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Z á s a d y   p r o   v y p r a c o v á n í :

Studentka se ve své diplomové práci bude věnovat možnostem využití tzv. picture books jako specifického druhu dětské literatury ve vyučování anglického jazyka. V teoretické části práce proto vymezí kategorii picture books ve vztahu k dalším žánrům dětské literatury a na základě této definice provede teoretickou analýzu možností využití picture books jako specifického materiálního didaktického prostředku v procesu rozvoje komunikativní kompetence žáků v anglickém jazyce. V praktické části práce pak budou prezentovány výsledky autorčina výzkumného šetření, jehož cílem bude komplexní zhodnocení aktivit, které diplomantka zkonstruuje na základě principů vydefinovaných v teoretické části práce a poté sama realizuje v rámci vlastní výuky anglického jazyka na základní škole.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the art form of picturebook and its potential in English language teaching. In its initial part it presents a theoretical overview of both the genre of picturebook and its potential role when used as a teaching aid in young learners' foreign-language classroom. The research part is then anchored in a set of picturebook-centred teaching sequences devised and carried out by the author in several elementary ESL classrooms, and consequently analysed and evaluated as regards their actual potential and efficiency when applied into language instruction.

KEYWORDS

picturebook; foreign language teaching; young learner; stories in language teaching; pictures in language teaching

NÁZEV

Obrázkové knihy ve vyučování cizích jazyků

SOUHRN

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá obrázkovými knihami a jejich potenciálem z hlediska využití ve vyučování cizích jazyků. V první části přináší práce teoretický úvod do problému: nejdříve definuje obrázkovou knihu jako specifický literární druh, poté nastiňuje aspekty její aplikace do vyučování cizích jazyků u žáků mladšího školního věku. Praktická část práce potom vychází z navrženého učebního bloku zaměřeného na práci s obrázkovou knihou, který diplomantka na základě principů vydefinovaných v teoretické části sama zkonstruovala a použila v rámci své výuky na základní škole, a následně tuto zkušenost analyzovala za účelem komplexního zhodnocení aspektů práce s obrázkovou knihou ve vyučování cizích jazyků.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

obrázková kniha; výuka cizích jazyků; žák mladšího školního věku; příběhy ve výuce cizích jazyků; obrázky ve výuce cizích jazyků

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1. Introduction

In the last decades there has been a trend of introducing foreign languages to younger and younger learner audience. This trend, mirrored also by current educational policies of our country (for instance in the *White Paper: National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic*), has led to considerable changes as far as practical approaches to language learning are concerned. While a decade ago schools offering language instruction to children under the age of eleven were positively rare, nowadays language classes have gradually found their firm place already at the very beginnings of primary education, and have often crept even into regular kindergarten practice. As a result, materials suitable for teaching languages to young learners are in a great demand. When looking for them, language teachers search for attractive, colourful resources that would appeal to young children, yet at the same time provide opportunities for their development and facilitate language learning. It is my opinion that picturebooks possess both 'the power of attraction [which] may be exploited to make language learning pleasurable and memorable' (Klippel in Enever and Schmid-Schönbein 2006: 80) as well as the potential to act as an effective teaching aid in language instruction. To illustrate this statement is to be the issue of this paper. It is attempted both theoretically and practically – through research.

As the preceding paragraph already suggests, the phrase 'foreign language classroom' as it is used in the title of this thesis refers – in the particular context of this paper – specifically to elementary language classroom and young language learners. The distinction was made principally due to my belief that picturebooks – while potentially applicable into language instruction of older learners, too – are ideally suited for the preferences and needs of young language learners. As to the question of age spectrum of learners who would still, or already, count among young learners, opinions differ from author to author, from one publication of another. For the purposes of this thesis, Scott and Ytreberg's definition was adopted, who describe young learner as a child of approximately five to eleven years of age (Scott and Yttreberg 1990: 1). Such delineation roughly overlaps with the age group of pupils attending lower primary school in Czech context, which is approximately the fraction of learners picturebooks seem best-suited for.

The words 'foreign language classroom' point to another subject to be noted on. While my own language teaching experience (as well as professional knowledge) is mainly restricted to that of teaching English, I believe that most conclusions about picturebook made in this paper are not strictly language-bound and specific for English instruction only, and can therefore be generalized and applied (with necessary alterations) also in the context of teaching other foreign languages. This paper therefore mainly considers capacity of picturebook as a teaching aid in foreign language instruction in general, even though its research-related part, along with any practical experience possibly mentioned throughout the text, refer strictly to the context of English language classroom.

Text of this thesis is organized into several chapters which, together, attempt to introduce the reader to the concept of picturebook as a teaching aid for the purposes of foreign language instruction. Initial chapter is devoted to a universal portrait of picturebook, bearing the prime intention to provide reader with a notion of what a picturebook actually is (and what it isn't), or at least indicate the view assumed by this thesis as regards this point. Afterwards, picturebook is viewed in the context of language learning: the paper at first discusses what kind of learners young learners are, then suggests ways in which picturebook as a language teaching tool can facilitate their learning and development. The following chapter then presents a description of a small-scale research project carried out by the author in order to describe picturebook from another point of view – on basis of a practical teaching experience with it.

2. Defining picturebooks

This chapter, as already its title reveals, aims to explain what a picturebook actually is. It is divided into three subchapters: the first one depicts the emergence of picturebook and trends or events that perhaps allowed or influenced it; the second one recapitulates current approaches to picturebook study, identifying also the standpoint of the thesis itself; eventually, the third subchapter attempts to list the major and most distinctive features of the picturebook form, settling its choice mainly on those attributes which the second part of the theoretical section of the paper is to relate to when introducing the potential of picturebook in language teaching.

