

MASARYK UNIVERSITY IN BRNO

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

**Using Literature in ELT in the Secondary School:
Extensive Reading**

Diploma Thesis

Brno 2008

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AND LITERATURE

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PROHLÁŠENÍ

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen prameny uvedené v seznamu literatury.

Souhlasím, aby práce byla uložena na Masarykově univerzitě v Brně v knihovně Pedagogické fakulty a zpřístupněna ke studijním účelům.

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.....
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INTRODUCTION

The aim of the thesis is to present the principles of using literature within extensive reading programme in ELT classrooms at a secondary school and to demonstrate the effects of extensive reading on the development of learners' writing abilities and attitudes to both reading in English and language learning. The first part of the thesis deals with general questions relating to the use of literature in ELT classrooms and describes different approaches to work with literary texts, whereas the second part focuses on the aspects of extensive reading approach and the main constituents of an extensive reading programme. The third practical part provides an example of the extensive reading programme used with secondary students and presents results of the research into the effects of extensive reading approach on the learners' writing abilities and their attitudes to both reading and language learning. Finally, the results of the research are discussed and the whole extensive reading programme is evaluated.

The role of literature in ELT classrooms has varied depending on what learning theories and approaches have prevailed in language learning and “it has only been since the 1980s that this area has attracted more interest among EFL teachers” (Clandfield and Foord n.d.). Duff and Maley state that “there has been a remarkable revival of interest in literature as one of the resources available for language learning” (1990:3). Literature has been generally used in ELT classrooms for the development of knowledge *about* language. Reading literature, however, also increases learners' awareness of language use since literary texts present language in discourse set in different social contexts (McKay 1986: 191-2). Though there are different approaches and ways how to exploit literary texts in language learning, Waring stresses that extensive reading approach, which is associated with reading a lot of books for pleasure

and general understanding, should become an inseparable part of any language teaching programme because it allows learners not only to consolidate their previously learnt knowledge of linguistic rules but also to get a 'sense' of how the language is used in real situations, which consequently improves their ability to use the language fluently ("Why Extensive Reading" n.d.).

On the whole, extensive reading represents an alternative approach to learning languages involving motivation, pleasure and fun for both learners and teachers, and heading towards the main outcome defined by Bamford as "the time when students are silently at one with the written word while seated at a desk at school, standing on a crowded train, or stretched out on the floor at home over an open book, unaware that the written words are in English" (qtd. in Brown 2000).

1. LITERATURE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

To use literature in language teaching is still not a common practice in secondary ELT classrooms. This is partly because of time constraints, and partly because some teachers still feel “that they are not equipped methodologically to use literary texts” (Paran 1998:83). Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to clarify briefly what literature is, why use it and how to exploit it to the full benefit of EFL students.

1.1. What is literature?

Prior to using literature as a part of ELT classrooms the teacher should pose the question: What is literature?

The Oxford Wordpower Dictionary defines literature as “writing that is considered to be a work of art” (“Literature” 1998:370) or as Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English explains literature as “books, plays, poems etc. that people think are important and good” (“Literature” 2003:944). The Concise Dictionary of Current English defines literature as “writings whose value lies in beauty of form or emotional effect (710:1964). Wikipedia presents Panghilito Luigi's opinion that “literature is a slice of life that has been given direction and meaning, an artistic interpretation of the world according to the percipient's point of views” (“Literature” 2008). This seems to me to be the most interesting opinion since the writers express creatively their perception of reality, their feelings, dreams, fantasies, and experience in a highly subjective way. McRae pointed out that the “secret formula” of literary text is that “literature reaches the parts that other texts can't reach” (in Pulverness 2007:5).

Though there are various definitions and explanations of literature in works of many critics, writers and philosophers, most of them lead to the same conclusion that “literature is only literature if it is considered as art” (Clandfield and Foord n.d.).

1.2. Why use literature in ELT?

There are many reasons for using literature in ELT. Firstly, literature is a valuable source of authentic language and as that expands language awareness, secondly it encourages interaction and discussions, finally it educates the whole learner's personality and is motivating (Clandfield and Foord n.d.). In other words, literature complies with the major objectives in ELT, namely “linguistic, psychological, cognitive, social and cultural” (Ellis 2002), or as Duff and Maley summarise it, there are three main reasons for using literature: linguistic, methodological, and motivational (1990:6).

1.2.1. Linguistic reasons

Literary texts “can develop the student's knowledge of language at the levels of vocabulary and structure and at the level of textual organization” (Hedge 1985:22). When reading, learners have opportunity to recycle and fix the vocabulary already learnt and meet new expressions and as David Wilkins wrote in 1972:

Through reading the learner [...] is exposed to the lexical items embedded in natural linguistic contexts, and as a result they begin slowly to have the same meaningfulness for him that they have for the native speaker (qtd. in Hedge 1985:23).

Being contextualized body of a text literature presents “genuine samples of a very wide range of styles, registers, and text-types at different levels of difficulty” (Duff and Maley 1990:6). This contributes to the learner's consolidation of language structures and textual organization, namely cohesion and coherence, which may improve their reading and writing.

While the course book texts are adapted to the learner's level and designed to “exemplify language” (Williams 1984:25), literature is a source of authentic language,

i.e. unmodified language. It is a text written “to say something, to convey a message”, a text that allows the learners “to experience ‘real’ instances of language use” that they can exploit in the situations outside the class (Williams 1984:25). At this point, however, it is necessary to stress the difference between written and spoken communication (Hedge 1985:27). As Collie and Slater emphasize, in reading literature the learners “gain additional familiarity with many different linguistic uses, forms and conventions of the written mode: with irony, exposition, argument, narration, and so on (1987:4).

1.2.2. Methodological reasons

Literary texts are rich in meanings which may elicit different reactions, understanding and interpretations. This variety of opinions may serve as a springboard for discussions and sharing feelings which means that literature encourages interaction (Duff and Maley 1990:6; Clandfield and Foord n.d.). In addition, creativity and imagination are also employed and “at productive level, students of literature, become more creative and adventurous” (Collie and Slater 1987:5). When reading literary texts the learners practise and develop their reading skills and strategies, which contributes to the development of their reading fluency and proficiency.

1.2.3. Motivational reasons

Students usually find literary texts more interesting than coursebook texts. Literature involves “affective, attitudinal, and experiential factors” and so may motivate learners to read (McKay 1986:192). Duff and Maley stress that literature is motivating because it deals with situations and themes that the writer considered important to address and they point out that the motivational effect of the genuineness of literary

texts is increased when the topics relate to the learner's personal experience (1990:6). Collie and Slater emphasize that it is the personal involvement encouraged in readers by literature that makes literary texts useful in language learning process and claim that “engaging imaginatively with literature enables learners to shift the focus of their attention beyond the more mechanical aspects of the foreign language system” (1987). Moreover, “literature holds high status in many cultures and countries” therefore students can feel a real sense of achievement at understanding a piece of highly respected literature” (Clandfield and Foord n.d.).

Literature educates the whole learner's personality since it includes a lot of cross-curricular and cross-cultural relations. Through literature teachers may not only develop the learners' attitudes to reading and learning languages but they may also cultivate learners' attitudes to values. Though different cultural backgrounds reflected in literary texts may cause some difficulties in reading and general comprehension, it is suggested to overcome this problem by exploring foreign cultures rather than to avoid using literature (Duff and Maley 1990:7; McKay 1986:193). McKay takes this argument further and makes the point about that in this way literature may increase learner's understanding and tolerance for cultural differences (1986:193).

According to Carter and Long “literature can be a special resource for personal development and growth” offering “many linguistic opportunities to the language teacher” and allowing “many of the most valuable exercises of language learning to be based on material capable of stimulating greater interest and involvement” (1991:3).

1.3. How to use literature in ELT

The reasons mentioned above in section 1.2. influence the way the literature is used in ELT classrooms. According to Carter and Long there are three models: a cultural model; a language model; and a personal growth model which differ in objectives for learners and pedagogical practices applied (1991:2). The type of the model determines how literature is used in ELT classrooms (Clandfield and Foord n.d.).

1.3.1. Models of reading literature

The cultural model is defined as the model “associated with more teacher-centred, transmissive pedagogic mode, which focuses on the text as a product” (Carter and Long 1991:8). Carter and Long state that the model concentrates on the study of literature and individual learner's work is restricted. The cultural model investigates the literary work from the political, social, historical and cultural viewpoint and is more typical for university studies (Clandfield and Foord n.d.).

The language model aims to be “more learner-centred and activity-based” and pays attention to the way language is used (Carter and Long 1991:9). This model is often used by teachers who want to increase learner's language awareness and “to put students in touch with some of the more subtle and varied creative uses of the language” (Carter and Long 1991:2). Also, the teacher may use stylistic analysis within this approach and so help students to make the meaningful interpretations of the text (Clandfield and Foord n.d.).

The personal growth is also a learner-centred and process-based approach which is aimed at the interaction between the text and the reader and motivates learners to express their own opinions and feelings (Clandfield and Foord n.d.). As Carter and Long put it, this model prompts individual responses and is associated with learner's

involvement in the reading of literary texts which are selected so as to allow learners to react to them from their own experience (1991:3,9). In this way the learners are stimulated to read, to make the text their own and to evaluate the text (Carter and Long 1991:3,9). "This model recognizes the immense power that literature can have to move people and attempts to use that in the classroom" (Clandfield and Foord n.d.).

The three models do not exclude mutually. In fact, they overlap. This is particularly applicable to the language models which are "not sufficient in themselves and are only of real value if they embrace the personal growth approach, and are thus utilised as a means to a richer and of fuller personal development" (Carter and Long 1991:9-10).

Further, it is important to consider the approaches to reading i.e. why and how the literature is read.

1.3.2. Intensive and extensive reading

Basically, there are distinguished two main reading styles, namely intensive and extensive reading. The reading style is determined by the learner's reasons for reading and learners should practise different reading styles in order to become flexible in reading and use language appropriately (Williams 1984:10-11).

Intensive reading refers to "the careful reading or translation of shorter, more difficult foreign language texts with the goal of complete and detailed understanding" and "is also associated with the teaching of reading in terms of its component skills" (Bamford and Day 1997). As Hedge puts it, intensive reading activities "involve a close study of texts and an examination of the features of English at various levels of word, sentence, paragraph and whole text" (1985:vi). Hedge states that intensive reading practice can "activate the transfer of reading skills and strategies from the mother

tongue to English”, it also can “teach specific skills” and “increase the students' general understanding of language and their ability to understand socio-cultural meaning” (1985:33-34). In 1979 Munby referred to intensive reading as ‘skills training’ (qtd. in Hedge 1985:vii).

