “wrong” answers or ideas. In the exam, it’s more important that they interact with each other than just giving their own opinions.

Closing activity 3:

- When they have finished, ask them to compare their answers in their groups and then conduct class feedback to check the answers.

Setting up activity 4:

- The students work in small groups. Focus them on the questions that are related to Part 3 of the exam. Remind the students that in Part 3 of the exam they are assessed on how well they interact with their partner or partners. It is important to have a discussion and that they should give reasons for their ideas before moving to

something else and ask their partners to explain their reasons for their opinions. Give them enough time to discuss the answers in their groups.

Closing activity 4:

- Conduct open class feedback, elicit some useful functional language and provide more suggestions (see the answer key).

Setting up activity 5a):

- Focus the students on the task in the handout you are holding. Remind them that they should discuss each of the prompts in some detail but don't spend too long on any of them as they only have two (a pair) or three (a group of three) minutes to do this. Explain that the points in the boxes are there to give them ideas to start their discussion, and that in the exam they don't need to discuss them all. They can choose the order of prompts to be discussed.
- Ask them to do task 5a) in their groups of three (or a pair) within the given time limit.
- Distribute the handout.

Running activity 5a):

- Time them (2 minutes for a pair, three minutes for groups of three).
- Walk around unobtrusively and monitor them during the time allotted.
- Do not join in or interrupt the students.

Closing activity 5a):

- After the time limit, say: Thank you, which is a signal for students to stop the activity.
- Ask the students how many prompts from the diagram they managed to discuss.
- Give feedback on how well the students responded to what their partners said and comment if one student dominated the conversation.

Setting up activity 5b):

- Tell the students that in the exam they have another minute to make a decision about the discussed topic.

- Focus them on the task and say: Now decide which benefit of having a part-time job is the most important.

Running activity 5b):

- Time them (1 minute) but do not join or interrupt them.

Closing activity 5b):

- After a minute, say: Thank you, which is a signal for students to stop the activity.
- Ask the students if they reached an agreement.
- Explain that in the exam they don't have to agree, as long as they provide good reasons for their opinions.

Setting up activity 6:

- The students work in small groups. Tell them that in the exam, they have to discuss further questions related to the task they have been discussing. Focus them on the questions in activity 6 and ask them to discuss the questions.
- Encourage them to give at least five-sentence answers to give reasons for their opinions.

Running activity 6:

- Monitor but do not get involved in their discussion. You can take notes about good and problematic sentences.

Closing activity 6:

- Conduct class feedback and find out what ideas the whole class can agree on.
- If you have collected any sentences while you were monitoring, write them on the whiteboard. Ask students to work in their groups again and decide which sentences from the list are good English and which not. Elicit corrections to any errors.

Answer key:

- Activity 1: Students' own answers.
- Activity 2: Possible answers:

1. They can make some money, so that they do not depend on pocket money only.
2. They can learn something new, for example how to solve problems that may arise in the workplace.
3. They can learn how to manage your own time and divide it between the job and other duties.
4. They can make new friends or come into contact with people they wouldn't know without the job.
5. They can learn that having a part-time job means having different kinds of duties and responsibilities.

- Activity 3:

learn the value of money 3

take decisions 2, 4

cope with pressure 1

be punctual 1

become more responsible 4

organise your time 1

become more independent 2, 3, 4

make judgements about situations 2

become more self-confident 2, 4, 5

find solutions 2, 4

become more sociable 5

learn teamwork 2, 4, 5

improve communication skills 5

learn new skills 2

- Activity 4: Possible answers:

1.

What do you want to talk about first?

Shall we start with (time management)?

Why don't we start with (time management)?

Let's talk about (time management).

So, why is it a good idea for students to have part-time jobs? What do you think?

2.

Actually, doing a part time job makes you think more carefully about how much time you have and how you can fit everything into a day. So, I think it's useful.

3.

Yeah, definitely. Nothing teaches you the value of money more than when you earn it for yourself. And it's important for people to have their own money and learn how to use it, don't you think?

4.

Involve him/her by asking him/her opinions by saying, e.g.:

How do you think (a part-time job can help you improve time management skills)?

Do you really think that (a part-time job can help you improve time management skills)?

What do you think?

Do you agree?

I think (that a part-time job can help you improve time managements skills because you need to organise your school and work duties well). What about you?

How do you feel about it?

5.

Interrupt politely (e.g., when the partner stops to take a breath) and say e.g.: Yeah, that's a good point and...

Say: Sorry, can I add something to what you said?

6.

Yes, good idea.

That's right/true.

You're right and...

I think so, too.

Yes. Good point!

I agree with that.

7.

I'm sorry, but I don't agree.

I'm afraid I don't agree.

I'm not sure (I agree).

I don't think so.

I suppose so, but... .

It might be true but... .

8.

How about (time management)? What do you think about it?

Shall we discuss (time management) next?

Shall we move on to the next option?

Would you like to talk about (time management)?

Let's move on to the next option.

Maybe we should move on and talk about (time management).

- Activities 5 and 6: Students' own answers.

Variation to activity 5:

- The students work in groups of three. Two students do tasks 5a) and 5b) and the third should time them (two minutes for the discussion and one minute for making a decision per pair), listen and make notes of any useful phrases the two students use. After they have finished, the students change to their roles so that the third student becomes one of the pair and another student times, listens and takes notes. After completing both tasks, the students change the roles again so that they all had a turn at listening and monitoring.
- While they are working on the tasks, walk around unobtrusively and monitor the groups if they are following the instructions.
- After the time limit, ask them to compare their notes and to share any useful expressions they used.

7.4 Material Three

This teaching material focuses on developing test taking strategies mainly for Part 3. The visual material is available in appendix D of the thesis. This subchapter provides EFL teachers with instructions and guidelines.

Teaching objective: To develop students' test taking strategies for Part 3 in the context of making decisions.

Activity: Collaborative tasks

Focus: Developing test taking strategies, interacting with others, language processing

Arrangement: Pairs (a small group of three people in case of an odd number of students)

Level: Upper Intermediate (B2 level)

Age: Any

Time: 45 minutes

Preparation:

- Make a sufficient number of copies of handouts (preferably activities 1–3 on a double-sided copy): one copy per student
- Familiarise yourself with the material and activities.

Lead-in:

- Open class discussion. Ask the students randomly but do not allow much thinking time: Which do you prefer – tea or coffee? Chocolate or crisps? Cat or dog? The sea or mountains? Wine or beer? (make sure you ask this question an adult student), etc.
- Ask: Are you good at making snap decisions?
- Elicit some answers from the students in open class feedback.
- Say: Some decisions are harder and take a long time to make. What decisions usually take more time to make?
- Elicit ideas from the students, write them on the whiteboard and add some other phrases if there are fewer than five, e.g., choosing how to redecorate a room, choosing how to celebrate a birthday, choosing the name of a baby.
- Divide students into pairs.

