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**Fakulta pedagogická
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Diplomová práce

**POUŽITÍ LITERATURY VE VÝUCE CIZÍCH
JAZYKŮ: DRAČÍ OČI, TĚLO A HOLČIČKA, KTERÁ
MĚLA RÁDA TOMA GORDONA OD STEPHENA
KINGA**

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Thesis

**USING LITERATURE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING:
STEPHEN KING'S THE EYES OF THE DRAGON,
THE BODY AND THE GIRL WHO LOVED TOM
GORDON**

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

V Plzni dne 30. června 2016

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Jméno Příjmení

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I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this diploma thesis is to discover ways how to use the selected works by Stephen King in the language teaching process. First of all, the theoretical part will describe the reasons why should literature be used in a foreign language classroom. First, the main role of literature in a foreign language classroom will be determined and described as well as the advantages and the possible effects. Later, the criteria for the selection of appropriate literary works will be named. The next passage will deal with the actual use of the literary works in a foreign language classroom, that is how the literature can be used in practice.

The practical part will offer possible ways of using the selected works by Stephen King in the language teaching process. This part will be supported by actual examples and results of using the stories *The eyes of the dragon*, *The body* and *The girl who loved Tom Gordon* during a teaching practice.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The aim of the theoretical chapter is to share information relevant to the topic of using literature as a resource in the foreign language classroom. First, the main role of literature in a foreign language classroom will be determined and described as well as the advantages and the possible effects. Later, the criteria for the selection of appropriate literary works will be named. The next passage will deal with the actual use of the literary works in a foreign language classroom, that is how the literature can be used in practice. Moreover, there will be described some useful approaches of using literature as well as possible activities.

Literature in a foreign language classroom

While using a literary material, the learners need to pay closer attention to the text and to search for desired language features while completing a task. An important fact here is that literature is a resource which can stimulate a range of language activities. Therefore, the learners are obligated to participate actively. (Duff and Maley, 1990, p. 5).

Arguments for the use of literature

First of all, the question why should literature be used in a language classroom needs to be answered. Among other things, the use of literature enables better interaction of the learners and also between the learners and the teacher. However, there is plenty of other advantages regarding using literature during the foreign language teaching process.

Motivation

G. Lazar (1993) considers literature to be an important motivational tool. For instance, if the student is familiar with a particular literary work in his/her native language, reading the text in English might be interesting as a source for comparison for said student. Furthermore, a carefully chosen text has an emotional value as well. A good thrilling story will give the students the pleasure of discovering what comes next, while dramatic works might give them a closer insight into the characters. (p. 18)

Personal development

It is necessary to mention that the purpose of a teaching process is not only to help the students to gain desired knowledge. The teaching process is also a way of developing and forming student's personality. Literature itself is a source for personal growth and development. While reading, the students become curious about what will happen next and they share the character's emotions. Thus, the reading itself ensures personal growth of the students as they engage with the story as well as try to evaluate it. Further, literature also promotes fantasy and imagination (Collie and Slater, 1987, p. 5-6).

The important role of literature in a language classroom lies in the fact that it is an authentic material, which means that literature is not primarily intended to be used in a foreign language classroom. Thus, the students get more aware of the world and different ways of living which is naturally related to the aspect of cultural awareness described later. In addition, literature contains texts relevant to everyday situation and the language connected with them.

Language enrichment

Because the main aim of this diploma thesis is to determine how the literature could be used as a resource in a foreign language classroom, it is of course necessary to describe how the literature could have impact on the learner's language skills. Literature is usually

designed for native speakers. Therefore, literature is a valuable resource since it helps the learners to become aware of various linguistic form, such as metaphors, irony, narration, etc. One of other features related to improvement of language skills is the enrichment of vocabulary. However, the teacher should avoid texts containing difficult or overly complicated words or phrases. The text should be used so that the contained vocabulary could be used by the learners in practical life. On the other hand, literature also provides the reader with informations about the general appearance of the language. The reader has a better chance to remeber how the language works in sense of word or sentence formation and the overall structure of the language. In addition, another great advantage of using literature in terms of language enrichment is the fact that various grammar features can be contextualized (Collie and Slater, 1987, p. 4-5).