Whereas intensive reading involves activities aimed at the study of language, extensive reading “aims to build reading fluency and reading confidence” (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). It is associated with reading of “large quantities of easy material in English [...] for information and enjoyment, with the primary goal of achieving a general, overall understanding” (Ono, Day and Harsch 2004). The learners' attention is focused “on the meaning of the text [rather] than the meaning of individual words or sentences” (Bamford and Day 1997). As Hedge argues, it is the extensive reading that gives learners an opportunity to “operate strategies like prediction or guessing word meaning” learned in intensive reading (1985:34). Therefore experts suggest that extensive reading in or out of class should complement intensive reading activities in class (Hedge 1985:34; Susser and Robb 1990; Waring, “Why extensive reading” n.d.).

1.4. Selecting reading materials

The selection of an appropriate literary text seems to be crucial for the success of literary lessons. The book is suitable if it is in compliance with the learners' needs, interests, cultural background and language level (Collie and Slater 1987:6). However, as Collie and Slater suggest, the main criterion to be kept in mind when selecting a literary text is “whether the particular work is able to stimulate the kind of personal involvement [...] by arousing the learners' interest and provoking strong, positive reactions from them” (1987:6). The text should be “meaningful and enjoyable” so that

the reading may “effect upon the learners' linguistic and cultural knowledge” (Collie and Slater 1987:6). Therefore, teachers should use books which are “relevant to the life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner” and “not too much above the students' normal reading proficiency” in order to maintain the learners' interest and enjoyment (Collie and Slater 1987:6).

Further, the importance of visual support which contributes to the understanding of a text is emphasized and it is suggested that the text should allow the development of students' autonomy in learning and offer a concrete outcome e.g. dramatization or a poster-design (Ellis 2002). Brumfit suggests the following group of six general criteria: linguistic level, cultural level, length, pedagogical role, genre representation, and classic status also referred to as ‘face validity’ (1986:189).

In addition to this, it is necessary to decide whether authentic or simplified materials will be used.

1.4.1. Authentic materials

The term “authentic” is generally used to refer to any text which was not written for language learning purposes but for native speakers. However, the experts point out that “what makes texts written by and for native speakers authentic is that they are instance of communication between writer and intended audience” (Bamford and Day 1997). Janet Swaffar explained it in 1985 clearly: “The relevant consideration here is not for whom it is written but that there has been an authentic communicative objective in mind” (qtd. in Bamford and Day 1997). To put it briefly, it is suggested that “reading is authentic when students read books for the purpose for which they were written rather than for language study” (Susser and Robb 1990).

The advantage of using authentic materials is that they allow students to meet language as it is used in real life. On the other hand, authentic materials may not be an appropriate reading material because of linguistic difficulty. As experts suggest, it is possible to make a difficult text easier by assigning easy comprehension tasks (Spratt, Pulverness and Williams 2005:23). Another possibility how to solve this problem is to simplify the authentic material by omitting or replacing difficult or unnecessary vocabulary by easier ones and re-organizing the text structure (Williams 1984:28).

1.4.2. Simplified materials

There are specific books, referred to as graded readers, the language of which is simplified or abridged to make the book easy for language learners to read and understand (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). Graded readers are also referred to as “language learner literature” (Bamford and Day 1997). There is a wide range of series of graded readers at all language levels published every year e.g. Oxford University Press Graded Readers, Penguin Readers, Cambridge Graded Readers, or Macmillan Readers to name some of them. Learners may choose classical English and world literature or contemporary literary works which cover different genres e.g. thrillers, detective stories, fantasies, ghost stories and horrors, adventure stories, science-fiction, historical books etc. The readers are graded at the lexical, structural and information level (Hedge 1985:2,9,14).

Whether to use authentic or simplified materials depends on the purpose of the reading. The simplified materials are made easy in order to improve learners reading fluency and confidence; thus they are suitable for extensive reading (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). In contrast, the complexities of authentic texts may discourage the learners and so they are recommended to be used in intensive reading (Schmidt n.d.;

Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). Considering the general reasons for using literature in language teaching i.e. to become better readers, language acquisition and success, it is recommended to use both types of materials in language teaching (Harmer 1991:187).

1.5. The three stages of reading classes

This section will give a brief description of pre-, while- and post reading stages involved in a reading class.

1.5.1. Pre-reading

This stage is often referred to as ‘lead-in’. The goal of pre-reading stage is to prepare students for the text, to arouse their interest in the topic of the text and motivate them to read (Williams 1984:37). To prepare students for reading means to ease students' stress from their fear of not-being able to cope with language difficulties (Williams 1984:37). Thus the “teacher's role must be to play up the sense of adventure while providing a supportive atmosphere that will be reassuring to the students” (Collie and Slater 1987). At the beginning of preparing the pre-reading stage Williams suggests that the teacher should think of the following questions and so find how to introduce the text, motivate students and to incorporate language preparation:

1. What do the learners already know about the topic and how can this knowledge be used in work with the text?

2. Why is the text worth reading and how to make the learners share the same reason? (1984:37)

Students are encouraged to express their expectations and predictions by discussing pictures, the cover page, titles, or the author's biography, brainstorming the relevant vocabulary, matching titles and parts of a text, ordering parts of a text, or answering

questions. To set the scene, to get in the mood, to support understanding of the text , or just to reduce learners' stress it is possible to use visualisation i.e. students listen to a topic-related music or to a short literary extract and then try to construct meaning in a creative way.

1.5.2. While-reading

This stage is aimed at the clarification of text content and at students' understanding of the writer's purpose and the text structure (Williams 1984:38). What is important for the teacher to consider in this phase is “what the effect of these exercises is and whether this corresponds to both his and his learners' aims” (Williams 1984:38). Therefore, prior to choosing or developing suitable exercise, the teacher should pose the questions regarding the function and the organization of the text, what information to extract, what the learners can deduce from the text, what language can be taught or what styles can be practised (Williams 1984:38-39). According to Williams the while-reading activities are necessary to be organized from the general understanding to understanding of smaller units e.g. paragraphs or sentences (1984:39).

While-reading activities involve traditional comprehension exercises in the form of true or false questions, answering pre-reading questions, matching halves of sentences, guessing what comes next, identifying who said what, completing maps, diagrams or factfiles, cross-words and word-search puzzles. Basically, the while-reading activities deal with the characters, the plot, language, and topic issues.

1.5.3. Post-reading

In the final stage of reading students are supported to consolidate and reflect creatively upon what they have read. Further, during this stage the text is personalized

and related to the students' personal experience, emotions, views and interests in order to stimulate their reactions to the text. The whole organization and types of the post-reading activities are determined by the objectives of the programme; so when planning the post-reading activities the teacher should consider whether the topic of the text is recommendable, whether it invites completion and primarily whether learners may involve their personal experience when working with the text (Williams 1984:39).

The post-reading stage may include writing activities e.g. writing a summary or a recommendation, a letter to a character, re-writing the story from a character's point of view; speaking activities e.g. role-plays, interviewing the characters, dramatization; project work e.g. drawing illustrations, preparing a series of pictures for comics; or combination of these.

As Williams points out, “the problems of motivation, language and reading-related activities are not dealt with separately in each of the three phases, but are ‘spread’ throughout the three phases”; and therefore “the three-phase approach is not to be carried out mechanically on every occasion” (1984:40). The advantage of this three stage approach is grounded in the fact that “it respects and makes use of the student's own knowledge of language and of the world and uses this as a basis for involvement, motivation, and progress” and it also “leads to the integration of the skills in a coherent manner” (Williams 1984:40).

1.6. Assessment of reading literature

The assessment of the learners' progress should be in compliance with the aims and objectives set at the beginning of the programme. When designing the assessment scheme for reading classes the teacher should decide how to monitor the progress and what kind of feedback to use to motivate the learners to read and study more.

Firstly, it is necessary to consider whether to use the formal assessment leading to a grade e.g. a test, a quiz or a paper, or “content and performance driven” (Weaver n.d.) informal assessment which involves “observation, inventories, checklists, rubrics, rating scales, performance and portfolio assessment, participation, peer and self evaluation, and discussion” (“Assessment” 2007).

Being performance-based, the informal assessment is represented by alternative assessment devices and strategies. Alternative assessment “employs strategies that ask students to show what they can do” (Tannenbaum 1996). It focuses on “documenting individual student growth over time” (Tannenbaum 1996) and learner's achievement is emphasized and as that it might be conveniently used in learner-centred reading classrooms. The measures of the alternative assessment involve pictorial products e.g. drawings, charts; oral performances or presentations e.g. interviews, role plays, summarizing, retelling or paraphrasing the stories; oral and written products e.g. reading response logs, writing assignments, dialogue journals; or portfolios (Tannenbaum 1996). It is also possible to combine both formal and informal assessments.

Secondly, it should be specified whether the teacher will apply the continuous or the final assessment. Third, the assessment scheme should cover information about how to analyze the results, what forms of feedback to use e.g. an oral or written, or a grade.

Finally, teachers should consider how the data obtained in the reading programme can contribute to their further professional development e.g. change of a text, activities, or topics.

2. ASPECTS OF EXTENSIVE READING APPROACH

The idea of extensive reading as an approach to foreign language teaching in general and as a way to teach reading in particular was developed theoretically and practically by Harold Palmer in Britain and Michael West in India at the beginning of 20th century (Bamford and Day 1997).

Within extensive reading students read a lot of texts they choose according to their interest and language level, they read them for pleasure and general understanding, without dictionaries and independently of the teacher, with minimum post-reading tasks (Bamford and Welch 2000; Scott-Conley n.d.). As Day and Bamford emphasized the aim of extensive reading in language teaching is “to get students reading in the second language and liking it” (qtd. in “Using Graded Readers” 2006:6).

In connection with these aspects of extensive reading there is a set of specific principles and particular issues which the teacher has to consider prior to starting an extensive reading.

2.1. Extensive reading and language acquisition

”In his 1982 book, Krashen argues that extensive reading will lead to language acquisition, provided that certain preconditions are met. These include adequate exposure to the language, interesting material, and a relaxed tension-free learning environment” (Bell 2003).

The idea of the second language acquisition “has had a large impact in all areas of second language research and teaching since the 1980s” (Schütz 2007). It was introduced and explained by Krashen “as unconscious process in which we acquire language by understanding messages” (Dawson 2005:6). According to Krashen's theory of language acquisition “language learning needs to be more like the child's acquisition

of its native language” when “they hear and experience a considerable amount of the language in situations” and their “ability to use language is the result of many subconscious processes” (Harmer 1991:33). As Harmer continues, Krashen's suggestion is that if learners are exposed to a great deal of comprehensible input, i.e. roughly-tuned input represented by language which students hear or read and which is slightly above their language level but still comprehensible, they can acquire language by themselves (1991:34). Krashen emphasizes that 'acquisition' is more important than 'learning', since it initiates the utterance (Schütz 2007).