- Focus them on the phrases on the whiteboard and invite them into a discussion. Say: Here are some things we sometimes need to make decisions about. What do we need to consider when making these decisions?
- Ask the students to discuss five selected items written on the whiteboard.
- Conduct class feedback and compare students' ideas, write their suggestions on the whiteboard next to the topics.

Setting up activity 1:

- The students work in pairs. Focus them on the handout with a mind map you are facing towards them. Tell them that later they will do the speaking task from Part 3, which is a discussion between candidates. Ask them to read the question in the diagram and brainstorm points to consider when making a decision. They write at least three points for each prompt.
- Ask some instruction checking questions to make sure your instructions are clear and then distribute the handout.

Running activity 1:

- Walk around unobtrusively to check if they are following the instructions.

Closing activity 1:

- Conduct class feedback. Elicit answers from the pairs. Provide your suggestions (see the answer key).
- Remind them that in the exam they have 15 seconds to look at the question and prompts and organise their thoughts. There are no "right" or "wrong" ideas.

Setting up activity 2:

- The students work in pairs. Remind the students that in Part 3, it very important to have a good discussion as it is an interactive task. Ask them to suggest three things they should do and three things they shouldn't or don't have to do in Part 3 in the table.

Closing activity 2:

- Conduct class feedback, elicit ideas and provide further suggestions (see the answer key).

Setting up activity 3a):

- The students work in pairs. Focus them on the mind map in activity 1, the question and the prompts. Remind them that they should discuss each of the prompts in some detail but don't spend too long on any of them as they only have two minutes to do this. They can choose the order of prompts to be discussed and they can use their notes from activity 1.
- Ask the students to do the task within the given limit that you time for them (2 minutes).

Running activity 3a):

- Time them.
- Walk around unobtrusively and monitor them during the time allotted.
- Do not join in or interrupt the students.

Closing activity 3a):

- After the time limit, say: Thank you, which is a signal for students to stop the activity.

Setting up activity 3b):

- Tell the students that in the exam they have another minute to make a decision about the discussed topic and you will time them.
- Focus them on the task and say: Now decide which decision is the most difficult decision to make.

Running activity 3b):

- Time them but do not join or interrupt them.

Closing activity 3b):

- After a minute, say: Thank you, which is a signal for students to stop the activity.

Setting up task 4:

- Tell the students you would like to know how they feel about doing this speaking part. Face the final handout towards the students and focus them on the statements to self-evaluate their performance.

- The students work individually. Ask them to tick the points they did and cross those they didn't during activity 3.
- Distribute the handout.
- Give them enough time to think about their answers.

Running activity 4:

- Walk around unobtrusively and monitor if they are following the instructions.

Closing activity 4:

- Conduct open class feedback. Provide further explanation why each point should be ticked or crossed (see the answer key).

Setting up activity 5:

- The students work in pairs. Tell them that in the exam, they have to discuss further questions related to the task in Part 3. Tell them to ask each other the questions in task 6 and remind them that they should extend their answers by giving reasons or examples.

Running activity 5:

- Monitor but do not get involved in their talks. You can take notes about good and problematic sentences.
- Conduct class feedback and find out what their attitude towards making decisions is.
- If you have collected any sentences while you were monitoring, write them on the whiteboard. Ask students to work in their groups again and decide which sentences from the list are good English and which not. Elicit corrections to any errors.

Answer key:

- Activity 1: Possible answers:

Choosing a holiday

1. price (how much they can afford to spend)
2. destination and accommodation (e.g., abroad x locally, hotel x campsite)
3. activities (e.g., cycling, water sports, sightseeing)

Buying a new phone

1. brand
2. price
3. parameters (design, memory, camera)

Choosing a new home

1. location (city x countryside)
2. type (house x flat)
3. availability and accessibility of services (public transport, commuting to work, school)

Applying for a job

1. reputation and background of the company (international x local, established x start-up)
2. job description and prospects of promotion
2. workplace (location – commuting time, team – size, age of colleagues)

Deciding to get married

1. age
2. children
3. own home

- Activity 2: Possible answers:

😊 They should do:

1. ask each other for their opinions, agree and disagree politely
2. add ideas to what their partner said
3. support their ideas by giving reasons or examples
4. use the full time allotted

😞 They shouldn't or don't have to do:

1. dominate the conversation (shouldn't)
2. interrupt the partner rudely (shouldn't)
3. discuss all the prompts (don't have to)
4. come to an agreement in the second question unless they are trying to do so (don't have to)

- Activities 3a) and 3b): Students' own answers.

- Activity 4:

1. ✓

They should have interactive communication in this part. Listening and responding to a partner is important for a discussion. Being natural and positive is also a plus.

2. ×

Remind the students that should respect the rules of turn-taking and they should not dominate the discussion. If students are paired with an uncommunicative candidate, they should encourage their partner and invite him/her to take part in the discussion by asking about his/her opinions, what they think. If they are paired with a candidate who fails to invite them in the discussion, they need to interrupt him/her politely. They are tested on the language they use to work together and penalized for dominating the conversation.

3. ✓

As turn-taking skills are an important aspect of interactive communication, students should avoid dominating the discussion. They should take turns to give their opinions, agree, disagree, etc.

4. ✓

They should explain what they think by giving reasons and explanations and don't leave long pauses.

5. ×

They should respect the rules of turn-taking and it is important to follow up on what their partner says, to respond appropriately.

6. ×

They should talk about each of the prompts in detail. Even though they do not have to discuss all of them, next time they should try to talk about more than only two.

7. ✓

They are not penalized for not discussing all the prompts unless they interact well, which means they involve their partner and respond appropriately. They should develop the conversation by agreeing, disagreeing, or asking questions.

8. ✓

They should use a wide range of vocabulary as range, accuracy and functional language are assessed.

9. ×

They should not rush with reaching a decision as they should make full use of the time available to show they work towards reaching a decision.

10. ✓

However, they do not have to agree. Reassure them that they are not penalized if they do not reach a negotiated decision, as long as it is clear that they are trying to reach a decision.

- Activity 5: Students' own answers.

Variation to activities 3a) and 3b):

- Change pairs and let them do the same activity again with a different partner (partners, in case of an odd number of students).
- Ask students to record their discussions using their mobile phones. They could listen back to what they said and consider how well they interacted with each other. They can use feedback on activity 4 to self-evaluate their performance.

8. Final assessment and its implications

This chapter aims to conclude the research by answering the research questions presented in the first chapter.

