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**TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH LITERARY  
TEXTS AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL**

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis deals with the issues of teaching English through literature at lower secondary schools. It provides fundamental information about different approaches to using literary texts in the language classroom. Later on, it focuses on developing reading skills and reading strategies. It briefly summarises types of literary works and criteria for selecting appropriate materials. Then types of reading activities are discussed in detail. The practical research consisted of designing and teaching seven lessons based on using literary texts. Two groups of pupils were compared to find out whether reading literary texts helps to improve reading skills of pupils. The results are presented graphically. Finally, the implications and further research ideas are discussed.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Why use literary texts in English lessons at lower secondary school? We can easily enumerate several arguments against it: to prepare a good reading lesson is time consuming, it is necessary to follow syllabus, children do not like reading even in their native language, it is too difficult to read unabridged texts and abridged ones are sometimes too dull and their authenticity is lost, it is impossible to choose the text which everybody is interested in etc. All these statements seem to be true, at least partially. But why not to reckon them as obstacles which we have to overcome? I have been teaching English for thirteen years and in my experience the best students are those who do something special, not just regular work during school English lessons. It does not matter if they are keen readers, zealous computer game players or adore some music group and know their songs by heart. Their involvement make them extraordinary, their vocabulary is wider and more detailed. In addition, they acquire something that could be called „language intuition“. When we are willing to include reading literary texts in lower secondary English lessons and fill at least one pupil with enthusiasm, in my opinion, it is worth it and possible results can surpass our expectations.

The theoretical chapter of this thesis provides background for further research. The aim is to explain fundamental issues concerning teaching English through literary texts. First of all, different approaches are thoroughly defined, then language based approaches are discussed in detail. Further on, reading as a process is introduced along with various ways of developing reading skills. Later, the chapter concentrates on different types of literary works and their use for students of English. Next, the issue of using abridged or unabridged texts and a procedure of selection is examined. In the final section, types of reading activities are summarized and various ways of application in practice are suggested.

In the methodological chapter a brief description of research participants, location and assesment tools is given. The main objective of this thesis is to find out whether reading literary texts develops reading skills more significantly than working on extracts included in the regular textbooks. The research is aimed on pupils of pre-intermediate level of language proficiency, which is recommended as a boundary level for using original, unabridged literary works. Therefore both types of literature - an original extract of J. K. Rowling novel and a simplified version of E. A. Poe short story is used.

In the Results and Commentary chapter the reflection of each lesson is given. The final data of testing two groups are presented graphically along with verbal descriptions of findings. The comparison between the class where the special reading course was conducted and the referential class is given as well.

The implication chapter deals with additional remarks and limitations of the conducted research including several ideas for further exploration. It also offers some suggestions and improvements for more efficient work on similar researches next time.

In the final part overall findings are summarized along with main ideas of this thesis. All documents relevant to the research like for example worksheets and lesson plans are presented in Appendices.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical chapter objective is to present different views on the issue of teaching English through literature. The most important questions to answer are: Why reading literary texts in the language classroom matters? What possible teaching techniques should we use? What are criteria for selecting literary texts? First, different approaches to teaching literature are thoroughly defined, then language based approaches are discussed in detail. Next, reading as a process and various ways how to develop reading skills are introduced. Later, the chapter concentrates on four types of literary works and their exploitability. Only the issues of short story and novel are presented in depth. Poems and plays are examined just briefly because they were not used in the following special reading course. Then, the question of using abridged or unabridged literary texts is discussed. Next, the procedure of selecting literary texts as the most important stage is examined. Finally, types of pre-reading, while-reading and after-reading activities are summarized along with suggestions for practical use in the classroom.

### **Literature in the language classroom**

Using literary texts in the ESL classroom has been changing along with the changing paradigm of teaching. As Duff and Maley (1990) stated, when the grammar-translation model dominated, literature was appreciated as a valuable source to develop reading and writing skills. Literary works were translated and used to illustrate grammatical rules of the language. During the time, literature in the ESL classroom was sidelined as a part of the old traditional teaching methods and the emphasis was on communication (p. 3). In the end of the last century methodological approach to literary texts significantly changed and several books on the topic were published.

However, the general approval of teaching English through literary texts is not unambiguous. Not to mention its usage at primary and lower secondary classes. For example Brumfit and Carter (1986) claimed that „literature teaching is by no means secure in many educational systems, and its role as an ally is not infrequently disputed“ (p. 1). According to Collie and Slater (1991) the question whether we should be teaching literature in the foreign language classroom at lower levels remains controversial „and the

attitude of many teachers ambivalent“ (p. 2). Lazar (1993) stated that literary texts are used „ most effectively with learners from intermediate level upwards“ (p. XIII). Nevertheless, she suggested several ways how to use literature at lower levels which are presented later.

Moreover, it would be a mistake to see literature teaching itself as one monolithic method. It can be noticed that there are various approaches cited. Lazar (1993) outlined the line between: language based approach to literature, literature as a content and literature for personal enrichment (p. 24). Collie and Slater (1991) distinguished among literature for: cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement (p. 5). Carter and Long (1991) also presented three approaches: cultural model, language model and personal growth model (p. 2). The terminology differs even though it can be seen below that the concept is somewhat similar.

Only Lazar (1993) distinguished the approach focused on the content, which is considered as the most traditional one and often used with advanced university students. It is aimed at details about author’s life, biographical data and its relevance to his/her work. The historical background of literary texts is explored in the social and political context. It analyses the genre of texts in connection with the literary movements of its time (p. 35).

On the other hand, Collie and Slater (1991) together with Carter and Long (1991) agreed on cultural relevance of using literature in ESL classrooms. As Collie and Slater (1991) stated, reading literary works allows learners, however indirectly, to perceive foreign culture. Films, newspaper articles and naturally books or short stories provide full and vivid glimpse at the way of life in the country whose language is being practised (p. 4). Carter and Long added that teaching English within a cultural model „enables students to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own“ (1991, p. 2).

The „personal“ approach was cited in all relevant works, however differently it was named. Lazar defined the literature for personal enrichment approach as „a useful tool for encouraging students to draw on their personal experiences, feelings and opinions“ (1993, p. 24). Similarly Collie and Slater (1991) showed the importance of reader’s emotional responses shared with characters of the book (p. 6). According to Carter and Long (1991) in the personal growth model the text is not studied from the linguistic or analytical point of view. Students are motivated to read books related to their „own personal experience“ (p. 9).

## **Language-based approaches**

For teaching lower secondary classes a closer look at language-based approaches is required. Its definition is quite broad. Simply said, it uses literature as a basis for different language exercises. But according to Lazar (1993) it represents a variety of approaches which differ at their goals and procedures. On the one hand, some of them focus on using literature for stimulating language activities, which offer interesting topics to discuss in the classroom, on the other hand, some of them focus on using the literary work itself including stylistic analysis (p. 27). She also stated that there exist some classroom procedures and activities which could provide the way how to bridge the gap between language oriented study and literary based skills (p. 28). For example „asking students to make predictions about what will happen next at key points in a short story“ ( Brumfit and Carter, as cited in Lazar, 1993, p. 28).

Some general notes about language based approaches can be also found in Carter and Long (1991). They implied that these approaches are not concentrated on the literary text as a piece of work but more on reading skills developement. It is aimed to help to develop students'ability to perceive the text and express their opinion afterwards. They see the teacher as an „enabler“ who works with students in a creative way ensuring „ a relevant and meaningful experience through a direct contact with the text“ (p. 7). According to Carter and Long (1991) the danger of this approach is that a piece of literary work could be easily treated as another teaching material, however motivating or interesting it is. They believed that literary texts are not just regular texts so even language based approaches should serve literary purposes and allow pupils to feel that „special enjoyment and fulfillment“ of real literature (p. 8).

Carter and Long (1991) suggested a few practical tips which emphasize language and at the same time help to understand better the text. They deal with activities well known to teachers of English as ESL but they explore the way how to use them in the teaching of literature. They specifically mentioned several activities as jigsaw reading, which can be successfully used for poems (p. 73) or gap-filling, which can lead to deeper involvement with the text (p. 81).

To sum up, language-based approaches to literary works are quite familiar to ESL teachers but the aim is to use them in the way to produce deeper engagement in the reading

procedure and provide „greater awareness of the properties of language use in literary texts“ (Carter and Long, 1991, p. 93).

## **Developing reading skills**

### **Reading as a process**

Brumfit and Carter presented reading as a process of meaning-creation by integrating one's own needs, understanding, and expectations with a written text (1986, p. 23). The reading itself is more complex than we are usually able to realise. Carter and Long (1991) stated that it could not be seen in a passive way. Although, we do not move and we are usually quiet while reading, it requires our active approach. They suggested that it involves: sharing the world with the author of the book, relating our experience to the experience offered by the text and „interpreting what the text might mean“ (p. 16).

The most important skill taught at the very beginning of school attendance is reading. Children in the first grade start to join individual letters, primary teachers spend a lot of time practising that skill and gradually lower secondary pupils read more or less effortlessly. As Harmer stated (2001), while reading we are not aware of employing our previous knowledge as we approach the process of comprehension, and we deploy a range of receptive skills (p. 199). The specific ones which we use are determined by reading purpose.

The problem is that our ability to understand any literary text involves more than knowing the language. As Cook described, in order to make sense of any text we need to have „pre-existent knowledge of the world“ (as cited in Harmer, 2001, p. 199). Such knowledge is often referred to as schema. In a simplified way it means that we use our previous schematic knowledge to recognise on the basis of particular words, contexts or discourse patterns what we read. When we know what genre of the text we are going to read we can predict what is coming next. However, it can be misleading. As Brumfit and Carter (1986) implied, each student derive slightly different messages from reading a particular book or a poem owing to different needs, understanding and expectations which can lead to misinterpretations or make the text incomprehensible or irrelevant (p. 24).

Harmer divided (2001) reasons for reading into two broad categories: instrumental and pleasurable reading, which sometimes overlap (p. 201). For example, reading non-fiction literature, history textbooks etc. Most researchers make a difference between „extensive“ and „intensive“ reading. Extensive reading tends to be perceived as longer, often for pleasure, without any help or intervention of the teacher and in a relaxed manner whereas intensive reading tends to be more concentrated, created for study purpose, accompanied by teacher’s comments and not so relaxed (Harmer, 2001, p. 204)..

What causes some problems when we want to involve reading literary texts into regular lessons is that pupils are not used to enjoy reading even while they are reading in their native language. Naturally, they can read but simply said: rather textbooks for study than books for pleasure. Their desire for adventure or fun is fully satisfied by television or more likely by computer which offers a wide range of TV shows, films, on-line games or just an opportunity to share their life via social networks. When they want to be entertained the only thing necessary to do is pushing the button. There is no need to be concentrated or to make any effort. They can switch a topic or a scene the moment they get bored so reading and pleasure is not often connected in teenagers’ mind. When we have at least several keen readers in a class where we want to start using literature as a way to improve their English, it really helps because they are used to read for pleasure.

### **Reading strategies**

Harmer (2001) stated a distinction between top-down and bottom-up processing when we analyse the reading processes. Top-down processing is used by readers to get an overall picture, whereas using bottom-up processing allows readers to focus on individual words and phrases in detail. However, it can not be seen as consequent procedures but more likely as „the interaction between top-down and bottom-up processing (p. 201). In the context of this differentiation Harmer identified following reading skills.

Identifying the topic: Experienced readers can easily understand the topic of a written text and react adequately using their own schemata. They are able to process the text more efficiently as it progresses.

Predicting and guessing: Good readers can predict what is coming next. They make assumptions or guess the content based on their previous experience. During the reading process they readjust their thoughts and confirm what they have predicted.

Reading for general understanding: Good readers „are able to take in a stream of discourse and understand the gist of it without worrying too much about details“ (Harmer, 2001, p. 202). It means that they do not analyse every word in the text, however they are still able to comprehend it in general. This technique commonly mentioned in the context of reading skills is called skimming, which means „running your eyes over a text to get a quick idea of the gist of a text“ (Harmer, 2001, p. 202).

