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Thesis
DEVELOPMENT OF READING SKILLS IN AN ENGLISH CLASS IN LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Anna Šimicová

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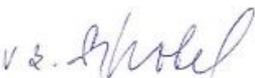
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ABSTRACT

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The thesis answers the important question about the reality of teaching reading in English classes in the lower secondary level in the Czech Republic. Reading is one of the four language skills learners are required to acquire during their education. Furthermore, it is a skill that will shape their future – they will use it in their academic development, and even in their professional and private lives. Thus, it is important to shape this skill in young learners of language properly. This thesis observes the reality of reading practice in various classes and the teachers of the particular classes are interviewed about their teaching practice in regards to reading. The first part of the thesis provides theoretical background for the second part that focuses on research in two chosen schools. After the observations and the interviews are described, conclusions are drawn – several suggestions for changes in reading practice are made. These suggestions include changing the material support for teachers, scheduling of lessons, further educating teachers on the effective practices in English teaching (especially in regards to reading).

Keywords: reading, reading skills, reading comprehension, teachers, teachers of English, lower-secondary education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Language teaching is a very broad term that covers several areas or directions. Directions that must be covered by both teachers and their students in order for the learners to be able to communicate in their chosen language. A set of skills needs to be acquired, to be more precise, sets of skills. The focus of teaching - and also learning - moves between reading, writing, listening and speaking.

With the prominence of communication as the primary goal for language learning, a shift in language teaching appeared. Educators needed to adjust and think about the way they present the language skills and the ways they approach the development of their students' abilities to use English (or other languages). And reading is a vital segment of communication.

Various reasons support this idea. One of them is that students encounter written text every day, and even in countries where English is not the first language the text is written quite often in English. Not only that, the future of the students will be affected by their ability to work with text - a good example being research in their future education or job. It is important to acknowledge that quite a great percentage of job offers requires ability to communicate in English in both the spoken form and the written one. Another point in the list of reasons why the pupils should improve their reading skills is the advantages of being able to read various international sources of news, foreign articles and other written media. Students will encounter text written in English on social media, in movies (movie subtitles), and in other places. The topic for this thesis is reading, reading skills and their development. The question of why should be addressed in the introduction - and these were the reasons for describing, contemplating and researching the chosen topic.

Several questions arise when one considers reading: what is behind the theory of reading? What is the reality in schools? These questions directed and motivated the writing of this thesis. The first part of this piece of work is concerned with the theory. The stances of experts in language education and in reading are described. There are several areas that need to be covered if one seeks to understand reading – such as types, stages, purpose, etc. – and these areas are introduced in the theoretical background of this thesis. Theoretical part provides the basis for the research.

After describing the theoretical background of the practical part, the theory leads to the research of this thesis. To introduce the practical chapter, methodology of the research is

discussed first in its own section. Reasons for the choice in regards to the methods used are outlined.

Afterwards, the research is introduced. The research was conducted to find an answer to this question: In what ways do teachers of the lower secondary level approach teaching reading? How do they work with text and what sources do they use? The motivation for finding the answer to these issues is the importance of reading skills in everyday life of the students. And the aim for this research is to explore this territory and to observe the real situation in the school environment. Several classes were observed, teachers of those classes were interviewed, the conclusion arising from the research are drawn in the last part of the chapter about research.

A vital segment of this thesis are the concluding chapters, which offer the analysis of implications of this research (implications for teachers and schools, but also for further research). All findings are concluded in these closing chapters.

LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE SKILLS

Language is a tool used by people to communicate their ideas, thoughts, feelings and needs. Encyclopaedia Britannica defines language as "a system of conventional spoken, manual or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves" (Roberts & Crystal, 2019). Analysing this definition provides an insight into what areas need to be covered if anyone is learning or teaching a language. Such person must learn to work with spoken word. Furthermore, written symbols are also an inseparable part of any language; thus, it is important to acquire the abilities to work with text in a given language, too. The exemplary definition connects language to expression of individuals in a social groups, proceeding from that, it may be concluded that only after mastering both spoken and written ways of communicating in the language (at least at certain level) one is able to communicate effectively and to participate in the group or the setting.

The teaching of language is based on the language and its definition. The spoken and the written symbols were described as a segment of language (Robins & Crystal, 2019) - how does an individual encounter the language? The individual encounters the language when communicating with someone else, when listening to radio, when reading an article in newspaper, when writing a photo description on Instagram. In all of these and many other everyday situations one uses a language. As the world is becoming globalised, English is quite often the language used in these situations - not only by its native speakers, but also by those learning it as their second (or third, etc.) language. To be able to do all of those activities, English learners need to focus their attention on acquiring language skills. These skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing, this distinction to four skills is generally used in linguistic terminology, from all the authors it is for example Richards (2015).

The theory, for example the authors Scrivener (2011) and Richards (2015), recognizes the four language skills and these skills are the centre around which the language learning process is built. Listening and speaking have certain qualities in common in comparison with the other two - they are oral (they deal with the spoken section of language, as it was defined in the beginning). Reading and writing are written.

Experts (Scrivener, 2011) use the terms receptive and productive skills. Productive skills are skills (speaking and writing) that produce something, either a spoken piece of communication, or a written one. When a language user receives some information through a spoken or written media, the theory classifies that as a receptive process, in which the

participant is more passive, the receptive skills are utilized. The "passivity" of these processes is questioned in the following chapter.

Although this classification divides the language to four parts, one must remember that language is a system consisting of all of them. In a natural communication they intervene, they connect with each other, and in many situations they contribute to the communication - a speaker in conversation usually listens to the other speakers and based on the received piece of information reacts and then produces speech (Harmer, 2015). Scrivener (2011) also stated that language skills are commonly used together, especially speaking and listening. When considering the language teaching one should remember that the complete isolation of the groups of skills does not exist, but a learning activity or lesson can be built with a primary focus on one of them.

READING

As a summary of the previous chapter and its connection to reading, a basic explanation of reading may be suggested. Reading is a language skill, closely related to the other skills, together they form the language. In the formal, generally accepted classification of reading it is categorised as a receptive skill, from this point of view similar to listening. The other category it belongs to is dealing with written language, in regards to this specification it is similar to writing.

Simply said, reading means working with written text and gathering information about it and from it. Closer look offers a view of reading as a complex skill, skill that contains several small steps which lead to comprehension. The reasons demonstrating the essential role of reading in learning process are described in the following chapter. Furthermore, this chapter also includes description of learning reading, a short comparison between reading in L1 (first language) and L2 (second language), and finally an analysis of the reading as a passive (or active) activity.

The purpose of reading

Reading is an activity humans practice every day. Education and workplace quite often request one's ability to read, to decode messages from a written text of various lengths and levels of difficulty. Private life does not exclude reading either - large amount of people read for pleasure or they encounter texts (usually of shorter format) on social media. In the last few decades, English has risen as a global means of communication. Seidlhofer (2010) stressed the role of English in the contemporary world, "English impinges on the lives of all European citizens (...) English also forms an integral part of the professional lives of a growing number of Europeans" (p.357-358). If the assumption that English is one of the main languages of the Internet (including social media and apps, sources of news and information, etc.) is made, then the question why reading in English in particular is an important life skill to learn starts to be answered.

Richards (2015) considered the problem of the purpose of reading from several points of view and he distinguished six categories. These categories do not apply only for those whose mother tongue is English, but also for EFL readers. To make the framework of this thesis complete the description of the categories is also described here.

The first reason for reading is everyday life and its needs (as it has already been mentioned in this chapter). Richards (2015) provided examples for each category, these

examples are very specific, giving an exact idea of how teachers may incorporate the purpose to the reading activity in their class. In the first one he listed ordinary, even mundane, activities that may not be the first association of reading, "reading a bus timetable (...) instructions on a food package (...) sign in an elevator" (p. 444). Even these short "texts" are a part of language and learners have to be able to recognize them and understand them. The implication here is that not only longer texts can be read in class, but the teacher and the learner should consider working with texts like these.

The second category is the situation when reading is essential for learning about things, people, destinations, etc. After the second category life purposes were listed, the exemplary ones are: "reading hobby magazines (...) an advice column in a magazine (...) membership requirements of a gym" (p. 444).

As the next reason for reading pleasure, or leisure, was named. Reading any fictional or non-fictional work, if it is done only for an entertainment of the reader, belongs to this category. Extensive reading is tightly connected to reading for pleasure (Day et al., 2011).

English is often used in education or in workplace. These two categories were also considered in the list of purposes. Studying was the fifth category described by Richards (2015). The electronic online sources and regular ones apply in this class. The last segment is reading and its link to work field. In the workplace there are numerous instances when workers need to read - be it emails, any kind of instructions, reports, etc.

From all of the categories, Richards (2015) highlighted the education as a particularly important purpose for L2 learners' reading (p. 444).

Grellet (1981) divided the reasons for reading into two categories: people read for pleasure or they do it for information. Watkins (2018) added to this that these categories are very broad and that each can be divided even more. Reading for pleasure contains reading posts on social media, reading novels, etc. Reading for information contains "reading quickly to identify appropriate information, evaluating information, and integrating information from multiple sources" (Watkins, 2018, p. 3). He also added a third category, this one is proposed specifically for learning context - reading as a learning strategy.

Nuttall (1982) accentuated the interconnections between different purposes of reading and different ways people use to read. She asked a question that clarifies this issue, "Did you read the telephone directionary in the same way as the newspaper?" (p. 3). Telephone directionaries might not be a good example for contemporary society, a question

whether a facebook status is read in the same way as a newspaper, or not, might be more suitable.

It is important to realize that this interconnection affects not only the way people read, but the way language teachers teach (and what they teach) (Nuttall, 1982). It can be assumed that a variety of texts and tasks is needed for teaching if a good preparation for real life and its diversity of reading materials is the aim. Except for the use of different texts and tasks, this issue is also connected to the types of reading (which are discussed in another chapter). In that chapter the focus will be, besides other things, on silent and vocalised reading. Most of the time, as Nuttall (1982) also mentioned, people in real life read silently, in classroom teacher chooses the other option more often. There is a disparity between real life reading and class reading, and one might ask whether the type of reading used in class prepares the learners for reading in L2 in the right way, or not.