As extensive reading involves reading a lot of easy material in the target language, it provides “increased exposure to English” and the learner receives the comprehensible input necessary for the acquisition to take place (Day and Bamford 2000). Therefore, in recent years extensive reading programs have been increasingly used by language teachers to facilitate language acquisition (Schmidt n.d.).

2.2. The principles of extensive reading

Bamford and Day formulated the following set of principles to be applied when implementing extensive reading approach in EFL classrooms:

- 1) *The reading material is easy.* The reading material is within their language level. It contains few (from two up to four) unfamiliar items of vocabulary or grammar. This principle is considered the most important.
- 2) *A variety of reading materials on a wide range of topics is available.* Varied reading materials ensure that students read what they want to read, and they can read for different reasons and in different ways.
- 3) *Learners choose what they want to read;* not the teacher. This principle is the basis of extensive reading. It is the possibility of students' own choice that

makes extensive reading enjoyable. Within this principle the students may also stop reading materials which they find difficult or not interesting.

- 4) *Learners read as much as possible.* It is the quantity of reading that brings the benefits of extensive reading and so a book a week is recommended to be an appropriate goal.
- 5) *Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.* Learners read materials at their language level, which encourages fluent reading. The work with dictionaries is avoided since looking up the vocabulary would complicate fluent reading. Instead, the skill of guessing the meaning of the unknown language items is developed.
- 6) *The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.* Learners read for pleasure and information and so their aim is only sufficient understanding rather than total comprehension, which is required in intensive reading.
- 7) *Reading is individual and silent.* In extensive reading learners read their self-selected books, at their own pace and mostly out of school, at time and place they choose.
- 8) *Reading is its own reward.* As the goal of extensive reading is the learner's own experience, there are no comprehension questions. However, learners may be asked to do some post-reading activities aimed at students' understanding and experience from reading, keeping track and cross-curricular linking of what students have read. Moreover, the activities should encourage further reading.
- 9) *The teacher orients and guides the students.* Extensive reading is different from a typical classroom practice; therefore, it is necessary to explain to students the

methodology, to keep track of what they read, and to guide them to get the most out of their reading.

10) *The teacher is a role model of a reader.* It means that the teacher reading the same material as the students are reading becomes an active member of the reading community in the classroom and demonstrates what it means to be a reader (2004:2-3).

These principles form a general theoretical basis of any extensive reading programme.

2.2.1. Rationale and benefits of ER in language learning

There are several reasons why to start an extensive reading in EFL classrooms. According to recent research extensive reading in a foreign language can lead to faster and more fluent reading, vocabulary acquisition, improvements in both language use and knowledge, improvements in writing skills, increase in confidence, motivation and learners' autonomy, development of positive attitude to reading and language learning (Nation 1997; "Using Graded Readers" 2006:7). In addition, extensive reading also improves speaking and listening abilities (Ono, Day and Harsch 2004).

As to the fluency, when students read texts within their reading ability level, they start to recognize words automatically, which allows them to read faster and "to move from reading 'word-by-word' to 'reading-with-ideas', thus increasing reading fluency" (Waring, "The OUP Guide" 2007). "Consequently, students increase their reading speed and confidence and can give more attention to working out the overall meaning of what they are reading" (Day and Bamford 2000).

In extensive reading "learners not only build new vocabulary but they also expand their understanding of words they knew before" (Ono, Day and Harsch 2004). Extensive reading plays an important role in the recycling and the consolidation of

vocabulary since “the learner is meeting massive amounts of language and is being repeatedly exposed to meaningful occurrences of words and grammatical structures” (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007).

By reading the huge mass of texts students increase their awareness of language since they have “opportunities for noticing new language and working out the patterns in text and phrases” (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). In other words, learners get “a 'sense' or 'feeling' for how the language works” (Waring, “Why Extensive Reading” n.d.) They learn more about the organization of the text and start to perceive the foreign language “as a piece of text that is actually communicating ideas, opinions, or even emotions to them” (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:7).

In addition, the range of materials students read with confidence and without any difficulties, also referred to as 'the comfort zone' of language, is expanded (Ono, Day and Harsch 2004). What is more important, if students are not allowed to expand their comfort zone of language, they cannot progress to productive language use (Waring, “Why Extensive Reading” n.d.).

Elley and Mangubhai's studies show that extensive reading influences learner's writing abilities (Nation 1997). Especially, if it runs over a longer period and is supported by while-reading and post-reading activities, students “not only produce better written work, but they are also more willing to experiment with the language” (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:8).

Within extensive reading students have chance to try out the skills and strategies developed in intensive reading on their own, and as they expand their comfort zone, they move from simplified materials to ungraded texts, which contributes to their confidence, autonomy and success in learning (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:8).

The more students read the better readers they become. If they read materials within their comfort zone they experience success. “Success in reading may increase motivation for further study and reading” (Nation 1997), which leads to the development of learners' positive attitude to language learning. Moreover, extensive reading helps learners to form the habit of reading and “if students can develop the habit of reading widely for enjoyment and interest, they benefit not only by increased confidence and fluency, but may also take with them the life-long habit of reading in a foreign language” (Brown 2000), which is important for further learners' independent development in language.

2.2.2. Reading materials in extensive reading

“Choosing which books to read is tremendously important” (Dawson 2005:7). When selecting reading materials for extensive reading the basic criteria involving the learner's interest, language level and cultural background as well as the content are crucial (See sub-section 1.4.1.).

As to the genres that should be used in extensive reading, Hill stated in 1998 that fiction, especially romances, comedies, adventures, thrillers, and ghost stories, seem to be the most appropriate for extensive reading because they offer a wide variety in setting, characters and plots, discuss important contemporary issues and do not require a high level of concentration (in Brown 2000). Non-fiction is not recommended for the purposes of extensive reading since it requires “a close attention that can result in a stop-and-start style of reading” (Scott-Conley n.d.).

Supposing that extensive reading can facilitate acquisition, then it is necessary to consider “whether to use authentic materials written for the general market or simplified (graded) materials produced especially for language learners” (Schmidt n.d.).

In compliance with the purpose of extensive reading “to improve fluency [and] confidence” (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007) and “in order for extensive reading to do its work -- build automaticity of word recognition, build vocabulary knowledge and develop positive attitudes towards reading – the reading material must be well within the students' linguistic ability” (Bamford and Day 1997). Consequently, it is recommended to use simplified (graded) materials rather than authentic materials the complexity of which may impair the development of fluency (Schmidt n.d.). However, Hedge and some reading experts argue that simplified versions of original works cannot “keep the original individuality of style”, and so “many of an author's intentions, attitudes, and opinions” are not communicated (Hedge 1985). This may happen when the editors' concern is not the communication but particular vocabulary or simplification of a huge text to minimum pages (Bamford and Day 1997). Nevertheless, quality “graded reading materials can serve as a bridge providing comprehensible input, skills practice, and increased confidence leading to eventual fluent handling of authentic texts” (Schmidt n.d.).

Therefore, the “language learner literature” that is represented by a great number of attractive books “adapted or written for language learners at all levels of proficiency” and covering various genres “is the most appropriate material for extensive reading by beginning and intermediate learners” (Bamford and Day 1997). Moreover, most of the graded readers now available are accompanied with audio recordings on CDs which may be used in many ways (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:17).

In addition to graded readers “for less advanced adult and adolescent learners of English, a useful source of reading material is books [...] produced for native-speaking children and teenagers” which are not simplified but “are relatively easy for EFL

learners to read, and some have much to say to older learners” (Day and Bamford 2000). They are also referred to as “levelled readers” (Furukawa 2006).

There are some procedures designed to help the learners to find their reading ability and the appropriate level of graded readers. One of them is a cloze test, when students complete a copy of the text of approximately 200 words in which every eighth word was deleted with four complete sentences at the beginning and the end of the text (Hedge 1985:53). As Hedge stresses out:

The principle underlying cloze procedure is that the number of correctly guessed words indicates how well the student can reconstruct the author's message by using knowledge of structure, by predicting from the context and by choosing words which 'fit' best with the author's own choice of vocabulary and language patterns. (1985:55)

Another way how to assess the learner's reading ability level is to prepare a piece of paper containing the copies of pages representing all levels. Then students read the paper “to find the level where they can read 80-100 words per minute, with about 2 or 3 unknown words per page” (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). Some publishers of graded readers e.g. Penguin Readers have developed their own placement tests (Dawson 2005:7).

Generally, once the students find their level, it is advisable to use books slightly below the indicated level to develop confidence in reading longer texts (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007; “Using Graded Readers” 2006:10).

2.2.3. ER and general English teaching programmes

Waring emphasizes the importance of extensive reading in general English classes and says that “language programs that do not have an extensive reading [...] will hold back their students” (Waring, “Why Extensive Reading” n.d.).

When starting the extensive reading program, it is vital to find ways how to integrate it into the school's curriculum so that the direction and purpose of the program will be in compliance with the goals, aims and objectives of the school (Waring, “Getting an Extensive Reading” n.d.). It is necessary to decide on how to connect extensive reading to the main course, how to use graded readers and how much time to devote to extensive reading (Hedge 1985:75). Further, prior to involving an extensive program in general English class it is also important to determine the balance of extensive and intensive reading since this balance is crucial for the reading program to be successful (Waring, “Getting an Extensive Reading Program” n.d.).

As reading experts stress out extensive reading can be added to any curriculum since it is mostly an out-of-class activity (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007; Day and Bamford 2000). It could be implemented as a separate course, which would be ideal situation, offered as an extracurricular activity, or involved into the existing course (Day and Bamford 2000). Though, most of extensive reading is done in the students' own time, “a necessary part of the process or encouraging extensive reading is that initially the reading should be motivated and then regularly monitored, so that rhythms of reading are built up and class interaction on the reading developed” (Gail and McRae 1991:5). There are many ways how to connect the extensive reading with the general English language program e.g. to relate topics of the coursebook to a reader, to use a reader for listening work or intensive reading (Hedge 1985:79).

As to how much class time should be devoted to extensive reading to develop good reading habits, Hedge refers to the overall amount of time in an English course and the intensity of a course as the main criteria (1985:79). Gail and McRae claim that it depends on “teaching situation, curriculum requirements and, indeed, on individual teachers and classes” and suggest that “half an hour once a week or every ten days should be devoted to extensive reading” (1991:5). Gail and McRae also point out that this class time work should be based on “what has been read rather than mere verification that reading has been done or checking comprehension” (1991:5).

Work with readers can be organized either “as part of an individual reading program in which learners take books from a class library and read them on their own” or “as a whole class reading program in which all the students in a class read the same graded reader, generally chosen by the teacher” (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:8).