The first question asks: Which test taking strategies do candidates use and find effective in the Speaking Paper of B2 First? It can clearly be said that the strategies that students use and find effective are, in addition to the development of their communicative language competences, sufficient familiarity with the format of the oral test, including its requirements, and consequently types of questions that students may expect in an exam. Furthermore, it is the dedication of sufficient time to preparation by answering model questions focusing on oral production and interaction. Using a range of communication strategies is found an essential precondition for a successful exam performance and therefore one of the most effective TTS.

The answer to the second question: How do the strategies differ in the various parts of the exam? is complex. The research findings showed that some test taking strategies are similarly employed in more parts of the exam, such as using compensation strategies, others differ according to the test tasks. In Part 1, the strategy of deliberate avoidance of one-word or brief answers is applied by producing extended and complex utterances. For Part 2, the strategy of practising a minute-long individual talk is used. In this part, the students also use the strategy that helps them avoid detailed description of photos by comparing both at the same time, referring one to another when comparing and speculating. In interactive Part 3, proactivity, but not dominance, is the employed strategy together with a "table tennis ball" strategy related to the regular exchange of speeches, and "yes, but" and "yes, no" technique for developing ideas when expressing agreement or disagreement. In Part 4, the strategies of thinking loudly to buy time, presenting an opinion by extended utterances, along with justifying one's thoughts, or mentioning specific examples from life are used. To successfully involve a partner into the discussion, the strategy of questioning their experience is employed. Another important strategy is knowledge and proper use of appropriate language constructs and functional language depending on the task focus.

The final question aims to find out if the candidates are aware of the appropriate strategies for each part. The research showed that the respondents are fully aware of the appropriate strategies in general and those required for each speaking part, too. They use the strategies consciously. However, they sometimes struggle with practical application of strategies. One

of the goals of the designed teaching materials is to help the students to deal with this problem.

The respondents participating in the research provided valuable information on the important role of test taking strategies when preparing for and during an exam. Designed teaching materials reflect the research findings showing that parts two and three are considered the most challenging. However, some activities in the teaching materials help to improve test taking strategies for parts one and four, too.

Potential further research may aim to answer the question how the teaching materials are dealt with and whether their aim to develop and improve test taking strategies for the Speaking Paper of B2 First is fulfilled with a larger target group of students.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor thesis deals with the topic of developing test taking strategies for students taking Cambridge English: B2 First, Speaking exam. The aim of the thesis is to design teaching materials to develop students' test taking speaking strategies for the above-mentioned exam, based on the research findings. The thesis comprises two parts, theoretical and practical.

The theoretical part consists of four chapters. The first chapter introduces the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which defines six common reference levels in different language areas through independent illustrative descriptors, and communicative language competences.

In the second chapter, the skill of speaking is briefly explored, together with a short introduction of the approaches to its summative assessment by major awarding bodies, international and Czech, specifically CERMAT, Trinity College London and Cambridge Assessment English.

In the third chapter, test taking strategies and their importance are discussed, first in general and subsequently focusing specifically on those suitable for B2 First, Speaking exam.

The fourth chapter summarizes the theoretical part, which provides the basis for the practical part.

The main aim of the practical part is to conduct the research on employing test taking strategies in B2 First speaking exam by using a combination of a self-administrated questionnaire and focus groups. Based on the data, teaching materials are designed to develop students' test taking strategies. The practical part also consists of four chapters.

The fifth chapter starts with introducing the research questions, research sample and research methodology, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research instruments is justified.

The sixth chapter deals with research findings which are presented in relation to each of the four parts of the Speaking Paper. Based on the research findings, three engaging teaching materials are designed to help students develop their test taking strategies.

The seventh chapter informs about the objectives of the designed materials, and it also contains step-by-step guidelines for EFL teachers how to deal with the teaching materials. Ready-to-use teaching materials with a sequence of activities can be found in the appendices of the thesis.

The final chapter concludes the research and its implications. It was found out that some test taking strategies are consistently used for all parts of the speaking exam, while the others differ according to the focus of the test tasks. The strategies that the students use and find effective are sufficient familiarity with the test format and its requirements as well as the dedication of sufficient preparation time to answering model questions. Another inevitable employed TTS are the practice and subsequently effective use of communication strategies focusing on oral production and interaction. Furthermore, the development and mastery of communication skills and communicative language competences in general is vital not only for improving one's exam performance and results but it also plays a crucial role in everyday use of the English language for communication.

RESUMÉ

Tato práce se zabývá problematikou rozvoje zkuškových strategií u studentů skládajících jazykovou zkoušku Cambridge English B2 First. Cíl práce je směřován k vytvoření materiálů k výuce osvojení zkuškových strategií pro ústní část výše uvedené jazykové zkoušky. Na základě teoretické části byla vybrána kritéria pro postup výzkumu, který se zabýval využíváním strategií v testování pro studenty. Celá práce je koncipována do dvou hlavních částí, a to do teoretické a praktické.

Teoretická část se skládá ze čtyř hlavních kapitol. První z nich představuje Společný evropský referenční rámec pro jazyky (dále bude v textu používán zkrácený název Rámec) vytvořený Radou Evropy. Rámec poskytuje obecný základ pro vypracování jazykových sylabů, směrnic pro vývoj kurikul, zkoušek atd. v celé Evropě. V Rámci je detailně popsána jazyková dovednost na stupnici skládající se ze šesti jazykových úrovní, od nejnižší pre-A1 úrovně, po nejvyšší úroveň C2. Jednotlivé jazykové úrovně vyhodnocují a popisují jazykové kompetence, tedy míru zvládnutí cizího jazyka, pomocí tzv. deskriptorů v jednotlivých oblastech jazyka.

Rámec byl poprvé představen v roce 2001 a následně v roce 2020 bylo publikováno Doplňující vydání Rámce, tzv. Companion volume, které původní vydání nenahrazuje, ale přináší nový náhled na jazyk, jeho učení (se), používání a hodnocení. Jedna ze změn je odklon od tradičního modelu řečových dovedností poslechu, mluvení, čtení a psaní. Nově je zavedena koncepce vycházející ze vzájemně propojených komunikačních činností, kterými jsou produkce, recepce, interakce a mediace. V práci je používán původní termín mluvení s odkazem na kvalitativní aspekty mluveného projevu jazyka, kterými podle Rámce jsou rozsah, přesnost, plynulost, interakce, koherence a fonologie.

Rámec také definuje komunikativní jazykové dovednosti, které představují znalosti a dovednosti umocňující jedinci komunikovat za využití jazykových prostředků. Jazykové kompetence se skládají z několika vzájemně provázaných komponent, které jsou členěny do

tří hlavních skupin, a to lingvistické, sociolingvistické a pragmatické. Lingvistické kompetence se týkají rozsahu a kvality znalostí jazyka ve smyslu slovní zásoby, gramatické správnosti, výslovnosti a pravopisu. Zatímco sociolingvistické kompetence se vztahují k sociokulturním podmínkám jazyka a odráží společenské konvence v komunikaci, pragmatické kompetence se týkají funkčního využití jazykových prostředků, které jsou využívány při interakčních výměnách. Do těchto kompetencí spadá také plynulost jazykové promluvy, její koheze a koherence.

