ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Traditional and Computer-based Teaching Aids and Learning Resources in Foreign Language Education in Slovakia

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Abstract

The continuous development of educational technology has undoubtedly a lot of advantages also in the field of foreign language teaching. Thanks to this, teachers are given newer and newer possibilities to catch their students´ attention. One of them is to supplement traditional course-books with computer-based teaching aids. Furthermore, teachers can enrich the content of foreign language lessons also by bringing other learning resources in the classroom, such as authentic materials, the positive effect of which on students´ foreign language competence has been supported by numerous scholars.

But do teachers really grasp these opportunities to make their lessons more attractive? Do traditional course-books still represent the core of foreign language teaching? What other complements and learning resources are used to enrich foreign language lessons? Do learners of English as a foreign language have the chance to experience real language inside their classrooms? And, finally, are authentic materials perceived by them useful, enjoyable and motivating, or rather demanding and demotivating?

The aim of the present study was to find answers to the given questions. The questionnaire, which was answered by first-year students of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, focused on students´ experience during their secondary school studies. The paper also compares answers given by students of different specializations attending the subject "English for Academic Purposes" with those provided by students of the Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies.

Keywords

EFL course-books, EFL course-book complements, learning resources, authentic materials

Introduction

It is commonly acknowledged that the aim of foreign language teaching (FLT) is or should be to improve learners´ communicative competence. According to Homolová (2003), this term is generally understood as the ability of a foreign

language (FL) learner to use the language efficiently in real situations of communication. In order to reach the above mentioned goal, learners of a FL should be provided with a great variety of teaching methods, techniques and materials, including both non-authentic and authentic materials (AM).

According to Peacock (1997, p. 144) non-authentic materials are "materials produced specifically for language learners". Undoubtedly, the course-book is the best known and most often used non-authentic material or artificial material. According to Harmer (2007) one of its main advantages is that it provides a framework for the content of the lessons.

However, the boom of technology in the last two decades has influenced the world of education, including the area of FLT. Due to it, a great variety of accessories has appeared, such as class CD-ROMs, MultiROMs, iTools, etc. which do not decrease the importance of course-books; on the contrary, they are perfect supplements to them. They do not only contribute to the development of language proficiency and enrich the lessons, but challenge students´ overall competences, including their computer or technical skills.

A further benefit of technological innovations is that they make the world smaller and bring the real world in the classroom. They provide an access to the real language mainly through AM, which are materials originally produced for native speakers (Homolová, 2003). AM include literary texts, job advertisements, radio programmes, songs and audio-visual materials, such as films, videos, etc.

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of using AM in the FLT process. Some of them focus on the effect of AM on different language skills, the most often surveyed of which are receptive skills, e.g. reading and listening comprehension (Mousavi, 2011; Ghaderpanahi, 2012). Others deal with the impact of real language materials on the motivation of language learners (Peacock, 1997).

Certainly, using AM has both its advantages and disadvantages. Their proponents often argue that AM are more interesting than traditional materials, such as course-books and their components, because they are up-to-date and provide a precious source of the target culture making the lesson more enjoyable and motivating. Due to the fact that they demonstrate a true picture of the target language and the culture, they are useful when developing communicative competence.

However, teachers often refuse to bring real language to their classrooms, as they find it too demanding to work with and time-consuming to prepare. They claim that these materials do not correspond with their students´ language level, as they are full of difficult expressions and grammar structures. Furthermore,

some teachers also argue that AM might be a bad example for students, since grammatical and stylistic rules are often disobeyed in them (Homolová, 2003).

Resulting from the above presented theoretical background, the research was run focusing on the reality of using traditional and computer-based teaching aids and other learning resources in secondary foreign language education in Slovakia. The methodology of the research is discussed in the following part of the study.

Research design

The main objective of the research was to learn about the reality of using course-books and their complements as well as other learning resources in EFL lessons in Slovakia through a questionnaire survey.

Further objectives were defined as follows:

1. to examine the attention given to AM in teaching EFL at secondary schools in Slovakia.
2. to find out students´ opinion about the use of AM in EFL education.
3. to compare answers given by students of different specializations attending the subject "English for Academic Purposes" (EFAP) with those provided by students of the Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies (DLIS).

According to the mentioned objectives we have stated the following research questions:

1. What are the most often used titles of course-books used in EFL education at secondary schools today? Did DLIS respondents use different course-books than EFAP students?
2. Which complements of the given course-books are applied in EFL lessons? Can any differences be traced in the answers given by DLIS and EFAP students?
3. What other materials and sources are used to enrich the content of EFL lessons? Are they the same in the group of DLIS respondents as amongst EFAP participants?
4. What types of AM are used? Were they present equally in EFL lessons of both groups?
5. How often did students use them? Were EFAP students as frequently exposed to them as DLIS respondents?
6. What types of tasks did they have to do while working with AM? Are the answers of EFAP students different from those of DLIS participants?
7. Do students think of AM as demanding, funny, useful and motivating tools of improving language competences? What is the agreement between DLIS and EFAP respondents?

Research sample

A sample of 76 first-year students took part in the research, while 38 of them studied either *Teaching of English Language and Literature* or *English Language and Culture* at the Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies (DLIS students). Three students of the whole group attended a study programme called "*Elementary Pedagogy*" and they were offered a certain number of subjects also in the English language. Another 38 respondents involved students of different study programmes all attending a subject called "English for Academic Purposes" (EFAP students), which means that they learned English two hours per week during thirteen weeks.

The respondents came from different regions of Slovakia and their age distribution was from 19 to 23 years. 51.32% of all the respondents were 19 or 20 years old which means that they started their studies right after having finished their secondary education. Another 43.42% were 21 or 22 years old; these students had had one year "off" or attended another institution before they started their recent studies. Only 3.95% of all the students (3 people) were twenty-three or more years old, which means that they had left their secondary school more than one year ago. Based upon these statistics, we assume that the vast majority of the respondents remembered well the educational reality of their secondary schools and, thus, they could provide us with valuable and reliable information on the investigated area.

Concerning the level of their English proficiency, almost 90% of them passed "maturita" (i.e. secondary school leaving examination) in the English language at either B1 or B2 level of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR), while the rest learned English as a second foreign language.

Research tool

The respondents were given a one-sheet questionnaire of two pages with twelve questions in the Slovak language.

In questions from one to five the basic data on respondents were collected (age, gender, recent study programme, level of school leaving examination, etc.). Participants´ answers helped us to characterize our research sample.

Questions from six to seven dealt with course-books and their components used during the secondary school attendance of the participants.

The second page concerned respondents´ experience with AM and other learning resources during the lessons of English language at their secondary schools. Questions focused on the types of AM applied in EFL lessons, the frequency of using them, as well as tasks connected with them. The last question investigated respondents´ opinions on AM.

