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**“About a Boy“ – Využití filmu ve výuce anglického
jazyka k rozvoji komunikačních dovedností**

Plzeň 2010

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**“About a Boy“ – Using Film in ELT to Develop
Speaking**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

V Plzni dne 5.ledna 2010

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ABSTRACT

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December 2010, “About a Boy” – Using Film in ELT to Develop Speaking. Supervisor: Mgr.
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This project deals with using film in ELT to develop speaking. The theoretical part discusses the reasons for using film in English teaching, suggests film-based activities to develop speaking and outlines some tips for incorporating film into ELT. The aim of the presented research was to illustrate various activities that can be used with a film in an ELT classroom (“About a Boy” in case of my research) and to analyse students’ feedback on a film based teaching unit as a whole and also the individual tasks.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Media have become an inseparable part of our daily life. They serve us as the major source of information and entertainment. Consequently, teachers of most subjects try to integrate modern communication technology (DVD, television, Internet) into their teaching and make use of interactive approach to teaching. Such effort proves to be very beneficial for students, also in learning a foreign language.

Film use has recently expanded into English language teaching (ELT) and it represents an easily available source of authentic language material. Personally I think students welcome the opportunity to study the language from a different source than a textbook and as film is very popular nowadays, using it in the classroom might make learners really motivated. The teacher's role is to approach film critically. It means to choose a suitable film, select sequences corresponding to the level of students, their interests and the target language and prepare film-based activities aimed to develop students' language skills. These tasks could be quite demanding but when teachers learn to use film occasionally, their effort might bring variegation into lessons and also help students in language learning.

These are the reasons why I decided to choose using film in ELT as the topic of my final research project. In the theoretical part of my project I discuss the reasons for using film in English teaching, suggest activities to develop speaking, outline some tips for incorporating a film into English teaching and explain why I chose the film "About a Boy" to be used in my final project. In the practical part I describe the teaching unit based on a concrete lesson plan for using the film About a Boy and analyse the students' feedback based on the questionnaires that they filled in at the end of the lesson.

2. THEORETICAL PART

Using Film in ELT

Video definitely does not belong to the newest technologies teachers can use to enrich their lessons. Hoodith (2002) states that video technology became affordable in the 1970s and soon famous publishing houses released video materials specially designed to accompany particular English language textbooks. Presenting videos during English lessons (materials specifically designed for ELT, various recordings from the television and also films) brought a new impuls for both students and teachers. A few years ago videos at schools started to be replaced by DVDs. The fast penetration of DVD technology into schools was caused by its better quality and also some additional functions including the subtitle feature, language choice and easy access to specific scenes. Another advantage is that films in DVD quality are nowadays easily available. These are the reasons why using videos or films in ELT have become much less complicated and more enjoyable.

When making a list of advantages of using films in ELT, undoubtedly motivation is the biggest one. Most students enjoy watching films in their leisure time and films of American and English provenience belong to the most popular ones. How much students understand English speaking films or songs often becomes their own subjective measure of their advance in studying English. So films, when used effectively, can create a perfect motivation tool for students. In comparison to traditional reading or listening materials, film unites visual and audio stimuli in an attractive form, which students generally like. According to Ryan (1998), the teacher's task is to manipulate this enthusiasm in a way that develops a positive attitude towards language learning. Such dynamic material often has much stronger impact on students' emotions than a plain text in a book and that makes learning process more effective. It might be particularly beneficial for students who are uncomfortable with traditional teaching and need more interesting material to become interested and involved in learning process.

From the language point of view film is a piece of authentic language material because it is originally made for authentic audience. Katchen (2002) states that there are a number of features found in real spoken language but not found in typical teaching materials. Film presents people in real situations and deals with contemporary issues. Students welcome the chance to listen to authentic language speakers acting in natural situations and using informal

language structures. Those aspects influence the fact that incorporating films into ELT increases students' involvement.

The Czech curriculum (RVP pro G) mentions film in Chapter 5.1.2 Foreign Language. It sets the goal that students should be able to summarize the plot and sequence of happenings in a film or a play. When using films in classroom, teachers can make students practise talking about film in general. Learning to characterize and evaluate films in a foreign language is a very practical skill because it is a common conversational topic of both teenagers and adults.

Furthermore films can also be used for teaching cross-cultural differences. Chapter 6.3 Multicultural Education in RVP pro G (2007) states a need to develop students' ability to recognize and understand cultural differences between people of various origin. An appropriate film can help teachers demonstrate habits and traditions of other nations. In my opinion audio-visual stimuli is more likely to be an inspirative source of ideas and subsequently students are more motivated to start a discussion on the topic of multiculturalism.