Reading for specific information: Experienced readers are able to look through a text and find quickly the specific item that interests them. All the other information is ignored. This technique is also called scanning.

Reading for detailed information: Sometimes, in special cases, readers concentrate intensively on reading and try to understand everything in detail. This happens usually when written instructions, directions or descriptions of scientific procedures must be read.

Interpreting text: Good readers are able to see „beyond the literal meaning of words in a passage, using a variety of clues to understand what the writer is implying or suggesting“ (Harmer, 2001, p. 202). It is based on shared schemata and presuppose that a reader reacts as an active participant using his experience and knowledge of the world.

All those reading strategies are used while exploiting literary works mentioned below. Some of them like reading for gist or skimming are used more often and the way how to use them more efficiently and develop reading skills will be shown in the practical part of this thesis.

## **Types of literary texts**

### **Short story, novel, poem and play**

Lazar (1993) defined short story as a work of fiction, which involves imagination. Its storytelling is very concentrated. It usually tells about people who in reality do not exist and describes a moment of crisis. „It has a plot, and characters who are somehow connected with each other“ (p. 73). According to Lazar (1993) short stories are very



suitable for ESL classes however pupils might have three main problems: understanding the plot, vocabulary difficulties and how the type of narrator influence the way of narrative style (p. 75). Collie and Slater (1991) suggested that the length of short stories allows to apply fewer activities than longer novels. However, sometimes even one activity is enough to help children to understand and enjoy the text (p. 36).

Although short stories and novels share many similar features, there could be found some specific distinctions. As Lazar (1993) stated, the cast of characters is usually larger in novels than in short stories. Also highly complicated plot and numerous flashbacks are more likely to be found in novels than in short stories. The narrative form can vary in novels and the story can be told from different perspectives (p. 89). All these factors should be taken into account while we prepare novel relating activities.

As Lazar (1993) pointed out, the main difference between reading short stories and novels is generally their length (p. 89). The amount of time to be spend working on a short story is relatively smaller than working on a novel. According to Lazar (1993) the solution is obvious. We might let students read at home and class time could be used to explore the text further. Nevertheless, it depends on their maturity and ability to keep self-discipline. When we lack time, the text could be divided among several groups and each group could be responsible for reading a part of the novel and summarising its content. Then it could be presented in a written or a spoken form in front of the class (p. 90).

According to Lazar, the other problem to be solved is the number of unknown words in a novel. The vocabulary difficulties play a decisive role in the process of text selection discussed later. The aim is to make a compromise between letting pupils to extend their vocabulary and enjoy the reading without the urge to look up the meaning of every second word (1993, p. 91). It might be useful to help students to practise reading for gist not reading for detail (Harmer, 2001, p. 202). Lazar also suggested that less experienced students might be allowed to highlight unfamiliar words. Then the reasons why they felt that those words were fundamental for understanding the text can be discussed in the classroom. The second option is to provide students a glossary of unknown words crucial for basic comprehension of the text (1993, p. 91).

Similar activities could be used with a novel as with a short story but in the less concentrated way. The traditional novel with chronological narration allows teachers to work with individual chapters separately. As Lazar (1993) explained, after reading an

introductory chapter students might feel confused about too many characters and we aim while-reading activities to this issue and after reading another chapter students could be for example revising the use of different tenses (p. 91). In other words, the longer text of the novel provides more opportunities to practise a wider range of activities.

The third form of literary works used in the language classroom is poetry. Poems has been characterised as deviating from the norms of language (Widdowson, as cited in Lazar, 1993, p. 99). As Lazar stated, from linguistical point of view poems differ distinctly from standard forms of English. Poets often use their own vocabulary, punctuation or different registers together in the new creative way (1993, p. 98). Therefore, the use of poems in the language classroom seems to be very different from previously mentioned short stories or novels. Spiro (2004) explained why it might not be said that poetry is an uncharacteristic piece of language not used in everyday life. She provides some examples of using metaphors or similes in ordinary conversations as *to see red* which means *to be angry* or *headhunters* as people who try to choose the best candidates for working positons (p. 10). She claimed that the way how poets invent new words or use „poetic language“ become a part of modern English spoken in everyday dialogues (p. 11). On the other hand, it helps to show students that „language may not be quite as rigidly governed by rules as we think“ (Lazar, 1993, p. 100).

The last form of literary works to be discussed is a play. According to Lazar (1993) one fundamental issue concerning the play should be mentioned. The fact that it exists in performance and also as a written text on the page (p. 137). It provides an opportunity to use it separately and focus on dialogues in the text or use just extracts to present pupils a vivid piece of conversational language (p. 138). While performing the play students can practise their pronunciation or use non-verbal features of communication the same way like in common conversations. As Lazar mentioned, the script helps shy students to develop speaking skills the way which is more appropriate for them than role-playing improvisations (1993, p. 138).

To conclude, four types of literary works are distinguished and their use in the language classroom somehow differs. Activities connected with novels and short stories are similar in many ways and also partially familiar to English teachers from regular language lessons. Nevertheless, poems and plays are exploited quite specifically. On the other hand, there is no need to avoid them in the teaching because they could be very motivating.

## **Abridged or unabridged texts**

What is the main purpose of using abridged texts in the language classroom? According to Carter and Long (1991) we can not expect that students at elementary or intermediate levels would be able to read major prose works in the target language (p. 146). Therefore the main reason is to expose pupils to literature, however they are not able to read the original version. The issue is how much the process of shortening, condensing and reducing affects the authenticity of the original text. It is obvious that simplified texts differ at many aspects. Carter and Long (1991) compared the process of simplification to translation into foreign language. They pointed out that less rich vocabulary, shorter sentences and less complex grammatical structures must be used with regard to learner's level of knowledge. Some parts of older literature like archaisms and poeticisms are also omitted not to mention literary figures such as simile or reported speech in dialect which are largely removed thus the „charm and flavour“ of the unique literary language is lost (p. 147).

On the other hand, as Carter and Long stated that „the simplified version merely whets the appetite for the real thing at an earlier stage than the language learner may otherwise have attempted to read it“. (1991, p. 146). In general, graded readers are adjusted to students' actual level of proficiency which enables them to enjoy uninterrupted reading for pleasure and feel the sense of achievement when they finish the book. The fact that they are able to read a „book“ in English may increase their motivation and be the first step to reading original literary works. The other factor which should be taken into account is that the quality of simplified versions differs considerably thus the choice should be careful. As Carter and Long (1991) claimed „as with all books - there are good, bad and indifferent simplified texts“ (p. 152). The question whether can simplified version of the original literary work give students the authentic reading experience remains a subject of discussion but its usefulness concerning the development of reading skills is indisputable and will be proved in the practical part.

To sum up, for teachers of more advanced learners the choice between abridged and unabridged text is usually clear however it might bring several problems mentioned above including vocabulary, grammar, syntax or stylistics. The most valuable aspect of original version is that in comparison with abridged texts it provides real and authentic experience

for English learners. But for teachers at primary or lower secondary schools a good simplified version of original literary work might be an adequate option which is used as a starting point to extensive reading programme.

### **Criteria for selecting literary texts**

What sort of literature is suitable for lower secondary English learners? What novel, poem, play or short story would be the one that attracts their attention? To find the right answer for this question seems to be crucial to ensure future success. According to Collie and Slater (1991) one primary factor to consider is whether a particular work is able „to stimulate the kind of personal involvement by arousing the learners’ interest and provoking strong, positive reactions from them“ (p. 6). They summarized the most important criteria for selection this way: to find an interesting piece of literary work if possible close to the students’ own interests which provide a good potential for a variety of classroom activities (p. 12). They also mentioned students’ reading proficiency, the relevance of books to students’ life experiences, emotions or dreams (p. 6) and the factor of delight which makes reading enjoyable enough to overcome the linguistic obstacles (p. 7).

Lazar defined (1993) three main areas we should think about while choosing literary texts for our students. „These are: the type of course we are teaching, the type of students who are doing a course and certain factors connected with the text itself“ (p. 48). Other factors which should be taken into account according to Lazar (1993) considering the type of student are age, intellectual maturity, interests and hobbies, cultural or ethnic background and previous experience of reading literary texts (p. 49). And last but not least Lazar (1993) also referred to students’ linguistic proficiency (p. 53).

Carter and Long (1991) emphasized the fact that students should not be „forced to study unsuitable texts“ (p. 141). Then they establish following criteria. Firstly, they mention general availability of the printed text, which is nowadays less important thanks to the Internet sources. However, not all primary and lower secondary school libraries are endowed with a variety of books in English. Secondly, the question whether to focus on a representative selection of works which could be too narrow and discouraging for students is debated (p. 142). Thirdly, they briefly discuss advantages and disadvantages of reading well established texts or rather prefer not so widely-known texts (p. 142). Then, the issue

of selection restricted by syllabus or examining body is explained. Next, the problem whether to choose texts related to the native country of the reader or English speaking country is elaborated. Finally, several other criteria are mentioned like difference between contemporary and older literary works, longer and shorter texts, complete work and extract, genre and topic selection (p. 143-144).

Duff and Maley (1991) referred to two main areas in the context of selection - „difficulty“ and „level“. They explained linguistic difficulty as the problem of complex syntax and lexical density (p. 7). They also mentioned issues arising from reading longer texts. Further on, they presented question of cultural relevance common un/acceptability of certain literary works (p. 8).

As Clanfield (2011) summarized we should think about following questions to answer. Do we understand the text enough to feel comfortable about using it? How demanding the reading is concerning the time? Is the text somewhat relevant to our pupils and the rest of the syllabus? Is it motivating enough? Do we need to explain cultural, political or historical background? What level of proficiency does the text require?

Each author enumerated slightly different list of criteria which created a thorough listing but how to apply them in practice? Lazar (1993) offered three evaluation sheets: „Quickie“ Book Evaluation (p. 58), Detailed Book evaluation (p. 59) and Evaluating a piece of material (p. 60) where above mentioned criteria are summarized. More general information provides „Checklist for choosing literary texts“ which contains following main areas: type of course, type of students, other text related factors (p. 56).

To sum up, the procedure of selection is quite difficult concerning many different criteria. On the other hand, at least some of them should be taken into account while choosing texts for the classroom use. One option how to make this process simpler is to include all relevant factors into the elaborated questionnaire, which might provide useful information and help to avoid future obstacles.

## **Types of reading activities**

### **Pre-reading activities**

According to Carter and Long (1991), the purpose of pre-reading activities is to attract attention to the text (p. 22) and to motivate the student (p.16). Partially even the process of

selection discussed above is covered including the interest questionnaires. Carter and Long (1991) also suggested activities like a pyramid discussion and a set of preparatory questions which are targeted more towards the specific text (p. 22).

Pyramid discussions are based on the principles of voting. Students are given several words or statements. Each student should select three of them, then they work in pairs and again agree on three. Then they should work in bigger groups voting again. The goal is to select one final item in the ongoing debate where pros and cons are considered. As Carter and Long explained „the pyramid idea reflects the move from a broad base to a single point at the top“ (p. 18). As Fox and Cockett (1999) added, the aim of class discussions is that students feel such involved in the work that they cease being worried about the adequacy of their English and start to concentrate on the discussion itself (p. 8).

Lazar (1993) presented the list of suggested tasks and activities. Firstly, in case we think that students need to understand cultural background, teacher should expose information about the author's life and historical details. The background research project can also be done by students themselves - individually or in pairs provided that the library and the Internet facilities are easily accessible.

Collie and Slater (1991) also used visual aids to stimulate student's interest in the story like the title and the cover design of the book. Then the teacher can ask different questions concerning the cover picture (p. 17). Other visual prompts to use are photos or magazines pictures somewhat connected with the topic of the chosen literary text (p. 18). The other activity to use before reading is to select several key words from the first paragraph and let students guess what possible narrative links between the words are (p. 19).