All the questions were formed in Slovak language in order to ensure that respondents understand them together with the given list of offered items properly. Except from the first five ones focused on basic information about the respondents, all the other questions were formed as close-ended in order to make students able to answer them. It intended to help their memory, e.g. served as prevention from getting back unanswered questionnaires. Moreover, in questions from six to nine they were also given the possibility to add any kind of extra information about the given issue.

Data processing and analysis

The data were collected during February 2013. The questionnaires were filled anonymously and the respondents did not have any time limit. All questions of the questionnaire were analysed manually in a separate chart by filling the collected answers in it, in the end of which they were summed up. At a further stage they were calculated into per cents and put into graphs or charts. Based upon these statistics, we tried to make our conclusions about the reality of using different learning resources in EFL lessons in Slovakia.

Results and discussion

Below, the complete results are presented, being structured in seven main parts reflecting the statements of the questionnaire.

1. Today´s most popular titles of course-books used in EFL education at secondary schools

In question six, students were given a list of EFL course-books written for secondary-school students which we had selected from webpages of different bookstores. In order to help students´ memory to recall the name of EFL course-book(s) used during their secondary studies, the list included both the most widely used publications, which we had been able to find almost at all webpages, such as New Headway, New Opportunities, as well as the latest, less known course-books, such as Laser, Inside out, Code, etc. Moreover, the respondents were also provided with the possibility to add any other publication(s) which they had used and they could not find on the list.

As it can be seen in Figure 1, in general the order of the five course-books used by most students is as following: New Headway, New opportunities, New Horizons, Solutions and Laser. Comparing the two groups, the three "winners" are New Headway indicated by 57.89% of DLIS students and 36.84% of EFAP respondents, New Opportunities circled by 23.68% of DLIS and 39.47% respondents and New Horizons chosen by 13.16% of DLIS and 5.26% of EFAP participants. Apparently, differences can be noticed in the percentages, as except

for New Horizons, New Headway and New Opportunities were used by far more DLIS students than EFAP respondents.

Figure 1: Titles of course-books used by at least 5% of students
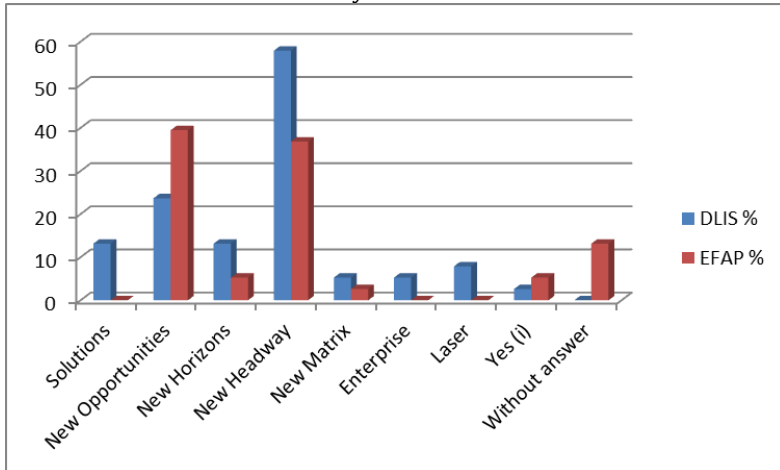
In the group of DLIS participants, the list of course books was further completed by Solutions, chosen by 13.16% and Laser by 7.89%; furthermore New Matrix and Enterprise both indicated by 5.26% of the respondents. However, none of the EFAP participants circled Solutions, Enterprise or Laser and even New Matrix was chosen only by 2.63%. (The other books included on the list as well as added by students, reached only 2.63%, e.g. one student or 0% in both groups. Therefore, in order to make the figure clearly arranged, we have decided not to include them.)

An interesting phenomenon can also be noticed when examining the percentage of students who neither indicated any kind of course-book, nor added any other title. In the group of EFAP respondents it is 13.16%, while amongst DLIS participants it is 0%. Although the reason of ignoring the given task might be interesting, we can only hypothesize that they either did not use any kind of course-book, which is undoubtedly the worst alternative, or they simply did not feel like answering the question. Another option may be that they forgot the title of the book they had used during their secondary studies and the provided list could not help them to recall it.

Summarizing the results of the sixth question, there cannot be seen very sharp differences between the DLIS and EFAP group when it comes to the order of the three most popular titles. As shown in Figure 1, almost all titles were indicated by more DLIS students than EFAP ones. Also in the group of DLIS

participants, the number of different titles is higher comparing with the group of EFAP students. However, as results of the differences between the two groups are almost unexplainable, further research into the content of the course-books would be necessary. Yet, the answers of the two groups as a whole provide us with precious information about the titles used by most students. This can be useful as an option to choose the source when starting our research about the authenticity of course-books used by secondary-school students today, which we intend to realize in the near future.

2. Course-book complements in EFL education at secondary schools

Question number 7 focused on course-book components that the students used during EFL lessons at their secondary schools. They were asked to both circle or add any other accessory they used as a part of the "course-book package", such as workbook, class CD-ROMs (compact discs containing audio tracks for listening exercises included in the student book), MultiROM (compact discs containing data used only for reading) and iTool (e.g. a set of digital resources for Interactive Whiteboards).

If we look at the two groups as a whole (Figure 2), we can see that the components of the given course-book most preferred by the EFL teachers were workbooks (85.53%) and class CD-ROMs (77.63%). All the other accessories included on the list, e.g. MultiROM and iTool usually available to the given courses were indicated only in one or two cases. As to the possibility to add any other teaching aid than the mentioned components, two of all the respondents wrote that they had used glossaries published to the given course. Two other students did not indicate any of the given options, neither added anything.

Seeking for differences between the two groups, according to Figure 3 we can claim that there are not any sharp contradictions. However, when examining the usage of class CD-ROMs in the two groups an interesting fact occurred to us. There were 81.58% of DLIS respondents and 73.68% amongst EFAP students who had had the chance to listen to class CD-ROMs. It means that in the former almost 20% and in the latter nearly 30% of the students learnt EFL without doing listening comprehension exercises contained in the given course-books.