Reading in L2

As previously mentioned, reading, and even writing, is a human activity used for communication "through space and time" (Watkins, 2018). Watkins (2018) identified reading as a skill that has to be consciously learned (unlike for example listening), to be able to read in a foreign language, reading in L1 has to be developed first. He also declared reading to be an empowering accomplishment that is connected to reducing poverty. He assumes that being able to read in more languages than one multiplies the chances of better life. In his introduction to reading he noted:

> More recently, the increasing internationalization of education (Altbach and Knight, 2007), and the use of L2s (primarily English) as mediums of instruction, has increased the need for many learners to develop a high level of reading proficiency in languages other than their L1. (p.1)

Watkins (2018) suggested the three above mentioned categories for the purpose of reading in L2, two of those are the same for L1 and L2 readers. Nuttall (1982) considered it from a different point of view, she disagreed with the idea that the purposes in foreign language class are the same as in mother-tongue classes. Typically, the reading in foreign language is used for teaching "the language itself" (p. 19).

Comparing L1 and L2 reading brought Watkins (2018) to a conclusion that there exist several differences. The first prominent characteristic of L2 reading in comparison to L1 is the "limited knowledge of lexis and grammar" in the beginning of learning reading (p.

5). When learners start to read in their mother tongue, they already possess certain level of knowledge - vocabulary containing thousands of words and comprehension (although implicit) of how words are linked together to form a higher unit (Watkins, 2018).

Unlike native speakers, non-native speakers already know another language. This knowledge interferes with learning L2. This can be a helpful advantage or another obstacle the learner has to overcome while learning reading in a foreign language (Watkins, 2018). Learner whose mother tongue is French knows a language that is similar in its syntax or "discourse conventions" to English and he begins with a better chances on quickly mastering reading in English than someone with L1 diametrically different (for example in regards to its ortography - Arabic, Cyrillic) (Watkins, 2018, p. 6). The L2 interference may have the form of searching for word forms resemblance or text structure. These learners may also translate the text to their language to review the message of the text, some strategies used in their L1 may also be useful in reading in L2 (this is applicable only if learners know enough grammar and vocabulary - in other words, they overcame the "language threshold" (Watkins, 2018).

The final point Watkins (2018) made about the differences in L1 and L2 reading is the environment. L1 readers encounter written text in English in their everyday life often, L2 readers are limited in the amount of text they come across.

Richards (2015) described types of knowledge needed for text comprehension, too. According to him, grammatical knowledge, vocabulary knowledge and prior knowledge all contribute to understanding, and this knowledge differs between L1 and L2 readers (p. 448).

This summary of attitudes toward the L1 and L2 reading, their differences or similarities, demonstrate that educators need to consider the type of L1 and its role (possible positive or negative interference) in learning, furthermore, they need to acknowledge that the purposes and the future utilization affect the choice of texts and tasks, too.

Teaching reading

The purpose of reading was described, the focus of this thesis shifts the theory from general information about reading further toward classroom practices. The reading process contains two participants. Neither of them is a separable part of reading. Even though it might seem that it is only the learner who participates in a reading activity, the truth is teachers have an important role in this activity, too. These roles are analyzed in this chapter.

Nuttall (1982) considered the communicative role of reading. Two distinct forms of communicating messages (which can contain ideas, thoughts or feelings) are incorporated in the term communication. People communicate via spoken language or written one. The message, in the case of reading in a form of a written text, is shared by the sender (the author of the text), then it is received by the receiver (the reader). On both sides of this equation the participant has to work with words - the sender encodes it, the receiver decodes it. Communication is not straightforward in many cases, obstacles in the form of decoding the message in a wrong way may appear.

The definition of the learner's role emerges from this analysis of communication. Learner is the receiver of a message who needs to use his or her skills to decode the message, in the ideal situation correctly decode it (Nuttal, 1982).

The role of learners in reading activities as readers was described by Nuttall (1982), she also dedicated a chapter to the role of a teacher. She said, "Some people would (...) say that reading cannot be taught, but only learnt. This does not, however, mean that there is nothing for the teacher to do: there is, in fact, a great deal" (p. 22). The teacher is not the sender of the message, what his role is in this communication is an important question.

The aim of learning a reading skill in English class is the learner's success in decoding the shared message with the teacher's help (Nuttall, 1982). Teacher's job lies in choosing the correct and suitable text and tasks or activities connected to decoding the text. Teachers make students work with text in such a way that they develop their skills, and they also make them "interested in doing it better" as they continue with their skill training and usage (Nuttall, 1982, p. 22).

Giving learners various texts does not mean that the learners will be given the opportunity to work with every possible text they can ever encounter, however, learners can be taught to work with texts and then later in their future they will be able to use the learnt techniques to understand unknown texts. In connection to this, Nuttall (1982) noted:

> One of the teacher's jobs is to make sure that the bridge is built between the specific and the general. And one way of helping the student to generalize his skills is to make sure that he reads a lot and has a lot of practice in using the skills with varied materials. (p. 23)

Teaching reading has gone through several changes in the last decades. The form that is taught today, has not been the same as the reading that was done a hundred years ago. Richards (2015) described the evolution of the approaches to teaching reading in classes

where English is taught as a second language. Reading and writing were not at the forefront of attention at first (in the times of the direct method). Richards (2015) indicated contemporary English as a second language (ESL) classes originate in the direct method. After years of using the aforementioned method, the focus was shifted toward reading comprehension and its teaching to large amounts of ESL students. This approach produced graded reading materials (these were typical for its limited vocabulary suitable for various levels). Another milestone for reading according to Richards (2015) was the Second World War because spoken language became a priority for language teaching. A term audiolingual method is connected to this time period, "reading was viewed as the ability to read sentence patterns that had first been established orally" (Richards, 2015, p. 447). From 1960s until today many disciplines (such as linguistics, second language acquisition, pedagogy, etc.) evolved and developed, therefore, language teaching was reconsidered. Nowadays teaching reading reflects "a process that moves from controlled to automatic processing" (Richards. 2015, p. 447).

Watkins (2018) summarized contemporary state of teaching reading and he described two views held on this educational process. First one is the "phonics approach". This approach focuses on teaching letters and their combinations, "Learners typically move from letters and sounds to simple words" (Watkins, 2018, p. 4).

"Whole language" stands as the opponent of the "phonic approach", as Watkins (2018) pointed out. This approach to teaching reading criticises "mechanical decoding of words over meaning and as a result can be rather dull" (Watkins, 2018, p. 5). Extracting meaning of the text is the centre of attention in this idea. The automatic collateral effect on readers is the development of phonemic awareness.

Reading and its teaching in reality use both of these approaches, they are not distinguished as strictly as in theory (Watkins, 2018). Watkins (2018) also mentioned that contemporary approach to ESL teaching is communicative; thus, it accepted the whole language approach more than the phonic one.

Reading as a passive process

As was indicated in the previous chapter, there is a discussion whether reading is more passive or active process. This chapter overviews some stances toward this issue, and in addition to this it provides the reasons for approaching it as an active process.

In regards to the role of reader, Nuttall (1982) said that reading from the point of view of reader is generally embedded in the minds of masses as a passive process. The sender, to be more specific the writer, has an active role. She demonstrated these different roles in the following metaphor: reader's mind is a sponge that soaks up the water (meaning) poured in from a jug (text). All active work has been done by writer, reader passively absorbs the information. She explicitly rejects this idea. Many different factors affect the process, and through the filter of these factors only certain aspects of the meanings conveyed pass through to the reader's mind.

Individual differences and diverse experiences everyone has, simplify or hinder the process of extracting the meaning from the text (Nuttall, 1982). Every reader has to be "actively involved and will very often have to work to get the meaning out", instead of passively absorbing the message "merely lying in the text" (Nuttall, 1982, p. 9).

Nuttall (1982) called reading not only an active set of skills, but she went even further and called it an interactive process. A writer shapes the text and he has to assume where problematic areas that may cause misunderstanding are. Or he can be careless with the information provided for the reader and through this carelessness he builds an obstacle on the reader's road to understanding the text. On the other hand, the reader should not be careless either, it may also cause problems with comprehension.

Even though "efficient reading depends on efficient decoding "(Watkins, 2018, p. 5.), other factors affect the understanding of the text, too. Readers also "build that information into what we already know, or believe, about the topic, and in this sense, each reader constructs meaning as they read" (Watkins, 2018, p. 5.).

This chapter showed that authors, here demonstrated on Watkins (2018) and Nuttall (1982), believe reading to be active (even interactive) process.

TYPES OF READING

A general term "reading" was used so far in the previous chapters. It is important to note though that there are several "sub-categories", as Watkins (2018) called it (p. 3). Besides "sub-categories" one may also speak about ways of reading, as did Grellet (1981). These terms describe the same phenomena which will be titled types of reading in this thesis.

There are several ways to divide types of reading, this chapter offers an analysis of three of those and a description of each of them is provided.

Scanning, skimming, detailed reading

Common division of types of reading includes three types, each of them characteristic for different reasons. As the title reveals, these categories include so-called scanning, skimming and detailed reading.

Scanning is a fast process, where reader looks for specific details, Watkins' (2018) example is connected to advertising and searching for a specific piece of information in such an article (price of certain product for example). Deep understanding of text as a whole in this case is not the focus of this type of reading, its focus is "the recognition of form" (Watkins, 2018, p. 3). Hadfield & Hadfield (2008) described it as follows, "We move our eyes quickly over the text and only stop when we see the word or information we are looking for" (p. 92). They pointed out that the time limit given for finding the specific answer ranges from five to ten minutes. Scrivener (2011) also engaged in this topic and he found examples of tasks for scanning the text, one of these tasks is answering a question, "What time does the Birmingham train leave?" (p. 265).