Druhá kapitola přesouvá pozornost na komunikační dovednost mluvení spolu s představením přístupů k hodnocení této dovednosti hlavními mezinárodními i českými organizacemi specializujícími se na jazykové zkoušky. Mluvení jako produktivní řečová dovednost je komplexní jev, považovaný za jednu z nejobtížnějších složek osvojování cizího jazyka. Důvodem jsou zejména specifické vlastnosti mluvení. Kapitola pojednává o jednotlivých elementech ústní produkce i interakce, které kromě slovní zásoby a gramatiky zahrnují i výslovnost s fonologickými aspekty a plynulostí řeči. Mluvený projev je také doprovázen hlasovými i tělesnými paralingvistickými prvky, např. tónem hlasu či řečí těla, které mohou naprosto změnit obsah sdělení. Kvalita a přesnost autentického ústního projevu jsou ovlivněny různými faktory, např. odehrává se v reálném čase s minimální možností přípravy na promluvu a většinou je interaktivní, tedy se odehrává mezi mluvčím a posluchačem. Charakteristické vlastnosti ústního projevu vyžadují od mluvčích nejen znalosti o jazyce, např. slovní zásoby, gramatiky, fonetiky, funkčního jazyka či diskurzu, ale také dovednosti je používat, aby bylo dosaženo komunikačního cíle.

Tato kapitola se také věnuje sumativnímu, tedy konečnému, hodnocení komunikativní dovednosti mluvení třemi významnými organizacemi a jejich zkouškám. Konkrétně se jedná o Centrum pro zjišťování výsledků vzdělávání (CERMAT) a maturitní zkoušku, Trinity College London a odstupňované zkoušky v mluvené angličtině, tzv. Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE), a dále Cambridge Assessment English a zkoušky Cambridge English, tzv. Cambridge English Qualifications. Zatímco CERMAT testuje českou státní

maturitní zkouškou z anglického jazyka znalost kandidátů na úrovni B1 podle Rámce, GESE a Cambridge English zkoušky zjišťují komunikativní dovednost mluvení na všech úrovních, od pre-A1 až po C2. Všechny zkoušky hodnotí ústní produkci i interakci v různých formách promluvy, ve kterých kandidáti prokazují znalost lingvistických, sociolingvistických i pragmatických komunikativních kompetencí. Jedná se především o gramatickou přesnost, znalost slovní zásoby včetně funkčního jazyka a fonologie z hlediska přesnosti a plynulosti řeči. Kandidáti také prokazují schopnost reagovat adekvátně na komunikačního partnera.

Ve třetí kapitole jsou diskutovány testové strategie a jejich důležitost, nejdříve obecně a následně je pozornost zaměřena na ty, které jsou vhodné pro ústní zkoušku B2 First. Využívání testových strategií pomáhá uchazečům nejen zdokonalit svůj výkon u zkoušky a následně výsledné hodnocení, ale zároveň překonat úvodní nervozitu u zkoušky. Jsou chápány jako záměrné myšlenkové procesy, které kandidáti využívají v různých testových situacích ke zvládnutí požadovaných úkolů. Testové strategie představují souhrnný termín zastřešující různé techniky, které lze rozdělit do tří hlavních kategorií, a to zaměřených na studenta jazyků, organizaci času při testech a obeznámení se s testy a jejich formátem. Na testové strategie je možné pohlížet z hlediska jazykových dovedností, typu úloh a otázek, nebo fázi zkoušky, ve které jsou používány, zda před, během nebo po zodpovězení testových otázek.

Testové strategie používané u zkoušky B2 First jsou diskutovány s ohledem na jednotlivé části ústní zkoušky. Avšak některé jsou aplikovatelné pro všechny části zkoušky, jako například důkladná příprava před samotnou zkouškou a obeznámení se s typy úloh, co konkrétně testují. Pro první část zkoušky zaměřenou na interakci se zkoušejícím je doporučována strategie procvičování rozšířených odpovědí na otázky týkající se každodenního života, což však neznamená, že by se kandidáti měli učit odpovědi nazpaměť. Ve druhé části zkoušky zaměřené na orální produkci by měli kandidáti věnovat záměrnou pozornost využití vhodných slovních spojení pro porovnání a spekulaci, organizování

myšlenek, a zároveň vyvážit správnost vyjadřování s fonologickými aspekty ústního projevu. Během třetí, interaktivní, části zkoušky je kandidátům doporučováno věnovat pozornost rovnoměrnému střídání replik v rozhovoru a udržování plynulé konverzace. Dále je žádoucí využívat vhodného funkčního jazyka pro účely návrhu, souhlasu, či nesouhlasu. Závěrečná fáze také zahrnuje ústní interakci. Zde mají kandidáti věnovat pozornost tomu, jak vhodně a s co největší přesností formulovat a prezentovat své pocity a názory a dále, jak reagovat na své komunikační partnery, což v tomto případě jsou zkoušející a druhý kandidát.

Závěrečná, čtvrtá kapitola shrnuje hlavní poznatky teoretické části, které poskytují základ pro část praktickou.

Praktická část si klade za cíl provést výzkum se zaměřením na používané testové strategie při ústní zkoušce B2 First za použití kombinace kvantitativních a kvalitativních metod a následné vytvoření učebních materiálů. Praktická část je také rozdělena do čtyř hlavních částí.

V úvodní fázi jsou přestaveny výzkumné otázky, výzkumný vzorek a metodologie výzkumu. Hlavní výzkumná otázka si klade za cíl zjistit, jaké testové strategie kandidáti používají a shledávají efektivními při ústní zkoušce B2 First. Dále byly formulovány dvě doplňkové otázky zaměřené na zjištění, jak se tyto strategie mění podle různých částí ústní zkoušky a zda si jsou studenti vědomi vhodných strategií pro jednotlivé části. Výzkumný vzorek tvoří čtrnáct frekventantů přípravných kurzů ke zkoušce B2 First ve věku 18 až 33 let, kteří budou v tomto akademickém roce skládat výše uvedenou jazykovou zkoušku. Zvoleným výzkumným nástrojem je kombinace dotazníku, souhrnně obsahujícího třináct uzavřených, polouzavřených i otevřených otázek, a dvou polostrukturovaných ohniskových skupin. Dotazník byl studentům zaslán k vyplnění prostřednictvím osobních e-mailových adres a diskuse s ohniskovými skupinami se také uskutečnily ve virtuálním prostředí, na platformě Zoom.