Figure 2: Course-books complements used in EFL education at secondary schools in percentages
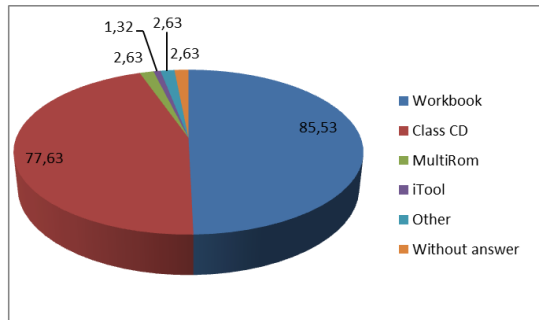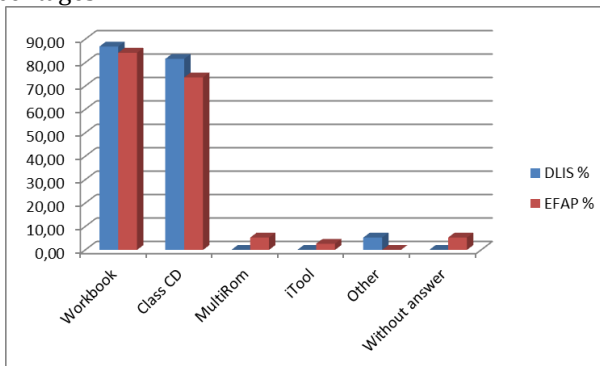

Figure 3: Distribution of the usage of course-book complements in the two groups in percentages


We have found it surprising because in order to develop language competences effectively all the four skills must be treated as equally as possible. In case of neglecting the skill of listening comprehension, one might have difficulties to understand native speakers and even other foreigners speaking English. What is more, developing perceptive skills, such as speaking and writing is almost impossible without improving receptive skills first. If students are not exposed to listening to the language by using class CD-ROMs released to the given course, they should at least be provided with authentic listening materials. Therefore, we have decided to look at the answers of those students who did not indicate the usage of class CD-ROM from another angle, e.g. whether they were exposed to aural AM.

Results in Figure 4 show that all of those DLIS students who did not indicate the usage of class CD-ROMs, were at least given the possibility to listen to AM. However, in the EFAP group, we can find 10.53% of respondents who listened neither to class CD-ROMs, nor to language spoken by native speakers. The only sources of the spoken version of English for these students were their EFL teachers what we find completely insufficient.

Figure 4: Respondents provided neither with class CD-ROMs nor with AM
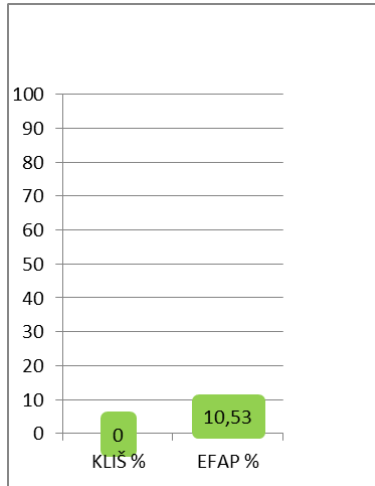
Regarding the usage of course-book components other than workbooks and class CD-ROMs, such as MultiROM and iTool we can claim that they are almost absolutely put aside, what is quite surprising in the era of the Information and Communication Technology (Figure 4). However, learning about the reasons would require another research focused on the role played by new technologies in FLT. Surely, they may be different, beginning with the small number of EFL lessons per week, through the lack of teachers´ confidence and experience with using such aids, to the lack of finances in education.

3. Using different learning resources in EFL education

In question eight we tried to get an answer whether the teachers of the participants had also used other materials except from the given course-book and its components. The respondents were given six options and they could indicate more than one. They included AM (with an explanation and examples in the brackets), copies from other course-books and teaching aids (than the ones

they used daily), magazines written in English for learners of EFL (such as Friendship, Bridge, etc.). They were also given the possibility to add anything else that came to their minds or to indicate that they had not used any of the given options.

According to Figure 5 we can assume that AM are the most frequently used types of additional teaching aids, as 85.53% out of all the respondents indicated this option. The second most often used learning resources are magazines written in English for learners of English (53.95%) and parts or components of other courses than the ones they used on a daily basis (30.26%). However, there is a group of students (10.53%) who did not use any sort of additional material, including the lack of AM.

Figure 5: The most frequently used learning resources in percentages
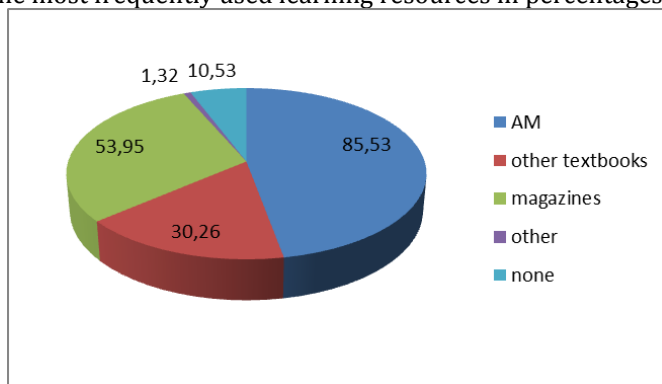
Examining the differences between the two groups, we can see the following (Figure 6). In the use of magazines, there is not a sharp contradiction. On the other hand, we can assume that more DLIS students were exposed to authentic language (94.74%) than EFAP respondents (76.32%). However, copies from other course-books and their components were indicated by 36.84% of EFAP participants and only by 23.68% DLIS students. Furthermore, the percentage of those who did not indicate any of the given options is 15.79% amongst EFAP respondents and only 5.26% in the group of DLIS participants.

It seems that teachers of EFAP students preferred to choose traditional textbook-kind materials and did not really experiment with alternative types of teaching aids, such as AM. 23.68% of EFAP students claimed that they had never met AM during their secondary education, while amongst DLIS students there were only 2 such participants (5.26%). In our opinion, it could be one of the

reasons why EFAP students had less confidence to choose English language as their academic specialization.

The next part of the questionnaire is focused only on the answers of those students who experienced learning English language through AM.

Figure 6: The use of different learning resources in the two groups in percentages
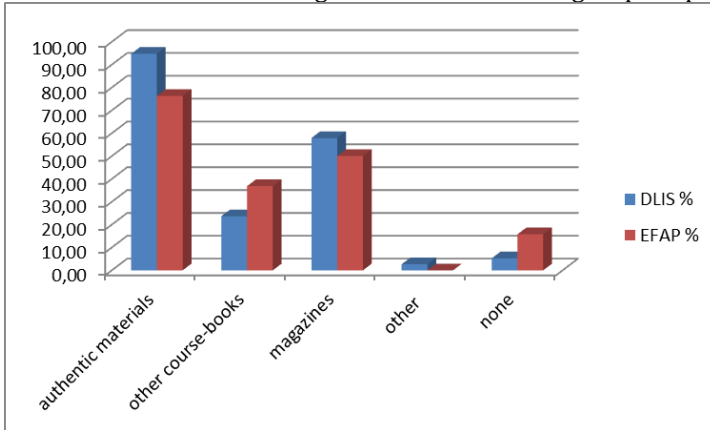

4. Types of authentic materials used in teaching English as foreign language

According to Homolová (2003), we distinguish a wide range of different types of AM, including visual (for example leaflets, menus, tickets, etc.), audial (songs, radio interviews, etc.) and audio-visual resources (films, videos, computer games, etc.). In question 9, we have divided them into 10 categories and the students were asked to indicate the types of AM they had met during their secondary studies. These groups were created based upon the most commonly used AM in FL teaching. Group number 9 called "Materials of every-day life" includes all kinds of practical things which native speakers encounter in their lives, such as menus at restaurants, timetables and tickets at stations, leaflets at museums, etc. In the tenth category, they were given the possibility to add any other resource or type of AM which they had experienced to work with within the lessons of EFL.