In case we anticipate unfamiliar vocabulary, our attention should be aimed at pre-teaching difficult words. The point is to concentrate on the right amount of words. Pupils could be bored very easily by this type of exercise but on the other hand without knowing the key words their general comprehension would be influenced negatively. Lazar (1993) suggested brainstorming a set of words which could be found in the story according to the genre or the typical vocabulary exercise when words are matched with their dictionary definitions (p. 85).

As Carter and Long (1991) stated „students need to be prepared for reading a literary text“ (p. 23). The pre-reading activities should be very concrete and factual. The main

point of preparatory activities is to help pupils to use their own experience and excite their interest (Carter and Long, 1991, p. 23.)

### **Types of while reading activities**

As Lazar (1993) stated, these type of activities are aimed at understanding the plot and the characters. They also provide the meaning of difficult words and help with style and language (p. 85). To assure of pupils' overall comprehension of the plot could be done by several independent ways or by a combination of them. Practically it means that we can ask a few questions to check whether pupils have understood what the text was about. We can ask them to write a brief summary of the text or titles for each paragraph. We can also use sentences cut of the text and let students to put them in the right order. The other way how to work with summaries is to give students three different ones and let them to decide which one is the most fitting (Lazar, 1993, p. 85). Spiro (2006) explained another activity connected with writing summaries. Each group of students is given a story title and its true summary. The task is to write another two summaries which are false. Then pupils give their work to the other group and their adversaries have to guess which summary is the right one (p. 116).

Carter and Long (1991) suggested to use prediction. At the specific moment of the story reading we can stop students and ask: „What happens next?“ (p. 58). This question supports pupils' creativity and imagination. It also helps to clarify what happened so far and could be alternated into: „What happens in the end?“ As Carter and Long (1991) added, predictions is not concretely linked to literature, it is a common reading strategy, which should be familiarize because it helps students to understand better the plot. This type of exercises based on prediction is not difficult to prepare and students quite like them (p. 59).

Except understanding the plot, pupils should be aware also about the characters and their motivation. There are several ways how to help students to understand the characters according to Lazar (1993) like for example to write a list of adjectives to describe them, or to decide „which character is the most or the least active, passive, aggressive, gentle, decisive etc.“ (p. 85).

Nevertheless, the most difficult part remains how to cope with unknown words. Pupils are, of course, encouraged to work with a monolingual or bilingual dictionary. But this activity is time consuming, demotivating and do not always lead to the successful

understanding the meaning of the word. As mentioned above, pupils can match unknown words and their definitions. The more active way is to give a group of students the text before reading and ask them to prepare a glossary for their classmates (Lazar, 1993, p. 85). Also multiple choice questions help to guess the meaning from the context which is the most important skill to be practised during the reading.

### **Types of post reading activities**

As Lazar (1993) stated the goal of post reading activities is to help students to interpret the text. Pupils give, with teacher's help, different opinions about the literary text and then they discuss which one is the most appropriate and why. The other option is to ask students whether they have found in the text some symbolic meaning. Students are encouraged to imagine possible metaphorical associations (p. 86).

Carter and Long (1987) suggested a variety of activities such as gap-filling exercises, true/false sentences, scrambled sentences, multiple choice questions etc (p. 56). However, the gap-filling exercises work well as pre-reading activities, they can be used even at the post-reading stage (p. 56). The point can be for example to use synonyms. According to Long and Carter (1991) cloze as a procedure is well established in exams but could be successfully employ in the language development. The purpose is not to omit just random words but to attract students attention to specific language features of the text (p. 80).

Of course, also other types of ESOL exam style exercises can be effectively used while interpreting the text. For instant, the true/false statements used by Gelshenen and Kay (2001) in the reader of American short stories help to check students' comprehension of the text and to realize the cause and consequences of characters' behaviour (101). As Long and Carter (1993) stated true/false exercises are created to force students to make a decision (p. 95). The main point is that the right answer depends not only on the verbatim quotations but more often on the context.

However the focus of this thesis is on developing reading skills, Lazar (1993) described a collection of useful writing activities like for example: to write a summary of the text, to write a review of the text, to re-write a story from the point of view of a different character than the main one or to write a letter to one of the character as a reaction to what happened in the story. Pupils can also write a diary to describe events in the story or give a brief description of the narrator guessed from the context of the story (p. 86).



Many inspirational post-reading exercises can be found in the readers of textbook publishers. For example the reader of Horror stories collected by Ceri (2009) provides several suggestions how to exploit the text including literary analysis focused on the plot, main characters and atmosphere of the story along with the way how to record new words more efficiently (see Appendix 10).

As Collie and Slater (1991) noted students often benefit from exercises which they have devised themselves (p. 124). It means that for example true/false exercise written by one group can be answered by the other group and vice versa. Or for example the scrambled sentences of the story can be prepared beforehand by chosen pupils or volunteers.

To sum up, there exists a lot of different activities to use before, during and after reading the literary work. The teacher's objective should be to balance the time spent by reading and by working on exercises. The main purpose is to enjoy reading for pleasure and learn how to acquire language more intuitively which is not possible when pupils are overwhelmed by too many activities.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As illustrated in the theoretical background, using literary texts in the language classroom is believed to have a huge impact on readers' proficiency. The question to be researched is whether developing reading skills through literature may have the expected effect in practice in comparison with ordinary lessons. This chapter presents a methodology of the research carried out at Primary and Lower Secondary School of T. G. Masaryk in Rokycany. Firstly, a very brief characterization of our school and the researched class is given. Then, a detailed procedure of selection is described. Next, details of special reading course and assessment tools are provided including the procedure of each lesson.

#### **School and class profile**

I have been teaching English at Primary and Lower Secondary School of T. G. Masaryk in Rokycany since 2000. In the first years this school had a special status „with extended learning of languages“. It meant that it used to be a selective school for pupils from 3<sup>th</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Pupils had to pass entrance exams and were extremely gifted. Economical situation, development of 8-years comprehensive education and population decline caused that selective schools were forced to adapt and transform to common schools a few years ago. But the tradition has been endured partially. In comparison with other schools, our lower secondary pupils are still slightly above average or better said, at least some of them. We rarely deal with educational or behavioural problems. These conditions let teachers to concentrate on the teaching process itself and search for innovative approaches including the special reading course carried out from 8<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

English is taught compulsory from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, when pupils have one lesson per week. The amount of lessons increases and from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade pupils attend three or four lessons per week. It usually means three regular lessons plus one lesson of English conversation. Nowadays, the textbooks called Challenges, volumes 1, 2 and 3 published by Longman Pearced Ltd. are used in English lessons. In the end of the third book students should achieve Level B1. The reading research was carried out in the 8th grade. Two parallel

groups were chosen. The level of the pupils ranged from A2 to B1 of the Common European Framework of References for Languages.

The first group consisted of 12 pupils, 4 girls and 8 boys. I have been teaching them for three consequent years. They went through the special reading course. It means that they were reading extensively. The main focus was on the process of reading. They were able to read approximately 40 pages of J. K. Rowling book *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and a simplified version of E. A. Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado*. Providing that they were interested in the lesson, they could work hard. On the other hand, it was not easy to attract their attention. They got bored very easily but at least three of them liked reading in Czech. Even though they were not very dutiful or precise, they showed a kind of quite creative thinking. I supposed that a special reading course could be the right way how to motivate them to work harder which was proved by their improvement.

The referential group consisted also of 12 pupils, 7 girls and 5 boys. The whole class was originally divided into two groups on their mathematical results therefore it has no connection to their English proficiency. I used to be teaching them years ago but I did not teach them that year so I had only general information about their work. As my colleague said and I agreed with her, they could keep discipline better than my group and showed more diligence. They were about to start the second chapter of Challenge textbook. Each chapter is divided into several parts focused on vocabulary, wordbuilding or grammar. There are four longer texts and one dialogue accompanied by a variety of exercises aimed at general comprehension or practising grammar rules and new vocabulary. This chapter's topic is Health and Illness. Pupils were tested together with the first group then continued normally working on textbook exercises. Next, they were tested once more when the other group finished the special reading course.

### **Procedure of text selection**

The selection process was unsurprisingly difficult. I tried to apply all main criteria mentioned in the theoretical chapter. From that point of view lower secondary classes are specific because school education is compulsory in the Czech Republic, however pupils' reasons to learn English vary from person to person. Teachers usually follow the school education programme, which defines intensity of the course and also a syllabus.

Literary texts are rarely included in the textbooks, which are usually used by lower secondary English teachers. Even though children in the class are approximately the same age, their intellectual maturity and interests differ widely. Some lower secondary pupils in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade could easily achieve B1 level, on the other hand some of them are not sufficiently familiar with elementary grammar rules and their application not to mention their poor vocabulary. Practical problems to solve are: whether the text is easily accessible like for example in a school library, on the Internet etc., the length of the text and possible ways how to exploit it and whether the text is somehow connected with the rest of the syllabus.

The special reading course was divided into seven lessons, which were linked mutually. Lessons were taught as follows: four lessons were spent working on the novel extract and following three lessons on the short story. The selection process was not easy. The problem was how to narrow a wide range of, in my opinion absolutely appropriate and tempting works, which could serve the purpose of this research. I produced a quite thorough list, which is presented in Appendix 1, considering pupils' maturity and interest as the main criteria. Pupils were also asked to write a list of ten favourite books, which was quite problematic because some of them were not sure whether they actually have read so many books until now. Finally, a prompt given that many books were filmed helped. The list of their choice is presented in Appendix 2.

The most repeated author was J. K. Rowling and thus the title of a chosen novel was obvious. Irrespective of potential pupils' knowledge of the plot I decided to use the first three chapters of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. I was considering some nice horror story because horror as a genre was mentioned in our discussions. After that I noticed that *The Fall of the House of Usher* by E. A. Poe was written as the topic of Czech literature lesson in the class register so I decided to use the fact that children already got some background information about the author and *The Cask of Amontillado* was chosen. I must admit that the procedure of book selection seem to be more intuitive than described in the theoretical part. The fact is that filling evaluating sheets could provide more suitable books than was needed therefore the final selection also reflects teacher's personal preferences.

## Assesment tools

The first and the last step of the research were to let students fill a reading test to demonstrate whether teaching English through literary texts improved their overall reading proficiency. The test to measure additional enjoyment provided by reading „Literature“ with big „L“ and not just „sterile“ texts from textbooks does not exist therefore a decision was made to use a combination of standardized KET and PET reading test before the beginning of this special reading course and then in the end a similar procedure was repeated with a different version of those tests. I chose specifically these parts: Test A/ PET Reading part 4: Long test with multiple choice questions (Cambridge Preliminary English Test 3, 2004, p. 12-13, p. 32-33), Test B/ KET Reading part 4 test: Long test with comprehension questions (KET Past Examination Papers, December 2005, p. 8-9, KET Past Examination Papers, December 2009, p. 6-7), Test C/ PET Reading part 3: text with True/False questions (Cambridge Preliminary English Test 3, 2004, p. 10-11, p. 30-31).

Pupils were not tested to find out their level of proficiency thus there was no reason to use the whole test, which would be time consuming. They filled only those particular parts of Reading and Writing ESOL Tests mentioned above. They had 45 minutes to read and write their answers. They could not use a dictionary or ask a teacher. Majority of them just finished at the end of the regular lesson. Some of them who needed more time were allowed to write for extra five minutes. The first part of testing took place on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013 from 10:45 to 11:30. Final tests were conducted on Friday 3<sup>th</sup> May 2013 from 9:50 to 10:35.

As mentioned above, for the purpose of this research one referential group of pupils at the same age and language level was chosen. Pupils from the parallel class filled the same tests and results including comparison are presented in the following chapter. It is assumed that pupils who went through this special reading course would show the significant progress in the second test in contrast to the referential group whose results would be approximately coincident with them of the previous test.