This language acquisition certainly differs with the level of the students. In lower levels, it will be particullary difficult for the students to tackle with the text. However, for higher level students might be a novel so thrilling that they acquire a great deal of authentic language naturally. (G. Lazar, 1993, p. 20)

Cultural awareness

This is a next important effect that the literature can have on learners. Clearly, any kind of literary work is filled with cultural informations and features. This way, the learners gain better knowledge of the country in which the target language is normally used. The students are exposed to informations about history, habits and traditions, society, and even about food, dressing, etc. And they can compare these features to those of their own country. The cultural features can be observed also in the character's way of living or his behaviour and thus it helps to create an image of the country's society. Although the cultural informations are to great advantage, there is also a possibility that an excessive number of differences in cultures may be too difficult for the learners and thus, these differences discourage them from continuing reading (Collie and Slater, 1987, p. 4).

However, G. Lazar (1993) also argues that a literary work may not contain a factual information considering the country in which the story takes place. Some novels are indeed works of fiction and may not portay the foreign society truthfully, at least not the whole work. Partially, the text can provide an interesting description of the possible relationships and attitudes of the members of the society. In any case, he believes that the teacher should always encourage the students to respond critically to any cultural documentation mentioned in literary texts. (p. 18-19)

Criteria for the selection of a literary work

First of all, it is not possible to establish objectively which kind of literary material is the more suitable to be used in a language classroom. This choice depends primarily on the students and their age, language level and interest. The selected texts or excerpts should be interesting and, if possible, also awake the interests in the students themselves. The teacher should be aware of his/her student's interests and choose the topic and literary material accordingly. The chosen activities related to the text need to be designed so that the learners are better opportunities to express themselves in terms of own experience or opinions (Duff and Maley, 1990, p. 5). The proper and careful choice of literary text then ensures a great deal of motivation for the students. As for the language level, the text should be in accordance to the student's current knowledge of the target language, or it should not exceed the student's skills. In addition, the selected text should provide a range of following activities.

In practice, the choice of the text can be made effectively with the help of the learners themselves. A questionnaire can give the teacher an insight in student's needs and interest. Another way to select the literary material is to give the students summaries of possible texts, or even short extracts.

Using the selected literary work in classroom

At some point, the teacher will face the question of how he/she should use the literary material. In this passage, some useful activities will be presented as well as the most common approaches of using literature in language classroom.

The texts can be used in different ways. If the decision is to use the text as a whole, the teacher should be sure that the text is suitable for the learners, as explained in the section of criteria for selection of the text. This is naturally connected with the choice of activities to be used in the classroom in accordance to the text. First, the activities already familiar to the learners are the best choice. In case that the activities are successfully applied, new activities and ideas may be used (Duffey and Maley, 1990, p. 12-13).

Language-based approach

This approach focuses mostly on the process of reading rather than on the literary text and its value. In addition, this approach is student-centered and deals with the development of a personality, which means that the teachers role is only minor. Most of all, in this case prevail group or pair work.

Before reading

There is a huge importance of motivating the students before they meet the literary work for the first time. At this point, the main aim should be to raise the interest of the learners for the text. As mentioned before, the text should in some way relate to their lives. This would be even more effective if the students have some experience with the topic contained in the text. If they are enabled to talk about their experiences first, they will be more motivated to read. (Carter and Long, 1991, p. 17.) The motivation of the learners can be raised by using various pre-reading activities related to the topic of the selected text or excerpt. Also, the learners should be allowed to speak open about the text; that is to criticize it, comment on it, etc.

Usually, other various warm-up activities are used before the students start to read the text. For instance, if the selected text or extract includes vocabulary which is unfamiliar or more difficult for the students, it should be introduced or pre-taught before the actual reading. Thus, with gained knowledge of the vocabulary would be the reading more effective for the students.

Biographical montage

For some teachers, it is usual to introduce the author first. J. Collie and S. Slater (1987) in their book *Literature in the Language Classroom* describe a possible way of introducing the author with a help of a 'biographical montage'. This montage contains various pictures and individual facts about the author's life. However, there is no specific interpretation of the facts. The task for the students is that they in groups or as the whole class try to discuss the possible interpretation of the facts and their meaning.

Using the title and cover design

Further, even using the cover design or title of the selected text provides the teacher with a range of useful activities. Showing the cover picture or the title triggers curiosity in the learners. For instance, the teacher shows the learners the cover design and they are asked to describe what they see in the picture. Clearly, this activity is most effective when the cover pictures one or more characters of the book.