Skimming is also a fast type of reading, at least it is faster than detailed reading, in this regard it is somewhat similar to scanning. An important question is what is the difference between the two? First, the difference from the previous category is the understanding, it becomes more important and the reading process is focused on it more. However, it is important to note that it is general understanding that stands in the centre of attention here. Second, logically arising difference between scanning and skimming is its use. A tip sheet from Butte College (n.d.) advises to use scanning when answering factual questions and skimming when previewing or reviewing a text. A suitable example of skimming in everyday life may be, as Watkins (2018) mentioned, reading a document on a hard drive quickly before you decide whether to delete it or not. While processing texts in this way, readers usually do not read whole sentences and paragraphs, they select certain parts they

concentrate on. Quite often the sections selected for concentration include the headings, and then also first and last sentences of paragraphs. In learning environment (such as school) the learners are given a short period of time to deal with the text, around two to three minutes (Hadfield & Hadfield, 2008). Jim Scrivener (2011) provided exemplary questions that can be asked when teachers' aim is to work with skimming, such as, "Is this passage about Jills's memories of summer or winter?' and 'Is this story set in a school or a restaurant" (p. 265).

Deep understanding is a requirement in the last category, the detailed reading. In comparison to the other two, reader must focus his attention on the given information. Many students and teachers are familiar with this type, because they use it while reading an academic text (Watkins, 2018). Re-reading and checking are recurring activities. Hadfield & Hadfield (2008) suggested a series of tasks leading to reading for details should be used.

These three categories are frequently used to describe reading, but some authors recognise other categories as well. Hadfield & Hadfield (2008) described another type - reading for gist. Readers skip some parts of the text, on the other hand, other parts are read carefully, there is a certain purpose in mind.

Silent reading and reading aloud

The terminology in language learning context also provides another distinction, and that is silent reading and reading aloud. In their everyday lives, people tend to use silent reading, in their first language or any other. Though it is commonly used outside of classroom, silent reading is not the only effective way one can approach reading in class. Reading aloud has a role in teaching, too (Watkins, 2018).

There are different subcategories to reading aloud. Authors distinguish between who is reading to whom. The readers can be teachers and the students their listeners. Even though the students are more "passive" in this case, they are offered "a model of fluent reading, showing appropriate pausing and how texts need to be 'chunked'" (Watkins, 2018, p. 4). This type of reading was recommended by the author to young learners of L1, but it was also suggested as a beneficial way of reading for L2 beginners.

Except for the teacher being involved as the reader, the reading activity can be transferred to learners entirely, students or pupils can read in small groups or the whole class together. Not only did Watkins (2018) describe reading aloud in a positive way, she also highlights the disadvantages of this type of reading. According to her and other authors, the readers do not focus on meaning in the text, but their attention is directed on the form. A

critical factor in this quite problematic area is stress too, for some learners reading aloud in front of other people in the class stresses them, and thus the focus on form rather than the text and its meaning only rises.

A study was conducted by Mohsen Jafari at Eastern Mediterranean University (2013). Jafari compared reading aloud and silent reading among learners who were learning English as a foreign language, their level of English was intermediate. One hundred participants were divided into two groups, one half had to read given text silently, the other one's job was to read aloud, a comprehension test followed and the results were quite surprising. The results provided the answer to a question whether there is a significant difference, or not. The statistics showed a great gap between the two groups and their comprehension of the meaning. Silent readers fared better than the ones who read aloud. The reasons for it being similar to the disadvantages previously described, the author himself wrote that those reading the passage aloud "concentrated less on concept and meaning" (p. 52), the other group was able to focus more on the meaning because "the presence of vocalisation variable" (p. 52) was not distracting them.

This comparison of the two types was supposed to demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of both silent and vocalised reading. It is possible to assume that in the same way the stance of experts and researches differs, the teachers may face the same difficulties and choice between the two types in their classes.

Intensive and extensive reading

The last category that is considered in this academic paper is the division of reading based on its extensiveness. In language learning circles there are several approaches to dividing types of reading, as it has already been suggested in the introduction to this chapter. The second language learning experts also work with the terms intensive and extensive reading. In some instances they describe them differently than other authors. Hadfield & Hadfield (2008) described extensive reading as another category, another way of reading next to skimming, scanning, reading for gist and reading for details. Watkins (2018) talked about intensive and extensive reading as a separated distinction, and he compared intensive reading to detailed reading. The truth is that there is certain overlap between the categories, and it can be described in several ways.

Richard Day presented the differences between extensive and intensive reading in his chapter in *Bringing extensive reading into the classroom* (2011). The following three

approaches to intensive reading and its teaching are borrowed from his description in the aforementioned book: grammar translation, comprehension questions and language analysis, and finally comprehension work and strategies.

The first approach may be seen as problematic - the reason for that is the possible outcome might be that learners perceive reading in English as a tedious work full of translating and studying grammar. As Day (2011) wrote, "Translation is not reading, and reading is not translation" (p. 12).

The second approach is connected to short, but relatively difficult, texts. Learners are given comprehension questions and through them they control their understanding. An analysis of certain grammatical structures also takes place in this approach.

In the third approach to intensive reading, the readers check their understanding of the passage via questions, however they are also taught strategies like "finding the main idea" or "recognizing points of view" (p.12), the aim of these strategies being improvement of comprehension. Day (2011) pointed out one crucial problem, he asked whether there is a possibility that this approach confuses "learning to read with reading to learn", or not (p. 13).

Extensive reading works with longer texts, another characteristic of this type of reading is that it (usually) does not take place in the classroom. Variety of texts can be used for extensive reading. Hadfield & Hadfield (2008) named fiction and non-fiction both as representative texts that can be read if teacher needs to focus on this.

Neither intensive nor extensive reading eliminate one another from the English classes. Both are good ways of learning. Both have a place in class. As outlined in this short description, both have its advantages and disadvantages - each teacher needs to consider several factors (such as time in class and learner's time, needs of students, their preparedness).

PROCESSING

Reading is a communicative active process. This process of decoding information from the text and building a comprehension of the message or idea hidden in the text is further examined in this chapter. Two distinct processes are introduced.

Richards (2015) described these processes used by readers while working with written text. They are called top-down and bottom-up processes. Scrivener (2011) also used this terminology to describe reading. The attention of readers in bottom-up processing, as Richards (2015) explained, is focused on the smaller units of text, on individual words and their meaning. Afterwards the focus is on phrases, sentences and paragraphs. Eventually, the meaning of the whole text is decoded.

Top-down process is the idea of going "from 'big' to 'small' (...) from overview to details" (Scrivener, 2011, p. 266). Richards (2015) described it as a process that uses background and conceptual knowledge connected with the text to understand it, he also linked the use of different processing strategies to this type of processing.

Whether it is bottom-up or top-down processing that is used more often in classes is arguable, but Richards (2015) indicated in his book that it is necessary to combine these two forms in order to become a successful and efficient reader. He called this combination interactive processing; thus, he is one of the authors, together with Watkins (2018) and Nuttall (1982), who believe reading is active and interactive process.

Levels of English in readers vary, so in some instances bottom-up processing needs to be used. In other moments in learning it is top-down process that is required for learning. Richards (2015) quoted a teacher educator describing this interaction of the processes in the education (p. 451). It was said that proficient users combine the processes. The lower-level students use the bottom-up process more often. The upper-level learners tend to us the top-down one. The problem is if the focus on individual words is so strong that a lack of knowledge of one word stops the learner in understanding the rest of the sentence or text, which in lower levels happens according to the quoted educator. The higher levels can also have an issue with understanding the text if they only use the top-down processing. Some details are not registered if the reading is too quick, then the need for bottom-up processing arises.

READING COMPREHENSION, SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

This chapter offers an explanation of different skills and strategies learners may or may not use if their goal is to become capable readers who understand the meaning of the text. Reading comprehension, skills and strategies are described as they were analysed by several authors.

Firstly, the question what reading comprehension means needs to be answered. Reading comprehension is a prerequisite for successful and efficient reading of texts (Grellet, 1981). Grellet (1981) literally wrote it is "extracting the required information from it [the text] as efficiently as possible" (p. 3). The author demonstrated on examples that how one understands a text differs with different types of texts. Decoding an advertisement requires particular skills, but reading an article in scientific journal focuses on others. It changes because there are various purposes for reading; thus, contrasting types of reading appear in these two cases (in the first instance scanning or skimming is used, the other should be read in detail).

Second, what comprehension is connected to needs to be considered. Grellet (1981) named the elements that need to be considered if comprehension is to be achieved. These elements are: text-type, reasons for reading, ways for reading.

Richards (2015) distinguished three separate areas that are involved in understanding a text. These areas are types of knowledge (which were briefly mentioned in the chapter Reading in L2): grammatical knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, prior knowledge.

Grammatical knowledge is something "successful readers make use of (...) to determine the overall meaning of sentences" (p. 448). To comprehend a text one must also have sufficient amount of words in their vocabulary bank. Reading texts of average difficulty requires the vocabulary knowledge of 3000 units, knowing less means more support in reading is needed (Richards, 2015). Activating background knowledge is an important part of reading because students utilize this prior knowledge (about text type, topic, etc.) in comprehending the given text (Richards, 2015).

Reading comprehension should be reflected in class (Grellet, 1981). This means that there will be various exercises suitable for particular texts. The procedures in class also have to reflect our goal (students understanding the text): silent reading is encouraged in most instances, tasks on skimming, scanning, etc. should be included, some activities connected to texts should be done in pairs or groups (discussions about meaning, interpretations, etc.) (Grellet, 1981).

Skills and strategies

Understanding a text requires having certain skills that allow us to decode the text and to extract the important information. Furthermore, readers also use certain strategies that help them understand the message. Richards (2015) explained the difference between skills and strategies: skills are something non-conscious, through training certain habits were formed and these habits are called strategies, strategies on the other hand are "deliberate and goal-directed responses to a reading task" (p. 453).

Reading skills include skimming, scanning, searching for main ideas, making inferences (Richards, 2015). They also include skills that Richards (2015) called necessary for "reading to learn" (p. 453). This includes reading to find facts and details, skimming for gist, reading to obtain new ideas and information, responding critically, etc.

Reading strategies are chosen after considering what type of text is read, knowledge of the topic, level and difficulty, purpose, and so on (Richards, 2015). Based on these factors learners decide on what type of reading is the most suitable option in each case of reading. Reading strategies also help learner to "make sense of the relationship between ideas, such as cause and effect, comparison-contrast (...)" (Richards, 2015, p. 455). Teacher may help with strategies by sharing their own, analysing the text with students aloud and through this demonstrate the strategy choice.