2.1 Emergence of picturebook

As Peter Hunt makes clear in his *Introduction into Children's Literature*, the collocation 'children's literature' did not always possess quite the same meaning as it does today – one did not associate the same kind of books with it at least, nor the same function. In his depiction of the early history of writing for children, Hunt explains that although 'children's literature' definitely always suggested works *read by* children, the nature of these books changed considerably over time, along with the current view of childhood and, consequently, with the expectations of what the child was supposed to gain by reading (1994: 27-32). While the seventeenth-century child, as Hunt writes, would mainly share texts read by and intended primarily for adults of the time, such as folk-tales and chapbooks but often also much more serious and 'adult' religious and educational texts, the second half of the eighteenth century would witness the rise of commercial publishing targeted exclusively at children and the later generations of young readers would already be addressed through literature intended directly for them (1994: 27-28). The typically Victorian genres of domestic tale (for girls) or empire-building adventure story (for boys) of the century nineteenth still meant in the first place to instruct and educate, yet the idea of reading for amusement was already planted with the birth of commercial children's literature, and later children's texts would be principally much less directive and not so 'heavily moralizing' as the early ones, if at all (Hunt 1994: 28-29). This shift towards commercial writing for youth and reading for pleasure was of importance also to the emergence of picturebook. After all, picturebooks are and have always been intended primarily for children, and though they

perhaps do possess some more or less pronounced formative aim, as probably all books written by adults for younger generation, at least their lively, colourful format apparently wishes that their readers peruse them with enjoyment.

Similarly to the gradual development of the concept of children's literature, the notion of picturebook as it is known today and as this thesis talks about it also took a considerable period of time to develop. After all, in the broadest sense, the very first predecessors of picturebooks might be seen already in the earliest books with illustrations, and since pictures have been regularly incorporated into literature for young readers ever since the end of the eighteenth century (Lewis 2001: 139), picturebook needed time to distinguish itself from the wide mass of books with pictures available. For it is not mere presence of pictures in a volume what makes a picturebook. Thus it was not until hundred years later, in the end of the nineteenth century, when the rough form of picturebook had developed out of other currently popular forms of writing, such as chapbooks, toy books or comics (Lewis 2001: xiii). At this time, the first few isolated samples of primal picturebook form – pioneers of what Lewis would call 'modern picturebook' – appeared (Lewis 2001: 139). These were in their nature still very similar to the toy books of the Victorian era, yet some of them already possessed some attributes common to the contemporary picturebook form and, above all, fulfilled the basic criterion for contemporary picturebooks – they combined pictures and words into a composite text (Lewis 2001: 141). These were the direct predecessors of modern picturebooks, and – also thanks to them – in the second half of the twentieth century, the world would finally see the emergence of picturebook as a fully developed art form, defined by a set of distinctive characteristics which would distinguish it from the rest of illustrated works of children's literature (Lewis 2001: xiii).

The emergence of picturebook was also narrowly connected to developments in printing technology that occurred during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Lewis describes that the earliest picture printing techniques, such as woodcuts or engraving on metal, made it quite impossible (or very complicated and costly) to create a composite picturebook text with words and images printed on the same page (2001: 138-139). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, a printing technique known as 'white line' engraving was invented – an improved variant of wood engraving technology, which not only allowed printers to integrate text and image on a single

page, but also remarkably increased the quality of printed pictures, allowing them certain 'distinctly narrative sensibility,' as Lewis calls it (2001: 140). In other words, pictures could now communicate more to the reader due to better quality of print – an important progress towards the facilitation of picturebook production. Wood engraving later also proved to be a suitable method for creation of texts which would allow words and images on one page, and in the later course of the nineteenth century the technique was adapted for printing in colour (Lewis 2001: 140). Soon the new opportunities were grasped by numerous illustrators, among others also nowadays well-known artists and grand masters among picturebook-authors like Kate Greenaway or Randolph Caldecott, and these illustrators then created the first examples of the direct predecessor of today's picturebook: 'the simple form of nineteenth-century picturebook known as toy book' (Lewis 2001: 140). That was at the end of the nineteenth century. Later inventions in the field of printing technology further increased speed, efficiency as well as quality of picturebook production and widened and perfected the options for printing composite word-and-picture texts still more, so that nowadays the possibilities for combining words and images into an integrated text are, at least from the point of view of their processing in print, virtually limitless (Lewis 2001: 141-144).

Thus, since 1960s when the form of modern picturebook was eventually fully shaped, more and more picturebooks have been produced (and sold) yearly, and nowadays, according to Lewis, 'it is beginning to feel as if they have always been here' (2001: xiii). Along with this increase in popularity and in number of picturebooks there came also their acknowledgment in the academic circles: picturebooks have become the object of scholarly discussion, literary studies and art criticism worldwide (Lewis 2001: xiii). According to Lewis, general agreement has been arrived at as to what the most basic characteristics of the form is – that the picturebook text must be composite, created by the interaction of words and pictures (2001: xiii); yet the range of views on how to read and perceive picturebooks has been similarly wide as the variety of picturebooks available on the shop shelves around the world nowadays, and not all authors would agree with this model. This fact is made clear for example in the overview of current approaches to picturebooks as it is offered by Nikolajeva and Scott in their publication *How Picturebooks Work* (2006: 2-6).

Both the issues mentioned in the last paragraph, basic features of picturebooks as well as current approaches to picturebooks' study, are described in the following two chapters. The summary of recent viewpoints on perceiving picturebooks precedes the description of picturebooks' basic characteristics, since the attitude to picturebooks that I have chosen significantly influences the way in which picturebooks are depicted in this work and should therefore be discussed first.