The results in Figure 7 show that songs and films in English were met by more than the half of all the students. Among the most popular AM, we can also rank articles in newspapers and magazines read by 35.53% of students. Watching videos from You Tube (28.95%), reading authentic literature (27.63%), working with different documents (25%) and materials of everyday life (26.32%) reached similar values, as indicated by more than one quarter of all the students. The least frequently used materials were commercials (14.47%) and job advertisements (11.84%).

Figure 7: Types of AM used in EFL education in percentages
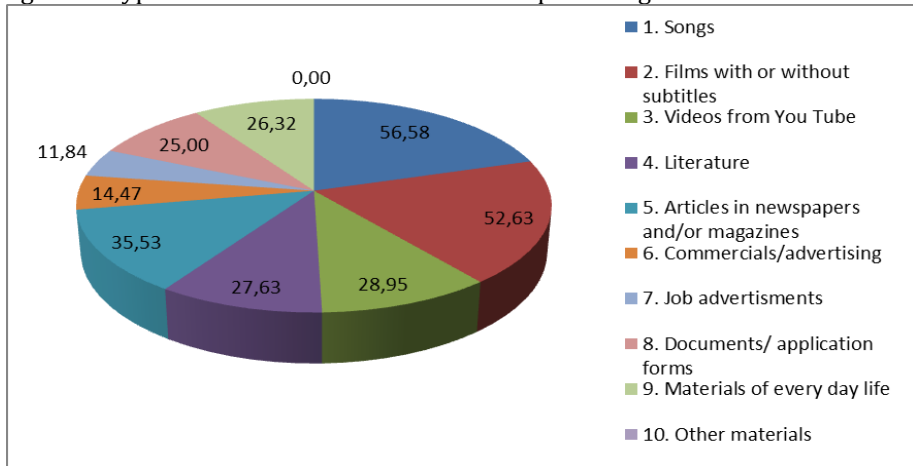
Examining the results shown in Figure 8, we can claim that the majority of EFAP students used songs as AM in the lessons of EFL, while the majority of DLIS participants was provided with films. The least often used AM by EFAP students were job advertisements; on the other hand, DLIS respondents worked the least frequently with commercials and advertising.

Figure 8: Frequency of using AM in percentages
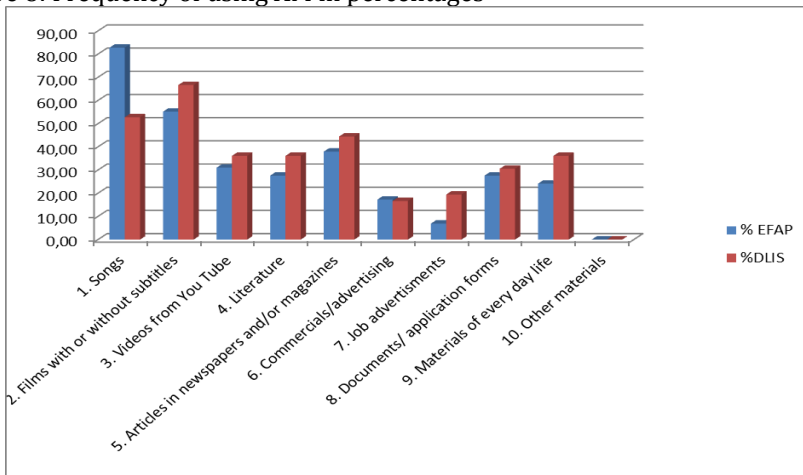
The significant difference can be seen in using songs as AM, as they were used by 52.78% of the DLIS students, while more than 80% of EFAP respondents

listened to songs during English lessons. There is only one more type of AM - commercials or advertising - which was used by more EFAP than DLIS students, but this difference is quite insignificant. All the other types of AM were used by more DLIS than EFAP students. Consequently, we might assume that DLIS participants were provided with a greater variety of AM, which might be the reason why their skills developed more effectively. Furthermore, it also seems that bringing only songs to the lessons of EFL is not sufficient if one wants his/her students to be in contact with the real life language.

5. Frequency of using authentic materials in English as foreign language teaching

As we have stated in the previous chapter, it is important to use various types of AM if we want our students to be able to distinguish different shades of the real language. In order to reach this aim it is necessary to bring AM more than once or twice in a school-year. Therefore to get a reliable picture of the reality of using AM, in question 10, respondents were asked to indicate how often they had worked with AM during their secondary school studies.

Figure 9: Types of AM used by DLIS and EFAP students in percentages
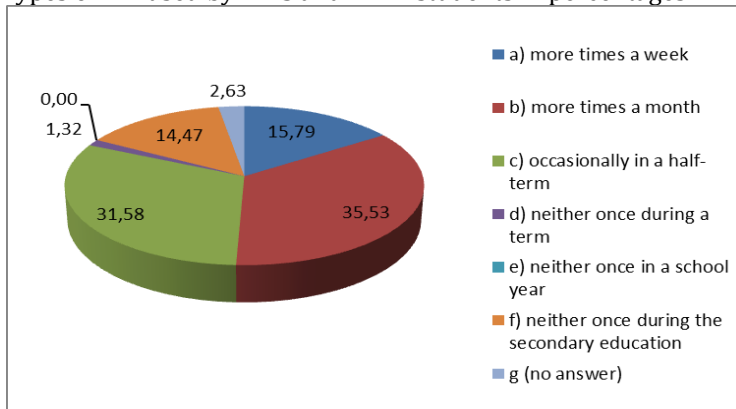

As the results show in Figure 9, 15.79% of all the students were exposed to AM more times a week and 35.53% more times a month. On the other hand, 31.58% met AM only occasionally in a half-term and there is quite a big group of those who did not have any experience with AM during the term, the whole school year or even during the whole secondary school attendance.