I must explain that the choice of tests was made intentionally because the reading skills tested by this exam are partially the same as the ones developed in the special reading course. Pupils were reading for general understanding and for detailed information. Moreover, other skills were developed as well, for example writing. During the course

pupils wrote a summary, a short story and several descriptions. Children also tried a new way of expressing opinion in the pyramid discussion when they justify their point of view in pairs, groups and the whole class. More efficient way of recording new words was presented during the reading lessons along with tips how to guess unknown words. The process of interpreting the text was introduced briefly and even grammar rules were explained and practised, for example: adverbs creation from adjectives and past perfect tense. However the main goal of this special course was to show children that reading could be fun that they can read for pleasure in English. The procedures of all seven lessons of the special reading course are presented below.

### Lesson 1

This lesson is ment to draw pupils' attention and motivate them before the following special reading course, which is presented in outline. Pupils get the information about the length of the course and the objectives. The main goal is to develop their reading skills and familiarize reading strategies. Even though less time is spent practising other skills, the process is complex, which means that speaking, writing and listening skills are included. The preparatory lessons showed that pupils know and like J. K. Rowling Harry Potter series, mostly films but majority of them read at least one book. Therefore the warming-up activities are omitted and this first lesson begin in an unusual way - without any pre-reading activities (see Appendix 3).

Pupils are asked to read for twenty-five minutes the introductory chapter of Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, *The Worst Birthday*. In advance, they are instructed not to ask about the meaning of individual unknown words, just to highlight them if they really need to look them up later and continue to read. They are allowed to highlight the maximum of five words on each page. I am well aware that there are more unknown words in the text but I want them to concentrate on reading for pleasure which would be spoilt by looking up every third word.

After reading pupils are given Worksheet chapter 1 (see Appendix 11). They are divided into groups of three and asked to demonstrate each other somebody who *speaks angrily*, *calls loudly* or *smiles broadly*. Then they try to match verbs and dictionary definitions from Exercise 1. During the work I check their answers, help them if they need

and ask them for the Czech equivalent to make sure that they understand the right meaning of the verbs. Still in groups, pupils are asked to do Exercise 2. The rules how to create adverbs are well known from regular English lessons. They should be able to apply them even when the meaning of the word is not absolutely clear. Once more, in the end of activity, I make sure that they understand what those adverbs mean in Czech. Exercise 3. and 4. are meant as homework together with finishing the first chapter.

## Lesson 2

In this lesson (see Appendix 4) we will read next chapter from Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, *Dobby's Warning*. Pupils are familiar with the story and main characters. We discuss some background information and develop reading for gist and scanning. The work with unknown words is emphasized. Pupils have to practise following three steps: guess it, skip it, look it up. In many cases they should be able to guess unknown words from the context. It is easier for experienced readers in Czech because they can use „schemata“ mentioned in the theoretical part. If it is not possible to guess the word, they have to judge how important the word is for general understanding. When it is reappearing in the text or they think that it is somewhat important, the final step is to look it up or ask the teacher.

First part of the lesson is spent by checking homework. Children are asked to answer what are the Czech equivalents for specific Harry Potter words like *Hogwarts*, *Quidditch* or *Muggles* as a part of pre-reading activities. Then we discuss more examples of words connected specifically with this book like *Slytherin*, *Ravenclaw*, *Albus Dumbledore* or with magic like *wizard*, *potion*, *sorcerer*, *wand* etc. Then pupils answer several questions from Exercise 4 to control their ability of reading for specific information. Next, pupils are divided into groups according to their choice of character descriptions. Vernon, Petunia and Dudley group are to present shortly their ideas. The last question is to describe how Harry felt that day. Pupils practise the verb *feel* in connection with adjectives. (He felt bad, sad, alone, unhappy, desperate, depressed etc.) They also try to interpret the text and explain why he felt that way. Was it because he did not get any presents from Dursley's, nobody sent him a birthday card, he got no cake or because he thought that his friends, Hermione and Ron ignored him. Then children are given the second chapter of the book

and Worksheet Chapter 2 (see Appendix 12). They read to the end of the lesson. There are not any post-reading activities in the classroom. Pupils have to finish reading at home and fill Worksheet Chapter 2 as homework.

### Lesson 3

In this lesson pupils read seven pages of Chapter 3 *The Burrow* from Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. The story is quickly developing and we change the setting and move from Privet Drive to Weasley's house. Pupils practise reading for specific information by doing one type of KET/PET test, True/False exercise and guessing unknown words from the context (see Appendix 5).

At the start we quickly compare pupils's answers to Worksheet Chapter 2. I presume that they had no difficulties to circle one correct option. If there are some tricky questions from their point of view, we discuss them briefly. Next, Worksheets Chapter 3 (see Appendix 13) and reading extracts are distributed and pupils continue to read till p. 30. They can spend half an hour reading.

In Exercise 1 pupils practise how to guess meaning from the context. They have to find out the right paragraph and fill in three missing words: *revved*, *crunching* and *dangling*. They were chosen on purpose. First of all, they are not crucial for general understanding. Secondly, they are easy to guess when we imagine the whole situation. The third reason is that in my opinion they are partially onomatopoeic (at least *rev* and *crunch*). It means that the sound and described actions are somewhat connected which is easy to remember (and to show). Next, pupils are given some time to do True/False exercise and then we check together their answers.

### Lesson 4

This lesson is meant as the final conclusion of reading Harry Potter story (see Appendix 6). Children have to read the first three chapters in one week and some of them are enthusiastic enough to continue. Pupils work in groups and finish Worksheet Chapter 3. *The Worst Birthday* story from Worksheet Chapter 2 will be read aloud and I will suggest how to record new words more efficiently.



Pupils are divided into groups of four. The first task is to choose whether sentences are true or false. We check answers together. Then pupils create their own True/False exercise. While they are working I am checking whether the sentences are correct in grammar and content. Next, each group chooses three of them which is considered being the most tricky ones and read them aloud. Other groups write their answers than we check it together and announce which group is the winner. We also return to *The Worst Birthday* story from Worksheet Chapter 2. Pupils read their stories in their group and vote for the „the worst“ one. Then one speaker of each group, a different person than the author of the story, retells the story to the rest of the class. Then I give them a sample of wordlist which is recorded differently (see Appendix 10) and explain how and why they should do it this way. There is no actual reading in this lesson which means no post reading activities. We just generally discuss the possibility of writing a reader’s diary.

## Lesson 5

In this lesson we start reading an abridged version of E. A. Poe’s short story *The Cask of Amontillado*. I have not chosen the original, unabridged version for several reasons. First of all the problem of syntax and stylistics. The author used complex grammar and difficult vocabulary, which is not easy to guess from the context. For example: „*It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile NOW was at the thought of his immolation.*“ (E. A. Poe, 1846). Next, pupils lack a background knowledge of the story concerning history like tell-tale signs of Freemasonry, the way how noble Italian families lived in their palaces or a tradition of carnivals. Moreover Poe’s story contains specific factual information like the one that nitre causes coughing or latin quotations: „*Nemo me impune lacessit.*“ All those reasons might influence overall comprehension of the story and make reading extremely difficult for 14-years children at A2-B1 level. Still I presume that it has been a good choice because children like horrors, they also read *The Fall of the House of Usher* so I decided to use the abridged version of the story adapted for Special English by Dona de Sanctis. The objective of this lesson is to arouse pupil’s interest in the story before actual reading and let

them to express their opinions about fear and frightening places in a preparatory discussion (see Appendix 7).

The introductory part is based on pyramid discussion. Pupils are given E. A. Poe Worksheet (see Appendix 14). They choose three examples of the most terrifying place in the world. Then they work in pairs, agree on three places, tell briefly reasons to justify their choice and write them on the second line. After that they are divided into groups of four, each group chooses one place accepted by the whole group. Next, the whole class votes for one. The aim is to develop class discussion about specific reasons why some places are more terrifying than others. The idea of pyramid discussion reflects the move from a broad base, during which everybody is allowed to contribute, to a single point at the top when the final decision is made. Then pupils read the first paragraph and guess the setting of the story. What could be the actual frightening place and what horrible action could be happening. The last one of pre-reading activities is to explain several unknown words using visual aids and mention some basic facts of historical background. I show following pictures on the interactive board: cask, bottle of Amontillado wine, tombs with bones, Italian carnival masks and old Italian palaces. Then pupils read till the end of the lesson.

There are not any post-reading activities this time, just short feedback at the end. I ask pupils whether it is easier or more difficult to read *The cask of Amontillado* in comparison with *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

## Lesson 6

In this lesson pupils read the final part of the story. After finishing the reading they work on E. A. Poe Worksheet, then we discuss thoroughly the plot, main characters and narrator's motivation to check whether they are able to read for specific information and general comprehension (see Appendix 8). Pupils read for about 15 minutes. They are reminded to highlight unknown words the way we practised in the previous lessons.

The first three questions of the worksheet are aimed to check whether children understand who is the narrator and the other character, Fortunato. The background of their relationship and very brief descriptions of their personality help pupils to realize narrator's motivation. The objective of following questions is to let pupils interpret the text from their

point of view. They explain why Fortunato gives up so easily and why this horrible crime is committed. Then they think of what makes the story terrifying and give examples. If it was an unabridged version of the text we would spend more time on stylistics. In this case it is aimless to go deeper.

## Lesson 7

This lesson is meant as a final conclusion of reading Edgar Allan Poe's short story, *The Cask of Amontillado*. Children read three pages of the abridged version very quickly and efficiently. We will continue working on the second page of E. A. Poe Worksheet. There is a variety of exercises aimed on vocabulary, grammar and developing reading skills (see Appendix 9). By writing a short summary and a horror short story pupils also develop their writing skills.

Pupils start with True/False/Doesn't say exercise written the same way as KET Reading Part 4: long test with comprehension questions. This exercise tests detailed understanding of the text. Then we review new vocabulary by matching words and fill in the gap exercise. Next, the principle of past perfect tense usage is briefly explained and practised however we do not go into details. The last part of the lesson is spent by writing a short summary. Pupils can write a horror short story as the optional homework. There is no actual reading in this lesson which means no post reading activities.

To sum up, seven lessons are described thoroughly in this chapter, included their objectives, timing, the variety of pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities. The related lesson plans are presented graphically (see Appendices). The reflection of each lesson is given in the next chapter.

## IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARY

In this chapter reflections of the special reading course and results of the research are discussed in detail. The reflections are presented separately for each lesson numbered analogically from 1 to 7. The results are based on the battery of tests and presented in well arranged colourful tables and charts. They contain specific data like the number of pupils and the number of right answers accompanied by thorough commentary. Preliminary tests were conducted on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013 from 10:45 to 11:30. Final tests were conducted on Friday 3<sup>th</sup> May 2013 from 9:50 to 10:35. Two tables show the overall data for both groups. Following charts are focused on the comparison of individual improvement and commentaries. These two crucial questions are answered: *1. Do reading literary works influence reading skills development more positively than reading textbook extracts? 2. How significant is the possible improvement?* At the end, a summary of main results is presented.

### **The special reading course reflection**

#### **Lesson 1**

This lesson was somewhat new to pupils. They were not used to read for pleasure during regular English lessons, therefore they felt extraordinary. I was surprised how quickly they understood that asking about unknown words was disturbing and did not affect significantly the general comprehension of the text. They were quiet and concentrated for all twenty-five minutes. I must admit that their background knowledge of the story and main characters also helped.

The first exercise was quite easy and they thought of adequate phrases, which could be shouted or accompanied by „broad smile“ or „audible breathing through the nose“ but during the second exercise I had to remind some basic rules how adverbs are created. I did not explain it fully, just gave them more examples than the written one (*easy-easily*) to cover other ways of adverb creation like for example: *humorous-humorously, invisible-invisibly*.

Then we shortly discussed why those verbs and adverbs are used in the text. Pupils deduced that it helped to make narration of the story more „vivid, colourful or natural“ that

it helped to „show character’s emotions“. In the end, I asked them whether they wanted to continue and they were quite enthusiastic so I made it clear that we would proceed on one condition: everybody finish reading at home and do their homework. Last two exercises were not very time consuming, so I supposed that they could do it even though they normally forget their homework very often.