2.2 Current approaches to picturebooks

Taking into account what has been written in the previous chapter, it might be said that modern picturebook is a relatively recent art form, having truly developed at first in the second half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, in academic literature picturebooks are discussed quite often; in many, if not most general publications on children's literature there is a chapter devoted to picturebooks (e.g. in Peter Hunt's *Introduction to Children's Literature*, or in Saundra and Donna Nortons' *Through the Eyes of a child: An Introduction to Children's Literature*) and there is also a number of studies that concentrate on picturebooks in particular. As for these volumes specifically on picturebooks, different authors treat picturebooks in quite different ways, usually either according to what they consider of value or of importance about the art form, or according to what they want to use it for.

In the introduction to his *Reading Contemporary Picturebooks*, David Lewis poses a few rhetorical questions in order to indicate the nature of the issue of multiple approaches to picturebooks.

> '[…] are picturebooks first and foremost books – that is, stories that just happen to be "told" in pictures as well as words – or are they better thought of as a kind of narrative visual art that happens to be annotated or captioned with words? Is it really the pictures that lie at the heart of picturebooks, or do we need to look for ways in which the pictures and the words interact and work upon each other?' (2001: xiv)

The questions Lewis asks, though quite vague, seem to hit the point, as the three basic approaches he implies in this quote roughly correspond with the overview of current viewpoints on picturebooks as it is provided in Nikolajeva and Scott's *How Picturebooks Work* (2006: 2-4). According to both these sources, it is the focus on 'the literary' as opposed to highlight of 'the visual' in picturebooks what forms the two

extremes among approaches to picturebook study, with the third group – the advocates of importance of word-image interaction – somewhere in between.

Let us explain more closely what Lewis only indicated, and begin from one end of the spectrum implied above: from those studies on picturebooks whose authors have chosen to focus strictly on the visual aspects of the art form – on pictures. Such publications, according to Nikolajeva and Scott's description, usually comprehend picturebooks as a source of visual art: as objects for art history or else objects for art criticism, and their interest lies purely in the graphics of the individual images, in techniques employed in their creation, in their final design and similar artistic and visual concerns (2006: 3).

Slightly different though they are, studies that are concerned with thematic and stylistic diversity among picturebooks would also fall into this category at the very edge of the image-to-text continuum, for also here picturebooks are treated only as sets of illustrations which are to be categorized, 'without [considering] their relationship to the narrative text' (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 3). In addition, these studies generally pay attention to issues such as topics or genres in picturebooks, yet, as Denise Matulka points out on her website devoted to picturebooks, it is primarily its unique format what distinguishes picturebook from other artistic or literary forms, not its themes (1999a).

For both these groups of authors, it would seem, picturebook is something of a catalogue of single images or of varying themes rather than an art form of its own. These authors do not examine the character of picturebook; in fact, they wholly neglect it, considering usually only one of its layers – the visual, thus ignoring the twofold nature of the format.

On the other end of the continuum, one would find what might be called 'literary approach', where, as Nikolajeva and Scott put it, 'picturebooks are treated as an integral part of children's fiction' (2006: 3). Here themes, issues, ideologies, values etc. are discussed, mostly by authors who adopt a standpoint closest perhaps to that of a literary critic. These writers take picturebooks to be what Lewis in his quote has described as 'first and foremost books': they perceive picturebooks as no different from books of usual format, and consequently treat them as any other work of children's literature and judge them according to the same guidelines. And, as it is customary with 'ordinary' books, it is generally the printed text that matters; all the rest, from illustrations to

unique format of the actual volumes, is considered only secondary (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 3). Yet, in picturebooks, the written words form only one layer of narration, convey just one part of the book's message, since the accompanying images have just as much to say as the verbal text itself (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 2). Thus, in turning solely to the printed text, this approach is similarly indifferent to the picturebooks' specific format as the latter one, though it considers the verbal level of communication this time.

Finally, somewhere between the above described two ends of the scale, there are those authors who value the counterbalance of words and images in picturebooks as the form's distinctive, unifying feature; authors who believe that pictures, not only verbal text, have a certain communicative capacity and that they take a significant role in the story narration within picturebooks (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 4). Perry Nodelman should be mentioned here as one of the first academics to study the functioning of picturebook from this point of view. Nodelman is the author of *Words about pictures*, a publication which has according to Lewis 'become something of a standard work on the subject' (2001: xiiv) and which Nikolajeva and Scott believe to have made 'a significant contribution to the study of text-picture interaction' (2006: 4). Maria Nikolajeva, Carole Scott and David Lewis, all so often quoted in this thesis, would all belong to this category, too, as would further Lawrence R. Sipe, Peter Hunt, Alfred C. Baumgärtner, Kirsten Hallberg, Ulla Rhedin or Clare Bradford, to name at least a few of the major authors studying picturebooks through this approach, recognizing the role of the two levels of communication and their relationship in picturebooks.

It should be mentioned that not all authors who employ this attitude deal with text-image interaction; there are some who concentrate purely on pictures, though not in the same way as the first approach mentioned in this chapter did. Here, illustrations are not discussed from an art critic's point of view, but rather from the viewpoint of their role in narration and in picturebook communication, and they are examined in order to reveal their communicative potential, for example 'the ways of conveying such elements as space and movement' (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 4).

Although their exact focus is somewhat different from each other, what both latter groups of authors have in common is that they do not simplify picturebooks into mere verbal narrative or a picture catalogue. On the contrary, they recognize the two

levels of communication within picturebook – the verbal and the visual – as well as their interaction, and the possibilities it puts forward. In recognizing and focusing on the distinctive nature of picturebook, this approach is the only one that is indeed interested in the specific ways of the picturebook form, not in literary values or in visual art in general.