When studying a film from a different point of view, it could be used to insert Media Education into ELT. This cross-curricular subject can be found in RVP pro G (2007) as well and it focuses on the development of students's critical thinking and their ability to keep distance from media production. They should learn to assess the type of material, its purpose, quality and trustworthiness. English teachers can at a certain moment in a film presentation direct students' attention to a film as a whole and make them think about the above mentioned criteria.

Last but not least, film could represent a source of inspiration for artistic activities. Working with a film in an English class can be followed by students' attempt to create their own short film section in English.

On the other hand incorporating films into ELT must be done highly thoughtfully and carefully because film being merely a time-filler is the way which does not lead to success. The first crucial moment is choosing an appropriate film. According to King (2002), recently released films are more appealing to students than classic ones. Above all the film must be comprehensible for students, then also enjoyable and relevant to their age and proficiency in English. The basic rule says that ideal input is comprehensible but slightly challenging. With less advanced students teachers should select a film with a universal theme in which the characters speak intelligibly, with standard accent and without redundancy of meaning. Scenes that balance dialogue with a high degree of visual support are generally easier for

viewers to comprehend than a long monologue or fast dialogue. Katchen (2002) adds that another way to make the material more comprehensible is to provide helpful pre-teaching activities. Generally said a chosen film should have an adequate quality and be well-acted because teachers' task among others is to lead students to select quality production. It must be socially relevant, it means not encouraging any kind of discrimination, provoking violence or employing an excessive amount of sex, nudity and vulgarity. Teachers can allow students to give suggestions about films that could be used but teachers' responsibility is to preview the film and first of all evaluate it using the above mentioned criteria.

Films only serve as an effective resource for language development when teachers are able to employ them responsibly and to make students be active participants in the lesson. When preparing a film for classroom use, teachers first think of the language or skills they intend to practise. Consequently he selects appropriate scenes from the film that could serve the purpose. It is important to assess the adequate portion of the material because it is quite demanding for students to concentrate on both content and language. Too long scenes including an excessive amount of language might discourage them. Hoodith (2002) claims that a five-minute sequence from a movie is likely to contain more than enough language for the students to cope with, and so it is better to expose students to several short sequences, each followed by activities which practise and recycle the target language. In any case the teacher's task is to ensure students that there is no need for them to understand every single word in the scene but to comprehend the gist.

The most time consuming part of the process is to design meaningful activities based on the film. Teachers can search for inspiration in literature and on the Internet. When selecting challenging yet achievable learning tasks, teachers must take into account the proficiency of their students, their age, interests and whether the film allows the application of the chosen tasks. King (2002) argues that films offer endless opportunities for pedagogically sound activities for developing fluency. Teachers can either apply the short sequence approach (selecting only a few scenes from different parts of the film) or the whole film approach (showing the whole film in a single viewing) depending on the teaching objectives and target groups. In the following chapter of my project I focus on film-based activities developing speaking.

Film-Based Activities Developing Speaking

When presenting a film in the classroom, teachers' main task is to provide stimulating activities that will make students benefit from the video as much as possible. There is a variety of activities teachers might use when working with a film in the ELT classroom. I give an overview of possible tasks in Appendix 1 of my project. Most of them have been adapted from the sources mentioned in the bibliography, while some of them include my own ideas. The activities I suggest represent a sample of tasks teachers might find beneficial in case they intend to stimulate the oral language production of their students. The reason why I decided to concentrate on the speaking skill is that speaking is usually appreciated the most by students and textbooks often do not develop it sufficiently. Film contains a lot of interesting and stimulating material to become the basis for speaking. Some sequences might become the basis for description or narration. Individual scenes, problems or the central topic of the film may provoke students' thinking and imagination which could be used in various forms of discussions or could motivate students to speak a foreign language.

While in some of the activities (see appendix one for more detailed description of these activities) film supplies a visual background for students' description, for example No sound or Vocabulary in context, other ones mostly use the audio material from the film, like No picture. The subtitle feature of DVD technology is used in the activity called Subtitles but can be used as support accompanying any of the other activities, especially with weaker students. Eyewitness or Backwards viewing tasks involve narration, while more demanding activities like Discussion or Debate provoke students to express their opinions and support it by adequate argumentation. The activity called Cultural differences was designed to make students detect and describe differences in the culture, mentality or lifestyle of different nations. Students can also demonstrate their creativity in activities like Alternative endings or Creating their own video. To sum up, the range of activities is quite wide and teachers have a chance to select the kind of speaking skill they want to practise with their students.

In most cases the students will need to watch the video more than once. The aims for watching the extract for the first time and further times will probably be different. During the first watching students usually get to know the scene or do a lead-in comprehension task, the second watching becomes the basis for performing the main speaking task. The teacher should set the tasks clearly, making sure students understand what they are supposed to do.