When looking for differences in the answers of the two groups (Figure 10), 23.68% of EFAP students claimed that they had never met AM during their secondary education, while amongst DLIS students it is only 5.26%. In Figure 10,

we can see that twice as many DLIS students used AM more times a week than EFAP students. All the other possibilities were also chosen by more DLIS students than by EFAP respondents. It might indicate that DLIS students were, in general, more often provided with AM, which could contribute to the development of their level of English proficiency and, thus, to their decision to choose English language as their academic specialization.

Figure 10: Frequency of using AM amongst DLIS and EFAP students
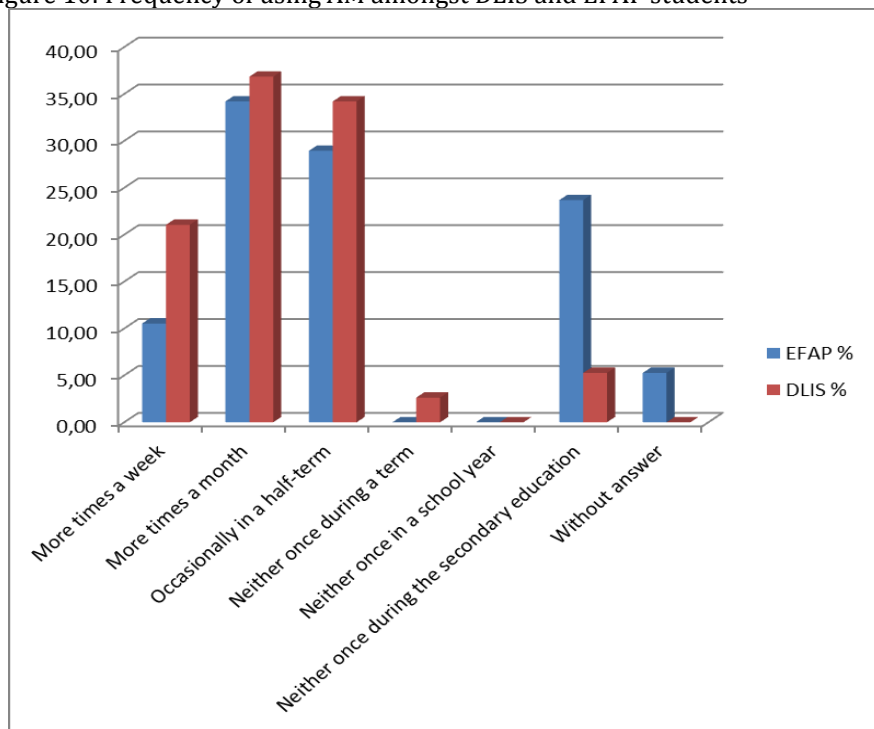

6. *Using different types of tasks with authentic materials*

In question 11, participants of the survey had to indicate the types of tasks they were asked to do with AM. According to the stage of the task, Homolová (2003) distinguishes "pre-", "while-" and "post" activities. As the list of these tasks is very long, we have grouped them into seven categories regarding the skill they are to develop. Some of them we have selected relying on recommendations of different course-books, while others were included based on the reality of every-day practice of TEFL in Slovakia.

As it is commonly known, AM are mainly used to develop receptive skills, such as reading and listening comprehension. Therefore, the most frequently used task connected with them is reading or listening for a gist, e.g. to get the main idea; and the second one is looking for some information or finding answers to questions. According to Pokrivčáková (2009), developing writing skills is possible through the tasks of controlled (e.g. matching), guided (e.g. gap-filling) or free writing (e.g. essay-writing), which we have divided into two groups for the purpose of the present study. The category of developing speaking skills through AM includes different types of speaking tasks, such as discussion, debates and so on.

Figure 11: Types of tasks used with AM in percentages
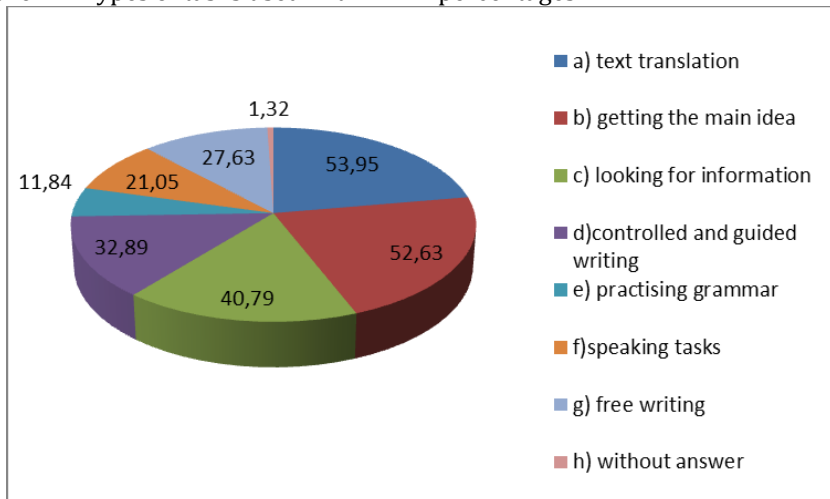
The reason why the two other groups were added even if they are not considered to be skills was that they play a crucial role in FLT. One of them is focused on using AM to explain or practise grammar, while the second one is concentrated on building vocabulary. We have created a separate group for the latter, in spite of the fact that developing vocabulary can be found in all the previous categories. This category includes tasks using text translation and looking for the meaning of words in dictionaries. Although translating texts into the mother language is criticised by a lot of scholars, it still represents a widely used method in the every-day practice of TEFL.

As can be seen in Figure 11, in spite of the methodological recommendations of theorists and experts, the most often applied activity connected with AM is still

translating them into the mother tongue of the students. However, similarly frequently students are asked to get the main idea (52.63%) and a bit less often they are to look for some information (40.79%) in AM. Controlled and guided writing were indicated by 32.89%, but tasks of free writing only by 27.63%. As to the development of speaking skills through AM, only 21.05% claimed they had had such an experience. The least often were AM used to explain or practise grammar (11.84%), which is not surprising as AM are usually full of untraditional grammar structures.