Individual reading allows students to become much more autonomous, they are free to select the book they are interested in and they read whenever and wherever they want at their own pace (Hedge 1985:76-78). As Hedge summarizes, “individual private reading is a way of organizing language learning which recognises that students have different experiences, interests, motivation, intellectual capacities, tastes and levels of maturity” (1985:78).

The use of a class reader, group work and whole class discussions “can help build a team feeling and motivation to tackle the potential difficulties with understanding content, issues or vocabulary” (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:8). The book should be read within a set time limit (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:8). To maximize the benefits of extensive reading it is recommended to combine both kinds of reading programs (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:8).

2.2.4. Extensive reading procedure

In the first lesson, the teacher explains to the learners the importance of extensive reading, the aims, goals and objectives of the program. Then, the reading materials are introduced to the learners and the learners receive information about the classification and borrowing system. Finally, the teacher sets the page goal or a number of books, and explains the assessment procedures (e.g. written reports, class discussions, reading summary sheets). In the following reading sessions students, borrow and return books, and the teacher uses various techniques and develops activities to track and encourage the students' reading activity. In the last class the books are returned and the reading summaries are collected (Waring, "The OUP Guide" 2007; Waring, "Getting an Extensive Reading Program" n.d.).

As far as the exercises and practice activities are concerned, reading is the most required task and activity. In addition to reading, which is the main task, students may write summaries, which help students to improve their comprehension and writing ability, or answer a set of open-ended questions fitting most of the books used in the program (Susser and Robb 1990). Teachers may utilise various techniques to help their students get maximum benefit of the extensive reading program. They can organize reader interviews, check and comment on written summaries, which allows the students to demonstrate their reading activity and the teacher has the opportunity to check whether the students understand their books (Susser and Robb 1990).

Since extensive reading is focused on the quantity, it is necessary to set a unit of amount to measure the students' progress, to compare and assess students (Susser and Robb 1990). The quantity of reading depends on the "type of program, level, and other variables" (Susser and Robb 1990). Some experts claim that "it is best to set a page goal e.g.300 or 500 pages per term" whereas others suggest that "the learner reads a certain

number of books during the course” (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). In addition, it is always important to consider that easier books are shorter and contain a lot of pictures, whereas more difficult texts are longer and denser with fewer pictures (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). This problem may be solved by using “weighted pages” which means that “one page of a higher level book is worth more than a page of a book at [lower] level” (Helgesen 1997). There is no precise rule how to assign the amount of reading to be done extensively, however, Light wrote in 1970 that the assignments should be of sufficient length “so that neither teacher nor pupils will fall for the temptation to talk them through in class” (qtd. in Susser and Robb 1990).

2.2.5. Teacher's Role

When discussing the teacher's role in extensive reading program it is important to point out that “extensive reading should be a student-centred and a student-managed activity” (Stanley 2005). Hence, “the role of the teacher is [...] to advise, assist, correct, widen the students' interests and encourage them to analyse their own reading experience by talking about the books they have read” (Hedge 1985:95). In this connection, Bamford and Day emphasize that a teacher reading books together with the students and discussing them is the best instructor because such a teacher serves as a “role model of a reader” who can recommend reading materials to the students and create atmosphere stimulating learners to read (2004:3).

2.2.6. Assessment

The form of the assessment of students' activities within the extensive reading programme depends on the goals and aims set prior to the start of the program. It is recommended to use tests in extensive reading program at the beginning and end of the

year to assess the students' reading speed and level (Scott-Conley n.d.). In order to assess the learner's improvement in English abilities, teachers may use the formal assessment in form of cloze tests or tests from outside the school e.g. SLEP - Secondary Level English Proficiency tests (Furukawa 2006).

Teachers are warned of testing students' reading activity in extensive reading since it may threaten the stress-free conditions (Bell 2003). To assess students' reading activity in the program, a performance-based alternative approach may be well applied in form of Instant Book Reports and teacher-student interviews about books that the student has read (Schmidt n.d.). Reading experts use the performance-based assessment because it encourages “responding to a story and allows for diverse interpretations” (Fiderer n.d.). In addition, students' may keep reading journals or portfolios (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:17). Moreover, “pre and post assessment of students' sense of confidence, enjoyment, and motivation is recommended in addition to the [...] skills tests” (Scott-Conley n.d.).

2.3. Implementation of an ER programme

An extensive reading programme has to be well planned and flexible, otherwise it may fail due to lack of direction of purpose, insufficient resources, lost of reading materials, or general decrease of enthusiasm (Waring, “Getting an Extensive Reading Program” n.d.). Therefore, after being acquainted with the theoretical aspects of extensive reading the teachers have to make decisions about some more practical issues: how to organize and run a library, how to administer the program, and what class activities are suitable to motivate students to read.

When making these decisions it is necessary to consider the shape and size of the extensive reading program i.e. whether a single class, a group of classes, or the

whole school will be involved in the extensive reading programme (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007).

2.3.1. Class library

A class library is a collection of books available to students in the classroom (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:10). Setting up a class library requires choosing and organizing reading materials of students' interest, classifying and promoting the books, and designing a borrowing system (Hedge 1985:83). When starting a class library, a teacher should organize the library so that it can be enlarged and adjusted to changes of the developing reading program (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). The key to the success of a class library is the involvement of both the teacher and the students in the class library management (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:10).

First, it is necessary to make an initial collection of as many books as possible at or a bit above the students' level. It is advisable to start with at least one copy of a graded reader per learner (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007) Multiple copies of interesting titles at each level are more beneficial than one copy of numerous titles at each level (Scott-Conley n.d.). It is estimated that when we use EPER grading system (see Table 1), then students should read about 15 titles to move on; in case of fewer level system the number of books is higher (Scott-Conley n.d.).

There are different ways how to cover the cost of the books: the teachers may explain the benefits of the program and persuade the head of school, then, it is possible to address students and their parents, or to ask for a sponsorship.

The book management system should be simple and transparent (Waring, “Getting an Extensive Program” n.d.). First, each book should be numbered and classified by difficulty in some way (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). Different

publishers of graded readers use different systems to classify their levels. In order to unify the classification the EPER grading system (Table 1) has been developed by the Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading; within this system the graded readers are divided according to the average number of headwords with the G level being the easiest and X level being the most difficult. (“Handout from the Extensive Reading” 1998).

Table 1 EPER grading system (“Handout from the Extensive Reading” 1998)

| EPER level | Average vocabulary | Student Level |
|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| G | 300 | Starter |
| F | 500 | Beginner |
| E | 800 | Elementary |
| D | 1200 | Low Intermediate |
| C | 1600 | Intermediate |
| B | 1900 | High Intermediate |
| A | 2200 | Advanced |
| X | 3000 | Bridge |

Teachers may also adapt this system to suit their learners or even add an easier level but the system of 6 or 8 levels should be maintained (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). In order to make it easy for students to find the book at their level, it is recommended that the level of the book is indicated by the coloured tape across the spine of the book (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007). After marking books in this way, they may be displayed: according to their level or type.

“The best way a teacher can create interest in the library and a good atmosphere for reading is [...] to promote books (Hedge 1985:84). The ideal situation is if there is a 'book corner' in the classroom; when teaching in different classrooms the teachers may create a mobile library in form of hanging library with pockets or to keep the books with their audio CDs in a box (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:10). To draw students'

interest it is also useful to display wall charts or brochures delivered by the publishers of graded readers (Hedge 1985:84).

There are several possibilities how to design a borrowing system. It is possible to use a library lending book recording information about the student's name, title of book, date of borrowing and return, or a library catalogue using a simple card index (Hedge 1985:86). Alternatively, a checkout sheet with the learner's name and book number recorded by week may be used when books are borrowed and returned at the same time (Waring, "The OUP Guide" 2007).

2.3.2. Preparing learners

"It is vital, if extensive reading is to be valuable, confidence-building activity, one which develops good reading habits, that students are well-prepared before they begin" (Hedge 1985:68). At the beginning of an extensive reading programme it is necessary to prepare students and help them to get from "teacher-guided, close study of short texts to individual reading of whole books" (Gail and McRae 1991:6). According to Gail and McRae students need to be prepared psychologically, methodologically and to obtain practice in self-direction (1991:6).

Whereas the psychological preparation involves activities leading to the students' awareness of their attitudes to reading and building their confidence for reading, e.g. an informal discussion based on a questionnaire, the methodological preparation involves training in skills and strategies e.g. previewing, predicting or guessing unknown words, developing vocabulary, using a dictionary (Gail and McRae 1991:6-10). Some students may need practice in self-direction, which means that in the beginning they will need teacher's guidance and help as to the decisions regarding reading, monitoring and evaluation (Gail and McRae 1991:6,10).

2.3.3. Programme administration

After planning and making decisions regarding the size and shape, goals, objectives of the reading programme, setting the library and the borrowing system, the teacher may start the programme. When introducing the reading programme the teacher may use a questionnaire focused on the students' reading habits as a basis for an introductory discussion (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:9).

Once the programme is set up and students are motivated to read, the programme administration involves supporting, monitoring and evaluating students' reading in subsequent lessons. As Gail and McRae state, “monitoring does mean checking that a certain amount of reading has been done and that what has been read has been understood”, however, as they emphasize, it should become “less teacher-controlled” in the course of the programme and “teacher monitoring should give way to student monitoring” (1991:10-11). For the purpose of monitoring students may be asked to write reading summary sheets or reading reports which may be kept separately or in a reading journal (Waring, “The OUP Guide” 2007).

2.3.4. Class activities

The class activities should support and reflect the main aim of extensive reading program, which is to motivate students to read and enjoy reading.

Pulverness highlights that the initial activities should be aimed at “getting learners to the point where they are ready to read”, which means that “the teacher should devote as much time as possible to such preparatory work” (2007:6). The aim is to “establish mental framework within which they can begin to negotiate the potential meanings in the text”, which may be accomplished by exploring themes, speculating on titles, key words, or by predicting (Pulverness 2007:6).

Then students should interact in the texts they read, to experiment and to play with texts, which, as experts propose, may be realized by different activities e.g. varying of genre, point of view, or audience; changing of titles and openings, or providing alternative endings; learners may expand the text, or re-cast prose as drama (Pulverness 2007:6). Further useful post-reading activities are interviewing the characters, creating a new character, designing a poster, or writing a review (Castiglioni 2005). Pulverness summarizes that “anything and everything that the writer has done is subject to modification” (2007:6).

As mentioned earlier the balance is vital for any reading programme, thus teacher should involve also some more intensive work focused on language. To meet different learning styles, video, CD, tape recordings, or the Internet may be used in class or at home as a source of information for students' projects based on extensive reading (“Using Graded Readers” 2006:17,35).