## **Lesson 2**

The introductory discussion about specifically Harry Potter’s words developed very quickly. Even though I doubted that everybody really finished the reading part at least they tried to do the written homework part except two boys. The first one was extremely weak and I was not sure whether this type of activity was not too much above his actual knowledge. The other one was quite gifted but he did not respect authority and rules. He was also very moody therefore his performance was unstable.

Because pupils knew so many words I asked them to make groups earlier and make a list. The winners were able to write 21 words in 3 minutes. Then we continued with Exercise 4. Descriptions of Vernon, Petunia and Dudley were short but quite satisfactory. Children used partially the vocabulary from the book and added what they remembered from the film. The interesting thing was that they were able to use the pattern of derived meaning. Dudley was described as „porcky“ (p. 9) and later on when we were reading something else, they noticed the word „beefy“ and deduced what it could mean.

Next, we discussed how Harry felt that day. Everybody told at least one sentence, I made a list of adjectives on the board then I wrote the rule *feel + adjectives* on the board and emphasize the difference between: *He felt happy. He spoke slowly.* The last part was to deduce the reasons why Harry felt that way. Pupils enumerated all material reasons like no party, no cake, no birthday postcards and they also mentioned the problem of being ignored by friends. It took approximately 20 minutes and I realized that the main difficulty was the lack of time. No matter how carefully I tried to plan activities in advance, sometimes we felt the lack of time. When I did not want to interrupt animated discussions, more time had to be spend reading at home. Therefore children were reading Chapter 2 for the rest of the lesson but they had to continue at home which required their willingness and self-discipline.

### Lesson 3

Pupils were reading for 30 minutes. As I presumed, only four of them were able to finish all seven pages. They agreed to finish Chapter 3 at home providing that no written homework would be included. So I decided to change the originally planned homework (Exercise 3 Worksheet Chapter 3) into the warm-up activity at the beginning of our next lesson. Then we started with Exercise 1, guessing meaning from the context, which was quite easy.

I asked them to imagine the whole situation and helped them by performing the appropriate sound. After that I wrote those verbs on the board and asked about their base form, especially because of *rev-revved* spelling. I also emphasized that even without knowing the right meaning of those three words they were able to understand what was going on. Then we discussed other words of this paragraph and their importance for general comprehension.

We agreed that for example without knowing the word *bar* it would be more difficult to understand the whole action. It was not enough time to start True/False exercise so we just generally discussed whether pupils liked special reading lessons and the fact that next time Harry Potter lessons were going to finish. I revealed which story was chosen and pupils did not object to read another story of E. A. Poe. They even briefly described what was *The Fall of the House of Usher* about.

### Lesson 4

In this lesson pupils were working in groups of four which is always more exacting for teacher with regard to maintain classroom discipline. I insisted on using English during work but I did not really succeed. Pupils worked efficiently on the first task. As I supposed, True/False sentences were quite easy for them except the tricky ones like for example: Fred and George are Ron's younger twin brothers. (It is false because Fred and George are Ron's older twin brothers). I reminded to all that they had to concentrate even on small details.

When they found out that the purpose of Exercise 3 is to create the list True/False sentences for adversary groups they quite enjoyed this activity. Even though they were deliberately trying to figure out only tricky phrases. Meanwhile I was correcting grammatical mistakes and helped with the word order and verb tense. At the end, the

winner were announced (Group 2) and pupils started to read their *The Worst Birthday* stories. It was not so time consuming because pupils' stories were adequately short.

Next, the choice was made and the speaker retold the most successful story. It was not allowed to read the story so speakers were struggling partly with vocabulary but with the help of other members they finally succeeded. The objective was to retell the story chosen by the group so they were not too embarrassed as they would be by presenting their own story. Then the samples of vocabulary record were handed out and each pupil tried to record three of the words previously highlighted in Harry Potter extracts this new way.

## **Lesson 5**

In this lesson pupils tried the pyramid discussion mentioned in the theoretical chapter. It was slightly difficult to explain and organize the whole process but I suppose that next time it would be easier because now they know what to do. We discussed several terrifying places like for example: deep forest, cave, cellar, haunted house, cemetery, tomb, funeral parlour, old castle, ruins, dungeon, museum after closing hours, school at midnight etc. The discussion developed well and everybody added something and gave its justification. At the end the whole class agreed on the most terrifying place in the world. It was a „real“ haunted house (in case it exists).

After a short reading time pupils tried to guess the setting of the story and the most repeated place was an old castle and cemetery which was quite close to reality and also a murder was mentioned among ideas of what was going to happen along with seeing ghosts, torture prisoners or searching for treasure. Next, pictures were shown on the interactive board and pupils worked on an interactive vocabulary exercise to consolidate their knowledge.

As I supposed their opinions concerning the better accessibility of Harry Potter story or Poe's short story differed widely. Harry Potter „experts“ were persuaded that reading *Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secret* was: „a piece of cake“. On the other hand, reading *The Cask of Amontillado* for the first time they were a bit confused who is who - Montressor, Fortunato and Lucreci because they did not have any previous knowledge about the plot. Nevertheless, with regard to the fact that this version was simplified, I believed that it was easier for majority of them to read Poe's story.

## Lesson 6

Pupils were able to finish the reading part very quickly. Moreover, they were quite concentrated and calm. I was not sure whether Poe's short story was not too distant from their world. On the other hand we discussed very thoroughly the meaning of real friendship which was close to their experience. Narrator's personality was described by adjectives like: *cruel, bad, malicious, insane, mad, wicked*. Fortunato was described according to story as *a big, rich and handsome man with the feature of arrogance. He married a rich and beautiful woman who gave him sons* in contrast to narrator's background with no reference to family. One of pupils called him quite peculiarly „an angry looser“. It was not easy for children to find out what was the murderer's motivation. They could not believe that somebody committed such a terrible crime just because he was ridiculed repeatedly by his friend in their childhood.

Later, we discussed the way how real friends should react and children gave some positive examples of real friendship. The story was not believable from their point of view but they saw several thrillers when murderer's motivation was even weaker. Then, we agreed that E. A. Poe wrote the plot which was recycled many times in Hollywood films. Describing the setting was the easiest task. Everybody was able to imagine dark, damp underground corridors full of bones.

## Lesson 7

In this lesson pupils were practising the test aimed on detail understanding of the text. They worked in pairs and had to justify their answers by searching the text again. Question 1 was not difficult to answer. It was just a word-for-word quotation from the text. Questions 2, 3, 4 required an ability to understand fully the text and interpret what had been read. Questions 5, 6 required the ability to read for specific details.

Next two exercises were aimed on practising new vocabulary. Matching exercise was a bit ambiguous. Without the text references there were more possible answers. Therefore, pupils were asked to match words according to the text and then we discussed other possibilities. Fill in the gap exercise was based strictly on the phrases from the text. After finishing it pupils tried to put the sentences in the right order.

Next, I wrote an example of past tense on the board. I reminded what *past participle* means. Then pupils worked individually on Exercise 6. It was just a brief introduction into



the past perfect tense. We did not mention how to create a question or negative sentence, or its usage in the reported speech.

After that children were divided into groups of four and each group was given one page of the story. Their task was to write a summary of their page in three sentences. Then we put their parts together and got the summary of the whole short story. It was quite difficult to sum up one page into such a short text. The most demanding thing was to capture what is important and shorten it. This activity should be trained sometimes later with another short story. In my opinion, it helped children to realize fully the plot of the story.

To sum up, pupils were working hard for these three weeks. They were proud of themselves because of their ability to read approximately forty pages in English. Moreover, they seemed to be enjoying reading for pleasure and the results of the research presented below show that their improvement was quite significant.

### Results of the first group and commentaries

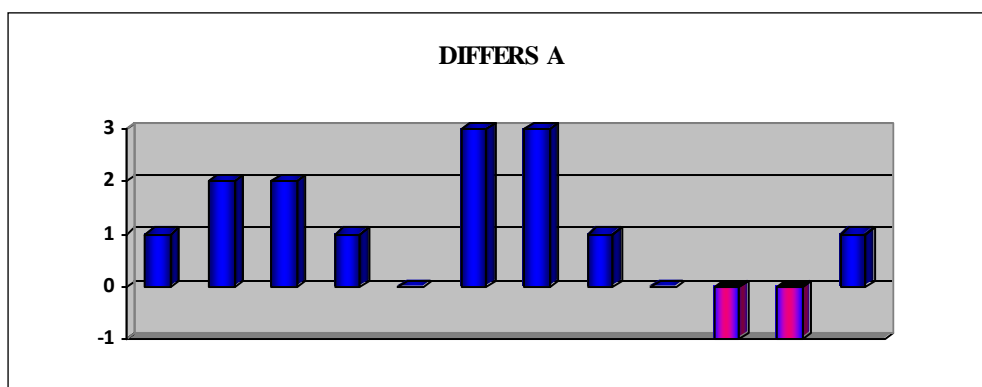
TABLE 1

<b>Pupil</b>	<b>Test 1</b> (max.8)	<b>Test 2</b> (max.8)	<b>Differs A</b>	<b>Test 3</b> (max. 10)	<b>Test 4</b> (max. 10)	<b>Differs B</b>	<b>Test 5</b> (max. 5)	<b>Test 6</b> (max. 5)	<b>Differs C</b>
Pupil 1	4	5	+ 1	3	6	+ 3	2	3	+ 1
Pupil 2	3	5	+ 2	4	5	+ 1	2	3	+ 1
Pupil 3	2	4	+ 2	2	5	+ 3	1	3	+ 2
Pupil 4	2	3	+ 1	3	5	+ 2	2	2	0
Pupil 5	7	7	0	6	7	+ 1	4	3	- 1
Pupil 6	4	7	+ 3	5	6	+ 1	3	4	+ 1
Pupil 7	3	6	+ 3	4	4	0	2	3	+ 1
Pupil 8	3	4	+ 1	4	3	- 1	2	2	0
Pupil 9	3	3	0	2	3	+ 1	1	2	+ 1
Pupil 10	7	6	- 1	7	7	0	4	5	+ 1
Pupil 11	6	5	- 1	5	6	+ 1	2	3	+ 1
Pupil 12	5	6	+ 1	5	7	+ 2	3	3	0

### Table 1 Commentary:

In this table the overall data are demonstrated. In the first column pupils from the group engaged in the special reading course are enumerated. Colourful columns shows individual increase, decrease or stagnation presented lower in detail. Pupils 1, 5, 6 and 10 are keen readers in Czech. Some of them sometimes read in secret even during our regular English lessons. Their results might indicate that knowing and applying reading strategies gained by reading in our native language can help to develop reading skill in ESL very importantly.

CHART 1



### Chart 1 Commentary:

In this chart the difference between preliminary and final results of KET Reading part 4 test: Long test with comprehension questions is presented. Majority of pupils improved their results; two of them significantly (three points difference). Pupil 6 and Pupil 7 worked extremely well in the second test which could be related to their previous reading experience in Czech. Moreover, they obtained better results than in regular school tests. This test also show the biggest improvement which is probably caused by combination of two factors. Firstly, the strategy of tricky questions was described and practised in detail during the reading course. Secondly, majority of pupils have already reached the level of proficiency examined in the test - A2, which means that the text was not too difficult to read. The main problem was to practise True/False questions strategy.