McEwan (n.d.) listed seven strategies for effective reading. These seven strategies are activating (prior knowledge and experience), inferring (what is spoken, unspoken and known), monitoring-clarifying, questioning, searching-selecting (gathering information and solving issues), summarizing, visualizing-organizing (making organizers, images, etc.). All these strategies help with understanding the meaning of the text.

This chapter considered what it means to understand a text and that learners use both conscious and non-conscious mental processes to achieve comprehension. In some ways teachers can affect students choice (by choosing various texts, tasks, etc. as described above).

STAGES OF READING

This part of the diploma thesis concentrates on the stages of reading. There are several steps that are taken by the teacher and the students to achieve the cultivation of reading abilities, skills and strategies. These are explained in detail here.

In general reading lessons (or activities) consist of three parts - this general lesson plan for reading was outlined by Richards (2015) and Watkins (2018). The first part is called pre-reading stage. This stage is followed by while-reading stage. The final step is post-reading stage. All of these stages are filled with several possible activities that may or may not be present in the particular lesson. Scrivener (2011) described a basic plan for reading, it includes the stages mentioned by both Richards (2015) and Watkins (2018), but he changed the steps in certain ways. His division of the lesson is: pre-text, text, and post-text.

Pre-reading stage serves as an introduction to the topic and to the text. In Richard's (2015) words, activities in this stage "provide background knowledge, activate schemas and help give a purpose for reading" (p. 459). The aim is to engage student's interest (Watkins, 2018), and to also prepare them for reading itself. This is done, for example, by predicting activities, by explaining difficult or unknown vocabulary, by skimming and scanning activities, by working with the graphic content of the reading material, such as titles, headings, visuals (Richards, 2015). Pre-text begins with introduction and lead-in, this is followed by pre-reading (first reading). The first reading is done by predicting what is in the text from illustrations, headlines, and other parts of the text. The focus may also be on questions about the text (reading them, making them) (Scrivener, 2011).

What follows pre-reading stage is a while-reading one. Reading the text is accompanied by setting and completing tasks. Checking whether students were successful in the completion is also a part of this stage (Watkins, 2018). Richards (2015) wrote about while-reading stage that it is a reader's reaction to what is read. He also suggested that readers change and adjust their reading techniques to understand the text. Richards (2015) included in the activities in this stage using graphs and charts, underlining, high-lighting, note-taking, paraphrasing, etc. Unlike Watkins (2018), he integrates tasks working with the text itself in the next stage. The stage named "text" by Scrivener (2011) is divided in five sub-categories. In this stage students read and complete tasks. The types of tasks fulfilled by the students are the categories of this stage. Tasks focusing on skimming are the first, the second category is scanning tasks, the focus of the third one is meaning and its general point,

the fourth concentrates on more detailed meaning, the fifth and last possible step is task about vocabulary and grammar.

The last segment is post-reading stage. This stage "sets up an activity that follows on from the text, such as a discussion or a role play" (p.7), according to Watkins (2018). Richards (2015) added to this description of the stage also tasks connected to vocabulary, grammar and organization of the text. The last stage by Scrivener (2011) is post-text. This stage is done by follow-on tasks (writing, listening or speaking activities) and closing the lesson. This stage, as the others do too, reflects the staging by Watkins (2018), the difference is in naming the stages.

Every reading does not contain every stage and all types of tasks. There needs to be, and there is, an adjustment of the stages in each individual case of reading (Watkins, 2018). The choice what to include is done after contemplating the level of students, and also the aim of the lesson or activity (Watkins, 2018).

MATERIALS AND TASKS

While teaching, several sources of materials and plans are available to teachers. Selecting the right materials and tasks is complicated. Some authors, Watkins (2018) between them, considered this issue.

Watkins (2018) used and defined the terms authentic and scripted material in his work. The basic explanation defines authentic material as not being made for the language learning purpose. Watkins (2018) disagreed with this strict distinction of the materials on authentic and scripted (because the level of modification of the text differs, sometimes only a few words are changed or taken out). He solved the issue by understanding this as a continuum, not a dichotomy. The authenticity of the text is always disrupted, according to Watkins (2018). The reason for it is an unnatural, scripted setting of reading (for example reading authentic restaurant menu is never done in classes in authentic situations, and thus one can not talk about purely authentic reading).

Watkins (2018) continued by highlighting the lack of research done in this field - neither the preference of the students, nor their sensitivity to the authentic texts, has been searched properly. Another author, called Swan, said that "the reality is that authentic, adapted, and specifically written texts can all be useful" (in Watkins, 2018, p. 8). In general, lower levels tend to read adapted or scripted materials more often, higher-level learners can read authentic materials (Watkins, 2018).

Grellet (1981) on the other hand preferred authentic materials, even in lower levels, because learners get used to reading authentic texts. The author argued that the difficulty of reading does not lie in the text but in the exercises accompanying the text.

The sources of materials are often the textbooks used in class. There are also other sources (McCarter&Whitby, 2007). Certain webpages focusing on teaching can be used, magazines or literature that focuses on teaching in general or specifically on reading skills. In the last category Ediger and Pavlik's (2000) book can be named as an example. This literature contains the description of strategies trained and built in the units, texts and tasks. In similar way, McCarter and Whitby wrote *Reading Skills* (2007).

Not only are there various sources of material and types of material. There are also different tasks that can be used to build or check comprehension. Scrivener (2011) for example distinguished in his basic lesson plan tasks focusing on skimming, scanning, meaning and language items. McCarter & Whitby (2007) described some types of questions

appearing in reading materials: multiple-choice, short answer, sentence completion, labelling and diagram, summary, matching, true or false activities, yes or no activities.

To what extent the sources of the text are considered by teacher in reality is one of the questions of the research of this thesis. Together with types of text read in class and stages of reading activities or lessons, this issue is further examined in the next chapters.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This chapter concentrates on describing the practical part of this thesis. Firstly, the choice of research question is explained. Secondly, the way of conducting the research is analyzed. Further comments on what was discovered during the research is commented on in the next chapter.

Research question

The topic of this thesis is: development of reading skills in an English class in lower secondary education. Ary et al. (2010) suggested in his work that the first step in researching certain area is selecting the concrete problem that has not been researched yet. After considering the topic of reading in class, as was already specified, and researching the previous works on this topic, the research question (or also called problem) was established to be: in what ways do teachers of English approach teaching reading in classes in lower secondary education.

As was demonstrated in the theoretical background of this thesis, there are several layers of reading. For this reason, the basic question is even more specified to be: how do teachers of English approach teaching reading in classes in lower secondary education in regards to its types, stages and sources. The broad context and importance of each of these categories in forming learners' abilities and skills was the object of the previous chapters.

Research methodology

The methods that were used while trying to answer the set questions were chosen after deciding on whether to focus on qualitative or quantitative research. The primary aim of this thesis is to "examine a phenomenon" (Ary et al., 2010), in this case the phenomenon is reading and its teaching. The aim was not to test certain theories or collect data in numbers. These traits decided that the better suitable orientation of the research in regards to its methodology was qualitative research.

Research methods

Švaříček et al. (2014) analysed the methods used in qualitative research in education. These basic methods are observation and interview. The authors wrote about the method of observation in classes that it is good because it does not interrupt social and educational interactions. Due to this fact the observation was chosen as one of the methods.

The other method is the next basic method: interview. This method provides exploration of an individual in certain surrounding (Švaříček et al., 2014), in this case it was a teacher. The question is how the teachers approach teaching reading. There was a need to see what the teachers think about teaching reading. That is why the method of interview was also chosen, beside the observations.

The observations took place in four different classes. These classes were in lower secondary education. Two schools in Ostrov by Karlovy Vary participated in this research. They were Základní škola a Mateřská škola Ostrov, Myslbekova 996, příspěvková organizace and Gymnázium Ostrov, příspěvková organizace. In each of these schools, two classes were chosen.

In each class five lessons were observed. While monitoring the classes, notes were being taken on what topic and activities were conducted in the lessons (Appendix 1). These lessons were analysed (this analysis is described in the next chapter).

After the observations, an interview with each teacher was done. The questions of the interviews covered the topic and question of this thesis. The questions were also set on the basis of observations in the classes. Without recording the answers in some way, a proper analysis would not be possible. A phone recording was decided to be the most time efficient way of doing so. At total, there were ten questions asked, in some cases specified in the context of the particular class.

Subjects

The subjects of this research were from the two schools mentioned above. Both schools were observed in two classes of different grade. The ninth and the eighth grades (further called Class 1 and Class 2 accordingly) were observed in the first school in January 2020. The second school provided the observations of the seventh and the eighth grades (further called Class 3 and Class 4). These classes were visited in January and February 2020.

The observations were conducted in blocks. Each class was observed in the time span of two weeks. The exact time period was determined by the number of lessons in each grade and class. Except for Class 3, all of the classes had three lessons per week. Class 3 had four lessons per week. The lessons in this class were separated in half by school trip. The same problem occurred in Class 4 where the observations were interrupted by an illness of the teacher.

The classes were not the only subjects of the research. The observations were a tool that served for collecting data about the teaching style of the teachers in these classes. The teachers were interviewed after the completion of the observation. In these interviews the teachers received an opportunity to give more context to their lessons that were observed (whether they were typical examples of their teaching practice, or affected by the presence of the researcher) and their choices about teaching reading in general.

Process

The school principals were addressed by an email. This email was answered positively with the permission to visit the schools and to become a part of the educational process in the aforementioned ways. Specific teachers were asked to participate in this research by the researcher, one of them volunteered after the offer from the school principal appeared.

The dates of the observations were agreed on in December 2019. All of the observations and interviews took place from January 6th to February 20th 2020. Detailed information was not provided to the teacher before the research - the aim was to observe classes as authentic as possible. The teachers were told that teaching reading is the topic of the research. The rest was not shared with them (the subquestions focusing on types, stages or sources). The subquestions were revealed only in the interviews.

Teachers were warned that the interviews were being recorded. All of the teachers were Czech speakers, so there were two possible languages for the interviews: English and Czech. Czech was chosen as a more suitable option of the two (the researcher and the teachers talked in Czech if they were not in the classes, so it was more natural way of having conversation).