Šestá kapitola seznamuje s výsledky výzkumu, odpovídá na výzkumné otázky v oddílech věnovaných jednotlivým částem ústní zkoušky. V první části zkoušky se uplatňuje strategie záměrného vyvarování se jednoslovných odpovědí nebo stručných vyjádření, a to produkcí rozvinutých větných celků. Pro druhou část je využívána strategie nácviku minutového samostatného ústního projevu a jeho naplánování. V této části také studenti využívají strategii, která jim napomáhá vyvarovat se detailního popisování fotografií, a to, že mluví o obou současně, při porovnání a spekulování se odkazují z jedné na druhou. Ve třetí části je efektivní strategií shledána proaktivita, nikoliv však dominance, dále strategie „tenisového míčku“ související s pravidelnou výměnou promluv, a zároveň technika pro doplnění myšlenek při vyjadřování souhlasu či nesouhlasu. Ve čtvrté části zkoušky jsou zmíněny strategie hlasitého přemýšlení pro získání času, prezentování názoru rozvinutými větami spolu s odůvodňováním vlastních myšlenek, případně zmíněním konkrétních příkladů ze života. Pro úspěšné začlenění partnera do diskuse se osvědčilo dotazování se na jeho zkušenosti. Další důležitou strategií je znalost a správné využívání vhodných jazykových konstruktů a funkčního jazyka v závislosti na testových úlohách. Zmíněné strategie jsou studenty používány záměrně a vědomě.

Sedmá kapitola je věnována vytvoření učebních materiálů, jejichž cílem je za pomoci stimulujících úkolů osvojit si všechny atributy testových strategií. Materiály byly navrženy na základě výsledků výzkumu, z nichž vyplývá, že druhá a třetí část jsou považovány za problematické. Tři podkapitoly podrobně provádí vyučující krok za krokem, jak učební materiály využít při práci se studenty. Samotné materiály obsahující různé, na sebe navazující aktivity připravené pro přímou distribuci studentům, se nachází v příloze práce.

Osmá kapitola shrnuje výzkum a jeho dopady. Výzkumem bylo zjištěno, že některé testové strategie jsou shodně využívány pro všechny části zkoušky, další se odlišují podle zaměření testových úloh. Jednoznačně lze říci, že strategiemi, které studenti používají a shledávají efektivními, jsou kromě rozvoje komunikativních jazykových kompetencí studenta

dostatečné obeznámení se s formátem ústní zkoušky včetně jejích požadavků a z toho vyplývajícími typy otázek, které studenti mohou očekávat. Dále lze jmenovat věnování dostatečného času přípravě spočívající ve zodpovídání modelových otázek se zaměřením na ústní produkci či interakci a využívání vhodných komunikačních strategií.

Závěrem lze říct, že studenti, kteří se výzkumu účastnili, poskytli cenné informace o důležitosti testových strategií při přípravě na zkoušku i během zkoušky samotné. Případný budoucí výzkum by se mohl zabývat otázkou, jak je s učebními materiály nakládáno a zda jejich záměr, tedy rozvoj testových strategií pro ústní zkoušku B2 First, byl naplněn u širší cílové skupiny studentů.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alevizos, Kathryn, Suzanne Gaynor, Megan Roderick. 2018. *Gold experience*. 2nd ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Amer, Aly Anwar. 1993. "Teaching EFL students to use a test-taking strategy." *Language Testing* 10, no. 1 (March 1993): 71–77.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/026553229301000104>.

Bicağ, Bayram. 2013. "Scales for Test Preparation and Test Taking Strategies." *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice* 13, no.1 (Winter 2013): 279–289.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286504141>.

Brown, Gillian, George Yule. 1983. *Teaching the Spoken Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bell Jan, Amanda Thomas. 2014. *Gold First*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Brook-Hart, Guy. 2014. *Complete First*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brook-Hart, Guy et al. 2019. *Complete First for Schools*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burgess Sally, Katie Head. 2005. *How to Teach for Exams*. Edited by Jeremy Harmer. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Bygate, Martin. 1987. *Speaking*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cambridgeenglish.org. "Cambridge English Qualifications." Exam and tests. Accessed October 28, 2021. <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/qualifications>.

Cambridge Assessment English. 2019. *B2 First. Handbook for Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge Assessment English.

Cermat. "School Leaving Examination." Maturita. Accessed October 28, 2021. <https://maturita.cermat.cz/menu/maturitni-zkouska>.

Chráská, Miroslav. 2016. *Metody pedagogického výzkumu*. 2nd ed. Praha: Grada Publishing.

Cohen, Andrew D. 2006. "The Coming of Age of Research on Test-Taking Strategies." *Language Assessment Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (2006): 307–331. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434300701333129>.

Cohen, Andrew D. 2011. *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Council of Europe. 2001. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Council of Europe. 2020. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment - Companion Volume*. Accessed October 28, 2021. <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4>.

Culhane, Joseph W. 1983. "Should Test-Taking Strategies Be Taught?". *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 57, no. 3 (November 1983): 101–102. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30185566>.

Dodeen, Hamzeh. 2015. "Teaching Test-Taking Strategies: Importance and Techniques." *Psychology Research* 5, no. 2 (February 2015): 108–113.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348207908>.

Duckworth, Michael, Kathy Gude, Jenny Quintana. 2017. *Venture in First for Schools*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gavora, Peter. 2000. *Úvod do pedagogického výzkumu*. Brno: Paido.

Goh, Christine C. M., Anne Burns. 2012. *Teaching Speaking: A Holistic Approach*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Harmer, Jeremy. 2007. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. 4th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Harrison, Mark. 2014. *First Testbuilder*. 3rd ed. London: Macmillan Education.

Kenny, Nick, Lucrecia Luque-Mortimer. 2014. *Cambridge English First Practice Tests Plus 2 New Edition*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Luoma, Sari. 2004. *Assessing Speaking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Miovský, Michal. 2006. *Kvalitativní přístup a metody v psychologickém výzkumu*. Praha: Grada Publishing.

Mohammed, Ibtisam Jassim. 2021. "Test Taking Strategies." *Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities* 28, no. 3 (March 2021): 78-90.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.25130/jtuh.28.2021.05>.

Norris, Roy. 2013. *Ready for First*. 3rd ed. London: Macmillan Education.

Norris, Roy. 2016. *Straight to First*. London: Macmillan Education.

Rozakis, Laure. 2003. *Test Taking Strategies & Study Skills for the Utterly Confused*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Statnimatorita-anglictina. "Speaking exam." Accessed October 28, 2021. <https://www.statnimatorita-anglictina.cz/ustni-zkouska>.

Švaříček, Roman, Klára Šed'ová et al. 2014. *Kvalitativní výzkum v pedagogických vědách*. 2nd ed. Praha: Portál.

Thornbury, Scott. 2005. *How to Teach Speaking*. Edited by Jeremy Harmer. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Trinity College. "GESE – Graded Examinations in Spoken English." Accessed October 28, 2021. <https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/english-language/GESE>.