2.3.5. Reading journals and portfolios

The final activity which students may do while and after reading a book is to keep reading journals which should reflect the student's reactions to the book rather than brief summaries of what they have read in order not to spoil students' enjoyment of reading (Day and Bamford 2000). The journal may be shared with the teacher or it may serve as a basis for discussions and activities in class. Moreover, it also allows students to compare their progress with the objectives within the Common European Framework (“Using Graded Readers” 1996:17). The achievements in extensive reading should be the part of the student's portfolio which records the student's work during the school year and is included in the overall assessment (Dawson 2005:24).

3. PRACTICAL PART

In this part of the diploma thesis I am going to give an example of the extensive reading programme (ER programme) which has been implemented at the secondary school of catering industry. Further, I am going to present results I have obtained when researching into the effects of the extensive reading programme on the learners' writing abilities and their attitude to reading and language learning.

3.1. The ER programme in the secondary school

Background

I started an extensive reading programme in the secondary school of catering industry in September 2007 and its first part was finished in December 2007. It became a part of general English lessons of a group of secondary grade students who had major problems with productive skills, especially writing, which are planned to be a part of the “New Maturita Exam”. Therefore, the programme has been designed to give the students the opportunity to meet the target language as it is used in real situations, to allow them to discover the usefulness of learning English and pleasure of reading, as well as to build their confidence in using English and develop positive attitudes to reading and language learning, with the main focus being on productive skills.

Since the extensive reading programme was new experience for most students I have decided to use multiple copies of the same title for all students first in order to prepare them for individual reading of long texts and to guide them continuously towards independent reading. Thus, during the first term of the school year the students mostly read at home and discussed their reading in class every two weeks. As they read the same book it was necessary to complete the collection of books which has already been established at school and used randomly. Nowadays the class library contains 60

labelled graded readers from Oxford Bookworms Library Series. We started with low-level readers corresponding to the students' reading level. When preparing the extensive reading program activities I was also inspired by Julian Bamford's and Richard D.Day's ideas or Alan Duff's and Maley's suggestions.

Programme Goals

- a) To motivate students to read in English for pleasure and to develop fluent readers.
- b) To improve students' speaking and writing skills.
- c) To improve students' knowledge and understanding of grammar and vocabulary.
- d) To develop positive attitudes towards reading and learning English.
- e) To stimulate critical thinking
- f) To establish cross-curricular and cross- cultural relations

Class Profile

The current second grade students will take the school-leaving exam in 2010 when the start of “New Maturita Exam” is planned. The group of fifteen students aged 16 is of lower pre-intermediate level and is timetabled for 3x45 minutes of general English classes per week. The group consists of 5 boys and 10 girls, who attend classes regularly. They are a mixed ability group and their average mark in English is 2.8.

In previous years the students were mostly trained in intensive reading only and have little experience with extensive reading. The students are aware of their problems in the area of productive skills and are willing to solve them, which is helpful for their school-leaving exam preparation. However, good preparatory work will have to be done by the teacher to get them reading.

Programme Methods

The programme was realised in six 45-minute lessons. During the first introductory lesson students completed an attitude questionnaire (Appendix No.1) and a placement test the results of which were used when choosing the appropriate text. The graded readers were used every two weeks in form of a class reader i.e. all the students read the same title. The students were assigned home reading which served as a base for the following class activities. The class activities were designed to suit different abilities and learning styles. They were aimed at the achievement of the programme goals, practicing strategies necessary for independent reading, with the main emphasis on writing and speaking activities.

Rationale for the chosen text: Oscar Wilde "The Canterville Ghost"

I have decided to start the extensive reading program with Oscar Wilde's novella „The Canterville Ghost”.

It is a story of an American ambassador Mr. Hiram B.Otis who moves with his wife and children – Virginia, Washington and the twins into a haunted castle of Canterville Chase in England. Mr. Otis is warned by the Lord Canterville that the ghost of Sir Simon de Canterville has been haunting the castle since the time he killed his wife. However, the Otis family were not frightened when they had met the ghost and in fact the two boys made fun of him and teased him. The ghost felt tired and depressed. The only person who was really interested in the ghost and his feelings was Virginia whose love helped the ghost to find the peace.

I have chosen this book since I have found that it is in compliance with students' needs and interests which is the most important factor. My students may be interested in

and enjoy the content because when completing the attitude questionnaires most of them labelled fantasy, horror and mystery as their favourite genres.

The level 2 of the OUP graded reader is suitable for my students since the placement test results showed that they feel comfortable within the level 2 or 3. Thus, the linguistic level of the text i.e. vocabulary, grammar structures and text organization should be accessible to the whole class. On the other hand, the beauty of the original version is partly lost in the adaptation e.g. the prophecy in the Chapter 5. This may be solved by giving students this section also in original version to compare.

As to the pedagogical role and educational potential the ghost story provides enough material that may involve all the students, stimulate their interaction, imagination, and provoke their reactions and interpretations. The story addresses values like love, life and death, or punishment and as that it provides a springboard for a discussion or a written assignment in which students may share their feelings and emotions about these topics.

In addition, the text presents also cross-cultural relations and may serve as a source of information about relations between the British and the Americans of that period and about the culture of 19th century Great Britain in particular. Moreover, the book may also be used in cross-curricular connections e.g. geography – a tour round haunted castles in Great Britain; civics – moral values, cultural diversity; or physics – paranormal phenomena).

The text provides a lot of possibilities for follow-up work in form of interviews, discussions, projects, written reports, posters, drama performance in which all the students of different learning styles (kinaesthetic, visual or auditory learners) may be employed. Some parts of the book may be also used together with the accompanying CD in class for more intensive individual or group work and language study. The text is

long enough to be cut into several parts and allows the teacher make use of co-operative learning. Since the most required activity in extensive reading is to read another book, the teacher may link this ghost story to a book on a similar or contrasting topic and raise students' interest in further reading. Though the book contains some follow-up activities I have designed my own activities allowing students to personalize and reflect creatively to what they have read.

Finally, the cultural level of 19th century novel is not expected to cause the students any problems with understanding. The appropriate length, thrill, humour and attractive illustrations will maintain the students' motivation and enable them to overcome possible difficulties.

Assessment and Evaluation

The students were assessed on the base of their pleasure reading reports (Appendix No.2), class performance and the final written or oral assignment related to the text. Students wrote a short summary of the book but the main part of their assessment was their creative expression of their feelings in connection with what they have read. Those who were reading also some other books were instructed to keep a reading summary sheet (Appendix No.3). This form of assessment stimulated them to think critically of what they have read, to express their opinions and gave them practice in writing. Since all the students were reading the same book they prepared pleasure reading reports from each reading assignment, which served as a springboard for the initial one-minute talk or class discussion and was useful for the purposes of monitoring. The students were instructed to involve their reports into the language portfolios which they started in the second grade. The assessment of their performance in the reading programme was involved in the final grade of general English lessons.

Further, to see how much the students improved during the first half of the programme, the students completed a PET test (*PET Handbook 2003*) at the beginning and the end of the programme. Moreover, in the last reading lesson the students completed the programme evaluation questionnaire (Appendix No.4) to evaluate their reading classes.

3.1.1. General information on the lesson plans I-VI

Level: pre-intermediate

Size of the class: 15 students

Age group: 15 - 16

Time: 6 x 45 minutes

Interaction Patterns: pair work S-S, group work, whole class activities and discussions
T-S, individual work S,

Language: any

Skills: reading, speaking, writing, listening

Materials: multiple copies of the graded reader: *The Canterville Ghost* by Oscar Wilde (OUP level 2) - one copy per student; worksheets (Appendices No.1 – 11).

Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language by Bamford, Julian, and Richard R. Day; 2nd ed. of *Literature* by Duff, Alan, and Alan Maley; *Using Graded Readers in Language Teaching* by Tricia Hedge, “Starting an Extensive Reading Program” by Lois Scott-Conley.

Timetable Fit

In the general English lessons the students use Horizons 2 Student's book and workbook. There is a sample text from a graded reader, which I find a useful occasion for the introduction of the extensive reading programme.

Rationale

The extensive reading programme is introduced to help students to overcome their problems with productive skills identified during the skills development activities.

3.1.2. Lesson Plan I

Subject/ Topic: Extensive reading - introduction

Context: Reading experiences

Materials: copies of attitude questionnaire (Appendix No.1), placement tests (extracts from different levels of graded readers copied on one page), copies of graded readers of different levels and genres, blackboard, chalk

Skills: reading, writing, speaking

Main Aims

- a) to introduce the extensive reading programme and motivate students to read
- c) to explain to students the benefits of extensive reading
- d) to explain to students the goals of the programme and the assessment system
- e) to present graded readers and create the students' interest in reading
- f) to identify students' reading experience, preferences, interests and needs

Subsidiary Aims

- a) to help students to become aware of their attitudes towards reading
- b) to create relaxed and comfortable atmosphere

Students Objectives

At the end of the lesson students will be aware of their reading habits and attitudes towards reading in L1 and target language, they will identify their reading level.

Assumptions

Students may accept the programme positively if they perceive it not as an extra work but as a fun which leads to their improvement. Therefore, careful explanation of all details which might be a source of students' fear is vital.

Anticipated Problems and Solutions

Problem – students may not understand all the terms in the questionnaire

Solution – explain or translate the unknown terms

Problem – students might tend to cheat when doing the placement test

Solution – explain the role of the placement test carefully; use a close test.

Procedure – Instructions and Activities

Stage 1: “What is literature?” Time: 5 minutes Interaction: T-S, S

Aim: to elicit the topic of literature and reading

Materials: chalk, blackboard

Procedure: Brainstorm students' perception of literature. Write on the board: *Literature is....* Let students complete the sentence anonymously and collect their opinions. Give feedback. Discuss the opinions in class, display the most interesting ones.

Stage 1: Introduction Time: 10 minutes Interaction: T-S, S-S

Aim: to introduce the extensive reading programme and its benefits, to explain to students the goals of the reading programme and how to read extensively

Materials: coloured chalk, blackboard

Procedure: Write on the blackboard: *Enjoyment, fun, pleasure*. Explain the principles of extensive reading and elicit reasons for extensive reading. Let students discuss them in pairs and then in the whole-class discussion. Use coloured chalk to draw students'

attention. Give details about the goals, the borrowing and assessment system of the programme.

Stage 2: Attitudes to reading *Time: 10 minutes* *Interaction: T-S, S, S-S*

Aim: to help students to explore their reading habits and attitudes, to identify students' interests and needs

Materials: copies of attitude questionnaire

Procedure: 'Reading and you questionnaire' activity by Ken Schmidt. Ask students to think of their attitudes to reading, in both Czech and English, and to complete the attitude questionnaire. Read through the questions with students and make sure that they understand them. Students complete the questionnaire individually. At the end of this stage students discuss their answers in pairs. Then ask volunteers to share their attitudes. Collect the questionnaires to identify the students' interests and needs. (Adapted from Bamford and Day, 2004:10).