PROCESS OF THE RESEARCH, RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

This chapter depicts the observed classes and lessons. After that it also recounts the interviews with the teachers. This part is divided in chapters based on the class that was observed. Then the observations and interviews are concluded in commentaries.

Class 1

The first class observed for this thesis was the ninth grade at elementary school in Ostrov. The teacher has been teaching for five years. It has been two years since she began teaching in this particular class. The following chapters depict five classes that were observed in January.

Observation 1

The first lesson began with test review and oral testing of two learners. After that, the students were instructed to fill in an exercise in their workbooks (*Project* book was used). The students completed sentences with have to, or its negative equivalent. The students decided whether it is a positive sentence, or a negative one, after reading a short article in the workbook. The article contained all the information needed for the completion.

In this reading, there was no pre-reading stage present. While-reading stage focused on the meaning of the text, but also on grammatical forms (language task). After completing the exercise, the class read the text together again, this time aloud. The type of reading belonged in the category of detailed reading. No scanning and skimming were executed. Post-reading stage was observed, too. This stage consisted of a task also from the workbook. Pictures depicting the activities described in the article were named by the students (one showed a bus going to school, other tidying the room, etc.). The students wrote seven sentences about themselves, in the same way as it was done in the article (which served as a model).

Another part of the lesson was also a reading activity. According to the teacher, the lesson was planned to start with this reading, but they needed to finish the exercises from previous lessons. The source of this reading was the magazine *Gate*. This reading was staged in all three stages and it contained several types of activities and reading.

The first instruction the students received was the introduction of the topic. This step happened before the distribution of the materials for reading. The topic was Good News. The teacher asked the students what good news means to them. A number of students

answered this question. The teacher revealed her reason for asking about the good news to the students: it is the topic of the next reading.

The article comprised of three short texts, three good news. At first, the students received only one part of this whole article. In each pair of students there were two different pieces of information (about same-sex marriage, revolutionary surgery or comeback of giant tortoises). The instruction was to read the short article and write down key words. After completing this, the instruction continued. The key words served as a basis for summary provided from one student to another. This type of reading could be categorised in two distinct groups - reading for detail or scanning. The time given for this reading and noting key words was quite short. Due to the short time limit, quick reading (scanning) for the main information is a suitable category. This reading was done silently.

Afterwards there was a summary in pairs. Then the class started to work together again. The key vocabulary from the first article was written on the board. Because of the end of the class, the other two articles were not analysed in this way in this lesson, but the next day.

Observation 2

The next lesson started by reminding the learners what was conducted in the previous lesson (reading about good news). The key words from the first part of the whole article (about same-sex marriage), which were suggested by the teacher and the students, were written on the board. Then the class continued to do the same with the other two parts that were not talked about in the last lesson (giant tortoise and revolutionary surgery). Teacher provided scaffolding where necessary (by asking questions and guiding the students in forming the summary).

The detailed reading was the next part of this training of reading skills. The learners received copies of the whole text (comprised of the three shorter articles), the same text that they worked with in the previous lesson. This reading was not a silent reading, it was done loudly. Several students took turns in reading the articles.

At first, there was an immediate translation to Czech. The teacher pointed out this type of reading was chosen to train pronunciation of the words. This step was time consuming, so the teacher decided to quicken the process. Instead of the translation, the students started to answer questions about the article (this way the teacher controlled the comprehension of the meaning of the text), only one student answered the teacher's question.

Post-reading stage finished these reading lessons. Vocabulary stood at the centre of attention, so a game with the new vocabulary was chosen as a follow-up activity. The students formed two lines. After they competed in finding the correct translation on the board (English words and phrases were written on the board, teacher said the Czech equivalent, faster student found the word on the board and crossed it out). The two students who competed in the round also had to repeat the word in English after the teacher, this way they trained the pronunciation of the words. Another game that would focus on production of the words in sentences was in the original plan of the lesson, however, it was not realised because there was not enough time.

Observation 3

The third observation started with a test, the topic was the vocabulary learned in the previous lessons during reading. A lack of time did not allow the teacher to conduct a competition in the last lesson, so it was done in this one. The students (divided in two groups) received words from the article. The groups had the same words. Each student had one or two words, their goal was to make grammatically correct sentence that included this word. Teacher announced the word to be tested. The students who had the word came to the board and wrote their sentences. The faster and correct student won the round.

After this the lesson turned toward the textbook. Another reading was observed. This reading began with pre-reading activity: description of pictures. Students described the pictures, while using correct tense and phrases. One student started, others added what they felt was missing from the description.

The reading itself began after the description. The class started to read aloud the text, before that they were warned that the story is not in a correct order. One student read the text, after several sentences the teacher asked someone else to read. Tasks that were supposed to follow the reading were executed in the next lesson.

Observation 4

In the beginning of the fourth observation the students were reminded about the content of the last lesson (the described pictures) and the lesson plan was outlined. Students continued with the reading of the article in their textbooks. Chosen students read aloud. The text was not translated, except for the key vocabulary written on the board.

After this reading the students focused on the task to put the paragraphs in a correct order. They did this task in pairs. There was also a second task. This second task was from the textbook. Chosen learners answered several questions about the text.

Another task was instructed by the teacher. The task was to make the end of the story from the words in the exercise in the textbook. While the students were working, the class came to its end. The closure of this reading and of this activity was done in the following lesson.

Observation 5

The last observation continued from where the previous lesson ended. The students shared their ideas about the ending of the story. After that they listened to an audio which revealed the true ending. There were some questions from the students about the end. These questions were answered by the teacher and other students.

The last step in this reading lessons that stretched in two lesson units was a vocabulary game. There were two teams. The team had to describe and explain a word to their classmate who did not see the word. If they were successful, they gained a point, if they were not, they did not gain anything.

After this observation, there were not any other tasks. The teacher was interviewed about her stances on reading in an English class. This interview is commented in the next chapter.

Interview with the teacher of Class 1

The teacher was interviewed on the topic of reading skills. Several areas were covered. The aim was to find out more information about the stances and habits of the teacher in connection with teaching reading. The questions that were asked and answered are enclosed in Appendix 2.

The teacher revealed that reading skills are as important part of teaching for her as the other skills. That is the reason why it was present in the observations as much as it was. But she also pointed out that she works with reading and reading skills more with more advanced students. Some of the activities, such as reading *Gate,* are sometimes assigned to be done at home. Time is one of the limitations to teaching reading from the point of view of this teacher, together with the level of students' language skills. Time constraints are in the lessons and in the preparation of the teacher (working with reading skills is often time

consuming). She also mentioned that there is certain lack of training in this area - not enough courses for teachers deal with reading comprehension in her opinion.

The sources used by this teacher were a textbook and a magazine. This is a routine work for this teacher. Textbook is the primary source, but where possible she chooses what is the most suitable text for her classes from various sources. In this school, she founded a small library with contemporary books in English. Some of them authentic, other ones in their abridged versions. When she knows a student is interested in English, she offers them the opportunity to read these English books. She works with books for learners of English as young as the fifth grade.

While working with the text, this teacher tries to make the reading as engaging as she is able to do with the given text. She also includes tasks on both language and meaning, quite often she makes the learners summarize the texts. The tasks change with the text itself. Mostly, the meaning is dealt with first, and then the grammar is analysed. The post-reading stage is usually connected to the other skills.

The teacher used reading aloud in her classes. In the interview she was asked about its effectiveness. She finds it effective, because her students need to practise pronunciation and also because the students that are reading at the moment (which are often the advanced students in the class) serve as a model to others.

Other types of texts were also asked about. Extensive reading is supported by this teacher by the means of the library and magazines. She finds it important, but with some students impossible to do. Brief reading (skimming or scanning) is not always done in the activities. The focus is more on overall impression and message of the text.

Class 2

The second class that was observed was an eighth grade class in the elementary school in Ostrov, the same school as the ninth grade titled Class 1 and described in the previous chapter.

This class was taught by a teacher with five years of experience in teaching. Five lessons were observed and these are analysed in this chapter. An interview with the teacher about her stances on teaching reading was conducted after the last observation, as with the other classes.

Observation 1

The observation began in January together with observations in Classes 1 and 2. The first lesson offered a look at grammar and reading activities. After translating several sentences from Czech to English and creating their negative versions, the focus shifted towards working with the students' books (in this class *Project* books are used).

Reading and listening were the main items to be trained in this lesson. The reading consisted of a short comic, with a written interview as a part of this text. The pre-reading stage was done first. The teacher asked the students to describe the first picture in the comic. One student began the description, others added more information that they thought was missing. The teacher offered help by asking questions about the persons present in the scene, the setting, etc. No further work with pictures was instructed.

After this short description, which was done in a frontal way, not in groups or pairs, a chosen student read aloud and then translated the instructions. The next instruction was to listen to the audio version of the story and at the same time silently read the text. A question about the main plot of the story was asked by the teacher. This question was again addressed to all students (the title of the story is A surprise for Smart Alec, the question was what the surprise was).

Next step was reading the story as the characters. The dialogue was divided between several students. The students read aloud and immediately translated the sentences they read. After this reading one student was unsure about the plot or meaning of the story, the teacher decided to explain it to the student, this was done by the teacher and in Czech.

The teacher played the audio version of the story once more and after that she wrote the key vocabulary on the board. Together with the students, the teacher translated the key words.

Observation 2

The second class in which I was present did not contain teaching reading skills. The focus was on grammar (the topic was irregular verbs in past tense in these classes) and on listening. Even tough this class did not focus on reading or reading skills, it was an important part of the next observation.

The listening was adopted from the student's book. The students listened to a short biography of a famous British author Beatrix Potter, while listening they picked the right answer from three options. The audio was played twice, for the second listening a transcript

of the text was shown to students. After checking the right answers together, the students read the text aloud and translated the sentences. The point of reading this aloud was not to train reading skills, but it was a training of pronouncing and translating.

Observation 3

This lesson was connected to the listening activity in the previous one. This first task assigned to the pupils was to solve a crossword, the solution of this crossword was Potter. The teacher asked about the author, some information was revised. This served as an introduction to the reading, which was a central part of this lesson.

The students read a story about Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter. They read silently and afterwards they completed two exercises. One focused on meaning (answering five questions about the text) and the other one focused on vocabulary (filling in words from word bank in the gaps).