After they have performed the task, the teacher commonly gives feedback and plays the sequence again in case it is suitable for the check-up.

In case teachers want to develop other skills like writing, there is a plenty of Internet links accessible where they can find inspiration and tips, for example McKinnons's Teaching English Using Video (2008). Teachers are free to use their imagination and creativity to use film for any language purpose they have. The variety of film production allows them to find suitable material for practising almost any skill, language means or structure.

About a Boy – Reasons For Selecting the Film

“About a Boy“ is a 2002 film directed by brothers Chris Weitz and Paul Weitz, and based on the book of the same title by Nick Hornby. It was very well accepted by the film reviewers. According to Dawson (2002), the film is a shrewd, ironically amusing adaptation of Nick Hornby's best-selling novel. The film stars Golden Globe winner Hugh Grant as Will, Nicholas Hoult as Marcus, Academy Award nominee Toni Collette as Fiona, and Academy Award winner Rachel Weisz as Rachel. It was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Adapted Screenplay.

The main reason for choosing this particular film to be the material for my final project is the central topic of an eccentric boy having insecure family background and being bullied at school. The theme of searching for one's place in life and desperate desire to fit into the world around him is close to a lot of teenagers. The film is relatively new and quite popular all over the world so teachers can count on the fact that some students have already seen it. The famous cast including Hugh Grant and Rachel Weisz might also attract attention of teenage audience.

When preparing the lesson plan based on this film, I decided to concentrate on the motive of bullying. That is a social problem that high-school students typically witness and I hoped their personal experience might become the basis for discussing this topic. In case teachers decide to use this film with a different age group, there are other topics they might select like relationships or a single-parent problem.

From the language point of view the film contains up-to-date language of a suitable level for intermediate or upper-intermediate students to comprehend without major difficulties. In case teachers find some passages too difficult for their students, I suggest to

use Czech subtitles simultaneously. The dialogues are quite witty and their length is convenient for the usage in the lesson.

Personally I find the film really amusing, in spite of the fact it also contains serious issues including loneliness, eccentricism and bullying. The film is considered to be one of the film adaptations which reach the quality of the book it is based on. Bringing the book “About a Boy“ by Nick Hornby to the classroom when working with the film might make a good opportunity to tell students about this best-selling British author and his other works.

3. PRACTICAL PART

Realization of the Project

My project consists of a lesson plan in the form of a student's worksheet and a questionnaire for students (see Appendix 2). My final project was realised in October 2010 at a grammar school in Ostrov where I teach English. The project was designed for intermediate students in my two classes – kvinta A and sexta A, B with 19 students altogether. The students in kvinta have been studying English for 6 years, the sexta students for 7 years, but the first two years of their English language learning were realised at basic schools with variable quality of English teaching. The level of the students in the two above mentioned classes is comparable, with most students being at the intermediate level while some weaker students were evaluated as pre-intermediate by the placement test I used at the beginning of the school year 2010/2011. I organized double lessons in both of the classes as my project was designed for a 90-minute teaching unit. The lessons took place in a special computer classroom equipped with a projecting screen, a computer and a sound system. I copied the students' worksheets and the questionnaires. The preparation included informing the students about these special lessons and I also informed the director of the school, who showed great interest in the unusual form of the lessons and even observed one of them. He was quite impressed by the lesson organization and recommended me to organize a presentation of the topic for my colleagues who also use film in their lessons. I was also asked to say a few words about my project into the promotional film about our school, which was just being shot, and where teachers mention unconventional methods they use in their lessons.

The aim of the teaching units was to demonstrate a variety of activities to develop speaking that can be used when working with a film in an ELT class and to find out how they work in practice. The questionnaire I prepared for the end of the unit was aimed to get students' feedback informing me about the fact which activities the students enjoyed, found useful to practise speaking or which of them they found difficult. The ten activities presented in my lesson plan were chosen to show a variety of tasks and to match the particular film and the chosen scenes so that they were as beneficial for students as possible. I also tried to choose scenes that follow the logical line of the story so that the students could also understand the general message of the film, not just watch incoherent fragments without any link apart from the main characters. The lesson plan was written in English which did not present a problem for intermediate students. On the other hand the questionnaire was written

in Czech to avoid any ambiguity or misunderstandings and to make the filling easier for the students. The questionnaire includes 6 questions requesting either closed or half-closed answers. Concerning the timing of the lesson, I intended to spend the first five minutes introducing the film and distributing the materials. The last five minutes of the lesson were meant to be devoted to filling in the questionnaires as I was aware of the fact that the students will need some time to think about the lesson and look back into the worksheets. The eighty minutes could have been spent on watching the particular scenes and doing the tasks on the worksheet. As the scenes were about two minutes long and some tasks did not include any direct video material, the time left for the individual activities was six to eight minutes on average. Some activities took shorter time, for example activities 1 and 2 while some demanded a longer time period like activities 5, 7 or 10.