Ur, Penny. 2012. *A Course in English Language Teaching*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire	81
Appendix B: Teaching material 1	82
Appendix C: Teaching material 2	87
Appendix D: Teaching material 3	91

Questionnaire: B2 First Speaking Paper

B2 First Speaking Paper consists of 4 parts:

Part 1: Interview (conversation with an examiner)

Part 3: Collaborative task

Part 2: Long turn (set of 2 photographs)

Part 4: Discussion

Male/Female (*circle*)

Student's Age:

1. When did you take your last Cambridge Exam and what level was it?
2. Which part of the Speaking exam do you personally consider the easiest and why? Part _____ because:
3. Which part of the Speaking exam do you personally consider the most challenging and why? Part _____ because:
4. How do you approach Speaking Part 1 to make a good impression on the examiner?
5. How do you make your answers longer – what words and phrases do you use?
6. Is it a good idea to memorise answers for Part 1 beforehand?
7. In Part 2, do you talk about each photo separately one after another?
8. Give examples of words/phrases that you use in Part 2 to - compare pictures: - contrast pictures: - speculate about them:
9. What do you do first in Part 3 and how do you finish this part?
10. To what extent is it important to react to your partner's suggestions? <i>Circle:</i> 1 2 3 4 Not at all important Not very important Very important Extremely important
11. Is there anything you should avoid doing in Part 3? If yes, what?
12. How do you keep the conversation going in Part 4?
13. If you have a lot of ideas, is it OK to talk more than your partner?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire and sending it to v.hnatkova@volny.cz.

By returning this questionnaire I agree with my responses being used anonymously for the purpose of Vladana Hnátková's qualification work.

Material One

Activity 1: Work in pairs and answer the questions.

- What does the photo show?
- How do you think the people are feeling?
- What might they find difficult about eating in this situation?



(Adapted from: Alevizos, Kathryn, Suzanne Gaynor, Megan Roderick. 2018.)

Activity 2: Look at the two photographs showing people eating. How many similarities and differences can you find between photos A and B? How are the people feeling? Complete the table below.

How do you think the people are feeling in these situations?



(Adapted from: Duckworth, Michael, Kathy Gude, Jenny Quintana. 2017.)

<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>	<i>How are they feeling?</i>
		<i>Photo 1:</i>
		<i>Photo 2:</i>

(Adapted from: Alevizos, Kathryn, Suzanne Gaynor, Megan Roderick. 2018.)

Activity 3: Complete the sentences for comparing and contrasting photographs with a word from the box. Then compare your answers with a partner.

in contrast both photos in the other picture one difference whereas

- show people eating food together.
-, there's a family sitting around the table.
- is that in the first picture the teenagers are eating junk food.
..... in the second photo they're having a traditional, home-cooked meal.
-, the group of friends is away from family.

(Adapted from: Duckworth, Michael, Kathy Gude, Jenny Quintana. 2017.)

Activity 4: Match the beginnings and endings of these sentences for speculating about the photos. Then listen and check your answers.

- They look enjoying a home-made meal.
- I guess they pleased and relaxed.
- They look as if talking about their day at school or problems they're having, for instance.
- It must be they're having a good time, too.

- 5. The people are probably ’re sitting in the garden.
- 6. They seem to be a lot healthier than fast food.
- 7. Maybe the teenagers are feeling happy about spending time with other family members.

(Based on: Brook-Hart, Guy et al. 2019.)

Activity 5: Work in pairs. Read the statements below and tick the checklist.

What are you expected to do in Part 2? Tick the correct box.

	Yes	No
1. Read the question aloud before you start answering it.		
2. Answer the question immediately.		
3. Describe each photo in detail.		
4. Compare the photos but not necessarily answer the question.		
5. Refer to the first photo when talking about the second photo.		
6. Speculate about the photos.		
7. Talk about things which are not connected with the question.		
8. Ask another candidate for help when I don't know a specific word.		
9. Speak until the examiner says: 'Thank you'.		
10. Listen to your partner and then answer a follow-up question the examiner will ask you.		

(Adapted from: Brook-Hart, Guy et al. 2019.)

Activity 6: Work in pairs. Take turns to do speaking tasks.

Student A: Do the speaking task. Then, ask Student B a follow-up question.

Student B: Time your partner (1 minute) and say 'thank you' after a minute is over.

Task 1

Student A: Here are your photographs. They show people preparing food. I'd like you to compare the photographs and say how the people might be feeling about the food they are preparing.

Student B: Do you think young people should learn to cook at school?



(Adapted from: Brook-Hart, Guy et al. 2019.)

Task 2

Student B: Here are your photographs. They show people having meals in different places. I'd like you to compare the photographs and say why the people might have chosen to eat in these places.

Student A: Do you enjoy eating in restaurants?

• Why might the people have chosen to eat in these places?



(Adapted from: Kenny, Nick, Lucrecia Luque-Mortimer. 2014.)

Material Two

Activity 1: Work in groups of three. Look at the photos and discuss the questions below.



Source: Brook-Hart, Guy et al. 2019.