CHART 2

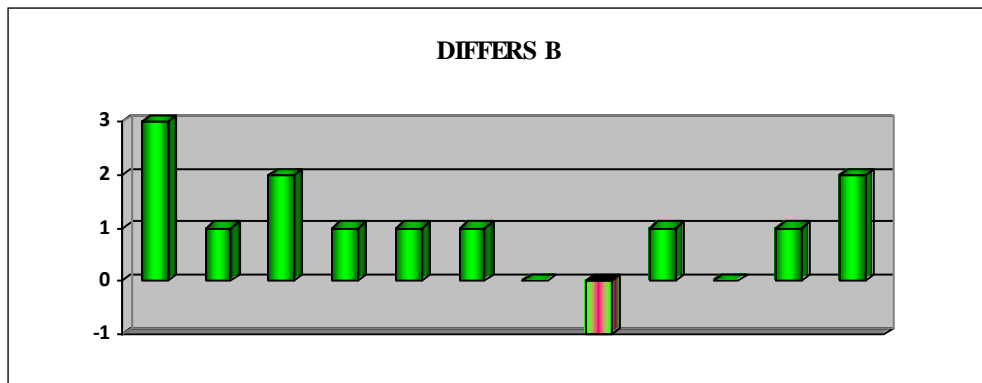


Chart 2 Commentary:

In this chart the difference between preliminary and final results of PET Reading part 3 test: text with True/False questions is presented. The overall improvement is not great. Only three pupils achieved significant progress. There are two possible reasons. First of all, Pupil 5 and Pupil 10 obtained good results in the first test therefore the improvement was not (and could not) be great. The level of proficiency examined in this test is B2, which is slightly above the knowledge of some of pupils. On the other hand, they were well aware of potential tricky questions which might help Pupil 1 to improve from three points to quite good 6 points.

CHART 3

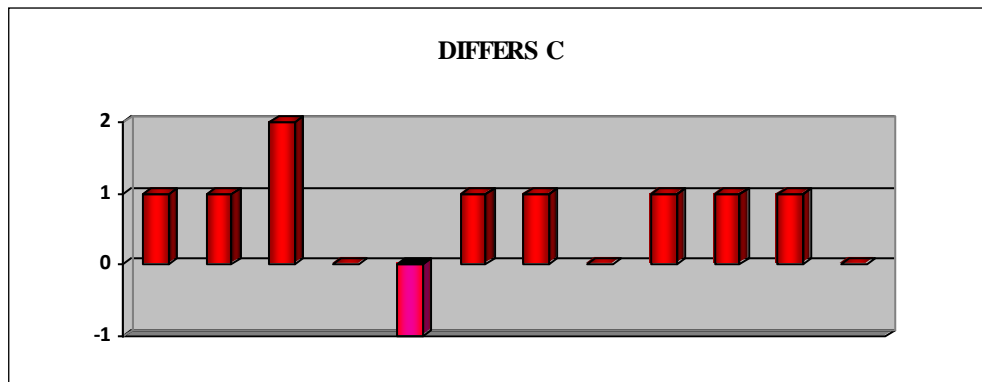


Chart 3 Commentary:

In this chart the difference between preliminary and final results of PET Reading part 4 test: Long test with multiple choice questions is presented. The overall progress is not

great. On the other hand, there are five questions in the test so one point improvement means in the percentage twenty percent progress. Moreover, this type of the text is more difficult than previous ones based on True/False sentences. It examines more reading for general comprehension than reading for detail. Pupils must be able to deduce and use logical thinking. In addition, ESOL tests are not aimed at teenagers. Even though I tried to choose an appropriate topic like school or hobbies, some themes could be quite remote.

TABLE 2

	Number of pupils			
	total	increase	stagnation	decrease
Test 1/2	12	8	2	2
Test 3/4	12	9	2	1
Test 5/6	12	8	3	1

Table 2 Commentary:

In this chart the difference between preliminary and final results of all tests are presented. It shows that the majority of pupils improved even though some of them not significantly. Only one third of the group stagnated or got less points in the final test than in the preliminary test. To sum up, it could be said that the majority of pupils who worked on literary texts in the special reading course developed their reading skills quite fundamentally. In addition, they enjoyed reading for pleasure and two of them expressed interest to continue. Pupil 5 continued with reading J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secret*. Pupil 10 started to read J. R. R. Tolkien's *Hobbit*.

### Results of the parallel group and commentaries

In the following tables and charts overall results of the parallel group are shown. The data commentaries are not given in detail because I do not teach them this year. Their midterm marks were comparable with the first group described above. Their lessons from 8<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>th</sup> May 2013 were not focused specially at reading. They continued working on the unit in their textbooks (Module 2, Challenges 3). This chapter is aimed at health, illness and connected vocabulary along with passive tense.

TABLE 1

<b>Pupil</b>	<b>Test 1</b> (max.8)	<b>Test 2</b> (max.8)	<b>Differs A</b>	<b>Test 3</b> (max. 10)	<b>Test 4</b> (max. 10)	<b>Differs B</b>	<b>Test 5</b> (max. 5)	<b>Test 6</b> (max. 5)	<b>Differs C</b>
Pupil 1	3	4	+ 1	4	6	+ 2	3	3	0
Pupil 2	4	4	0	3	5	+ 2	3	2	- 1
Pupil 3	6	5	- 1	4	5	+ 1	2	3	+ 1
Pupil 4	7	6	- 1	5	5	0	3	4	+ 2
Pupil 5	5	5	0	4	5	+ 1	3	2	- 1
Pupil 6	4	5	+ 1	5	4	- 1	2	4	+ 2
Pupil 7	2	3	+ 1	4	3	- 1	3	1	- 2
Pupil 8	5	6	+ 1	5	6	+ 1	3	3	0
Pupil 9	5	7	+ 2	6	4	- 2	3	2	- 1
Pupil 10	6	5	- 1	6	5	- 1	4	3	- 1
Pupil 11	6	6	0	5	4	- 1	3	4	+ 1
Pupil 12	7	6	- 1	4	6	+ 2	3	5	+ 2

Table 1 Commentary:

In this table the overall data are demonstrated. In the first column pupils from the group who were not engaged in the special reading course are enumerated. Colourful columns shows individual increase, decrease or stagnation of each pupil. Following charts and tables lack thorough information. The reason has been already explained above - I do not teach them this year.

CHART 1

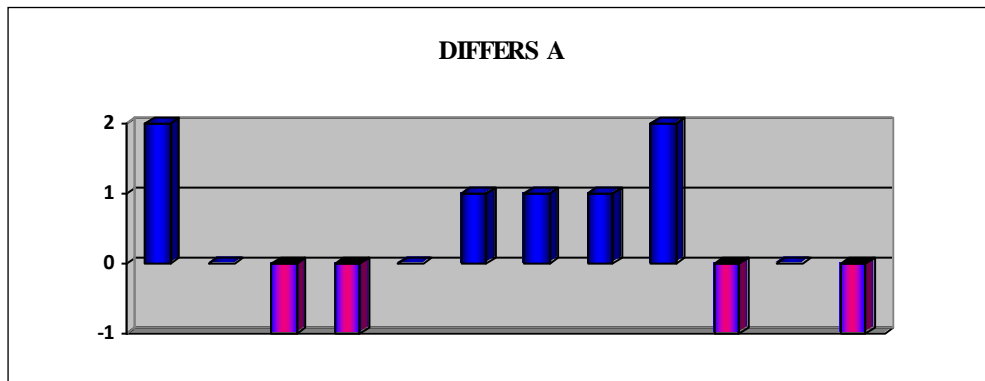


Chart 1 Commentary:

In this chart the difference between preliminary and final results of KET Reading part 4 test: Long test with comprehension questions is presented. As could be seen, majority of pupils stagnated or even got worse results than in the previous test.

CHART 2

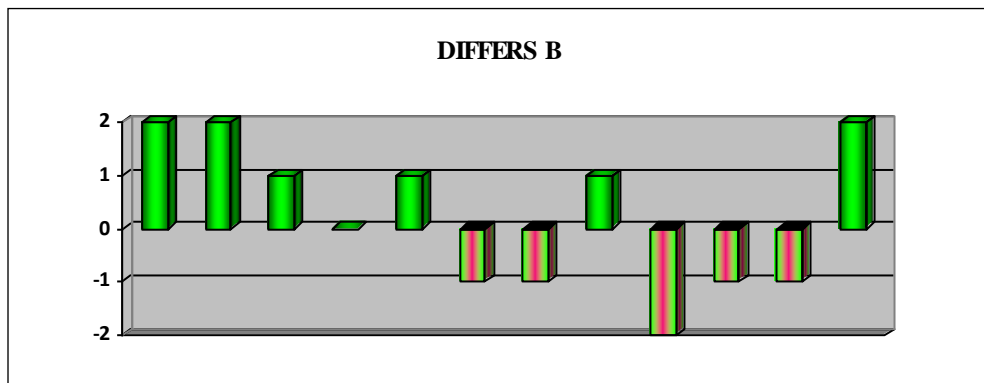
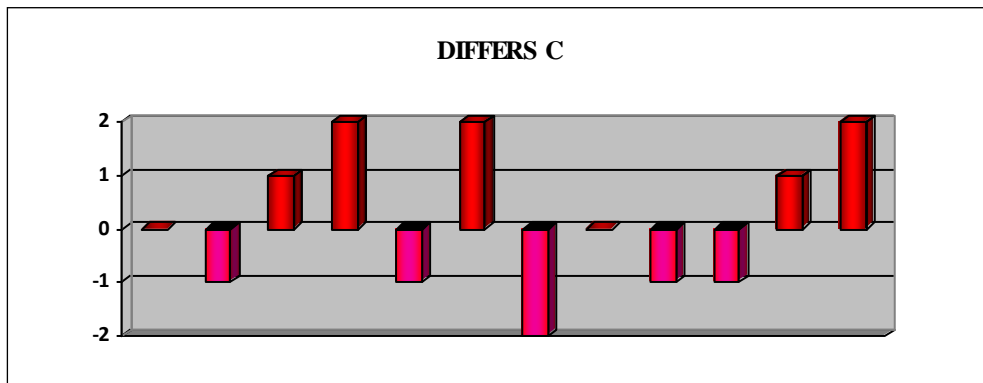


Chart 2 Commentary:

In this chart the difference between preliminary and final results of PET Reading part 3 test: text with True/False questions is presented. Only three pupils achieved significant progress - two points. On the other hand, five pupils got in the second test less points than in the first one.

CHART 3



### Chart 3 Commentary:

In this chart the difference between preliminary and final results of PET Reading part 4 test: Long test with multiple choice questions is presented. Five pupils got better results, five pupils got worse results and two pupils stagnated

TABLE 2

	Number of pupils			
	total	increase	stagnation	decrease
Test 1/2	12	5	3	4
Test 3/4	12	6	1	5
Test 5/6	12	5	2	4

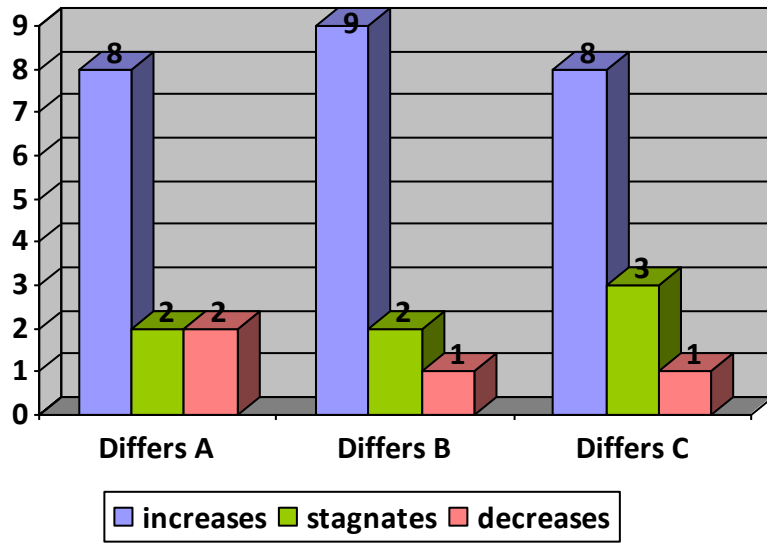
### Table 2 Commentary:

In this chart the difference between preliminary and final results of all tests is presented. As could be noticed, approximately the same amount of pupils increased and decreased which is quite surprising. There might be one explanation - the lack of motivation. Pupils who were not included in the special reading programme did not have the strongest motivation to get better results. Moreover, with another teacher, they knew that their results could not influence their final marks.