As for the standpoint of this thesis, it is precisely the specific character and unique format of picturebook what the work draws upon most often when arguing in favour of using picturebooks as a teaching aid in young learners' foreign language classroom. Obviously, picturebooks could be of value to language class even if only their illustrations, or just their stories were used constructively for purposes of foreign language instruction; this thesis acknowledges it, and even focuses on these particular components when discussing implementation of picturebook into language teaching in chapter 3. Nevertheless, if this paper specifically adopted any other approach than the last one described in the listing above, it would come nothing short of another study on implementation of pictures or stories into language instruction. That is why the last approach suits this thesis' purposes the best – because it intends to discuss picturebooks, and the thesis therefore attempts to regard picturebooks from this very point of view.

2.3 Describing picturebooks

It might seem simple to list several of the most basic characteristics of the contemporary picturebook form, yet it is not so, the main reason being perhaps that picturebooks are above all immensely diverse. Although they usually possess attributes that visibly distinguish them from other artistic or literary forms, such as high proportion of illustrations, scarceness of written text or singular formatting, picturebooks also differ much among each other. That is demonstrated in the first chapter of David Lewis' *Reading Contemporary Picturebooks*, where he examines and describes a sample of fourteen picturebooks in order to point out both their common features as well as differences between them (2001: 4-24). Lewis for example illustrates that while it is generally valid that a picturebook includes both text and image, the quantity of words in a book might vary significantly from one picturebook to another, since some volumes include relatively large chunks of text while others have no words at all (2001: 4-24). Furthermore, different authors use words and images within their

picturebooks in most varied, very own ways, giving them special functions in telling the story (if the book does narrate one) and creating quite unique impressions on the reader (Lewis 2001: 4-24; Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 12). In addition, some picturebooks tell stories while others do not, some are written in prose while others are in verse, and the books are considerably varied in their themes and genres as well (Lewis 2001: 4-24). The pictures inside picturebooks, too, vary tremendously from one volume to another, and in many aspects (Lewis 2001: 25). The list of differences could be even longer. Yet, besides diversity, there are still some features which picturebooks generally have in common and which will surely define the form more accurately than a catalogue of dissimilarities.

As for a standard description or a definition of the form, Denise Matulka justly remarks on her website that 'a universal definition of a picture book is hard to pin down' (1999a); perhaps that is why it seems rather difficult to trace one in the existing literature. There is a definition, though, quoted for example by Lewis (2001: 1) and relatively often used also by authors writing on the subject of picturebooks on the internet. This definition has been created by Barbara Bader and published as the introductory note to her *American Picturebooks from Noah's Ark to The Beast Within*, a study which presents a comprehensive history of picturebooks in America. I have chosen to cite Bader's statement here, as it encompasses many of the points this chapter wishes to comment on and thus provides a suitable outline to follow.

> 'A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and, foremost, an experience for a child.
> As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning of the page.
> On its own terms its possibilities are limitless.'
> (Bader in Lewis 2001: 1)

2.3.1 Words and pictures

In her definition, Bader starts at the very heart of picturebook: she identifies the basic elements of the form: text, illustrations, and total design. Words and pictures in picturebooks are indeed the major media to convey the book's message, and total design of the volume complements them, underlining the meaning and the effect of the book.

This subchapter deals especially with the role of words and pictures in picturebooks, leaving the issue of picturebook design to be discussed later on, in the next subchapter.

As for the ratio of words and pictures, picturebooks are typical for relative brevity of their written text (Lewis 2001: 25) and dominance of the illustrations (Matulka 1999a), so the amount of images generally highly surmounts the amount of printed words. Matulka estimates there are usually less than 500 words in a picturebook (1999a), although this is precisely one of the points where the diversity among picturebooks shows: while some count more than two thousand words, others have none at all (Matulka 1999a).

Surprisingly, although they do not contain any text, these so-called 'wordless picturebooks,' where *all* the information is conveyed through images, are also thought of as a certain form of picturebook, as already the term itself attests. This exception is briefly discussed by Lewis, who argues that although such books 'fail to meet the "interdependence of words and pictures" criterion [for the obvious reason that they lack any verbal text at all] there is enough similarity between these books and other more readily recognizable picturebooks for them to be accepted as such' (2006: 28). In other words, presence of a full-fledged, sequential 'visual text'[1] which in itself provides some kind of narration, even though not accompanied by printed words as is standard, makes a book similar enough to picturebooks (and dissimilar enough to standard verbal-text-based books) to classify it as a picturebook. Such an assumption definitely underlines the fact that a narrative expressed through pictures is something rather unique and in literature distinctive solely to picturebooks, and it also further emphasises picturebooks' boundless diversity.

Further in her definition, Bader maintains that it is not only simultaneous presence of verbal text and accompanying illustrations but also their interdependence what distinguishes a picturebook. Lewis' argumentation on wordless picturebooks in the former paragraph has revealed that he, too, generally recognizes text-image interaction in picturebooks as the form's standard feature. To indicate what this interdependence of text and image actually refers to, a simple comparison of picturebooks as opposed to illustrated books might be used:

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[1] 'Visual text' is Nikolajeva and Scott's standard term for a message conveyed in pictures. (e.g. 2006: 4)

Illustrated books generally convey information entirely through verbal text; pictures are added at first after the book has been written, they basically merely echo the printed words and do not significantly contribute to the book's message. They are thus virtually redundant and from the point of view of story narration or message transmission dispensable. On the contrary, words and pictures in picturebooks usually cannot easily discard each other. To explain: printed text and illustrations in picturebooks each provide certain information, and present it in a commentary of their own (Lewis 2001: 4). Unlike in illustrated books, though, these two commentaries often differ – they do not merely copy each other, or at least not fully (although symmetry *is* one of the many possible patterns of interaction between words and pictures in picturebooks) (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 17). Pictures often reveal one thing, words another. That is why the two media need to interact – because once 'woven together' they enrich each other and they can eventually provide a more complete, more comprehensible message of the page, or book. (Lewis 2001: 3) This word-image interaction thus creates a unique, composite medium typical for picturebook, which David Lewis refers to as the 'picturebook text' (2001: xiv); which Joseph Schwarz, as quoted in *How Picturebooks Work* (2006: 6), calls 'verbal-visual narration;' or which Kristin Hallberg, cited by the same source (2006:6), labels as 'iconotext'[2]. To sum up, in picturebooks both the verbal and the visual levels of communication take part in the narration (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 1), and neither words nor pictures can be omitted as none is sufficient without the other. (Lewis 2001: 4)