The class proceeded to read the text again, this time aloud, and translate. Students took turns in reading. This served also as checking of the right choice of words for the gaps. Another reading was done afterwards, this time without translating. Checking the answers to the questions about details of the text followed. The teacher decided for an impromptu task - she instructed the students to convert the last sentence of the story from positive to negative form.

The post-reading stage consisted of watching a video of the fairytale. It was a summary and visual representation of the story.

Observations 4 and 5

Grammar was the main part of the fourth lesson. Students worked in their workbooks and they also translated several sentences, all with irregular verbs which were the topic of the fourth lesson. This lesson is not further analysed, the reason is a lack of reading or reading skills and their training.

The fifth observation, on the other hand, did contain reading. Reading was connected to the listening activity the students did. The topic was music. It was firstly introduced by the teacher. Afterwards there was a brief conversation led by the teacher on the topic of favourite music artists, etc. The whole class answered the questions, it was not done in pairs or groups.

The learners received a worksheet. There were various exercises that worked with the text of one song. The first exercise was to put words in the gaps, the students read and translated these words. Then they listened to the part of the song that was written in the text.

Second exercise was read aloud for the pronunciation practice. Understanding was checked by asking questions about the words. Then several verbs were put in the gaps to complete the song.

Then there was a third exercise. This exercise worked with words that sound similarly and the students were supposed to choose the option that fits in the song. After this exercise, the learners listened to the whole song and sang along.

Interview with the teacher of Class 2

Similarly to the teacher of the previous class, this teacher agrees in the importance of learning reading skills in an English class. It stands on the same level as other skills and it is important to learn it to understand longer texts – and shorter ones, too (including instructions, etc.).

Class 2 works mostly with their textbooks, but about a third of the texts are taken from some websites or other literature. There are instances in which the teacher decides to alter the exercises that accompany the text. The alteration of the original sources and its tasks varies with every text. The teacher makes the decision on what to alter, or not, on the basis of needs in the particular class. She considers whether the learners need to work more on their vocabulary, or grammar, etc.

Next, the stages of reading were commented. There were various types of exercises in lessons used for pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading stages. The question was whether the teacher works with every stage in every reading activity, or not. The answer was that she tries to do so, she mainly works with pictures accompanying the texts in the pre-reading stage. Thus, she connects speaking and reading skills in this part of the reading. The other skills are also sometimes connected to the text in the post-reading stage, but the teacher finds it impossible to do it every time. The teacher also pointed out that this integration is important because even in ordinary life situations the language skills are connected.

Reading aloud and translating is always a part of the reading process in this class, and in other classes of this teacher. In her opinion it serves as an assurance of the comprehension of the language. Without the literal translation some students lack certain guidance in reading the text, according to the teacher.

In regards to other types of reading (scanning and skimming), the level of students' abilities affect the teacher's choice. Scanning and skimming are a part of the reading routine in the higher level classes, but in the lower level it is the detailed reading that is preferred.

The last segment of the types that was questioned was extensive reading. Directly in classes there are very few, close to none, opportunities to do extensive reading. But students that seek reading in English have the chance to borrow books or magazines from the teacher.

The choices of the teacher are limited by students' interests and abilities. Some texts that could be interesting to the readers of her classes are not compatible with their level of English.

Class 3

The third set of observations took place in the seventh grade. The following chapter describes the observed class in five instances. The teacher of this particular class is a teacher with twelve years of experience in teaching. The class itself consists of fifteen students between the ages twelve and thirteen. The class content changed every lesson and that is demonstrated in the following text.

Observation 1

The first observation was executed in January. It was a testing lesson. The test examined the knowledge and skills from unit 3 in the textbook *Your space 2* (distributor Fraus). The test contained several parts: grammar, vocabulary, communication, listening, translating, and finally, writing (the last two parts were added by the teacher, the others adopted from the official test provided by the book).

An exercise focusing solely on reading on its own was not a part of the test. Reading was integrated in some of the parts, namely the third one (communication). The task was to read a conversation and fill in the gaps in the text with words. The words were provided to the students. No distractors were present and the first word was filled in as an example.

A comparison with the unit itself brings up a question why reading is not incorporated in the test. Every unit in the textbook includes part centred around skills and their development. Reading was present in this unit. All three main stages are described in the textbook - pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading. In the pre-reading part the students worked with pictures, then the students worked with the text and their task was to match pictures and paragraphs. Following task was focused on training summarizing

(matching summaries with parts of text). The post-reading task was listening exercise connected to the text. In the workbook there is also a reading section, nevertheless, the test did not contain specifically reading tasks.

Observation 2

The learners began to work in a new unit in the second observed lesson. This lesson trained reading partly, in addition to that, it also focused on grammar (revision of past simple). The reading part appeared right in the beginning.

The pupils' first task was to read a text (an ad for some event) and answer four questions. The questions were aimed at scanning. The text continued with three dialogues which were connected to the ad. Learners listened to the text and they read it. Then they worked with an exercise which focused on meaning (deciding who the sentence is about).

Grammar was revised in connection to the text (there is a short chart with a few exemplary sentences from the text). Then the focus shifted toward vocabulary. Only some of the expressions in the exercise appeared in the text. Then there were activities on writing and listening.

Observation 3

Another observation took place two days after the second one. This lesson included several activities, the focal point of them being grammar (revision of past simple). The students completed exercises in their workbooks, then they checked the correct answers together by answering the tasks or by listening to audio from the textbook.

Tasks aimed at reading skills were not present in the class. However, some of the exercises integrated reading at least in minimal extent. One of the grammar exercises consisted of three blog posts (short texts). The instruction was to complete the gaps with correct grammatical forms of the verb to be in past simple. The students read the texts and then filled in another exercise where they had to decide whether statements about the texts are true, or false. This activity was followed by reading the texts again - this time one student read one short text (three students in total). Class was finished with speaking activity.

Observations 4 and 5

The fourth observation did not offer a look at reading skills training. This lesson was focused more on grammar and speaking. For this reason the description is not necessary in this chapter.

The fifth observation worked with a text in the textbook. Vocabulary connected to airport was reviewed - teacher asked questions and described the places at the airport and the students named them. There was an audio played while the students were supposed to read the text silently.

An activity called "vocabulary harvest" was introduced and done after the reading. Teacher wrote words on the board and students had to define the words in pairs. After vocabulary exercise, the centre of attention became the grammar. The task for students was to look for the past form of chosen verbs in the text and highlight it. After these two tasks the work with the text ended and the students started to test each other from the irregular verb forms. Then they also spoke about their Saturday.

Interview with the teacher of Class 3

Unlike the other teachers, the teacher of the third class does not spend as much time on reading. Reading is done almost exclusively when it is present in the textbook, non-textbook readings are done only sporadically. Reading is on a different level in the importance for her because the other skills (mainly speaking) are something that is more in accordance with her students' needs.

Furthermore, she mentioned that the needs of her students are not the only reasons for not doing reading more often. Students nowadays are not used to reading regularly, they are not interested in it. Their lack of interest in it is another reason for the teacher's decision. Similarly to other teachers in this research, she admits that there is not enough time to do reading as much as it could be done. She visited a different school and observed their classes. This demonstrated to her the way reading can be done effectively, but they had more lessons per week than she has with her students. She sees solution in the lack of interest in reading in extensive reading. She pursues extension of the small English library they have in the school. Adding books that are attractive for contemporary generation could lead them toward reading in English and in building reading skills even more.

There are several sources used for reading in this teacher's classes. Textbooks and reading sources from the Internet, also articles from certain magazines.

While working with texts from the textbook, the teacher adds exercises whenever she feels there is something missing. All three stages of reading are usually covered in the reading tasks. She chooses the tasks according to the needs of the particular class. In many cases the reading, for the reasons described in the first paragraph, is connected to other skills - mainly speaking. Speaking is the most engaging and useful activity, according to this teacher.

Not only are there tasks in the class connected to the texts, but there are also some projects done after reading certain articles. Lately, students of one class in the eighth grade filmed short video projects in which they described their best and worst moments, this activity originated in the reading they did.

This teacher does not let her students read aloud, she finds it to be quite ineffective. Only in lower levels (in the sixth grade) is reading aloud chosen - but it is a rare occasion. Another type of reading that the teacher started to focus on lately is extensive reading. It was said that leading children toward reading engaging literature in both their free time and in classes is a way to make them more engaged while training reading skills, but she admits that resources are limited in her school. In one of her classes she instructed the students to read Robinson Crusoe (in a simplified version) and they had to write a report. This was an exception though. The teacher also commented on other types of reading, it was mentioned that scanning and skimming are done together with detailed reading.

Class 4

The fourth class was led by a teacher with twelve years of experience. As with other teachers, there were five observations and one final interview. All of these were executed in February 2020. All of the findings serve as a demonstration of this teacher's standing on teaching reading and they are described in this chapter.

Observation 1

The first lesson in which the researcher was present contained reading. Not only that, reading was the primary focus of this lesson. Each lesson in the textbook used in this class (*Your Space 3*) ends with a part called Skills. The workbook copies the structure of the textbook. The workbook offered reading, listening, speaking and writing exercises about the topic hero.

The topic was introduced by the teacher. She asked the students to define heroes. Who are they? In groups the learners were supposed to discuss this and answer the question. Afterwards, they shared the answers together with other groups from the class. The answers created a mind map on the board - the centre of this mind map was hero.

While the students were discussing the topic, the teacher prepared certain words and phrases on the board. The instruction was to read them and cross out one that does not fit in with the rest of the words. The term to be crossed out was criminal. The students were instructed to define this term in three words. The other terms were not further explained. The students were warned that the precise meaning will be clear after reading the text.

The first quick reading that was done was reading of the first exercise. The students had to read the names of people who are then mentioned in the text. Then, they identified the people in the pictures that were a part of the text. They found the names in the article after that. They located them and underlined them. All of these tasks prepared the students for exercise one. In this exercise the students matched the people with their deeds. The students were advised to use firstly predicting (their prior knowledge could help with this exercise), secondly scanning (they underlined the important part of the text in the previous step). This exercise was checked together.

Detailed reading followed the quick one. Finding the best answer to three questions was the second task in this reading. In addition to answering the questions, students were required to be able to support their answer by quoting the text directly.