Stage 3: Introduce graded readers *Time: 10 minutes* *Interaction: T-S, S-S*

Aim: to present graded readers, to create the students' interest in reading by previewing the graded reader

Materials: 10 copies of graded readers of different levels and genres

Procedure: 'First impressions' activity. In order to create the students' interest in books, display the copies of graded readers on a desk prior to the start of the reading lesson so that students may explore them in advance. Draw students' attention to the displayed graded readers. Let them investigate the layout. Draw their attention to the levels, the pictures, and the blurbs. Pre-teach: *blurb, plot, character, setting, and layout*. In pairs students choose a graded reader they are interested in. Ask students to discuss the book

and create an interview about their first impressions: “*Do you like it? Would you recommend it to me, why, why not?*”. Collect the books and display them. Join two pairs. The pairs report about the book and guess the title. (Adapted from Hedge, 1985:73).

Stage 5: Find your level Time: 10 minutes Interaction: T-S, S

Aim: to allow students to find their reading level

Materials: copies of placement tests

Procedure: 'Find your level' activity by Ken Schmidt. Explain to students the importance of the level identification for successful reading. Instruct students that the maximum of unknown words is three words in an extract. Students read the extracts and identify their reading ability level. (Adapted from Bamford and Day, 2004:31).

Stage 6: Homework

Bring your favourite book to the next reading lesson. Recommend the book to your friend in writing e.g. write a blurb or an advertisement for your book. Comment on the layout, setting, plot, or characters. Reflect on your feelings.

Assessment and Reflection: The extensive reading was accepted mostly positively. Students were very creative when describing their perception of literature: literature is a history, literature is answers or literature is learning. They had some difficulties with the questionnaire and my careful explanation was necessary. The questionnaire will need some revision to be easier for students to complete. The activity in which students guessed the title of the book proved to be highly motivating and competitive. The atmosphere was relaxed and all the students were involved. The students' reading level

ranges from 2 to 3. The mystery and horror stories were identified as the most favourite genres. The attitude questionnaire further revealed that students overuse dictionaries and do not feel confident in either speaking or writing about what they have read.

3.1.3. Lesson Plan II

Subject/ Topic: Pre-reading activities - introduction of the story and the author

Context: Students' background knowledge

Materials: multiple copies of The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde – OUP level 2, blackboard, chalk, grouping activity worksheet (Appendix No.5), worksheet with extracts and questions (Appendix No.6)

Skills: reading, writing, speaking

Reading strategies: speculating, predicting

Main Aims

- a) to form groups
- c) to allow students to establish a mental framework
- d) to get students involved and ready to read
- c) to orient them to the story and encourage students to predict and speculate

Subsidiary Aims

- a) to build students' confidence for reading

Students Objectives

Students will be able to present their prediction or speculation about the story, they will know the basic facts about Oscar Wilde.

Assumptions

The genre and the level were selected on the base of the results of the attitude questionnaire and the placement test. Therefore, most of the students may be interested in reading it.

Anticipated Problems and Solutions

Problem – students may have little knowledge about Oscar Wilde, which may discourage some of them

Solution – give them more information about his work and life

Procedure – Instructions and Activities

Stage 1: Warm-up Time: 8 minutes Interaction: S-S

Aim: to form groups

Materials: grouping activity worksheet - a list of well-known titles, their authors, and two characters cut into pieces (Appendix No.5), chalk, blackboard

Procedure: Start with the students' presentation of their favourite books they prepared at home. Encourage class discussion.

Put the pieces representing three categories out of four on the desk face down. Each student chooses one piece. Ask students to mingle and find two matching partners. Students introduce each other and form five groups of three members. In groups they guess the missing category e.g. titles.

Stage 2: Introduction of the author Time: 10 minutes Interaction: T-S, groups

Aim: to create students' mental framework, to get students ready to read

Materials: picture clues (e.g. picture of Oscar Wilde, Ireland, Queen Victoria, Oxford, USA, Paris, and titles of other Wilde's famous works, quotations etc.); a text about the author cut into 4 parts (The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde – OUP level 2 - p52)

Procedure: Introduce the class reader. Put on the board: *Who is Oscar Wilde? Do you know any ghost stories? Do you believe in ghosts? Why/ why not?* Provide students with picture clues related to Oscar Wilde and ask them what they know about the writer. Finally, give students a copy of the information about the author on p.52 cut into four pieces and let them put the paragraphs into correct order. As an extension of this activity students may be assigned to find some more information on the Internet.

Stage 3: Introduction of the story Time: 9 minutes Interaction: T-S, groups

Aim: to orient students to the story

Materials: multiple copies of The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde, OUP level 2; enlarged copies of picture at p.9 cut into pieces of different shapes (1 picture per group)

Procedure: Pre-teach: *metal chains, handcuffs, to frighten sb..*

Give each group the picture on p.9 cut into pieces and ask them to reconstruct the picture. Discuss the picture (*What can you see? Who is in the picture? What is strange about the picture? Who is frightened?*).

Give each student a copy of the graded reader. Draw the students' attention to the pictures on the front cover and inside the book. (*Do you like them? Who is in the picture? What are their personalities? Where are they? Title the pictures*).

Brainstorm vocabulary connected with ghosts and ghost stories. Encourage students to guess the connection between the picture of the ghost and the hat on the front cover.

Stage 4: Stimulation and setting the scene Time: 10 minutes Interaction: S, S-S

Aim: to get students predict and speculate on how the story continuous

Materials: multiple copies of a short extract from the book

“After the family was in bed and asleep, a strange noise woke Mr Otis. It sounded like something metal moving slowly along the passage and it was coming nearer to his bedroom door. He got out of bed and listened carefully. The strange noise went on, and he also heard the sound of footsteps” (Wilde 2002:8).

Procedure: Give each student a copy of an extract and read it aloud to the whole class. Individual students speculate and write a few sentences about what is going to happen next. Monitor the students' writing. Let the students share their predictions and speculations in pairs. Elicit some of interesting predictions from the class.

Stage 5: Reading Time: 8 minutes Interaction: S

Aim: to get students involved in reading

Materials: multiple copies of *The Canterville Ghost* by Oscar Wilde (OUP level 2), extracts and questions (Appendix No.6)

Procedure: 'Read and Discover' activity. In silent reading students read the introduction and the cover notes and formulate in pairs questions they want to be answered at the end of the whole book reading. Give students the worksheet with extracts and questions for chapters 1 and 2 to take home. (Adapted from Duff and Maley, 2007:149).

Stage 5: HW – Answer the questions in the worksheet. Read chapters 1 and 2 and check your predictions and answers. Write a pleasure reading report. Focus on characters depicted in the story and your reactions to the reading.

Assessment and Reflection:

The initial presentation of students' favourite books they prepared at home served as a natural bridge from reading in L1 to reading in English. When preparing grouping activity it is vital to use books that the students know. The students' surface knowledge of Oscar Wilde was balanced with their interest in Oscar Wilde's person and the clues proved to be extremely useful for this activity. The work with pictures was much appreciated and the students' interest was raised. Students were encouraged to file their notes from lessons.

3.1.4. Lesson Plan III

Subject/ Topic: While-reading activities – supporting reading, monitoring

Context: Characters

Materials: multiple copies of The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde – OUP level 2, blackboard, chalk, worksheet - sentences with nonsense words (Appendix No.7), monolingual dictionaries

Skills: speaking, reading, writing

Reading strategies: guessing

Main Aims

- a) to review what was read and stimulate their critical thinking
- c) to allow students to interact with the text - characters
- c) to practise guessing unfamiliar vocabulary in context

Subsidiary Aims

- a) to develop students' cultural awareness and draw their attention to how the Americans and the English of Victorian period are described in the book
- b) to keep students' interest in reading

Students Objectives

Students will be able to guess vocabulary and infer unknown words from context.

Assumptions

Guessing and inferring vocabulary will encourage students not to look up all unknown words in the dictionary and make their reading more fluent.

Anticipated Problems and Solutions

Problem – some students may find the guessing activity difficult

Solution – give the weak students the first letters or a list of possible words

Procedure – Instructions and Activities

Stage 1: Describe your character *Time: 10 minutes* *Interaction: groups*

Aim: to stimulate interaction with the text read at home

Materials: blackboard, chalk, colour markers, a sheet of paper per group

Procedure: Start with a discussion based on the students' answers to the worksheet they received in the previous lesson. Then put on the board the tasks relating to the characters depicted in the book:

Imagine you are one of the characters, introduce yourself.

Design the costume for your character and describe it.

Design the “WANTED” poster and give as many details about your character as possible.

Encourage students to introduce their favourite character using one of the activities. To raise interest, ask students not to reveal the character's name and to guess the characters presented by the other group.

Stage 2: Developing cultural awareness *Time: 10 minutes* *Interaction: groups*

Aim: to draw students' attention to how different cultures are depicted in the book

Materials: blackboard, chalk, colour markers, a sheet of paper per group,

Procedure: Give each group a sheet of paper and ask them to make a list of characters, habits, places, situations depicting the USA and the UK culture in the story. Students change their lists and add missing ideas. Elicit any other cultural clues from the class and discuss the cultural diversity and its role in our lives.

Stage 3: Reading strategies practice *Time: 10 minutes* *Interaction: S-S*

Aim: to develop and practise guessing the meaning of unknown words

Materials: a worksheet with sample sentences from the book with some vocabulary being replaced by nonsense words (Appendix No.7), monolingual dictionaries

Procedure: 'Inferring from context and schema' activity. Give students the worksheet. Explain to the students how the parts of speech, context, punctuation, grammar structure and their knowledge of word formation may help them in guessing the meaning of words. Students guess the meaning of the nonsense words in context. After students complete the sentences, give them the text with original wording. Students may use dictionaries to check the meaning of difficult words. Discuss in class. (Adapted from Scott-Conley n.d.).

Stage 4: Writing *Time: 10 minutes* *Interaction: S*

Aim: to allow students to interact with the text in creative writing

Materials: chalk, blackboard

Procedure: 'Gifts' activity by Patricia Reiss. Explain to students that their favourite character is celebrating birthday next week. Ask them to write a short paragraph about

what present they are going to give their character at the birthday party and why. Start with words: *I am going to give him/her....* Elicit the most interesting ideas. (Adapted from Bamford and Day, 2004:156).