As both teaching units were comparable, I will describe them altogether. I started with explaining the lesson objectives without mentioning that it is my final university project. I introduced the film by showing them the cover of the DVD disc, asking them how many of them knew it or had seen it. Only about one fourth of the students had seen it which was quite surprising for me. I distributed students' worksheets (see Appendix 2) and instructed them to read the brief description of the film. The "Into Stage" was realised by Activity 1 called Will and Marcus. Students were asked to have a look at the photo of the two main characters on the students' worksheets and try to match the characteristics to either Will or Marcus. They managed very well but asked me to explain the meaning of some of the words like "well-off". I played the first part of the film so that they could check their answers. Then I asked them to predict the plot of the film excluding the students who had seen it and their guesses were close to the truth.

The "Through Stage" included 7 activities demonstrating various ways to work with a film, like freeze frame, commentary or roleplay. The specific task can always be found in brackets next to the title of the activity. In activity 2 the scene was stopped three times and the students were supposed to predict what the characters would do or say. They managed to guess the characters' behaviour very well and offered more than one prediction. They also easily answered the two follow-up questions.

Activity 3 required more listening practise than the previous activities as the students had to listen carefully to the dialogue on the screen and extract the facts needed to answer the two questions. It was necessary to play the scene two times. They were able to express their opinions concerning the lifestyle of Will, one of the two main characters.

Activity 4 was pair work when the first student was describing what was happening on the screen to the other student not facing the screen. Then they exchanged their positions so that they both got the same practice. The sequences were played with sound off. The students were instructed to try not to stop talking during the task and they really made an effort to do so. It was more demanding for weaker students but they usually managed by describing the actions in a more simple way leaving out some words they did not know in English. Anyway I think most of the students managed to transfer the storyline of the scene. Although this task was quite demanding for the students and I could see some of them were a bit anxious in advance, their reactions after the activity showed me they really enjoyed this task.

Activity 5 was a roleplay based on watching the scene of an unsuccessful date. I played this scene with the Czech subtitles as the language was slightly more difficult and the students needed to understand it in detail to be able to complete the following task. They worked in pairs roleplaying the dialogues between two friends commenting on the date. They changed their roles in the middle of the activity so that they both could practise questioning and answering. The level of their performance varied a lot depending on the level of their English. At the very end of the activity I invited them to share their experience with terrible dates but they mostly said they had no such experience.

Activity 6 called A Chat was my own idea. I used the subtitle feature of the DVD technology and played the chosen scene with sound off and the Czech subtitles. The first time the students were only watching so that they could get the gist of the dialogue on the screen. The second time I played the scene I paused it every time a new subtitle appeared and the students were trying to translate it into English. I explained that in case they did not know the exact words they could simplify it and transfer at least the main message of the line. As the chosen scene was a dialogue between the two main characters, the students chose one of the characters and took turns to translate. In the end I played the part with the sound, repeating some more difficult sentences once more myself so that they could compare their translation with the original version. In my opinion the students really found this activity useful as I could see they were really curious to hear the original version and discussed the differences in translations quite eagerly.

The next sequence of the film was played only to initiate the discussion on the topic of bullying for activity 7. The students watched the scene and I asked them to tell me the English word for this problem. In both classes only a few students knew the word “bullying” so I wrote it on the blackboard for the rest of the class. Consequently they worked in pairs to complete the chart in students’ worksheets. They filled most of the required information and

we did a brief frontal summary of the problem. Unfortunately there was not enough time to let them compare their charts in groups of 4. When asking the follow-up question about the students' personal experience with bullying, in one of the classes the students said they had never witnessed bullying, but in the other class one student briefly described the case of a bullied boy at her basic school. As far as I could see this activity was more difficult for the students as they had to use more complicated vocabulary to speak about this abstract topic.

The aim of activity 8 was to make students detect cultural differences between the Czech and British culture. They watched the final scene of a school concert and were instructed to notice cultural differences. Then they talked in pairs comparing the school concert in a British school and their own final school concert called "Gymnaziáles". They mentioned some interesting details, for example commented on the behaviour of the audience. I directed their attention towards the school uniforms which the British pupils were wearing and they discussed their usefulness in pairs. What surprised me was the fact that about half of the students would agree to wear school uniforms in their school. In case there was more time left for this activity, students could do class polls on the idea of wearing school uniforms, draw suggestions for their design or prepare a questionnaire for all the students of the school asking them about their opinion on school uniforms.