Then the attention shifted toward listening. Listening was about Albert Einstein. The reason for this topic in listening was mentioned by the teacher. The boy who was recorded talked about his hero. He gave basic information about his life and the reasons why he admired him. The listening was done and two exercise were completed. The listening activities were also accompanied by tips from the teacher (underline the key words, try to predict what could be said - is it number, city, etc.). The audio was played twice.

After this the students were asked to think about their own hero. In the next lesson there was a writing exercise. This exercise is a follow-up from this lesson. The instruction was to find out some information about the student's hero. The class finished with a short test on grammar.

Observations 2, 3 and 4

The second observation was divided in two parts. Firstly, the students worked on their communicative skills (giving and accepting compliments). Secondly, they wrote about their hero. This part was a continuation from the previous lesson. The listening and its exercises served as a model to this writing task.

The next lesson continued with the topic of giving and accepting compliments. It took place a week after the last lesson with this teacher, so she wanted to remind students of where they ended. Then the students finished the first grammar part of this unit - present perfect. Reading skills were not observed in this lesson.

The fourth observation consisted of grammar exercises - this time focusing on the second grammar part of this unit (past continuous and past simple). The exercises included writing and speaking, not reading.

Observation 5

The last lesson that was observed for this thesis was a testing lesson. The test consisted of several parts. There were two parts, each marked separately. The first one aimed at finding out the grammar knowledge. The second one checked the level of skills. The second part included reading.

There were four exercises in the reading part in this test. The first one required students to match questions (such as how many hours does Chris cycle every day) with paragraphs. This reading was scanning, the students had to read the question and then locate the information in the text.

The second exercise was true, false or doesn't say type of task. Students had to read more carefully to find out whether the given sentences are true, false or not present in the text.

The next exercise was connected to the text by the topic (it was also about famous sportsperson). The students picked the best word out of three for gaps in the paragraph. This exercise was more about grammar knowledge than reading, nevertheless, it was included in this section of the test.

The fourth task was connected to the original text even less. This exercise turned the attention toward the student. They had to answer questions about themselves. After this, students focused on listening and writing.

Interview with the teacher of Class 4

As with the other interviews, the first question was about the importance of reading in this teacher's classes. The answer was that the position of reading is equal to the other skills. The time spent on training reading skills is - more or less - the same as with listening, writing and speaking skills.

Reading is done mostly from the textbook, but if there is enough time and space for reading skills the teacher chooses to use texts from different sources. These texts are usually connected by the topic that is present in the unit. The sources are articles from newspapers or magazines - printed or online. There is also a small library with books written in English in this school, this is also a source used in the classes of this teacher (although not as often as she would like to). Similarly to some other teachers in this research, the preparation for reading can be quite time-consuming, this teacher admitted. Better materials in the library would help with this limitation.

Time is a limitation to the amount of reading that can be done in the lessons of this teacher. The teacher also pointed out that she has to complete the units in the textbooks (it is a common practice in her school), so not always does she have an opportunity to work with texts more than the textbook allows. Beside time, the teacher named a lack of sources with stories based more on real life or realistic situation (instead of theoretical texts) in the library of her school, too. The department of English has been working on enlarging the collection in the library, though.

The teacher considers what is needed to be done in the lesson and in accordance with that she chooses the tasks accompanying the texts. Sometimes she adds her own exercises, sometimes she thinks of her own tasks altogether.

Extensive reading is covered in this teacher's teaching reading. As mentioned before, not as often as would be optimal for the teacher, nevertheless, it is done when the opportunity arises. In extensive reading there are some tasks assigned to students that focus on the text.

All stages of reading are always covered by the teacher. While-reading stage focuses on both meaning of the text and language, but the teacher finds the tasks working with meaning more useful for the students' skills. All types of reading appear in this teacher's practice. Before the reading itself, the motivation and introduction take place. Reading is connected to other skills, similarly to the other teachers of this research.

Reading aloud is not done. Each student has their own tempo and the teacher respects that. In comparison to some other teachers who pointed out that they practise pronunciation through reading aloud, this teacher chooses to do that in different instances than reading.

Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to explore teaching reading, specifically focusing on the teachers' stance towards it. The types, sources and stages of the reading process were observed and asked about. In this chapter, the previous chapters about each teacher are expanded. Results and conclusions were drawn, these results are commented in this chapter.

The teachers' stance toward reading differed. Most of them (teachers in Classes 1, 2 and 4) perceive reading as something important and equal to other skills. One teacher thinks of reading as not that relevant for her students. Speaking is considered to be more important for their future and current needs in second language development by her. This reflects certain current stances towards ESL, as was mentioned in the chapter about reading. Richards (2015) mentioned that current situation in English education is affected by direct method, which preferred listening and speaking instead of reading and writing. But this was a minority of the opinions expressed by the teachers. Reading was mostly regarded as something that is neither priority, nor of less value.

Types of reading is a topic that has several subcategories. One of the categories is reading aloud and reading silently. Two classes out of four read loudly (in certain parts of the lessons), two used only silent reading. As was described in the relevant chapter in the theoretical background of this thesis, reading silently is more effective for acquiring appropriate reading skills. Two of the teachers agree with this. The other two use reading as an opportunity to practise pronunciation. This practice does not train reading skills though. Teacher 2 said that by making her students read aloud, she checks their understanding of the text. The text comprehension can be checked by tasks focusing on meaning of the text, reading aloud is redundant, teachers of Classes 3 and 4 agree with this thought. It was their reason for choosing silent reading as their dominant type of reading. There is another point of view to be considered here. Two contemporary approaches were described in one of the theoretical chapters - whole-language approach and phonic approach. The two teachers criticising reading aloud are the ones leaning more toward the first method. One teacher from those using reading aloud as a way of comprehending the text, leans more toward the other method. This shows that the theory was correct in its assumption that both methods are

present in ESL classes. The teacher of Class 1 belongs more to the first group, even though, she lets her students read aloud. She does not do it for building the comprehension of the text, but almost exclusively for training of pronunciation.

Other types of reading that were analysed were extensive and intensive reading. Extensive reading is not done as often and to such an extent as intensive reading in all classes observed and in the teaching of all teachers in this research. The theoretical literature suggested this, and this research confirmed this thought. Several teachers make an effort to include extensive reading in their classes, but there are limitations to their work that they are able to do in their lessons (teachers of the Classes 1, 3 and 4 to be specific). These limitations are commented in more detail further in this chapter.

The last type of reading that was an item to be researched is the detailed reading, scanning and skimming. All of the teachers use questions and tasks concentrating on every one of these types. The extent varies though. The teachers of Class 1 and Class 2 acknowledged that they do not do it in every reading. The other two teachers try to make it a part of their reading routine. According to the theory, it is useful to include scanning and skimming before reading in detail (described again in the theoretical background).

Stages of reading are also addressed in the observation of individual lessons (at least those that contained reading) and in the interviews. Each teacher showed and said that they are aware of the importance of teaching reading in several stages. The literature suggested that every lesson cannot contain every stage with every step as it is outlined in ideal reading activities or lessons. This was confirmed in this research. Nevertheless, the teachers tried to cover every stage with at least one activity. Pre-reading was often done by describing pictures and speaking about the topic; thus, the topic was introduced to the learners. While-reading stage contained tasks on language and meaning, scanning, skimming and detail, the preference of each teacher was described in the interview with them. It is important to note that all of them use all of these types of tasks in their teaching practice - more or less often, but a variety of types is used. Post-reading stage is quite often connected to the other skills, activities such as listening to audio, watching videos, having conversation about the topic, are common practice.

The textbooks are the most common source of reading materials by the teachers researched for this thesis. Beside the textbooks, they also use online sources, fiction or magazines. The materials from these sources are analysed by the teachers in regards to their

relevance of topic, grammatical structures and vocabulary. In many instances the teachers use the text, but they alter the tasks - they adjust it for their specific classes.

Each teacher mentioned something that limits them. This issue was then further questioned because there are factors that affect teaching reading of these teachers. All of them agreed on time being one of the biggest factors impacting their lessons and teaching reading. The sources present in the school is also a limitation, but in both of these schools the teachers are working on solving this problem by expanding their libraries. Expanding the libraries is a good way of how to begin working on extensive reading. The next step is to work with it effectively, specialized literature may help with that. Assigning shorter readings over the weekend or certain period of time, as the teachers from Class 1 and Class 3 did, is one of the ways how to do it. Discussions, creating projects or essays afterwards is a possible and manageable post-reading activity.

In regards to this research, the expectations of the researcher were correct in a majority of the expected outcomes. The stance of reading as an equal part of learning to other skills was expected. The opinion that it is not as important was not a surprise, though. It is an opinion that can be heard from both professionals and laymen. From my own experience as a pupil in lower secondary education I expected neglecting the pre-reading and post-reading stages of reading, fortunately, this was not the case. A welcome outcome of this research is the tendency of the teachers to promote extensive reading. It has not been perfected, yet. Nevertheless, the teachers are working on this problematic area, they are educating themselves and the readers. Reading aloud was expected to be seen in the observations, and this expectation fulfilled itself. The theory mentioned in the first part of this thesis suggested to use silent reading in the lessons - it is regarded as a more effective way of reading in the learning process. The research demonstrated that some teachers still cling to reading aloud. More education of the teachers in this area could help.

Many of the teachers examined in this research showed and said that they use various sources for texts and tasks. This was an assumption I made before conducting the research. What I would suggest to the teachers is to also focus on the literature about reading, a number of them was mentioned in the theoretical background of the thesis. They can get ideas for lesson plans or activities that include reading from such sources.

Time and motivation of the students was often considered to be an issue. Changes in the schedules could be a solution to the problem with time. Having English as a double lesson at least once a weak would provide more time for the teachers and the students - the

lessons and activities could be more complex or of greater length. Motivating students to read more is a problem the teachers also encounter. It was suggested in the interviews to use books or texts that are of interest to the particular class - be it contemporary literature or topics that are interesting. The first step I would suggest is to ask students what they would like to read - true stories, crime stories, fiction, fantasy, sci-fi, etc. After that, I would try to adjust the assigned readings. Connecting the reading with movies and videos is also a good way of motivating students to read.