Figure 12: Types of tasks used with AM amongst DLIS and EFAP students in percentages
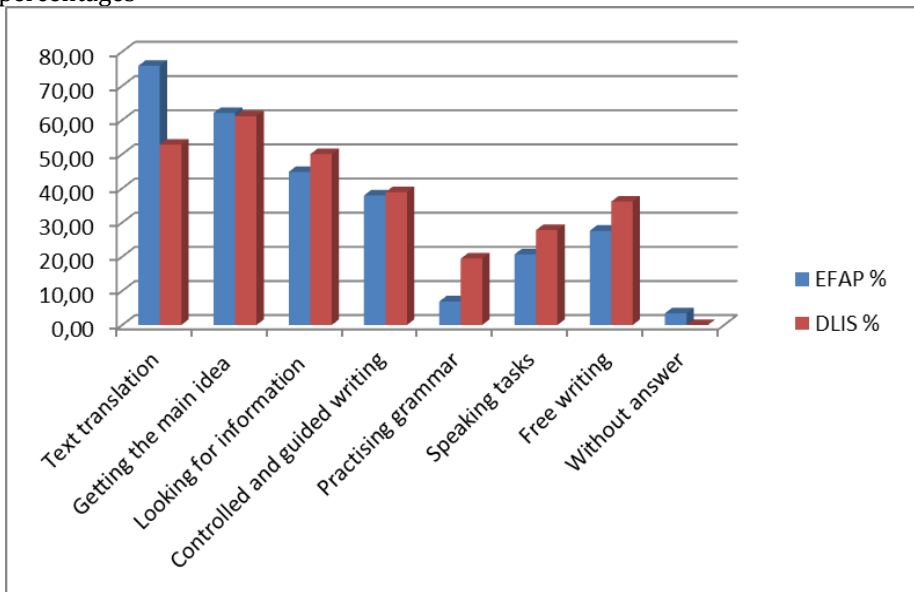
Comparing the results in Figure 12, a significant difference in the answers of the two groups can be seen in two cases. Firstly, more than 75% of EFAP respondents indicated that they had used AM to build vocabulary through text translation; while amongst DLIS students it was 52.78%. It corresponds with their previous answers given in question 9, in which over 80% of EFAP students and over 50% of DLIS students indicated they had listened to songs. These percentages prove the fact of the every-day practice of teaching English by translating songs through looking for words in dictionaries.

The second difference between the answers of the two groups can be seen when it comes to using AM to explain grammar, which is quite demanding and

therefore also unusual in the Slovak educational reality. Yet, 19.44% of DLIS participants experienced explaining grammar this way. However, in the group of EFAP students it was only 6.90%.

In all the other answers, we cannot see a bigger difference than 10%, although almost in all cases more DLIS students indicated that the particular option had been one of the tasks of English lessons when using AM.

## 7. Students´ views on authentic materials

According to Pietilä (2009, p. 3) materials used in FLT "should be created from the learners' point of view since they are the ones who benefit the most from the materials". The following part of the study is focused on students´ opinions on authentic teaching materials from the next four different points of view:
1. AM are difficult to work with
2. Using AM makes EFL lessons more enjoyable
3. AM as useful tools of developing language competence
4. AM motivate students to learn English language

7.1 Authentic materials are difficult to work with

One of the arguments why some EFL teachers refuse to use AM is that students often struggle with the unusual vocabulary and structure and so they get easily demotivated and frustrated (Homolová, 2003; Pietilä, 2009). In question 12a students had to indicate whether they agree or disagree on this viewpoint (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Agreement amongst students that working with AM is demanding
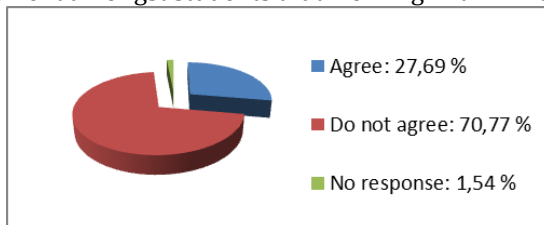
The results show that only 27.69% of the respondents felt that AM had been difficult to work with. Comparing the views of the two groups of respondents, in the group of EFAP students almost twice as many respondents thought that AM materials had been demanding to work with than amongst DLIS students (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Working with AM is demanding – comparing opinions of the two groups
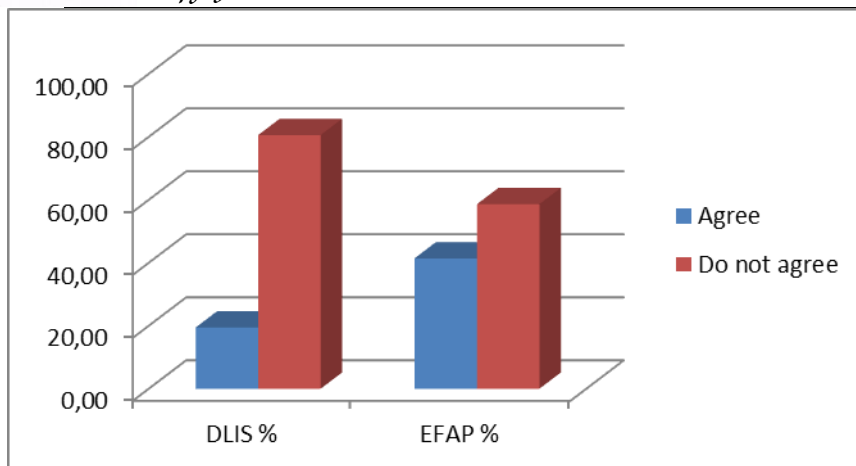
Apparently, DLIS students (80.56%) felt more confident when working with AM in comparison with their colleagues of other study programmes (58.62%). The lack of confidence and having difficulties with AM could have an impact on EFAP students´ choice of study programmes different from those offered by DLIS. The solution to students´ lack of confidence and difficulties while working with AM might be a careful selection of materials regarding "the age, language level, interests, usefulness and background of the learners" (Reid, 2009, p. 83). On the other hand, in both groups more than half of the respondents thought that working with AM was not demanding. It means that teachers are encouraged to involve tasks based on AM in their lessons.

7.2 Using authentic materials makes EFL lessons more enjoyable

Communicative competence does not only mean linguistic competence. It is equally important to be aware of different peculiarities that characterize the target culture. As, according to Hatoss (2004, p. 28), "we teach culture even when we are not intending to or are not aware of doing so", teachers should be careful when choosing the appropriate material. In order to give the learners a true picture of the target culture, the use of AM should be considered crucial, as they are trustful representatives of the target culture (Homolová, 2003; Reid, 2012; Pietilä 2009). Due to this function, they are also considered to be more interesting and enjoyable than artificial teaching materials.

In question 12 b, the respondents were asked to express their opinion on whether AM are enjoyable to work with (see Figure 15). As demonstrated, 75.38% of all the respondents consider learning through AM to be fun and only 23.08% disagree with this statement.

Figure. 15: Students´ agreement that working with AM is enjoyable
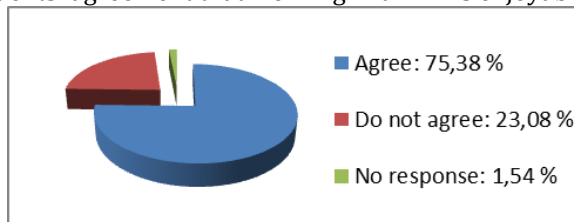
According to the statistics in Figure 16, no sharp difference can be seen between the answers of the two groups, as 75% of both consider AM enjoyable.