2.3.2 Picturebook anatomy and design

When mentioning 'the simultaneous display of two facing pages', Bader touches another major feature of contemporary picturebooks – their distinctive constitution, or 'anatomy' as Matulka inventively refers to it. (1999b) Some of the physical attributes of picturebooks are indeed quite unusual among books in general; Matulka in fact believes that, besides the unique 'picturebook text', it is precisely its specific format, not topics or genres included within picturebooks, what separates the form from other books in the

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[2] The term is probably inspired by semiotic terminology, which would refer to images in picturebooks as to complex iconic signs. (Streeter 2005) The term 'text' is usually associated with printed words or simply with verbal level of communication, and thus the word 'iconotext' refers to the composite blend of words and pictures by means of which picturebook communicates.

field of children's literature. (1999a) Nikolajeva and Scott likewise state that 'format is an extremely important feature of a picturebook'. (2006: 241) There are many physical traits of picturebooks that could be described here; Red Apple Education website on picturebooks, for instance, provides a comprehensive overview of the many features that could be listed under the heading of picturebook design (2008a). I shall choose and describe only several of these points, the major ones, and then those that are of importance to this thesis.

In their physical description, let us start from the very outside of picturebooks. Picturebook can generally have two shapes – rectangular or square, and if rectangular, then also two positions – horizontal or vertical (Matulka 1999b). The choice is not random but made with regard to author's artistic intentions and needs as to the setting and telling of the story (Matulka 1999b). For instance, rectangular shape with longer edges of the book running horizontally (which is actually very rare to find in volumes other than picturebooks) is 'especially useful in depicting space and movement' as it allows authors to spread their image (or images) across a relatively broad space, creating a kind of scenery not dissimilar to that of a theatre stage or a cinema screen (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 242). Vertically set rectangle, on the other hand, does not allow horizontal composition and thus is not ideal for depiction of movement or action, yet it would prove useful in other ways, for instance when 'demonstrating tall buildings, characters and objects' or in 'narratives involving a change in an individual rather than a change of location' (Red Apple Education 2008a).

Apart from their shape, picturebooks also substantially differ in size; and dimensions of individual volumes are chosen purposefully, too. Just like the shape of the book, its size can considerably add to the reading experience and to the impression of the book on the whole (Matulka 1999b). To use Matulka's example, very small books, for instance, are usually intended and most suitable for very small hands (1999b). Very big books, on the others hand, provide liberty for extensive visual depiction of the book's setting and may have a tendency to 'absorb' the reader, drag them into the scene. And when children in particular are concerned, big format might seem more attractive to them and the book is probably easier to handle (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 242).

Picturebook's covers, both front and back, usually sport some illustration related to the book's theme, sometimes even revealing brand new information on the story, and they contribute to (and go with) the book's overall design (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 241). Similarly, the endpapers – these pages glued to the inside of front and back covers of the book – can supply additional information to the narration (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006: 241), they match the total design of the book and, as Matulka puts it, 'are intended to enhance the mood or setting of a book' (1999b). Front and end matter of a picturebook – the first and the last page, providing usually information on the title, author, edition etc. (in the front) and acknowledgments (in the back) – are also, unlike in books of other than picturebook format, subject to the book's overall design (Red Apple Education 2008a). Thus, the whole picturebook volume indeed comes out as a composite unit.

As a standard, picturebooks contain thirty-two pages altogether; the scope, however, can extend from twenty-four to as many as sixty-four pages in some titles (Lewis 2001: 7). As for the organization of pages, there again picturebook format particularly differs from that of books in general. As far as 'ordinary' books are concerned, two pages lying next to each other in an open volume are to be read successively, at first the block of text printed on the page on the left, then the one on the page on the right. In picturebooks, though, not all pages are intended to be viewed separately. On the contrary, apart from single-page illustrations, picturebook authors often create also so-called 'page-openings', or 'double-page spreads', defined by Lewis as 'the complete visual display created when a picturebook is opened out flat showing the left- and right-hand pages side by side' (2001: 168). Double-page spreads break the sequential reading convention characteristic for common book format, as they require the reader to look across both pages of the page-opening and view them at once and as one whole (Lewis 2001: 168). The Red Apple Education page on picturebook illustrations further asserts that this design technique 'is particularly effective […] to emphasize a single moment in time or a particular instant of the plot' and that it 'give[s] viewers an insight into scenes and to worlds that may have been created for the picture book' (2008b).

Furthermore, picturebooks use a number of individual artistic techniques on their pages, such as borders (also called frames), vignettes or panels. (Matulka 1999b) It

would be pointless, and too lengthy, to describe all of these in greater detail. The essential point common to these techniques is that every one of them in a way adds to the artistic statement of the illustrations, some also support the narration, and they all contribute to balance and variety of a picturebook page (Matulka 1999b), thus 'affect[ing] the meaning and effect of the picture book as a whole' (Red Apple Education 2008b).