The Beyond stage was represented by two follow-up activities that did not require any further usage of the film. They were aimed to make students think more deeply about the problems of the main characters of the film. Activity 9 was focused on the topic of suicide as in activity 4 the students watched the scene when one of the characters was found unconscious after an attempt to commit suicide. They worked in pairs reading four controversial statements concerning suicide, deciding whether they agree or disagree with them. They were also instructed to support their opinion with some arguments. The students were all able to understand the statements and express their view, though some weaker students found it difficult to explain their arguments in English.

The last activity called A Therapy made students think again about the problems of the three main characters. This roleplay task was based on a dialogue between a psychiatrist or a psychologist played by the first student and one of the three main characters of the film played by the second student. The students could decide which character they wanted to roleplay – the depressed mother Fiona who tried to commit suicide, her bullied son Marcus who does not fit among other kids of the same age or superficial womanizer Will who finds his life empty. The psychologist was supposed to ask some questions and offer some advice or possible solutions in the end. The patient should have described his problems. Then

students changed their roles. The quality of students' performance in this activity varied according to the level of their English.

Generally said I found the lessons successful both organizationally and methodologically. The time management was quite adequate, some activities could have been more developed if there had been more time left but my major aim was to introduce a wide range of film-based activities so that the students could evaluate them. The students cooperated with me very well and I think they enjoyed the lessons both because they found them beneficial and because they appreciated the unusual form of the English language teaching. In case I would be teaching this unit again in the class of a similar level, I would not make any major changes. In case the students were slightly weaker, I would probably omit or simplify one or two more demanding activities, for example activities 7 and 10.

Students' Feedback

The basis for my analysis of the students' feedback were the questionnaires (see Appendix 2) that the students of both classes were asked to fill in at the end of the teaching units. All of the 19 students who were present in the lessons agreed to express their opinion on the lessons, so I analysed 19 questionnaires.

The first question was whether the students considered the film well-chosen for the usage in our English lesson. 26,3 % of the students selected the answer Yes and 63,1 % chose the answer Rather yes. The students had a chance to give a short explanation of their answer and they mostly appreciated the opportunity to speak, listen to native English or liked the serious motives of the film like bullying. Only 2 students circled the answer Rather no and they explained that they had problems to understand the dialogues in the film.

In the next question, the students were asked whether they liked the course of the teaching unit they had just undergone. 52,6 % of the students chose the answer Yes, 47,4 % of the students the answer Rather Yes. None of the students circled I don't know, Rather no or No answers, so generally their response was positive. In their comments they appreciated the usefulness of the activities for practising speaking and listening. Some of them mentioned that they had communicated a lot and learned some new words, enjoyed the lesson and would like to do such tasks more often.

In the third question, the students were asked to look back at their worksheets and circle no more than three activities that they liked the most. The three most popular activities were activities number 4 (Dead Duck Day – Commentary), number 6 (A Chat – Translation of Subtitles) and number 2 (Will and Marcus Meet – Freeze Frame). It was quite a surprising fact for me that the students liked those the activities the most that were the most demanding for them like translating or describing the happening on the screen. In my opinion they liked those tasks because they found them challenging and useful in real life. The least popular were the tasks number 7,8 and 9 that discussed serious topics like bullying or suicide.

In the following question, the students were exhorted to choose activities which they found the most useful for practising speaking, again no more than three. Their answers were similar to the answers in the previous question but activities 4 and 6 had even stronger preference this time. Activity number 2 was not selected by the students because although the students liked it, it did not require much speaking of them.

The fifth question challenged the students to select activities which they found too difficult. Forty-two per cent of the students did not circle any of the activities which means they found the tasks suitable for their level of English. The rest of the students mostly chose only one exercise. Most frequently they circled activity number 7 (Marcus's Problem – Discussion). They probably found the topic too serious or abstract.

The last question asked the students whether they considered any of the tasks useless. 36,8 % of the students did not select any activities. Among the most frequently circled activities were activity number 7 (Marcus's Escape – Discussion) and 9 (Suicide - Discussion). The general message of their answers was that they preferred direct work with the film to follow-up discussions.

To sum up the students liked working with a film in their English lesson and would like to use video more frequently. They appreciated most of the prepared tasks, especially the ones that were directly accompanying the selected scenes like translation, commentary or prediction. Generally they preferred these activities to discussions on serious topics like bullying or suicide. The used materials were in correspondence with the level of English of majority of the students.