This chapter served as a summary of the observations and the interviews. It highlighted the phenomenons appearing in more classes. It also commented on the practices in English lessons in connection to the theory of reading.

IMPLICATIONS

This chapter answers the question about the practical use of this thesis. The reason for completing this research was to observe the reality of teaching reading, and in addition to that, drawing conclusions that will affect the future teaching of reading skills in English lessons. These implications are introduced here.

Implications for teaching

The question why this research is important for teachers is the first one to be answered. As was demonstrated in the chapter about this research, teachers approach teaching reading differently in certain areas, in others the teaching is very similar in various classes. Reading is a part of a language, together with other skills it is unnecessary to acquire these skills to be a competent user of language. For this reason, teachers need to pay attention to the ways they teach young learners to read texts.

Theory of reading is a category rich in its publications - many of them offer general and specific steps on how to plan reading activities. This theoretical knowledge should be reflected in real classes. Teachers and students at faculties of education should focus on reading in greater detail, reading literature about it is an important step in such an education. Introducing literature with specific reading activities and lessons in different pedagogical sources is something that should happen at universities or in courses for teachers.

One of the categories that need to be focused on in regards to reading is the silent reading. The silent reading does not reflect the research conducted about this topic as much as it could. For this reason, one of the implications of this research is to start paying more attention to the types of reading used in English lessons - even silent reading and reading aloud. The latter is less effective for comprehending texts. Pronunciation can be trained in different activities than reading (as one of the teachers suggested, speaking is the most obvious part of lessons in which you can concentrate on that). The tasks that accompany the text serve as a checking of comprehending the message of the text, grammar and vocabulary; thus, there is no need for further checking by reading aloud. Silent reading is more valuable for practice in text comprehension, this fact should be made more obvious to teachers via further education. In addition to being more effective, silent reading is not as time-consuming as the other type is.

Extensive versus intensive reading is another type of reading that needs to be worked with more. Building libraries with English written literature (adapted or authentic) should be

executed in schools. Teachers are willing to work with extensive reading but in some cases they lack the resources for doing so. The use of various sources on the Internet is encouraged, there are websites containing adapted or simplified literature for various levels. The same situation is with printed materials in different publications - they are available on the market in sufficient amount. Dedicating one lesson per week to extensive reading would be good for students and their reading skills. In classes in which there is not a sufficient amount of lessons with spare time for reading per week, teachers could dedicate a lesson per week only during one month or some other limited time period.

Time was a major constraint teachers complained about. A revision of schedules might help - providing teachers with double lessons could be an answer to the problem with time management in complicated or complex activities.

The research showed that the teachers are aware of the stages and different types of reading. This was reflected in the classes, but scanning and skimming can be used more in depth or more often. Another implication of this research is to exhaust all possibilities to train reading skills that reflect real-life situations. And in real life students will need to scan the text quickly for one specific piece of information, etc. Technology can also be used - watching or making videos, listening to music, making presentations, and other activities can be executed in connection to some text.

While questioning the stages of reading used in their classes, some teachers reflected on their preference in regards to tasks focused on meaning or language. The recommendation for teachers is to use both of these types of tasks whenever it is possible. Some texts, especially texts used in extensive reading, focus more on meaning, that is fine. Nevertheless, in a great number of activities these two categories of tasks can be connected. If there is a possibility to connect the two, it should be conducted. Students can work both on the comprehension of the text and their language level.

A useful tip that can be used by any teacher is to guide their students through the text - this can be achieved by the structure of the tasks (pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading stages filled with various tasks in which the student learns the process subconsciously) or they can tell the students literally what they are supposed to do to understand it (teacher can tell the students what they do firstly, secondly, etc., they demonstrate what is the most effective way to read this text, they guide their students through the text - this can be done until their students do it on their own without teacher's help and guidance).

In connection to real life one might also consider the integration of several skills. This can also be reflected in lessons in which the main aim is to train reading skills. In the pre-reading or post-reading stages, speaking, listening, or writing can be implemented in the activity.

Limitation of the research

The first limitation of this research lies in the quantity of observed teachers. There were two schools that were visited and four teachers that were observed and interviewed. For this reason the research can not be generalised too much. For greater generalization more teachers and schools would be needed.

Another limitation that needs to be discussed is the problem that arose while doing the observations. Originally, they were supposed to be in one to two weeks. Unfortunately, there were certain events that stopped some of the observations for some time and they had to continue after the event passed. In one class it was a one-week school trip (followed by the teacher missing another class because of her observation in a different school), in another class an illness of the teacher. The second one could not be avoided, the first one could. There was a problem in communication in the schools and the teacher learned about the school trip too late, so the observation had to be interrupted for a week and a half.

Except for this, there were no other issues with conducting the research. There are no more items to be listed as a limitation of the research.

Suggestions for further research

A few suggestions for further research are offered. It can focus on more teachers and schools. The number of teachers was listed as a limitation of the research. Other researches can include a larger amount of people. This could reveal more information about the reality of teaching reading in English lessons in the Czech education. Another improvement of this study to be suggested is the number of lessons observed in the teachers' classes.

Another possibility in approaching this topic (teaching reading) is to research the practices in other levels of education. English is taught in elementary schools, so the teaching of younger children can be observed. Older students - in secondary schools - also offer a possibility of researching.

The students themselves as an object of study is a possibility. This research focused on teachers and their choices, their stances, etc. Interests, preferences and similar phenomenons may be observed from the point of view of students or learners.

CONCLUSION

As was demonstrated and described several times in the thesis, reading is one fourth of skills to be acquired in second language education. Future of all students is predicted to contain English and reading in English - in their professions, studies and personal life. Reading is considered to be a significant skill for learners - in their contemporary role of a student and further on in their lives (even though it is doubted sometimes). For this reason, reading was chosen as an object of study.

The main aim of this thesis was to describe teaching reading in English lessons in schools of lower-secondary level. The revelation of teachers' stances and routines was supposed to be executed after conducting the research. Firstly, the theory was studied. On the basis of the theory, research began by analysing classes and their teachers. Implications for teachers and further research are included and they are considered to be an inseparable and important part of the study. Further specifications are commented on in the corresponding parts of the thesis.

The question how teachers approach teaching reading, especially in regards to types of reading, its stages and sources, was answered. The answer is that the teachers know the theory of many areas of reading but there is still space for improvement in implementing the knowledge in practice. Some areas are covered almost exactly as the theory suggests - most of the teachers structure reading activities and lessons in stages that are in logical order, they are also aware of the importance of scanning and skimming, teachers explore sources other than textbooks. On the other hand, other areas (such as the use of silent or extensive reading) still need revision. Not all areas can be covered by teachers themselves. Schools should also provide equipment that would help teachers with planning the right lessons (for example libraries and literature), or they should give sufficient amount of time for teaching English.

Suggestions for changes in teaching and for more in depth research are outlined in the closing chapters of this thesis. The suggestions include revision of the timing of lessons, material support (in the form of libraries), or further education of teachers in this area (about what is and is not effective in reading practice). It concludes the research and it also demonstrates its importance.

Educating teachers can only bring better education of learners - in reading and in every other area - thus, it is important to research language teaching and draw practical conclusions from it. As was mentioned before, reading is a skill that students will encounter in their future, for this reason it is vital to prepare them to be capable readers. They need to

learn how to work with texts in regards to its form, language, and message - teachers of language are the primary group of educators who can lead them towards this goal. Thus, improvement through observing and then changing the practice of teaching reading is a crucial step in language education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Záznam pozorování hodiny

Škola:

Třída:

Datum a čas: (pořadí výukové hodiny…….)

Vyučující:

Téma hodiny:

1. Struktura vyučovací hodiny:

Čas	Popis činností

1. Jak důležité je čtení ve vašich hodinách v porovnání s ostatními skills?

2. Propojujete čtení s poslechem, psaním a mluvením? Např. v rámci fáze pre-reading nebo post-reading?

3. Využíváte vždy všech fází čtení? Pokoušíte se vyčerpat všechny možnosti?

4. Co za zdroje pro texty a úkoly k nim využíváte? Soustředíte se předvím na učebnici, nebo využíváte některé jiné publikace či internetové stránky? Jaké?

5. Upravujete si cvičení, nebo je přejímáte tak, jak jsou?

6. Zaměřujete své cvičení spíš na jazyk nebo význam?

7. Volíte ve všech svých třídách čtení nahlas/potichu? Proč? Co si myslíte, že je více efektivní?

8. Soustředíte se ve svých třídách i na scanning a skimming?

9. Jakým způsobem pracujete na extenzivním čtení? Je to něco, co děláte ve svých hodinách?

10. Co jsou pro vás limity? Co vás omezuje při čtení v hodinách anglického jazyka?

SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá čtením v hodinách anglického jazyka. Cílem práce bylo odpovědět na otázku, jak učitelé 2. stupně základních škol přistupují k učení čtení v hodinách anglického jazyka na vybraných školách (zejména v oblastní typů, zdrojů a fází). Čtení tvoři jednu čtvrtinu jazykové výbavy, kterou by si žáci měli osvojit. Je to také dovednost, která bude součástí jejich budoucího studia, práce či osobního života. Z těchto důvodů je důležité, aby se se čtením v hodinách pracovalo patřičně a správně. Výzkum se zabývá postoji vybraných učitelů anglického jazyka ke čtení v jejich hodinách, toho bylo docíleno pomocí pozorování hodin a rozhovorem s danými učiteli. První částí této práce je teoretický základ, který shrnuje poznatky o čtení v anglickém jazyce. Dále je popsána metodologie, nakonec se praktická část věnuje samotnému pozorování hodin, a také interview. Z výzkumu byly vyvozeny implikace pro učitele a školy, také byly navrhnuty další možnosti výzkumu v této problematice. Výsledkem práce bylo zjištění, že se učitelé snaží věnovat všem druhům čtení, detailnímu a rychlému. Problém je ale ve čtení nahlas a potichu, také v extenzivním a intenzivním čtení. Učitelé užívají různých zdrojů pro čtení, základním zdrojem však zůstává učebnice. Poslední zjištění je, že učitelé jsou si vědomi nutnosti rozdělit čtení do různých fází, náplň těchto fází však může činit problémy.