Finally, as a conclusion to this enumeration of picturebook characteristics I wish to point out that all the attributes mentioned above are especially important since they take part in creating the 'total design' of picturebook, the third basic element of the picturebook form as listed in Barbara Bader's definition. In its functioning, picturebook indeed heavily relies on the effect which a book's overall appearance creates on the reader, on the entire impression that it leaves behind (Red Apple Education 2008a), which has hopefully been sufficiently illustrated in the description of picturebooks' physical attributes provided above. To confirm the significance of this issue, it might also be mentioned that entire picturebook design in fact figures for instance also among the official criteria for Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award, a prize granted yearly by Canadian Children's Book Centre to one outstanding Canadian picturebook. The guidelines of this event actually state, among other conditions, that 'there should be a seamless integration of text, illustration *and design*' in order for a book to be eligible as a picturebook (Criteria and Submission Guidelines).

2.3.3 Picturebook's audience

There is one more point Barbara Bader has mentioned in her definition that is to be commented on here – the target audience of picturebooks. Although it might seem that, in elaborating on picturebook's audience, the paper slightly moves away from describing the actual art form in itself, it must be admitted that *who* a book is written for definitely influences *how* it is written, and in this way the audience becomes an influential factor in a (picture)book's description. In addition, picturebook audience at least partially overlaps with the target group on which this thesis concentrates when presenting picturebook as a means of foreign language instruction, which conveniently allows this sub-chapter to conclude the description of picturebook and at the same time introduce the further focus of the paper.

Bader believes, to use her own words as quoted above, that picturebook is 'foremost an experience for a child'. Although such an assumption would be most suitable as regards purposes of this thesis, it would be wrong to claim that all picturebooks are intended for young readers, or *solely* for young readers, as they are not. The Red Apple Education website on picturebooks explains in the introductory overview that

> '[t]raditionally, it was common to view picture books as serving as reading tools for younger children. […] Many picture books are written with these particular audiences in mind. In recent times, however, artists and writers have combined to create picture books with multiple layers of meaning and complex themes, suitable for older school students and adults alike. The way in which the images and text work together with the overall design of a picture book has become quite artistic. The themes that are expressed can be complex and mature.' (2008c)

David Lewis likewise admits that 'some picturebooks are designed to appeal primarily to older children and adolescents' and 'some […] do not seem to be addressed to young people at all' (2001: 77).

In addition, even if a picturebook is targeted at young readers in some way, it does not necessarily mean that it is intended to appeal to young readers *only*. In this aspect picturebooks do not differ from children's literature in general, and thus Barbara Wall's theory and terminology concerned with different 'modes of address' in children's books could be applied here (Wall in Hunt 1994: 12). According to Wall, there are three possible kinds of address to be found in children's literature: 'single address' (in books which are written for children only), 'double address' (in books which address both children and adults but each by different means or elements; for instance, the story is written primarily for children but its author addresses adults by including jokes the child reader will not understand) and 'dual address' (when both the audiences are addressed at once and by same means – when the story is told in a way 'that allows [adult and child] a conjunction of interests') (Wall in Hunt 1994: 12-13). Thus a picturebook targeted seemingly at children can have something to offer to an adult reader as well.

Apparently, the actual audience of picturebook is not exclusively comprised of young readers, just as that of children's literature on the whole isn't. This thesis, however, intends to introduce picturebook as a means of foreign language teaching at

elementary school, and in its further course will therefore narrow down the focus on the juvenile part of the audience only. Moreover, although carefully chosen picturebooks might prove an effective teaching aid with learners of different ages and levels of proficiency, I believe that the nature of the form possesses particular potential (as well as singular charm) for the youngest, beginning learners in the primary foreign language classroom, and my paper will therefore concentrate on exactly this target group. Detailed explanation as to how picturebook matches the needs of young learners and how it can effectively facilitate their learning of foreign language is provided in the following chapter.

3. Picturebooks in language teaching

It has already been explained that picturebooks are written for (and thus probably also read by) virtually anyone as far as age is concerned, from very young children who actually cannot read printed text yet and share the picturebook-reading experience with their parents, over adolescents, to adults alone. Similarly, I believe, picturebooks might be implemented into foreign language instruction with learners of very different ages; after all, books as well as authentic materials (both of which picturebooks are) have been applied as a popular and useful teaching aid in language teaching with learners of all ages and levels. Obviously, appropriate choice, suitable methods of implementation, and first of all the base consideration of whether a particular picturebook can provide opportunities to practise what particular learners need at the moment would be crucial to success, just as when employing any teaching aid.

Nonetheless, it is my personal opinion that picturebooks are very well, if not best suited above all for *young* foreign language learners. There are several points in favour of this assumption. For one, the choice is definitely broadest among picturebooks for young readers, as most picturebooks are indeed 'written with these particular audiences in mind' (Red Apple Education 2008c). Secondly, with 'real books'[3] and authentic materials there is often the difficulty that texts which would best suit certain group of learners in their theme and topic contain language that is far above their level, since they are originally written for native-speakers, though of approximately the same age. This issue certainly touches picturebooks as well, but especially as far as picturebooks for the youngest, emergent readers are concerned (text is simpler and scarce) – and re-considered as a language teaching tool for young language learners - beginners (first three years of primary education), the clash between preferred thematic orientation and 'achievability' of the language seems to be much smaller, as compared e.g. to picturebooks for older children. In addition, there is the picture narrative in picturebooks, which (if we forget about different cultural contexts) is no less readable to a foreign language learner than to a native-speaker, and significantly supports understanding. The strongest argument, however, stays in the fact that picturebook as a

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[3] Term commonly used by teachers to refer to authentic books (see e.g. Enever and Schmid-Schönbein 2006)

teaching aid promptly matches many of young children's learning needs and offers opportunities for children's development in various aspects – cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic. How exactly picturebook can cater for young learners' needs during foreign language instruction is to be illustrated on the following pages.

3.1 Child as a learner

When demonstrating in which way picturebooks match young language learners' needs, it might be appropriate to start by listing what their learning needs actually are and how they learn.