The questionnaires helped me to see the lesson from the perspective of the students. Being more aware of my students' preferences I can improve the way I use film in my lessons. The implications for improvement will mostly affect the choice of tasks. The next time I will be using film in the classroom, I might give more space to the activities that the students enjoyed and found more useful like translation of subtitles, commentary of freeze

frame. On the contrary I would insert fewer follow-up activities and less roleplay. Generally said I will concentrate more on the activities that directly accompany the scenes from the film and do less activities responding to the film as a whole.

4. CONCLUSION

My final project consists of two parts – the theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part deals with the theory of using film in ELT. I discussed the reasons for using film in ELT, suggested film-based activities to develop speaking, outlined some tips for incorporating a film into English teaching. I also explained my choice of the film “About a Boy” to be used in my final project. Among the many reasons, it was stated that it is considered to be a very good film adaptation of a famous book of the same title by Nick Hornby. I find the film suitable for teenage audience and the language mostly comprehensible even for intermediate students.

In the practical part I described my teaching unit based on a concrete lesson plan for using the film About a Boy. I discussed the individual activities and students’ response to them. The project concludes with the analysis of the students’ feedback based on the questionnaires that they filled in at the end of the lesson. Their evaluation of the teaching unit was mostly very positive and they expressed their preferences of the individual tasks. The students appreciated translation of subtitles, commentary and freeze frame tasks the most. They also evaluated those tasks as the most useful to develop their speaking. On the other hand, the follow-up activities like discussion or roleplay like were among the less popular and more demanding tasks.

In conclusion I would like to mention that I found the project very beneficial for my pedagogical development. The implications for the future usage of the film in an ELT classroom include the preference of film-centred activities and limited usage of the follow-up activities dealing with the serious topics mentioned in the film. Another significant fact is that the students enjoyed the unusual form of the lesson and implied that they would appreciate more film-based lessons.

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APPENDIX 1

The List of Activities

No picture

The teacher plays a film extract with the screen turned away from the students or covers the screen. After the playing the teacher elicits language production from the students based on sounds they heard. They might be instructed to describe the scene using the target tense (Present Simple, Present Continuous, Past Simple) or they might use the language of making deductions (It must / might / can't). Finally the students watch the extract with the screen turned to them. The teacher should choose a film extract with a lot of sound effect.

No sound

The teacher plays a film extract without sound. Afterwards the students are asked to describe what happened using narrative tenses or anticipate the dialogue of the characters in the extract using questions and answers. Finally the teacher plays the video again with the sound so that the students can check. The teacher should select the extract with a lot of action going on.

Jigsaw viewing

This activity combines the two previous activities. Half of the students watch the extract without sound, the other half watch it without picture. Consequently we match one student from the first group with one student from the second group and they discuss what they have seen or heard to recreate the scene. The extract should combine enough of both visual and audio stimuli.

Eyewitness

In this activity, students become witnesses to an event. The chosen sequence should have a sense of 'beginning' and 'end'. Students are instructed to remember as much information as possible about what they are going to see - no matter how trivial. The teacher plays the sequence (with sound and vision), then in pairs students discuss everything they

have seen and heard. The teacher can elicit class-level feedback and then play back to confirm.

Commentary

This activity is very similar to the previous one, the only difference is that students describe what the happening while watching the scene, not afterwards. The aim of this activity is to practise describing events that are happening at the moment of speaking.

Backwards viewing

The teacher plays an extract backwards. Then the students are asked to reconstruct the story in chronological order using narrative tenses or future tenses. Then the teacher plays the sequence normally so that the students can compare the real order of activities with their version. The teacher should select a sequence including a lot of action having logical order.

Freeze frame

This activity might be used as a prompt for practising new vocabulary, especially describing people and scenes, or to speculate about future happenings (what will happen or what the person will say). The teacher hits freeze frame when there is a lot of interesting material for description on the screen or when a character is about to make an important decision or answer a question. After the students have fulfilled their speaking task, the teacher releases the freeze frame to compare students' speculations with what actually happens.

Answering questions

Teachers typically use this task with less advanced students to give them basis for practising speaking. It is easier for students to answer the set of prepared questions reacting to the film sequence they have just seen to speculating or debate. Teachers might use this activity to make sure the students understood the gist of the scene or to make students speak about the characters or the scene in the sequence. Teachers should create questions provoking more extensive answers, avoiding simple yes-no or one-word answers.