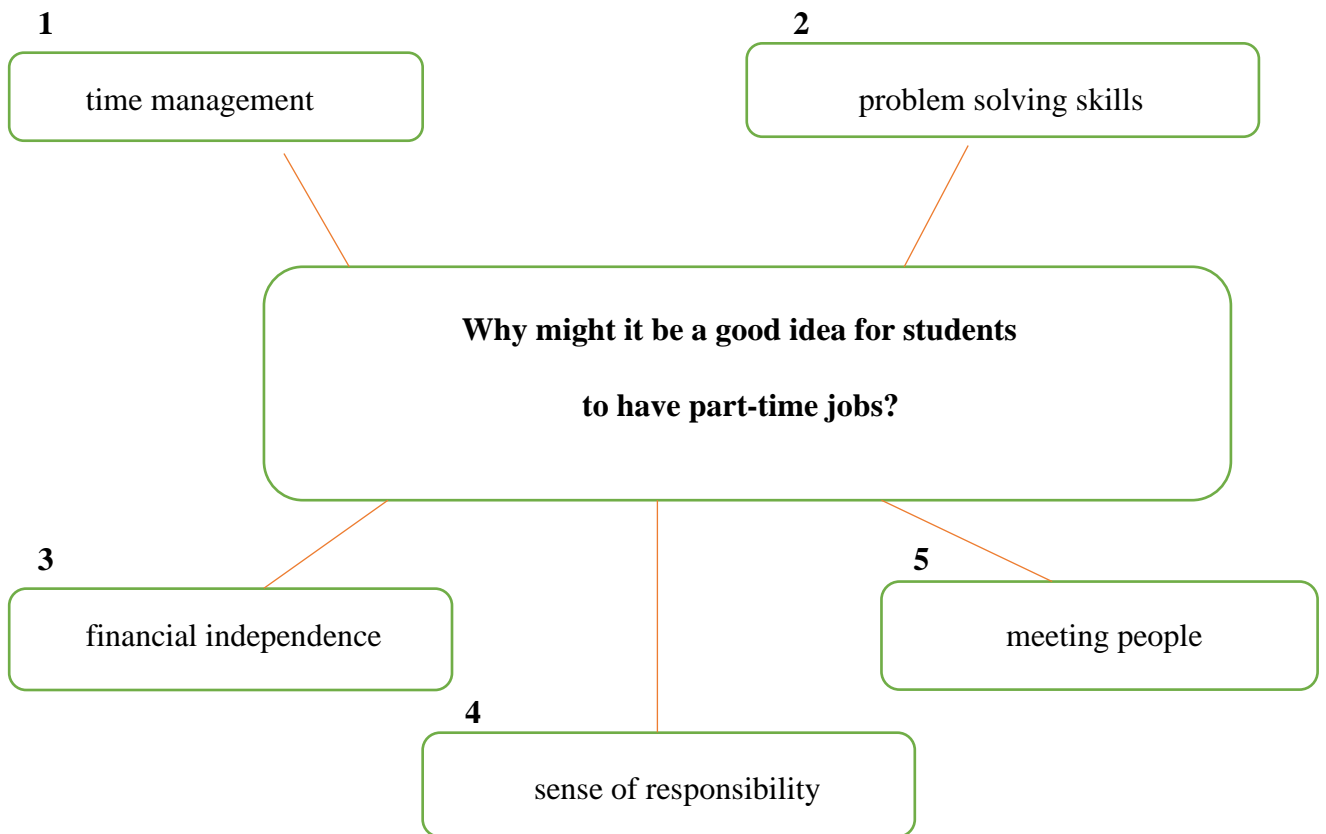
- What part-time jobs do the pictures show?
- Which jobs in the photos would be the best for a student in their free time or during their holidays?
- What skills do you need to do them?
- Which job would prefer to do and why?
- Which job would least like to do and why?

(Adapted from: Brook-Hart, Guy et al. 2019.)

Activity 2: Work in groups of three. Read the task about the benefits of students having part-time jobs. Make notes about it might be a good idea for students to have part-time jobs.

Why might it be a good idea for students to have part-time jobs?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



(Adapted from: Alevizos, Kathryn, Suzanne Gaynor, Megan Roderick. 2018.)

Activity 3: Read the task again. Which of these phrases could you use for each point?

The phrases could be used to discuss more than one point. Match the phrases with the numbered prompts.

<i>learn the value of money</i>	<i>take decisions</i>
<i>cope with pressure</i>	<i>be punctual</i>
<i>become more responsible</i>	<i>organise your time</i>
<i>become more independent</i>	<i>make judgements about situations</i>
<i>become more self-confident</i>	<i>find solutions</i>
<i>become more sociable</i>	<i>learn teamwork</i>
<i>improve communication skills</i>	<i>learn new skills</i>

(Adapted from: Alevizos, Kathryn, Suzanne Gaynor, Megan Roderick. 2018.)

Activity 4: Work in groups of three. Discuss the questions.

1. How could you start the conversation? Give 3 examples.
2. How would you respond to the following statement?

I'm not sure if having a job help to improve time management skills.

3. How would you respond to the following question?

Do you think that part-time jobs give you financial independence?

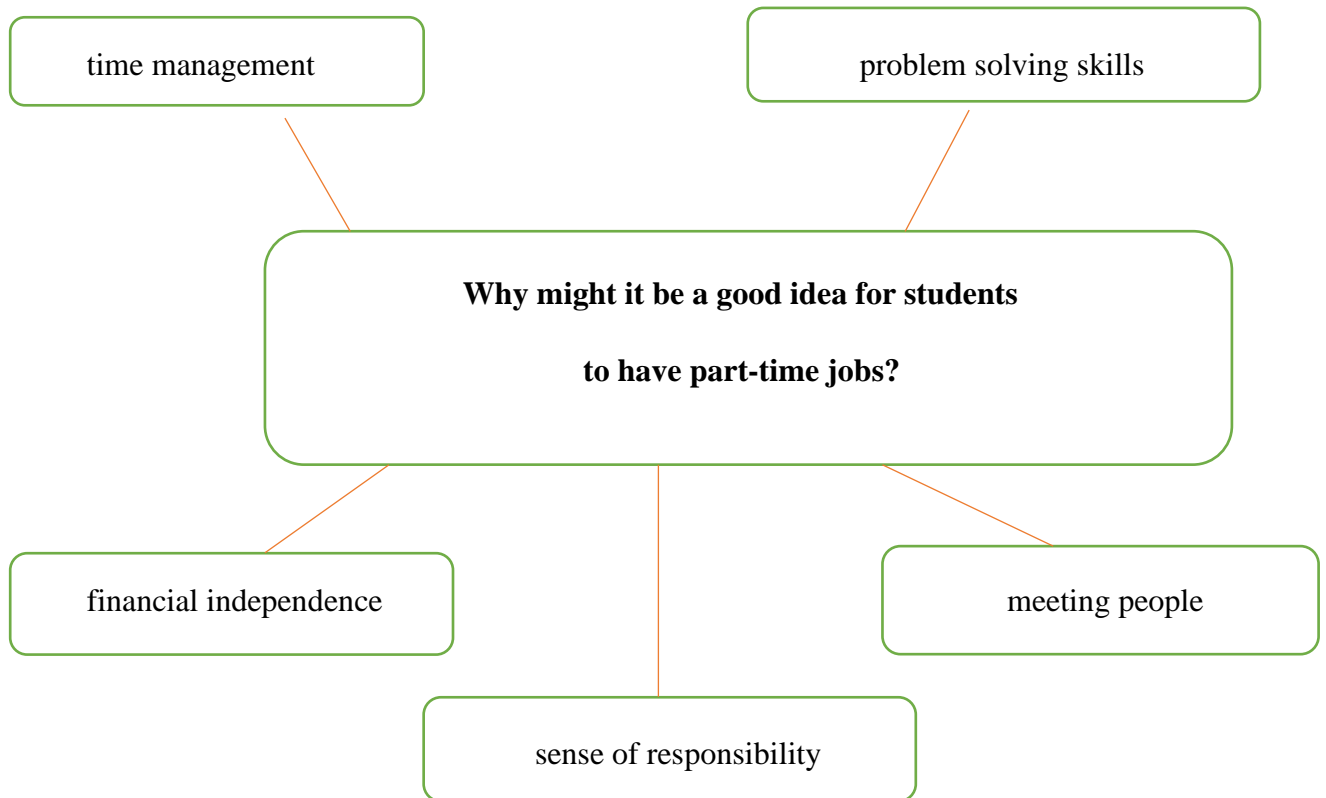
4. What would you do if your partner seems happy to let you do most of the talking?
5. What would you do if your partner keeps talking and doesn't let you give your opinion?
6. What 3 different phrases can you use to agree with your partner?
7. What 3 different phrases can you use to politely disagree with your partner?
8. What 3 different phrases can you use to moving to another prompt?