To begin with, there are many common generalizations as to what kind of learners young children are. It is for example generally understood that young children are livelier, more positive, more enthusiastic about learning than adults are; they are ready to take part in activities offered by the teacher and 'prepared to enjoy them' (Phillips 1993: 7). Truthfulness of this assumption would certainly depend on a variety of conditions in individual cases, as for instance whether the child has hitherto experienced their classes to be enjoyable and stimulating, or what kind of attitude towards learning (and towards the specific subject matter) they have brought from home. It is, however, still true that children in general approach learning with much more eagerness than learners at later age, and as Opal Dunn remarks in her publication *Beginning English with Young Children*, '[i]f teachers can manage to capture children's enthusiasm and keep it, […] foundations for what may be a life-long interest [in the subject matter in question] can be laid' (Dunn 1983: 1). Affective aims of building up self-confidence and positive attitudes towards language learning are indeed considered of highest importance in primary language instruction (Klippel 2006: 83). Since picturebook is frequently described as an item of 'strong socio-affective appeal' (Read 2006: 11), possessing a 'power of attraction [which] may be exploited to make language learning pleasurable and memorable' (Klippel 2006: 81) 'in ways that are enjoyable and enduring' (Read 2006: 11), its potential as regards this domain (when it is chosen and implemented appropriately) is not to be doubted.

However fast young learners may be enthralled or won over, their attention and interest can waver and fade away just as rapidly, chiefly due to the fact that their attention and concentration span is very short (Scott and Ytreberg 1990: 2). How long a

child can concentrate on (or keep to) one activity varies individually and depends on many factors, such as whether they understand the task in question, whether the difficulty level is appropriate to the child's possibilities, or whether the activity simply is not taking too long (Dunn 1983: 9-10). In classroom, the issue of short attention span is further complemented by the fact that young children find it rather difficult to sit still or to stay in one position for longer periods of time (Dunn 1983: 14). Such continuous need for physical movement in children at this age does not result from their limited concentration span but is closely connected to the physical development currently in progress (Dunn 1983: 14). In effect, however, both these facts result in a single conclusion – young children require a particularly varied programme when they are to be taught efficiently, and the variability needs to show in many different aspects. As for picturebooks, their value partly lies in the rich context they provide, which can be utilized as a reference point for a broad variety of related activities, limits being set only by boundaries of teacher's imagination (e.g. Ellis 2006: 95; Hughes 2006: 153).

Phillips further mentions that the younger the child, the more holistic learner they are (1993: 7). For language classroom this means that children do not focus on language alone but on the whole context, situation, and the sense hidden in it, and consequently respond to meaning underlying the language used rather than perceive it as an abstract system which to be learned in order to be understood (Phillips 1993: 7-8). In other words, children 'make sense of language by making sense of the situation' (Lugossy 2006: 25), and as a result they also treat language similarly – according to its potential function and use (not form), as a means of achieving something (Phillips 1993: 8). They 'are more concerned with the use of language to convey meaning than with correct usage' (Dunn 1983: 3) and they often 'use language skills long before they are aware of them' (Scott and Ytreberg 1990: 2). Apparently, therefore, in their language classes children need to be provided with highly contextualized language, as relevant, as practical, as communicative as possible (Phillips 1993: 8), presented and practised by means of communicative-style activities. Contribution of picturebook to language classroom as regard this aspect is indisputable, as the task of contextualizing language is continuously fulfilled by illustrations within picturebook, and the act of picturebook-reading in itself is a common, realistic activity, near (and dear) to young learners' experience. Furthermore, Scott and Ytreberg also reflect on the holistic nature of

children's learning when they write that their 'understanding comes through hands and eyes and ears' (1990: 2); this formulation suggest that context provided for the language used in young learners' classroom should be as varied as possible and allow children a multi-sensory, hands-on experience.

It is also noted in literature that children at very young age (approximately up to the age of seven or eight) are quite self-centred and prefer individual work to groupwork (Scott and Ytreberg 1990: 2-3). Self-centredness is a typical psychological feature in individuals at this age and is caused by their current way of thinking – to accept that there can be different views or opinions than their own is for most children till the age of seven very difficult (Fontana 2003: 68). It follows that, rather than inclining to their classmates, young learners require constant attention and immediate feedback from their teacher (Scott and Ytreberg 1990: 2-3; Cameron 2001: 1). This is connected to the fact that young children cannot yet decide what they are to learn or how, and are therefore strongly dependant on adult support in the classroom (Dunn 1983: 12). As regards the process of picturebook-reading in classroom, the activity is not to be taken up by learners on their own, without support; conversely, it is collective and continuously guided by the teacher, who assist the class in order to permit their successful accomplishment of the reading task, thus perhaps allowing the learners to achieve something they could not have accomplished, or would not even have dared attempt on their own.

These observations (along with numerous others) are frequently discussed by literature focused on teaching young learner classes and they are certainly significant to successful work with primary learners, whether the subject to be taught is foreign language or mathematics, and whichever the approaches and methods employed during the instruction are. Nevertheless, to understand in depth how young children learn and how they learn languages in particular, it is necessary to reach further and consult resources on child development and theory of learning and language development. To relate all findings from these fields here would be too extensive as well as irrelevant to the purposes of this paper, and therefore only selected concepts are to be discussed, particularly those that can later be exploited to illustrate the potential of picturebooks in foreign language teaching.

Learning through active interaction

The name of Jean Piaget belongs to the most influential ones within the field of twentieth-century developmental psychology, and is perhaps most frequently associated with his theory of cognitive development. Piaget distinguishes four distinct stages of cognitive growth which children move through as they gradually develop (Huitt and Hummel 2003); '[a]t each stage, a child is capable of some types of thinking but still incapable of others'; and each particular ability can be mastered at first when the corresponding stage in development has been reached (Cameron 2001: 4). Numerous pre-school and primary educational programmes have been modelled on Piaget's theory (Huitt and Hummel 2003), yet the concept of detached development stages has also been criticized for underestimating children's actual potential, for instance by Donaldson, Baillargeon or Bryant and Trabasso (Fontana 2003: 72-73).