Figure 16: Working with AM is enjoyable – comparing opinions of the two groups
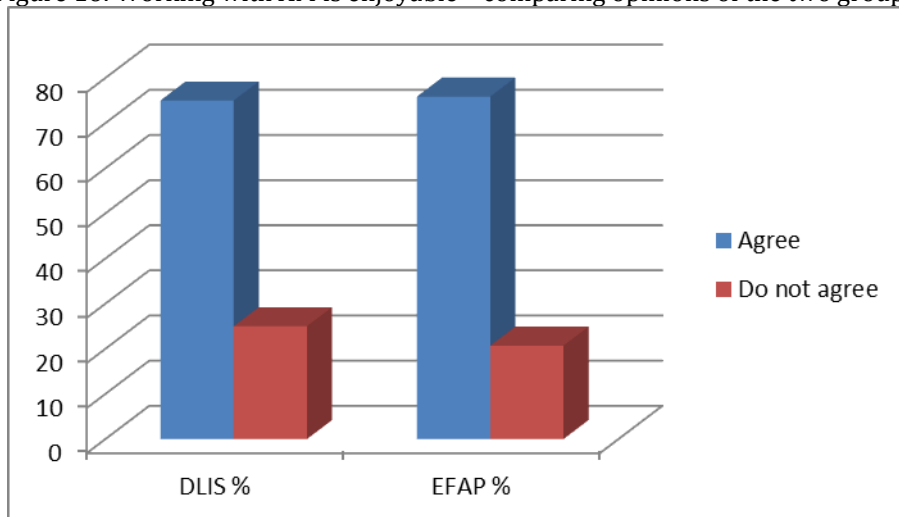
Based on the results, we might assume that AM are equally entertaining for all the respondents, even for those who had difficulties while working with them. What is more, only 20.69% of EFAP students did not agree with the statement that AM had been enjoyable to learn with, while amongst DLIS students, 25% thought the same. These statistics might support teachers to bring real language into their classrooms to make lessons more joyful for students, even if they might have difficulties with them.

7.3 AM as useful tools of developing language competence

Reasons why some students have a stronger willingness to learn a foreign language can be different. Some people simply love the language itself. Other may

have practical intentions (Harmer, 1998), such as to get a job abroad or to apply to a university in a foreign country and, therefore, they prefer to learn from materials which might be useful for their future.

Question 12c was focused on respondents´ opinion about the usefulness of AM. According to the statistics demonstrated in Figure 17, almost 90% of all the students consider AM to be a useful tool of improving language competence and only 9.23% do not agree with the statement.

Figure 17: Students´ agreement that AM are useful

- Agree: 89,23 %
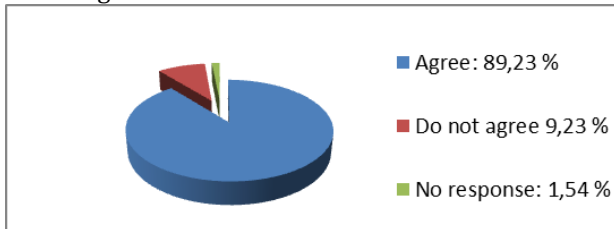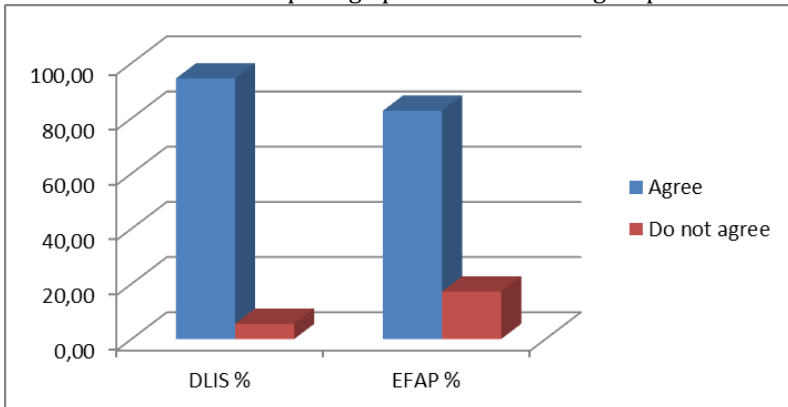- Do not agree 9,23 %
- No response: 1,54 %

Figure 18: AM are useful – comparing opinions of the two groups

As displayed in Figure 18, 94.44% of DLIS students and 82.76% of EFAP students think AM efficiently contribute to the improvement of their language proficiency. In their opinions, the slight difference of 10% might indicate that DLIS students have probably recognized the importance of using AM in the process of developing language skills to a level which corresponds with the requirements of English language studies. However, according to this high rate of agreement, we might assume that students not only find AM useful, but they even require the enrichment of traditional teaching materials with them.

7.4 Motivating students to learn English language through AM

"Motivation is one of the most important factors influencing learner achievement"(Pokrivčáková, 2009, p. 26). To be more precise, according to Tandlichová (1985, p. 95) it "determines how much a person will learn and when he will learn it". It might differ from person to person, as it depends on numerous factors which influence individuals, such as their needs, interests, personal goals or even their background.

In question 12d, respondents had to express their views on whether they thought AM had motivated them to learn English language. As statistics in Figure 19 show, 55.38% of the respondents thought that they had got motivated when AM had been used in lessons of English language.

Figure 19: Students´ agreement that AM are motivating to learn English
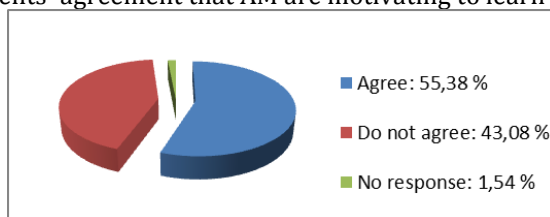
Comparing the results in Figure 20, a significant correspondence can be seen between the two groups. Surprisingly, in both groups approximately 55% of the respondents thought that using AM had made them more motivated to learn English language. These results are interesting in the light of students´ responses to the previous questions, as one could hypothesize that if students considered AM to be undemanding, enjoyable and useful they might have also found them motivating. Although undoubtedly, the percentage of those who agreed that AM were motivating to learn English is higher than of those who did not. Therefore, we might consider it to be a success if more than half of the students in a group get more motivated to learn English due to using AM in the lesson.