Subtitles

Subtitles are a very useful feature of DVD technology. When intending to develop speaking, they might be used to practise translation. The teacher plays the film sequence without sound but with subtitles in the students' mother tongue. He first plays the whole scene so that the students can get a general idea of what happens there. Then he plays the sequence again and pauses it every time a new subtitle line appears on the screen. The students in groups discuss possible translations of the lines into English. Then they can watch it with sound (or even with English subtitles) and compare their translation with the film. The teacher should choose a section including the language that the students are able to understand and translate without major difficulties. This activity might also be used to teach differences between formal and informal language (or phrasal verbs) when the teacher detects the part of a film including a lot of informal or colloquial expressions. The students will probably translate the subtitles using formal language or non-phrasal verbs and they will have an opportunity to compare their translation with the informal style of the extract.

Vocabulary in context

The teacher chooses a short extract which is rich in vocabulary. Either the teacher or the students themselves make a list of ten to twenty new words that are used in the extract. The teacher plays the extract again asking students to listen for the contexts in which the words are used. Then the students in groups or pairs discuss the meanings of the words in the particular context. Finally the teacher gives feedback and students might be asked to prepare a dialogue or a story using some of the words from the list.

Cultural differences

The teacher can enliven the topic of cultural differences by playing a film extract showing typical aspects of a certain culture (students' own, British, American or another). After watching it, the students in groups discuss differences between the two or more target cultures or speculate how people of another culture would react in the same situation.. Alternatively this activity could be focused on just one cultural aspect of the target culture (for example Christmas, wedding, birthday etc.)

Voices in my head

The teacher chooses an extract with an interesting and expressive dialogue between two or more characters. After watching the scene, the students are put into groups, one group for each character. The members of each group imagine and discuss what is going on in the head of their assigned character. Finally, when playing the scene again, the teacher pauses it after each character has spoken and the students add what they think the character feels or thinks.

Roleplay and creating their own video

Students watch a scene in which the characters solve a difficult situation, make an important decision or quarrel. Then the teacher divides them into groups and each group gets instructions (for example continue the dialogue, solve a different problem, make an opposite decision, a new character appears etc). The students have time to prepare short drama based on the scene they have seen and the instructions. Then they might roleplay it in front of the class. Students might be asked to prepare the roleplay and record it as their homework.

Discussion

The teacher plays the film extract introducing a controversial issue (for example racism, bullying, character's dilemma). The students in groups discuss their opinions concerning the problem, share their personal experience or cultural observations. They might also suggest some solutions of the problem.

In-Class Polls or Interviews

The teacher uses a scene with similar features as for the previous activity and the students are instructed to prepare questions exploring their classmates' opinions or experience concerning the issue. Then they interview each other and finally report what they have found out in groups or to the entire class.

Debate

The students hold a formal debate concerning an issue raised in the film. They do not present their real opinion of the problem but defeat the standpoint they were given by the teacher. This activity needs careful preparation.

Alternative endings

After watching a dramatic scene from the film, in which a character makes an important decision or chooses from several options, students in pairs or groups are asked to think of one or more alternative endings to the scene and report it orally.

APPENDIX 2



ABOUT A BOY – STUDENT’S WORKSHEET

“About a Boy“ is a 2002 film directed by brothers Chris Weitz and Paul Weitz, and based on the book of the same title by Nick Hornby. The film stars Golden Globe winner Hugh Grant as Will, Nicholas Hoult as Marcus, Academy Award nominee Toni Collette as Fiona, and Academy Award winner Rachel Weisz as Rachel. It was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Adapted

Screenplay.

INTO

Activity 1 - Will and Marcus (Vocabulary in context)

00:50 – 03:10

Look at the photo of the two main characters above. What do you think is their relationship? Work in pairs and try to match the characteristics to Will and Marcus. Then watch the first part of the film, check your answers in pairs and explain what helped you to decide. Try to predict the plot of the film.

Will (Hugh Grant)

Marcus (Nicholas Hoult)

		Weird		
	Cool		Well off	
Superficial		Loser		Womanizer
	Out of date		Doesn't fit	
		Poor		

THROUGH

Activity 2 – Marcus at School (Freeze frame)

5:26 – 6:33

Watch the scene. It will be paused 3 times. When the picture is frozen, predict the following:

- 1.What will Marcus’s mum say?
- 2.What will Marcus do?
- 3.What will happen on the schoolyard?

After you have watched the whole scene, answer the questions:

- What is the relationship between Marcus and his mum?
- What’s Marcus’s position at school?

Activity 3 – Will and Marcus Meet (Answering questions)

18:00 – 19:41

Will is having a date with Marcus’s mum’s friend Suzie, a single mum. Will pretends to have a child too. They all go to the park. Watch the scene and discuss the following questions in pairs:

- What does Will do for a living? Where does his money come from?
- Would you like to be in the same position as Will? Give pros and cons of such lifestyle.