### Results summary

Following two graphs show the difference between overall results of both groups. As was emphasized above, the majority of the first group of „readers“ achieved better results in the second round of the test which means that the preliminary hypothesis was proved. The validity and reliability of this statement will be discussed later. On the other hand, the performance of pupils in the parallel group was quite unbalanced which is not easy to explain. It was expected that they did not improve significantly but the fact that they got worse results in all three tests is quite surprising. It might be caused by the lack of motivation as mentioned above but it would require a deeper examination to answer this question.

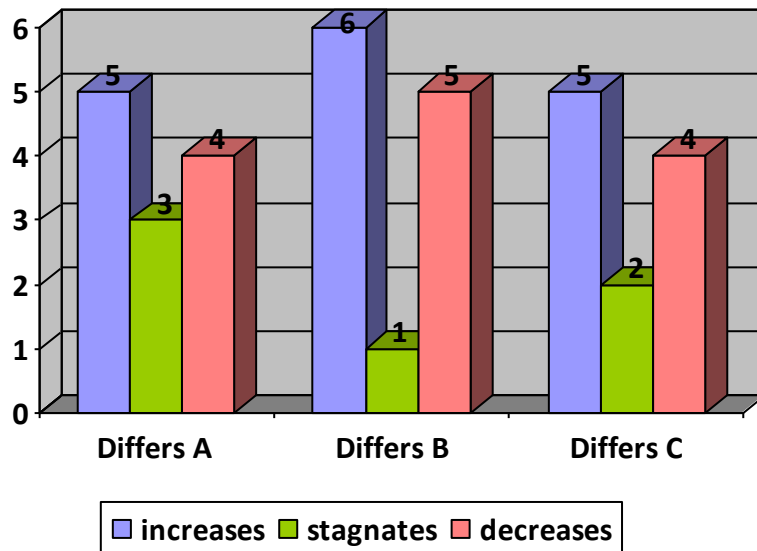
GRAPH 1



Graph 1 Commentary

This graph shows the overall data for the group included in the special reading course.

GRAPH 2



Graph 1 Commentary

This graph shows the overall data for the group which continued working on the textbook extracts.



## IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter pedagogical implications of the special reading course are discussed in detail along with teaching tips how it could be improved to be more effective. Different areas are enumerated including the length of the programme, the process of selection concerning tests and literary works or pupil's motivation. Finally, the limitations of the research are presented as well as ideas for further research activities.

### **Pedagogical implications of the research**

First of all, I think that the length of the special reading course was not sufficient. Seven reading lessons plus two testing lessons could not bring absolutely reliable data. Providing that it was possible to leave the syllabus and textbooks for a longer period (two months for example), the obtained data would be more significant. I do not question the fact that this special reading course helped to develop pupil's reading skills as was presented in the previous chapter but I would like to emphasize that, although it was a successful attempt, its potential could be expanded.

Pupils need to experience „reading for pleasure“ to be willing to continue reading outside school English lessons. Short extracts interrupted by many different exercises can not provide anticipated effect. Perhaps the amount of prepared exercises was partially overwhelming because the aim was to try a wide variety of activities mentioned in the theoretical chapter. In consequence of this redundancy there was not enough time to go into details or be engaged in work with weaker pupils. To conclude, it would be useful to try a longer course which allows to utilize all possible advantages of „reading for pleasure“.

Nevertheless, the selection of literary works was quite successful. Pupils liked *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and E. A. Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado*. The longer reading course would allow to use more texts or perhaps a combination of one compulsory text as a „starter“ with additional exercises and then as the second step pupils could choose independently. The type of additional exercises for „free choice“ books should be more general but on the other hand there exist quite a lot of exercises which could be used universally like for example: creating True/False questions, plot summary, titles for each

paragraph or page, describing main characters, rewriting the story from somebody else's point of view (not from the point of main character when he is a narrator) etc.

The other fact to mention is the level of pupil's proficiency. To enjoy reading for pleasure and achieve good results in the test pupils should have been at least pre-intermediate as mentioned above. Pupils who did obtain this level at the time of the special reading course would be struggling immensely. Fortunately, it was just one pupil in this group but in general it might be very demotivating to look up every second word. Moreover, it brings other consequences like having difficulties to recognize and understand who is who in the plot. (For a while that weak pupil thought that one of the main character in Poe's short story was named Amontillado.) Still, I strongly believe that extensive reading is a good way even for classes with mixed abilities. On the contrary, it is just a question of time and thorough planning.

Concerning pupils' motivation children of the group included in the special reading course were quite enthusiastic. They felt like being extraordinary not working on usual extracts from the textbook. At least majority of them. Pupils appreciated that they could participate on the process of selection. They also thought that the chosen texts were interesting even though more demanding than textbook reading.

On the other hand pupil from the parallel group were quite demotivated. I did not realize that obtained data could be influenced by such a subtle detail like „the feeling of exceptionality“. This factor which worked so well with the previous group of „readers“ might cause that results in the second round of the tests were so low. The other factor is perhaps that I do not teach this them so they did not feel the urge to achieve better results than in the first testing lesson.

The other thing to note is that pupils expressed their interest in further reading outside regular classes. Unfortunately, the school foreign language library has not been available yet. We have just several graded readers but not real books. Obviously, it is a question of financial support but I hope that in the future it will be something natural in our schools.

### **Limitations of the research**

The most difficult part of the research was to choose the test to find out whether pupils really improved their reading skills. I must admit that choosing the right test was not easy.

I chose intentionally just three parts of two different levels of standardized ESOL tests. Therefore the obtained data are not as complex as they could have been. There are two reasons to justify my decision. Firstly, to fill in the whole test would be time consuming. Secondly, pupils were somewhere in between A2 - B1 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which made difficult to decide what exactly would be the right test for them. Possibly another standardized tests including Czech Secondary School-leaving Examination test might be used more effectively. The question to answer is whether two testing lessons are adequate. Providing we could afford to spent more time working on the special reading course, one extra lesson of testing would be added to get more reliable results.

### **Further research**

Several improvements can be suggested concerning future explorative activities. Some of them were discussed above like the length of the course, the selection of literary texts and tests or pupil's motivation to work harder than usually. The main fact to mention is that obtained data could not be generalized. If more classes from other schools participated on the special reading programme, the gathered data would be more reliable and generally valid. It can be stated that the group of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in our school improved their reading skills tested by ESOL tests after conducting the special reading course but to prove this statement universally the further research should be conducted.

To sum up, the aim of this chapter was to present the various implications and limitations of the research. A main point made was that pupils enjoyed reading for pleasure therefore their results were influenced positively.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This thesis was concerned with using literary texts at lower secondary level. The aim was to find out whether extensive reading or better said „reading for pleasure“ help to develop reading skills more effectively than regular English lesson with textbooks. The special reading course was prepared and conducted in Primary and Lower Secondary School of T. G. Masaryk in Rokycany. Its goal was to help pupils become so involved in the reading that they stop worrying about their language deficiency for a while and enjoy reading.

The theoretical part was aimed mainly on advantages and partially on disadvantages of using literary works in the ESL classroom. Firstly, different approaches were discussed in detail. Then, a special attention was given to reading as a process and different reading strategies. Next, types of literary texts were presented with the focus on novel and short story along with pros and cons of using graded readers. Further on, main criteria for selecting literary texts were enumerated. Finally, a variety of reading activities before, during after reading itself were explained.

The practical chapter was concerned with the research conducted from 8<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>th</sup> May 2013. The fundamental part of this research was the special reading course mentioned above. It consisted of seven consequent lessons. The aim was to try a variety of different pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities. Nevertheless, primarily it should have shown pupils that reading could be a huge pleasure. Its objective: to prove whether teaching English through literary texts develops reading skills more significantly than regular lessons. This statement was confirmed for the group of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in our school but these results cannot be generalized.

As the results of the final test indicated, majority of pupils improved greatly. Moreover, they seemed to be enjoying reading for pleasure. I suppose that the main factor which influenced their performance was their strong motivation. In my opinion, they were willing to work hard for following reasons. Firstly, they were allowed to participate on the process of selection. Secondly, the chosen literary texts were more interesting in comparison with extracts used in the common textbooks. Next, they worked partially independently. It means that they could organize the time for home reading and they could choose the order of filling exercises in the worksheet. In addition, some exercises were not compulsory. The

last but not least was the fact that they felt extraordinary for doing something special. All these factors should be taken into account next time. No matter what type of skills we want to develop the issue of pupils' motivation should not be underestimated.

Finally, the implications and limitations of the research were discussed in depth. The different issues were mentioned including the length of the course, the procedure of selection or the main factor in my opinion - pupil's motivation. Last of all, some ideas for further research were presented.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Teacher's choice list

- Brontë, E. *Wuthering Heights*.
- Brontë, Ch. *Jane Eyre*.
- Dahl, R. *James and the Giant Peach*.
- Dahl, R. *Danny the Champion of the World*.
- Dahl, R. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.
- Golding, W. *Lord of the Flies*.
- Highsmith, P. *The talented Mr Ripley*
- Jones, T. *Fantastic stories*.
- Lewis, C. S. *The Chronicles of Narnia*.
- May, K. *Winnetou. Old Shatterhand*.
- Orwell, G. *Animal Farm*.
- Orwell, G. *Nineteen Eighty-four*.
- Poe, E. A. *Short stories*.
- Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter series*.
- Townsend, S. *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole*.
- Verne, J. *Journey to the Center of the Earth*
- Verne, J. *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas*.
- Verne, J. *Around the World in Eighty Days*.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Lord of the Rings*.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit*.



## Appendix 2

### Pupils' choice list

Ayres, J. *The Horse on the Balcony*.  
Ayres, J. *Zephyr of Wild Horse Island*.  
Brooks, M. *World War Z*.  
Cornish, D. M. *Monster Blood Tatoo trilogy*.  
Flanagan, J. *Ranger's Apprentice*.  
Golden, Ch. *World of Warcraft*.  
Golden, Ch. *Star Trek series*.  
Golemon, D. L. *Carpathian*.  
Golemon, D. L. *Legacy*.  
Lewis, C. S. *The Chronicles of Narnia*.  
Lovelace, D. W. *King Kong*.  
May, K. *Winnetou. Old Shatterhand*.  
Meyer, S. *The Twilight series*.  
Poe, E. A. *Short stories*.  
Riordan, R. *Percy Jackson*.  
Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter series*.  
Sapkowski, A. *The Witcher Saga*.  
Verne, J. *Journey to the Center of the Earth*  
Verne, J. *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas*.  
Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Lord of the Rings*.  
Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit*.