Stage 5: HW: Read chapters 3 and 4. Students do optionally while-reading activities at p.46 Write the pleasure reading report. Chapter 4 is titled “Enemies everywhere!” Have you ever experienced a similar situation in your life? Optional: learn more about the cultural differences and study the Wikipedia web site “Culture by region”.

Assessment and Reflection:

The worksheet with extracts and questions proved to be a good guideline for the home reading as well as good support for the students' class work. The students found the practice in guessing the meaning of words interesting and helpful. They required more practice. There was a lively discussion about the USA and UK cultures in which students proved good knowledge of this issue. The cultural differences also influenced their writing about birthday presents.

3.1.5. Lesson Plan IV

Subject/ Topic: While-reading activities – motivating and monitoring reading

Context: Setting

Materials: multiple copies of *The Canterville Ghost* by Oscar Wilde – OUP level 2, blackboard, chalk

Skills: speaking, reading, writing

Reading strategies: Reading in chunks

Main Aims

- a) to monitor reading
- b) to allow students to interact with the text - to focus on setting
- c) to practise reading in chunks

Subsidiary Aims

- a) to develop students' creativity when working with a text
- b) to draw students attention to variety of genres - poems

Students Objectives

Students will be able to read in chunks.

Assumptions

Reading in chunks in combination with guessing the meaning of words will contribute to the students' reading speed and comprehension. Students will write poems which might be fun for students and create relaxed atmosphere.

Anticipated Problems and Solutions

Problem – some students may find it difficult to mark chunks in a sentence

Solution – provide the students with a number of examples and emphasize that the goal is to get the gist of the thought group

Problem – some students may not feel confident when writing a poem

Solution – encourage the weak students to work in pairs

Procedure – Instructions and Activities

Stage 1: Warm-up discussion *Time: 10 minutes* *Interaction: S, groups*

Aim: to stimulate interaction with the text read at home, to monitor reading

Materials: blackboard, chalk,

Procedure: 'One-sentence summary test' activity by Jana Harper Makaafi. Write 'one sentence summary' (up to 15 words) of Chapters 3 and 4. (Adapted from Bamford and Day, 2004:88). Elicit the most interesting sentences.

Discuss in groups: *Who wanted to scare whom? Who is afraid of whom at the end of the Chapter 4? Have you ever experienced similar situation in your life?* Ask volunteers to share their answers.

Stage 2: Focus on setting *Time: 10 minutes* *Interaction: groups*

Aim: to allow students interact with the text and deepen their understanding of setting as an element of a story

Materials: multiple copies of *The Canterville Ghost* by Oscar Wilde – OUP level 2, a sheet of paper per group

Procedure: Explain to students what the setting involves (description of a landscape, an interiors, a building exterior, or of the weather). Ask students in groups to think of as much vocabulary as possible which refer to the setting. Encourage students to make use of both the text and pictures. Students make notes and then groups compare their lists of vocabulary.

Stage 3: Write a poem *Time: 15 minutes* *Interaction: S*

Aim: to increase vocabulary knowledge and to improve writing skills, to stimulate creativity

Materials: multiple copies of *The Canterville Ghost* by Oscar Wilde – OUP level 2, a list of vocabulary students prepared in stage 2

Procedure: Ask students to write a five-line poem on the setting of the story. The students write the Canterville Chase on the first and fifth line. Then they will write their

own two-word phrases on the second, third and fourth line. The phrases refer to the weather, landscape, the building. Provide students with an example. Alternatively, the more creative students may choose their own form of the poem (phrases start with a certain letter, each word starts with the letter the previous word ends, or the poem is written in different shapes expressing the students' feelings).

| | | |
|----------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Example: | Canterville Chase | Canterville Chase |
| | _____ | cold chambers |
| | _____ | curious creatures |
| | _____ | corners everywhere |
| | Canterville Chase | Canterville Chase |

(Adapted from Bamford and Day, 2004:158-160).

Stage 4: Practice of reading strategies *Time: 10 minutes* *Interaction: T-S, S-S*

Aim: to identify the thought groups and practise reading in 'chunks'

Materials: an extract from the text – a copy per pair, 3 sentences cut into words - a set per pair

Procedure: Chunking. Put on the board the sentence divided into vertical chunks reflecting the thought groups e.g. *For a second or two/ the Canterville ghost/ stood still.* Ask students to read it and stop after each line and say it to the partner. Allow students to notice the difference between the sentences with separated (e.g. *For a second/ or two/ the Canterville /ghost stood still.*) and not separated thought groups. In the first phase give students a set of three sentences from the text cut into words so that they can manipulate them to learn the strategy. Then ask students to mark the chunks in the extract from the text. Monitor and give feedback. (Adapted from Scott-Conley n.d.).

Stage 5: HW – The teacher divides the chapter 5 into 3 parts (approx.2 pages per student) and each member of a group is assigned to read carefully and retell one part.

Write your pleasure report. Reflect your reactions on the values mentioned in the chapter. Write your favourite piece of a dialogue in the text.

Reflection: One-sentence summary gave me a picture of students' reading and reactions. They were inventive when making lists of vocabulary describing the setting. The most successful activity seemed to be poetry writing. Not only did the students consolidate the vocabulary they brainstormed in the stage 2, but they also had fun when creating the poems. Some of the poems were worth displaying. Therefore, two students decided to prepare a board devoted to The Canterville Ghost reader where the most interesting products and opinions will be displayed. I have involved their activity into the final assessment. This was the students' own activity which I encouraged.

3.1.6. Lesson Plan V

Subject/ Topic: While-reading activities – supporting and monitoring reading

Context: Moral values

Materials: multiple copies of The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde – OUP level 2, blackboard, chalk, comprehension and speaking in role worksheet (Appendix No.8), tenses (Appendix No.9)

Skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing

Reading strategies: Retelling and summarizing reading

Main Aims

a) to monitor reading

b) to practice pronunciation with focus on intonation – drama introduction

c) to deal with tenses

d) to develop students' awareness of important moral values

Subsidiary Aims

a) to explore and share emotions

b) to introduce co-operative learning and develop students' responsibility

Students Objectives

Students will improve their pronunciation and will be able to employ intonation to express their feelings. They will be able to summarize and retell what they read.

Assumptions

In the co-operative way of learning all the students will be motivated to prepare at home since they are responsible to the other members of the group.

Anticipated Problems and Solutions

Problem – some students may be shy when speaking lines in different ways

Solution – practise some sentences chorally first to give them confidence

Procedure – Instructions and Activities

Stage 1: Warm-up

Time: 10 minutes

Interaction: S-S

Aim: to increase students' involvement and awareness in reading, students' own quotations

Materials: blackboard, chalk,

Procedure: 'Favourite quotation' activity by Jana Harper Makaafi. Students have prepared their quotations at home. Ask students to share their quotations and to explain their choice. Elicit the most interesting ones and put them on the board devoted to the *Canterville Ghost*. (Adapted from Bamford and Day, 2004:173).

Stage 2: Retell the story Time: 10 minutes Interaction: groups

Aim: to allow students to practise the reading strategy of summarizing,

Materials: blackboard, chalk, worksheet – comprehension questions (Appendix No.8)

Procedure: Students in groups tell each other about the passages they were assigned to read at home and answer the questions in the worksheet. Groups retell the whole chapter, share and compare their interpretations. Extension: students may intentionally make some mistakes to be identified by the other groups. Elicit the moral values depicted in the chapter and discuss.

Stage 3: Pronunciation practice Time: 15 minutes Interaction: S-S

Aim: to sensitize students to the role and power of intonation in the spoken speech and its interpretation; to consolidate the adjectives describing persons (e.g. feelings)

Materials: blackboard, chalk, worksheet (Appendix No.8)

Procedure: 'Speaking in role' activity. Give each student the worksheet with adjectives describing a person (old, young, happy, exiting etc.). Choose a sentence from a dialogue presented in the chapter and demonstrate how the sentence might be performed by a nervous, bored, or exited person. Ask students to choose two sentences from the worksheet and practice them in three different ways specified on the worksheet. Ask them not to disclose the chosen descriptor to the class. Pairs join together and guess the descriptors the other pair used. Give feedback and invite volunteers to perform their sentences. (Adapted from Duff and Maley, 2007:76).

Extension: if the graded reader is accompanied by a cassette or a CD, it is helpful to start stage by playing the dialogue.

Stage 4: Dealing with tenses

Time: 10 minutes

Interaction: S-S

Aim: to practice past tense of regular and irregular verbs used in narratives

Materials: blackboard, chalk, worksheet (Appendix No.9)

Procedure: Information gap activity. Give each student an extract from the text in which the correct forms of verbs are deleted and replaced by infinitives. Students ask the partners to complete the extract and write the correct forms. Give feedback.

Stage 5: HW – Bring the question which you prepared in the first session. Read chapter 6 and prepare for your classmates as many questions as possible relating to the chapter 6 as well as to the whole story. Finish your reading reports with the final contribution and bring to the next class.

Optional: choose a short dialogue and practise it in pairs for dramatic reading.

Reflection: The students had a lively discussion about the students' favourite quotations. The introduction of co-operative way of learning was useful. Though there was a student in one group who failed to prepare, the rest of the students were involved and proved a great deal of responsibility in team work. 'Speaking in role' activity was not only a good pronunciation and drama activity during which the students realized the importance of the reader's voice and imagination, but it also brought fun and relaxation into the lesson. The kinaesthetic students were the most successful in this activity.

3.1.7. Lesson Plan VI

Subject/ Topic: Post- reading activities

Context: Review of reading, final assessment and evaluation

Materials: multiple copies of The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde – OUP level 2,

blackboard, chalk, a list of topics for final writing assignments (Appendix No.10),
programme evaluation questionnaire (Appendix No.4)

Skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing

Main Aims

- a) to summarize and review reading
- b) to encourage students to reflect on their reading in a personalised way
in writing
- d) to assess students
- e) to allow students to evaluate the whole reading course

Subsidiary Aims

- c) to motivate for the next term reading
- d) to stimulate their critical thinking

Students Objectives

Student will be able to react critically in writing to what they have read.

Assumptions

I assume that the students will experience the feeling of achievement when they finish reading and complete the post-reading tasks. This experience seems to be the key factor in the students' motivation for their reading in the next term.

Anticipated Problems and Solutions

Problem – some students might have completed the post-reading activities

Solution – have some more activities prepared, or encourage students to develop their own activities

Materials: blackboard, chalk, programme evaluation questionnaire (Appendix No.4)

Procedure: Explain to students that they all have successfully finished the first part of the reading programme and that they may influence and improve their reading programme in the next term by completing the questionnaire. Give each student a copy of the questionnaire and ask them to complete it carefully. Collect the completed questionnaires and students' files of pleasure reading reports.