(Adapted from: Alevizos, Kathryn, Suzanne Gaynor, Megan Roderick. 2018.)

Activity 5: Work in groups of three and do the speaking task below.

a) Talk to each other about why it might be a good idea for students to have part time jobs.

b) Now decide which benefit of having a part-time job is the most important.



(Adapted from: Alevizos, Kathryn, Suzanne Gaynor, Megan Roderick. 2018.)

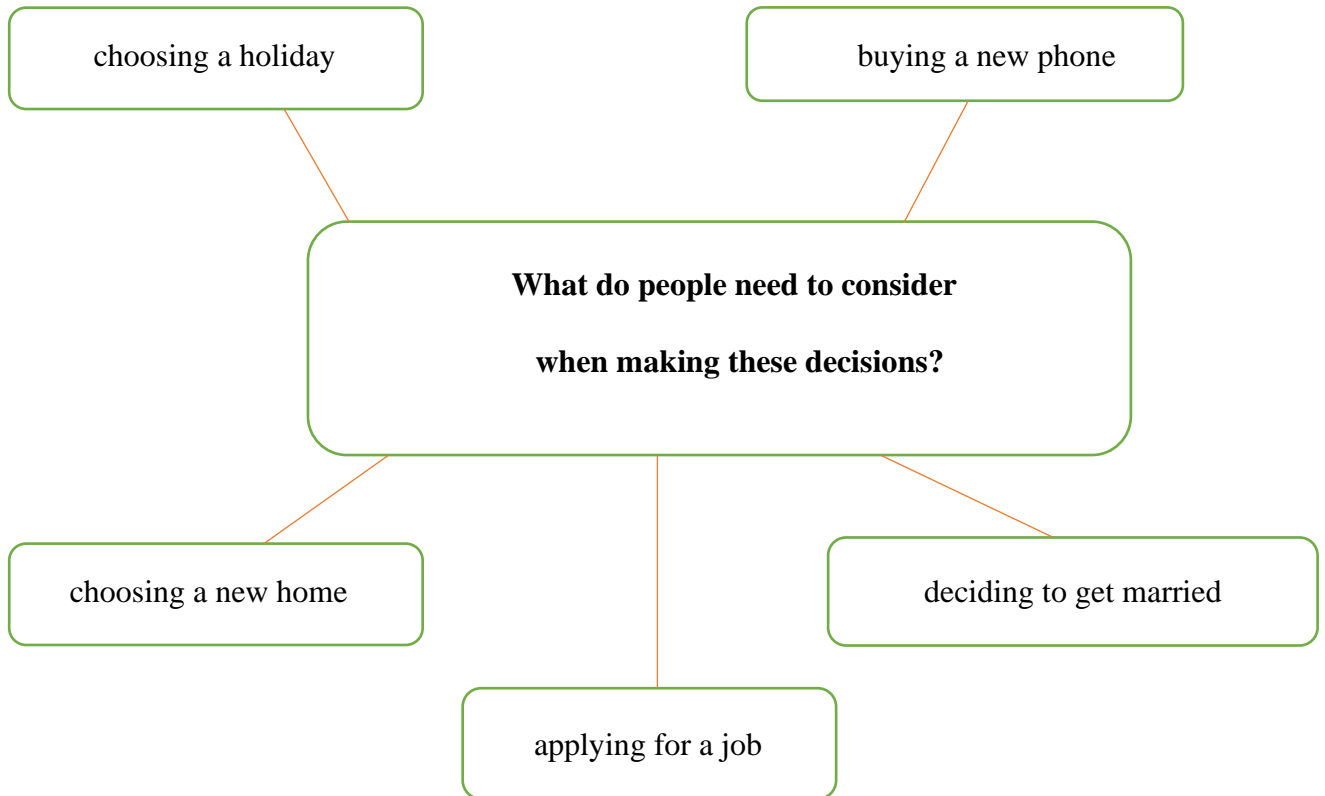
Activity 6: Work in groups of three and discuss the questions.

- Do you know what kind of work you would like to do in the future?
- Do you think it's important to have a clear idea of what job you want when you are a teenager? Why / Why not?
- Do you think it's better to follow one profession in life or to try lots of different types of jobs? Why?

(Adapted from: Alevizos, Kathryn, Suzanne Gaynor, Megan Roderick. 2018.)

Material Three

Activity 1: Work in pairs. Read the question below and make a list of points to consider when making a decision. Write at least three points for each prompt.



(Adapted from: Norris, Roy. 2016.)

Choosing a holiday

Buying a new phone



Choosing a new home

Applying for a job

Deciding to get married

(Based on: Alevizos, Kathryn, Suzanne Gaynor, Megan Roderick. 2018.)

Activity 2: Work in pairs. Suggest three things you should do and three things you shouldn't or don't have to do in this exam part.

	
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

(Based on: Brook-Hart, Guy et al. 2019.)

Activity 3: Work in pairs. Do the speaking task in activity 1. Here are some decisions people often have to make and a question for you to discuss.

a) Talk to each other about what people need to consider when making these decisions.

b) Now decide which is the most difficult decision to make.

(Adapted from: Norris, Roy. 2016.)

Activity 4: Look at the checklist. Tick (✓) the things you did in your discussion and cross (×) those you didn't do.

1. I talked naturally to my partner and listened to him/her carefully.
2. I had lots of ideas and I couldn't stop talking even though my partner was a bit quiet. But he didn't mind it.
3. I tried to talk the same amount of time as my partner.
4. I explained what I thought and gave reasons.
5. I introduced new ideas but didn't really respond to what my partner said.
6. We discussed only two prompts but in great detail.
7. We didn't manage to talk about all the prompts, we talked about four only, but I think we said a lot about them.
8. In the second question I didn't repeat the same ideas as in the first question.
9. We didn't need the whole minute to agree on the most difficult decision as we knew it straight away, so we decided in about half the time.
10. We reached a decision.

(Based on: Norris, Roy. 2013.)

Activity 5: Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- Once you've decided something, do you change your mind?
- Do you think it's a good idea to have a Plan A and a Plan B? Why?
- Do you sometimes put off making a decision until the last possible moment? Why?
- Do you ever leave it up to someone else to decide things like where to go on holiday or what to do at the weekend? When was it?
- Do you always weigh up the pros and cons before making a decision?

(Adapted from: Norris, Roy. 2016.)