Activity 4 – Dead Duck Day (Commentary)

In the park

19:40 – 21:30

Work in pairs. One student sits facing the screen, his partner is turned away from the screen. Watch the scene sound off and describe what you can see. Try not to stop talking. Then all students watch the scene with sound on.

The end of the date

22:20 – 23:30

Change your positions and do the same task with the following scene. Describe what's happening.

Activity 5 – A Date (Roleplay)

31:05 – 33:00

Marcus forced Will to take him and his mum out for a date. Watch the scene with subtitles. What was the date like? What was the problem?

Work in pairs - Will and his friend, then Fiona and her friend. Roleplay two dialogues between the pairs of friends, describe the date.

Talk about: FOOD CLOTHES COMMUNICATION ATMOSPHERE FEELINGS

- In your groups, share your ideas of a perfect versus terrible date. Have you ever had a really bad date?

Activity 6 – A Chat (Subtitles)

34:45 – 36:27

Watch the scene when Marcus and Will are talking at the door with sound off and Czech subtitles. During the second viewing the scene will be stopped after a new subtitle appears. Work in pairs, one of you is Marcus, the other one is Will. Try to translate the subtitles into English to create a dialogue. Then watch the scene sound on to check.

Activity 7 – Marcus's Escape (Discussion)

42:50 – 43:05

Watch the scene. What is this social problem called? Talk about this problem in pairs and fill in the chart. Compare your charts in groups of 4. Have you got personal experience with bullying (e.g. as a witness)?

REASONS	<u>FORMS</u>	<u>SOLUTIONS</u>
Bullied kids are usually...	1.	The classmates should...
They typically have...	2.	The teachers should...
At school they avoid...	3.	The parents should...
They have problems with...	4.	The victim should...
They try to...	5.	The bullies should...

Activity 8 – The School Concert (Cultural differences)

1:25:15 – 1:29:00

Marcus sees his mum is getting into trouble again and wants to please her by singing her favourite song on a school concert. Watch the final scene and then discuss the differences between your school concert (“Gymnaziáles”) at the end of the school year and the British one. Did you notice any other cultural differences?

BEYOND

Activity 9 – Suicide (Discussion)

Read the following statements, decide whether you agree (A) or disagree (D) with them and prepare two reasons for your answer. Then discuss your opinions in pairs.

- Everybody has the right to commit suicide.
- Doctors should respect a person’s decision to kill himself and shouldn’t try to save the person
- It’s selfish to end your life when you have small children.
- No reason is serious enough for a person to end his/her life. There’s always a way out.

A person who tried it once will probably try again.

Activity 10 – A Therapy (Roleplay)

Work in pairs. One of you is a psychologist, the other one can choose whether he wants to be Fiona, Will or Marcus. You are seeing the psychologist to discuss your problems. Roleplay the dialogue and then change roles.

Dotazník pro studenty

Zodpovězte prosím několik následujících otázek týkajících se vyučovací jednotky, kdy jsme pracovali s filmem "About a Boy". Děkuji za Váš čas.

1. Považuješ film "About a Boy" za vhodně zvolený pro použití v hodině anglického jazyka? Pokud chceš, odpověď stručně vysvětli.

- a) Ano.
 - b) Spíše ano.
 - c) Nevím.
 - d) Spíše ne.
 - e) Ne.
-
-
-

2. Líbil se ti průběh vyučovací jednotky, ve které jsme s tímto filmem pracovali? Pokud chceš, odpověď stručně vysvětli.

- a) Ano.
 - b) Spíše ano.
 - c) Nevím.
 - d) Spíše ne.
 - e) Ne.
-
-
-

3. Podívej se zpět do Students's worksheet. Které aktivity se ti nejvíce líbily. Zakroužkuj nejvýše 3 aktivity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Které aktivity se ti zdály být nejpřínosnějšími pro rozvoj mluvení v anglickém jazyce? Zakroužkuj nejvýše 3 aktivity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Byly pro tebe některé aktivity příliš obtížné? Zakroužkuj nejvýše 3 aktivity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Připadaly ti některé aktivity zbytečné? Zakroužkuj nejvýše 3 aktivity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tato závěrečná práce pojednává o použití filmu ve výuce anglického jazyka k rozvoji komunikačních dovedností. Teoretická část se zabývá důvody pro využití filmu ve výuce anglického jazyka, dává přehled aktivit souvisejících s filmem, které přispívají k rozvoji komunikačních dovedností, a uvádí tipy pro využití filmu ve výuce. Cílem výzkumu bylo ukázat různé úkoly, které lze využít při práci s filmem v hodině anglického jazyka, na konkrétním příkladu filmu "About a Boy" a analyzovat zpětnou vazbu studentů k vyučovací jednotce jako celku i jednotlivým aktivitám.