Stage4: Final written projects Time: 15 minutes Interaction: T-S, groups

Aim: to encourage students to reflect on their reading in a personalised way in writing, to stimulate critical thinking, to provide tips on books and motivate for the next term reading, to practice writing

Materials: blackboard, chalk, the topics for final writing assignments (Appendix No.10), a book to be recommended by the teacher

Procedure: Give each student the list of topics for writing assignments designed for individual students, for pair work or group work. Read through them with students and explain the task. Students discuss the topics in groups. Give advice and encourage the students' confidence in writing, if necessary. Set the size and the date for the writing assignments to be finished and presented. Remind students that, as they were informed at the beginning of the course, this final written work is a part of their assessment together with their in-class performance and pleasure reading reports.

'I Read a Good Book the Other Day' - finish the last lesson of the first part of the programme by an informal discussion about the book, graded reader, you have read recently. Show it, present the plot to the most interesting point and recommend it to the students. (Adapted from Bamford and Day, 2004:60).

Reflection: The final lesson started with a competition to review the whole reading and gave the students the feeling of achievement. This was encouraged further by the post reading activities and reached its peak by the students' evaluation of the programme. The final assignments were designed to stimulate critical thinking and to allow students their personal way of interaction and reflection on the whole text they read. At first, the students did not feel confident to complete them, but after close reading and my explanation of the task they found the assignments interesting and challenging.

3.2. Evaluation of the extensive reading programme

After six lessons of extensive reading programme the students were assessed on the base of their oral performance in class, pleasure reading reports, and writing assignments by means of scoring rubrics (Appendix No.11). This performance assessment, focused on their written or spoken interaction and respond to what they read, was followed by the formal PET test to assess the improvement in their English language abilities. In addition, the students evaluated the programme and presented the self-assessment of their attitude to and confidence in reading and learning languages.

Since the programme was more controlled by the teacher, it was demanding for the teacher's preparation. However, as the programme continued the students became more confident readers, which contributed to the students' independent work and stimulated their interaction with the text.

Most students enjoyed group work. However, some students tended to rely on the other group members. Therefore, it seems to be useful to use the co-operative learning in groups so that each member has the responsibility for the performance of the whole group. In addition, it might be useful to use re-grouping activities.

The evaluation questionnaire revealed that the title was well chosen. Two students found the homework time-demanding and reacted negatively to the programme continuation in the next term. Most of the students found the class activities interesting and the pace of reading acceptable. As to the teacher's help they were all satisfied.

The pleasure reading reports were well organized. Some students concentrated on the plot description only, but most students expressed creatively and critically their reactions, opinions, feelings and interpretations.

To conclude, though there were two students whose reactions were mostly negative, the start of the programme seems to be successful and may continue.

3.3. Small-scale research

The aim of this small-scale within-group research is to investigate the effects of the six-week extensive reading programme on the learners' writing abilities and their attitudes to reading in and language learning. In other words, the research questions are as follows:

1. Can extensive reading improve students' writing abilities?
2. Can extensive reading create a positive attitude to language learning?

3.3.1. Background studies

Susser and Robb states that there are not many experimental studies on extensive reading, e.g. Elley and Mangubhai in 1983, Mason in 1987, Hafiz and Tudor in 1990, and point out that these studies are limited due to methodological problems and unresolved theoretical issues, e.g. the definition of extensive reading (Susser and Robb 1990). As to the affect of extensive reading on writing abilities there are studies conducted by Hafiz and Tudor in 1998 and 1990 or by Mason and Krashen in 1996

which recorded significant gains in writing proficiency as well as positive effects on attitudes towards English as a consequence of extensive reading (Schmidt n.d.).

3.3.2. Method

Two groups were involved into the experiment. Both groups consisted of fifteen secondary school students of lower pre-intermediate level. The students aged 16 meet in three forty-five minute classes of general English per week. Whereas the experimental group started to run the extensive reading programme with a class reader as a part of general English classes once in two weeks, i.e six classes in a term, the control group continued their general English classes with skills development activities focused on intensive reading only.

At the beginning and the end of the extensive reading programme the students of both groups completed the same writing and reading paper of a PET test available in the PET Handbook 2003. The tests were assessed in compliance with the mark scheme used for the PET tests in the handbook.

The assessment of the change of students' attitude to reading and learning languages is based on the comparison of the answers of the experimental group in the attitude and programme evaluation questionnaire.

3.3.3. Results

The results are presented as the number of points the students obtained in the writing component of PET tests pre- and post- the implementation of the reading programme. The results of the experimental group (E) are compared with the control group (C).

Table 2 – Results and gains in the writing component of PET tests

| Student No. | Before experiment Group E | After experiment Group E | Gain | Student No. | Before experiment Group C | After experiment Group C | Gain |
|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| 1 | 9 | 14 | 5 | 16 | 8 | 10 | 2 |
| 2 | 7 | 11 | 4 | 17 | 6 | 9 | 3 |
| 3 | 10 | 15 | 5 | 18 | 12 | 16 | 4 |
| 4 | 12 | 17 | 5 | 19 | 6 | 7 | 1 |
| 5 | 9 | 13 | 4 | 20 | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| 6 | 8 | 12 | 4 | 21 | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| 7 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 22 | 14 | 17 | 3 |
| 8 | 12 | 17 | 5 | 23 | 9 | 12 | 3 |
| 9 | 14 | 18 | 4 | 24 | 12 | 16 | 4 |
| 10 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 25 | 14 | 17 | 3 |
| 11 | 10 | 13 | 3 | 26 | 8 | 10 | 2 |
| 12 | 12 | 12 | 0 | 27 | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| 13 | 14 | 18 | 4 | 28 | 8 | 11 | 3 |
| 14 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 29 | 9 | 11 | 2 |
| 15 | 14 | 18 | 4 | 30 | 10 | 13 | 3 |
| Total | 147 | 202 | 55 | Total | 141 | 176 | 35 |
| Mean | 9.8 | 13.5 | 3.7 | Mean | 9.4 | 11.7 | 2.3 |
| Mean % | 39.2 | 53.9 | 14.7 | Mean % | 37.6 | 46.9 | 9.3 |

Table 3 – Comparison of attitude to reading and English language learning

| | Before ER | | After ER | | Change | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | % |
| Reading is a good way of learning English. | 7 | 8 | 10 | 5 | +3 | 20 |
| I enjoy reading in English. | 5 | 10 | 9 | 6 | +4 | 27 |
| Learning English is fun. | 3 | 12 | 5 | 10 | +2 | 13 |
| I am going to read also after the programme. | 6 | 9 | 10 | 5 | +4 | 27 |
| Mean data | 5.3 | 9.7 | 8.5 | 6.5 | 3.3 | 22 |

3.3.4. Discussion

The data obtained in the research and presented in the Table 2 and in the diagrams (Appendix No.12) proved that the overall results in the written performance of the students involved in the extensive reading programme were better than those of control group students exposed to intensive reading only. The students might achieve

the maximum of 25 points in the writing component. Whereas the mean gains of the students in the extensive group were 3.7 points, which equals improvement by 14.7 %, the mean gains of the group dealing with intensive reading in general English classes were 2.3 points, which equals improvement by 9.3 %. Considering the gains of individuals in extensive group, four students (No.1, 3, 4, 8) improved significantly and one student (No.12) seems not to have profited from the program at all.

The comparison of the students' answers which reflected their attitude to reading and language learning (Table 3) shows that the number of students enjoying reading, interested in reading as a good way of learning and going to read in the next term increased by 22 % in average.

To sum up, though the results might be limited by the short-term run of the extensive reading programme, by different language levels of both groups and by the methods of assessment, the experiment shows that extensive reading can improve learners' writing abilities as well as create their positive attitude to reading, and so increase the students' motivation in language learning.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this diploma thesis was to demonstrate why and how to use literature in English language teaching in the secondary school with the main focus being on the importance and aspects of extensive reading and its effects on students' writing abilities and attitudes to reading.

It is argued that extensive reading should be incorporated in ELT classrooms as a complement to the intensive reading since it provides comprehensible input necessary for the English language acquisition and develops the learners' competences. Using literature in ELT classrooms is often limited to intensive reading of short extracts presented in course-books. However, to become a fluent and competent language user it is vital for the learners to read longer complete texts.

The lesson plans presented in the thesis reflect the theoretical aspects and emphasize that the main power of extensive reading lies in its motivational and affective factors. Extensive reading stimulates learners' interaction with the text, imagination, and critical thinking. Though the main aim of extensive reading is to motivate reading and enjoy it, extensive reading, which employs literature as a resource, extends language knowledge, improves the language skills, and contributes significantly not only to the development of the learners' fluency and confidence, but also to their intercultural awareness. Thus it also helps the learners to follow the objectives of the Common European Framework.

Further, the results of the small-scale research realized during the extensive reading programme in the secondary school proved that extensive reading can improve the learners' writing performance and create their positive attitude to both reading and language learning. Thus extensive reading contributes to the learners' autonomy in learning and consequently to successful results in their exams.

Finally, extensive reading is a long-term programme, both the teacher's and students' policy. Though time demanding and requesting resources, it is a challenging and rewarding activity, offering a wide range of possibilities to be explored by both the students and teachers.

RÉSUMÉ

The diploma thesis “Using Literature in ELT in the Secondary School: Extensive Reading” deals with the ways of using literature in language teaching in general and the main focus is on the special aspects of the extensive reading. After the use of literature is discussed from the methodological, linguistic and motivational point of view, the principles and benefits of extensive reading in language teaching are presented. The emphasis is on the contribution of extensive reading in the area of language acquisition, the development of knowledge about language and its use, as well as motivation. The issue of authentic and simplified texts is also discussed. The practical part provides six lesson plans of the extensive reading programme implemented in the secondary school and the results of the small-scale research investigating the improvement of the learners' writing performance and their attitudes to reading and language learning as a result of extensive reading.

RESUMÉ

Diplomová práce “Využití literatury ve výuce anglického jazyka na střední škole: extenzivní čtení“ se zabývá způsoby využití literatury v jazykové výuce obecně a hlavní pozornost věnuje zvláštním aspektům extenzivního čtení. Po diskuzi o využití literatury z hlediska metodického, lingvistického a motivačního, jsou v práci uvedeny principy a přínosy extenzivního čtení v jazykové výuce. Důraz je kladen na přínos extenzivního čtení v oblasti osvojování jazyka, rozvoje znalostí o jazyce a jeho použití a v oblasti motivace. Práce se také zabývá problematikou autentických a zjednodušených textů. V praktické části je uvedeno šest příprav na vyučovací jednotku v programu extenzivního čtení realizovaného na střední škole a výsledky malého, skupinového výzkumu zjišťujícího zlepšení písemného projevu studentů a jejich vztahu ke čtení a učení jazyka v důsledku extenzivního čtení.

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