Figure 20: AM are motivating to learn English – comparing opinions of the two groups
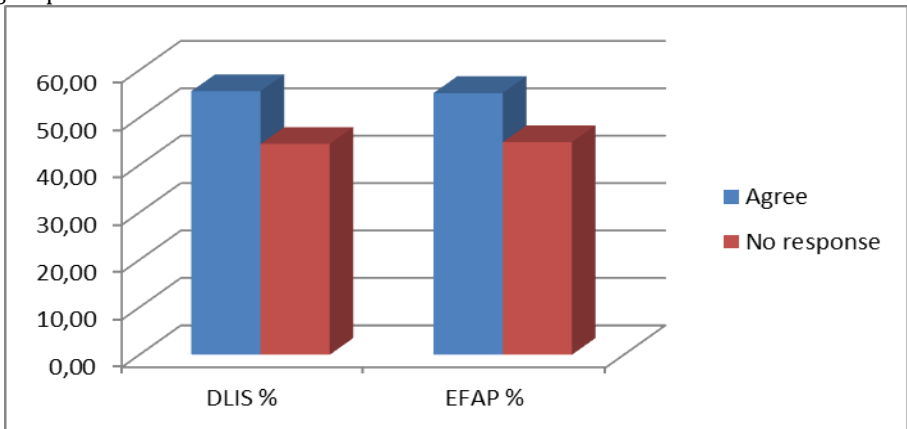
Conclusions

To summarize the results and partial conclusions we have decided to answer our research questions one by one.

1. *What are the most often used titles of courses used in EFL education at secondary schools today? Did DLIS respondents use different course-books than EFAP students?*

- The order of the three course-books used by most students is as following: New Headway, New Opportunities and New Horizons. The same titles were also found when examining differences in the answers of DLIS and EFAP respondents.

2. *Which complements of the given course-books are applied in EFL lessons? Can any differences be traced in the answers given by DLIS and EFAP students?*

- The most preferred components released or published to the given course-book are workbooks (85.53%) and class CD-ROMs (77.63%). However, untraditional teaching aids such as MultiRom and iTool are still neglected despite the boom of technology.

- There are not any sharp differences between the two examined groups regarding the usage of course-book complements. However, when it comes to the use of class CD-ROMs, in the group of EFAP students 10.53% did not listen to the exercises included in the course-books, neither worked with aural AM; whilst DLIS students who did not indicate the usage of class CD-ROMs were at least given the possibility to listen to the real language.

3. *What other materials and sources are used to enrich the content of EFL lessons? Are they the same in the group of DLIS respondents as amongst EFAP participants?*

- The most frequently used types of learning resources others than course-book complements are AM (85.53%), followed by magazines written in English for learners of English (53.95%).

- As to the differences between the two groups, magazines were used approximately by the same percentage of EFAP students as of DLIS respondents. However, EFAP participants were provided with less AM but more copies from other course-books than DLIS students.

4. *What types of AM are used? Were they equally present in EFL lessons of both groups?*

- Among the three most often used types of AM we can rank songs, films and articles in newspapers and magazines.

- We might assume that DLIS participants were provided with a greater variety of AM, as except from songs and commercials all the other types of AM were indicated by more DLIS students and EFAP students.

5. *How often did they use them? Were EFAP students as frequently exposed to them as DLIS respondents?*

- 15.79% of all the students were exposed to AM more times a week and 35.53% more times a month. However, 31.58% met AM only occasionally in a half-term and there is a considerable group of those who did not have any experience with AM during a term, the whole school year or even during the whole secondary education.

- DLIS students were in general more often provided with AM, as 23.68% of EFAP students claim that they had never met AM during their secondary education, while amongst DLIS students it was only (5.26%). Also twice as many DLIS students used AM more times a week as EFAP students. All the other possibilities were also chosen by more DLIS students than by EFAP respondents.

6. *What types of tasks did they have to do while working with AM? Are the answers of EFAP students different from those of DLIS participants?*

- The three most often applied activities connected with AM are translating them into students´ mother tongue, reading and listening to them to get the main idea and looking for some particular information.

- A significant difference in the answers of the two groups can be seen when it comes to text translation and grammar explanation. In the case of the former

it was much more widespread amongst EFAP students, while the latter reached a much higher rate in the group of DLIS students.

- Except from the mentioned text translation, all the other tasks were indicated by more DLIS students than EFAP ones.

7. *Do students think of AM as demanding, funny, useful and motivating tools of improving language competences? What is the agreement between DLIS and EFAP respondents?*

- The vast majority of the respondents think AM are enjoyable as well as useful and they do not consider them to be demanding. In addition, half of the respondents got even more motivated to learn English language while working with AM.
- Both groups find AM funny, useful and motivating. More than half of both groups think they are not demanding to work with; however, amongst DLIS students the percentage of those who agree with this statement is much higher than in the group of EFAP participants.

To summarize with regard to our research objectives:

1. In the light of the answers to our research questions, we might conclude that as far as course-books and their complements are concerned, there are not any sharp contradictions between the answers of DLIS and EFAP respondents. Course-books still represent the core of the EFL lessons and workbooks as well as class CD-ROMs are their most preferred helpers. Regarding the latest innovations in the world of foreign language course-books, they are still surprisingly neglected. In order to ensure the development of FL education:

- a further investigation into the content of the most popular course-books would be needed;
- involvement of computer-based course-book supplements in FLT should the sooner the better become a must;
- a balanced combination of traditional and modern teaching aids is necessary.

2. Concerning additional learning resources, we may assume that AM become more and more applied in EFL education, which is undoubtedly a positive phenomenon. Yet, differences can be traced from school to school, mainly in the variety of types of these materials and of the tasks connected with them, as well as the frequency of involving them in the lessons of EFL. Unfortunately, these differences may influence the level of English proficiency and in the case of EFAP students, it might have an impact on their choice of study programmes different from those offered by DLIS. To avoid it, we suggest that the following recommendation should be taken into consideration:

- *The more times AM are used, the better.*

In order to effectively build one´s communicative competence, AM should be provided as complements to traditional course-books systematically.

- *The more types of AM students meet, the better.*

It gives them the possibility to experience as many shades of the given FL as possible, so meeting native speakers might not be so shocking. Furthermore, different types of AM challenge students much more and make them more motivated to learn English.

- *The more types of tasks we use with AM, the better.*
Varying types of tasks with AM is at least as important as varying the types of AM. First of all, because by different tasks, different skills are developed, that contributes to the overall improvement of one´s communicative competence. Secondly, varying tasks do not let students get bored so easily, but makes the lesson more enjoyable and thus more motivating for students.

3. As far as the students´ opinions are concerned in both groups they are fully supportive to involve real life materials in EFL lessons, as they consider them to be funny, useful, motivating and undemanding to work with.

- The solution to students´ lack of confidence and difficulties while working with AM might be the careful selection of materials taking into account several factors, such as learners´ level of English proficiency, their age or interests. (Reid, 2009)

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