Using the theme of the story

It is possible for the teacher to use the theme of the story to promote learner's imagination. The purpose of this activity is to set the mood of the story. During the activity, learners are asked to think about what would they do if they were in the same situation as the main character. In the case that the main character of the story is younger, the learners can be asked to imagine they are in the specific age again. At this point, they could describe how they look, what do they wear, what hobbies and interests they have, etc. Clearly, a story takes place in a specific place; the learner could also describe what they feel, hear or see in this place (Collie and Slater, 1987, p. 95). This activity can be done either in written form or orally with the whole class or in pairs or groups.

Working with the text

This section will present some practical activities which can be used when working with the actual literary text. These below described activities were not randomly chosen. These activities were selected due to the fact that they will be later used in practice.

Missing poster

In some literary works, there are some characters who have gone missing at some point of the story. During this activity, the task of the learners is to create a missing poster for this character. The poster should include basic information of the characters such as age, height and general physical appearance. Moreover, there can be also the information of the place where they were last seen and what were they wearing at the time.

Gap-filling

One of the most common activities of language-based approach is one in which the students are asked to fill in the gaps in text. The left out words should not be chosen

randomly, however. The missing words should have a specific function. The missing words can be omitted completely or be listed below the text.

This activity is student-centered and its aim is to draw closer student's attention to the text (Carter and Long, 1991, p. 83).

Jigsaw reading

This activity is student-centred and is very easy to prepare. The task of the learners here is to reorder a scrambled text. The advantages of this activity is higher cooperation of the learners while solving a puzzle and also better focus on the text's language. Before the learners are asked to do this activity, however, there should be an example presented by the teacher (Carter and Long, 1991, p. 71-72).

Matching exercise

This exercise is similar to jigsaw reading described above. The task of the learners is again to create a whole of various parts. A possible way of using a matching activity is to collect several beginnings and endings of different texts and ask the learners to match the appropriate parts.

Selected novels by Stephen King

This chapter focuses on the selected works by Stephen King which will be later used in practice. First of all, the aim is to inform why the works by this author were chosen. This chapter includes also a short biography of the mentioned author since it will be later used as a source for introducing the author to the class. Further, the summaries of the chosen literary works will be described.

Short biography of Stephen King

Stephen King was born in 1947, in Portland, Maine. He attended the grammar school in Durham and also the Falls High School in Lisbon from which he graduated in 1966. When he attended the University of Maine, he started to be interested in writing. He wrote for the school newspaper *The Maine Campus*. He graduated in 1970 with B.A. in English and was qualified to teach on high school level. In 1971, he married Tabitha

Spruce who he met at the University of Maine. They live together to this day and have three children.

At first, Stephen King could not find a job as a teacher, therefore he began to sell short stories in men's magazines. In 1971, however, he started to teach at Hampden Academy. Nevertheless, he also continued to write short stories and novels. His first successful novel was *Carrie* which he published in 1974. The novel *Carrie* was published by a lucky coincidence. While writing the novel, Stephen King came to the conclusion that it is of inferior quality. He threw it away but his wife Tabitha has found it and persuaded Stephen King to finish it. Then Stephen King moved to Colorado, where he wrote his famous novel *The Shining*. However, in 1975 he returned to Maine.

Stephen King is a famous writer of science fiction and horror stories. He is also called 'Master of Horror'. His books have been translated into 33 different languages and published in over 35 different countries. There are over 300 million copies of his novels in publication. His well-known novels are *The Mist*, *Misery*, *The Dead Zone* or *Needful things*.

Stephen King has written several novels under his pen name Richard Bachman, for instance *The Long Walk*, *The Running Man* or *Blaze*. In these novels often appears a reference to Stephen King. The fans and supporters of Stephen King are usually able to recognize him.

Summary of *The girl who loved Tom Gordon*

Trisha, a nine year old girl, gets lost in the woods on a hiking trip with her mother and brother. Trying to find her way out of the forest, she faces many difficulties including her decreasing food and water supplies. Eventually, lack of nutrients causes Trisha to hallucinate. She imagines various people from her life, including Tom Gordon, her beloved baseball player. Towards the end of the novel, Trisha finds first signs of civilization; however, she encounters a bear on the road. Desperately trying to survive, she throws her walkman at the bear's face. Eventually, Trisha is saved by a hunter who takes her to safety. Trisha wakes up in a hospital where she meets her family at last.

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