### Appendix 3

#### Lesson plan 1

Title:	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
Length:	45 min
Level:	pre-intermediate (A2-B1)
Materials:	Worksheet Chapter 1 reading extract Chapter 1 <i>The Worst birthday</i>
Objectives:	By the end of the lesson students will be able to enjoy reading to create adverbs from adjectives to understand how adverbs make the story more vivid to describe a person
Interaction:	work in groups individual work
Language skills:	reading for specific information interpreting text descriptive writing
Language systems:	wordbuilding – adjectives/adverbs
Assumptions:	I presume that pupils might have some problems with unknown words. Especially verbs, which are used to introduce direct speech. On the other hand, I hope that they would enjoy reading for pleasure and would be able to understand that several unknown words do not affect general comprehension of the text.
Anticipated problems:	partially difficult vocabulary

## Appendix 4

### Lesson plan 2

Title:	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
Length:	45 min
Level:	pre-intermediate (A2-B1)
Materials:	Worksheet Chapter 1 Worksheet Chapter 2 reading extract Chapter 2 <i>Dobby's Warning</i>
Objectives:	By the end of the lesson students will be able to enjoy reading to describe feelings to write a short description of the worst birthday
Interaction:	group work individual work
Language skills:	reading for specific information reading for general understanding
Language systems:	feel + adjectives
Assumptions:	I presume that pupils still might have problems with unknown words but they gradually adopt reading skills like guessing from the context, which is easier in a longer story than in a short extract in the textbook. I suppose that pre-reading activities might be easy to discuss because pupils are familiar with the topic and vocabulary.
Anticipated problems:	partially difficult vocabulary

## Appendix 5

### Lesson plan 3

Title:	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
Length:	45 min
Level:	pre-intermediate (A2-B1)
Materials:	Worksheet Chapter 2 Worksheet Chapter 3 reading extract Chapter 3 <i>The Burrow</i>
Objectives:	By the end of the lesson students will be able to enjoy reading to create FALSE/TRUE exercise to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context
Interaction	individual work
Language skills:	reading for specific information reading for general understanding
Language systems:	past tense
Assumptions:	I presume that some slower readers might have problems with the length of reading extracts, on the other hand I can see that majoriry of pupils is enjoying reading and they are very concentrated and enthusiastic.
Anticipated problems:	slower readers might need individual help

## Appnedix 6

### Lesson plan 4

Title:	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
Length:	45 min
Level:	pre-intermediate (A2-B1)
Materials:	Worksheet Chapter 1, 2, 3 reading extracts Chapter 1, 2, 3
Objectives:	By the end of the lesson students will be able to enjoy reading to create True/False exercise to record vocabulary more efficiently
Interaction:	group work
Language skills:	reading for specific information interpreting text writing True/False sentences retelling the story
Language systems:	word order, present and past tense
Assumptions:	I suppose that pupils would be able to answer more or less correctly True/False exercise. In addition, I think that creating their own True/False exercise would help them to gain a deeper understanding of a story.
Anticipated problems:	Pupils wouldn't be able to express themselves solely in English.

## Appendix 7

### Lesson plan 5

Title:	The Cask of Amontillado by E. A. Poe
Length:	45 min
Level:	pre-intermediate (A2-B1)
Materials:	E. A. Poe Worksheet reading extract <i>The Cask of Amontillado</i> abridged version adapted by Dona de Sanctis picture presentation on the interactive board: cask, bottle of Amontillado, people wearing carnival masks, bones in tombs, old Italian palaces etc.
Objectives:	By the end of the lesson students will be able to make a list of the most terrifying places in the world to understand the background of the story to understand several new words
Interaction	group work individual work the whole class
Language skills:	reading for specific information reading for general understanding
Language systems:	past perfect
Assumptions:	I suppose that pupils might have problems with a slightly remote topic. The background of wine expertise, carnival, old noble families etc. should be explained more extensively during pre-reading activities because the topic is not as familiar as previous Harry Potter story.
Anticipated problems:	specialized vocabulary (cask, tomb, barrel etc.)

## Appendix 8

### Lesson plan 6

Title:	The Cask of Amontillado
Length:	45 min
Level:	pre-intermediate (A2-B1)
Materials:	E. A. Poe Worksheet reading extract <i>The Cask of Amontillado</i> abridged version adapted by Dona de Sanctis
Objectives:	By the end of the lesson students will be able to enjoy reading for pleasure to describe main characters to understand the plot
Interaction:	individual work pair work the whole class
Language skills:	reading for specific information reading for general understanding
Language systems:	past perfect
Assumptions:	I presume that pupils still might have problems with the background of the story. I suppose that post-reading activities might be difficult to discuss because pupils are not familiar with the topic and vocabulary.
Anticipated problems:	to understand the motivation of the main character

## Appendix 9

### Lesson plan 7

Title:	The Cask of Amontillado
Length:	45 min
Level:	pre-intermediate (A2-B1)
Materials:	E. A. Poe Worksheet 3 reading extract <i>The Cask of Amontillado</i> abridged version adapted by Dona de Sanctis
Objectives:	By the end of the lesson students will be able to write a short summary to understand past perfect tense to use new vocabulary
Interaction:	pair work group work the whole class
Language skills:	reading for specific information writing a summary writing a short story (optional homework)
Language systems:	past perfect tense
Assumptions:	I suppose that pupils might have problems with understanding the function of past perfect tense. It is the tense repeated several times in the story but children are not familiar with it from their textbooks.
Anticipated problems:	partially difficult grammar



## Appendix 10

### Vocabulary register

to rev (verb)          revved          to rev an engine is to increase its speed while the vehicle is not moving

e. g.: *He nervously revved up the engine before driving off.  
The car revved louder and louder and suddenly.....*

to crunch (verb)          crunching          to crush (hard food) loudly between the teeth, or to make a sound as if something is being crushed or broken

e. g.: *He sat there crunching his cornflakes.  
...with a crunching noise.*

to dangle (verb)          dangling          to hang loosely

e. g.: *She had big earrings dangling from her ear.  
...to see the bars dangling a few feet above the ground.*

## Appendix 11

### Harry Potter Worksheet Chapter 1

#### 1. Match verbs and dictionary definitions.

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. roared          | to laugh loudly, shout                             |
| 2. sneered/grinned | to inhale a short, audible breath through the nose |
| 3. cried           | to smile broadly, often baring the teeth           |
| 4. sniffed         | to call loudly, shout                              |

#### 2. Write how were adverbs below created

- |       |             |
|-------|-------------|
| Easy  | easily      |
| ..... | rapturously |
| ..... | heartily    |
| ..... | bitterly    |
| ..... | dully       |
| ..... | miserably   |
| ..... | viciously   |

#### 3. What means words below in Czech?

- four-poster bed
- Muggles
- Hogwarts
- Forbidden Forest
- Great Hall
- broomstick
- Quidditch

#### 4. Answer the questions.

- What is the name of Harry's owl?
- What is on Harry's forehead?
- How old is Harry?
- Why did uncle Vernon lock Harry's owl in the cage?

How does Harry feel this day? Why?

#### 5. Describe one of these characters Vernon, Petunia or Dudley. (appearance, personality, job etc.)

## Appendix 12

### Harry Potter Worksheet Chapter 2

*1. Choose one correct option.*

**Uncle Vernon and aunt Petunia**

- A/ love Harry like their own son.
- B/ are hate Harry because of his magic.
- C/ like Harry because of his magic.
- D/ hate Harry without any reason.

**Doby came to Harry's bedroom**

- A/ to entertain him.
- B/ to protect and warn him.
- C/ to give him a birthday present.
- D/ to give him letters from Hermione and Ron.

**Harry felt miserable while he was talking with Doby because**

- A/ his friends forgot his birthday.
- B/ his parents died years ago.
- C/ he wasn't allowed to use magic outside school.
- D/ Dursley didn't invite him to dinner.

**The letter delivered by a huge barn owl was from**

- A/ school
- B/ wizards' government
- C/ lord Voldemort
- D/ Ministry of Magic

**Uncle Vernon didn't make his deal with Mason's because**

- A/ they saw Doby and ran away.
- B/ they saw Harry and run away.
- C/ they saw an owl delivering a letter and ran away.
- D/ they saw Dudley eating pudding and ran away.

*2. Imagine the worst birthday in your life and write its short description.*

**Appendix 13**

Harry Potter Worksheet Chapter 3

1. *Fill in missing words and guess their meaning.*

The car ..... louder and louder and suddenly, with a ..... noise, the bars were pulled clean out of the window as Fred drove straight up – Harry ran back to the window to see the bars ..... a few feet above the ground. (p. 25, line 8)

2. *Read the first half of Chapter 3 The Borrow (including p. 30) and decide if each sentence is TRUE or FALSE*

- |   |      |       |
|---|------|-------|
| Fred and George are Ron’s younger twin brothers.                      | True | False |
| Harry’s wand and broomstick were locked in the cupboard.              | True | False |
| George opened the door using a spell.                                 | True | False |
| Uncle Vernon was asleep when Harry finally got away.                  | True | False |
| Lucius Malfoy was suspected being one of lord Voldemort’s supporters. | True | False |
| Ron borrowed a magic car without dad’s permission.                    | True | False |
| Mrs Weasley is very tall and slim.                                    | True | False |
| Mrs Weasley was happy to see Harry.                                   | True | False |
| The Burrow is a sign hanged on Weasley’s house.                       | True | False |
| Errol is the name of Ron’s rat.                                       | True | False |

2. *Read the second half of Chapter 3 at home and think up at least five TRUE/FALSE sentences.*

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Appendix 14**

E. A. Poe Worksheet

*1. Write down the most terrifying places in the world.*

My choice:.....

Pair choice:.....

Group choice:.....

The most terrifying place in the world is .....

*2. Answer following questions to check that you have understood the plot.*

1. What do you know about the narrator? What is he like? Where does he come from?  
Does he have any family? Write three adjectives to characterize him.

.....  
.....

2. What do you know about Fortunato? Think about his age, his health, his family. What is he proud of? Write three adjectives to characterize him.

.....  
.....

3. Are Fortunato and the narrator friends? Why? Why not?

.....  
.....

4. Do you sympathise with the narrator? Why? Why not? Do you understand what was the motivation of his behaviour?

.....  
.....

5. Why Fortunato does not defend himself? Give more than one reason.

.....  
.....

6. What makes the story so terrifying? Think of the setting, the time of the day, narrator's behaviour (signs of his cruelty and madness).

.....  
.....

7. Do you believe that it really happened?

YES/NO

5. Decide if sentences are Right/Wrong/Doesn't say.

1. Old noble Italian families buried their dead in the tombs under the palace.  
True                      False                      Doesn't know
2. Fortunato, Lucrezi and the narrator played together when they were children.  
True                      False                      Doesn't know
3. The narrator planned to murder Fortunato in advance.  
True                      False                      Doesn't know
4. Fortunato really believed that they are fiends with the narrator.  
True                      False                      Doesn't know
5. While the narrator was building the wall, Fortunato did not say anything.  
True                      False                      Doesn't know
6. Fortunato cried for help and desperately begged for his life.  
True                      False                      Doesn't know

4. Match words according to the story.

iron	stairway
dump	suit
silk	walls
stone	handcuffs
wine	bells
silver	cellar
twisting	air

5. Fill in the gap

**rare      insults      weak spot      costly      shovel      grabbed      damp**

Those rooms are very ..... and cold and the walls drip with water. Fortunato ..... my arm. But I promised myself that one day I would punish Fortunato for his .....to me. I spent a lot of money buying ..... and .....wines. He had a ....., however. Under the bones was a basket of stone blocks, some cement and a small .....

6. Past perfect tense (*předminulý čas*)

The **past perfect tense** is constructed with ..... + past participle.

If we are already talking about the past, we use ..... to talk about things that had already happened. (eg.: I explained that **I had forgotten** my keys.)

The Montresor family ..... (live) in it for hundreds of years.

We..... (bury) our dead in the rooms under the palace.

I .....(hide) the materials there earlier.

## SHRNUTÍ

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá využitím literárních textů ve výuce angličtiny na druhém stupni ZŠ. Jsou zde prezentována základní teoretická východiska pro následnou praktickou aplikaci. V teoretické části jsou definovány různé přístupy k výuce angličtiny prostřednictvím literatury, proces čtení a čtenářské strategie. Dále jsou rozebrány výhody a nevýhody využití zjednodušených textů a kritéria pro výběr konkrétní knihy nebo povídky. V závěru teoretické části jsou uvedeny typy cvičení nebo aktivit vhodných před samotným čtením, během něj a po jeho dokončení. Cílem této práce je zjistit, jestli použití literárních textů ve výuce angličtiny pozitivně ovlivňuje rozvoj čtenářských dovedností žáků větší měrou než prostá práce s učebnicí. Praktická část je věnována popisu jednotlivých hodin zahrnutých do speciálního čtenářského kurzu, který proběhl ve škole ZŠ T. G. Masaryka v Rokycanech. Data získaná prostřednictvím testů zadaných před a po kurzu, která podporují výše uvedenou hypotézu, jsou prezentována na závěr této práce společně s návrhem na další výzkum v této oblasti.