There is a second aspect to Piaget's concept, however, a more significant one to the purposes of this thesis: apart from stages which individuals pass through as they learn, Piaget was also interested in *how* they actually learn (Huitt and Hummel 2003). In Piagetian perspective,

> '[t]he child is seen as continually interacting with the world around her/him, solving problems that are presented by the environment. It is through taking action to solve problems that learning occurs. […] The knowledge that results from such action is […] *actively constructed* by the child.'   (Cameron 2001: 2-3)

Furthermore, this process of constructing knowledge through contact with surrounding environment is closely bound to prior knowledge and experience of the world which children already possess and bring with them into the classroom, and which act as 'a springboard into further learning' (Read 2006: 18). According to Piaget, children in new learning situations draw on their existing cognitive structures and concepts and either adjust them to fit and explain the current circumstances ('accommodating' them), or they use these concepts as a kind of model to re-structure the current situation accordingly in order for it to be clarified by these older structures ('assimilating' them) (Huitt and Hummel 2003).

When it comes to language instruction, Piaget's view of how children generally learn can be applied as a parallel to how they learn languages in classroom, implying that just as the world offers children opportunities to learn and develop through active

interaction with their environment, classroom environment should become a source of situations that invite interactive learning, of situations which would grant children new learning experiences (Cameron 2001: 5). Children need to be engaged in their lessons, need to be allowed to actively take part in them in order to learn (Cameron 2001: 4). Furthermore, teacher should bear in mind that while making sense of new situations (or new language, in the context of a language lesson), children can only draw on their limited previous knowledge, and consequently gain understanding just in terms of what they have already experienced (Cameron 2001: 4). This implies that when taught, children need to be approached in a way that allows them to make sense of new problems, situations or subject matter in terms of their own present possibilities – which for the target group means above all through sufficient authentic, practical experience (Fontana 2003: 69-70, 79).

As for picturebook-centred language lessons, it can be remarked that, firstly, picturebook-reading is considered to be a highly active process for the learners (which is to be accounted for in detail in subchapter 3.2.2); and, secondly, that throughout the process, learners have a chance to draw on their rich pre-existing experience with stories and narratives, which aids their successful accomplishment of the reading activity – their comprehension (as discussed in detail in subchapter 3.2.3 devoted to stories in particular).

Social dimension of learning; zone of proximal development
There is one important feature which is neglected by Piaget's theory of cognitive development, yet is a central one to children's daily experience: the social dimension of living, and learning. As Cameron conveniently puts it, '[w]hereas for Piaget the child is an active learner alone in a world of objects, for Lev Vygotsky the child is an active learner in a world full of other people' (2001: 6).

Key principle of Vygotsky's concept is that children develop through social interaction with others, especially with people who are more skilled, more knowledgeable than the children themselves (Read 2006: 12). These more knowledgeable individuals, be it adults or just more-skilled peers, can 'mediate' new information or skills to children which would be way too difficult and therefore inaccessible to them if they attempted them on their own (Cameron 2001: 6). Read

explains this mediation process when she writes that an adult carer, as an example of a person more competent than the developing child, possesses the language and cognition essential to fulfilling a certain task and can therefore '[guide] the child through relevant behaviour' until they are able to understand and perform the task successfully on their own (Read 2006: 12).

The area within which a child can carry out an action or a task if provided with a more skilled person's assistance is in Vygotsky's concept referred to as the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD). Vygotsky himself defines it as the space between the level on which children can successfully solve problems on their own (or 'actual development level') and the level of tasks which they can successfully perform when provided with adult or peer assistance ('level of potential development') (Vygotsky in Dahms 2007). The concept was conveniently visualized by Read (2006: 12) in the form of this simple, comprehensible table:

Level of potential development as determined by problem-solving under adult guidance
Zone of proximal development
Actual development level as determined by independent problem-solving

Vygotsky believes that learning can occur only within this very area – when the tasks or learning problems are one step ahead of learner's current level of competence (Dahms 2007). Read agrees when she explains that when the level of difficulty of a task does not reach the ZPD, children can already do it independently and learning is taken no further; when the level is situated beyond it, task cannot be achieved, not even with help, and learning is taken no further either (Read 2006: 12). Furthermore, functioning of ZPD is closely connected to so-called scaffolding. Scaffolding is a metaphor for the assistance of a more knowledgeable person, for the aid to learning and development which individuals receive when working within their ZPD (Dahms 2007). It is a complex, many-layered learning tool, since relevant support can be provided in a variety of ways at once (Dahms 2007), and it is also a dynamic concept – applied aptly when support is necessary, then gradually adjusted as learner's competence is being developed, until eventually completely withdrawn as the learner becomes independent (Cameron 2001: 8). Scaffolding is in more detail described later on, as a concept developed further by Jerome S. Bruner.

One more of Vygotsky's concepts to be mentioned here is that of internalization. Vygotsky claims that '[e]very function in child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)' (Vygotsky in Kearsley 1994-2008). In other words, the external social interaction between the child and people in their environment is the vital step towards learning and development, yet only just the first one: it creates the primary input which is still to be gradually internalized by the child, becoming 'the inner, personalized resource for child's own thinking' (Read 2006: 12).

As for implications of Vygotsky's theory for language instruction, similarly to Lynne Cameron I believe that there are many of them and that they can 'help in constructing a theoretical framework for teaching foreign languages to children' (2001: 7). Vygotsky's belief in key role of social interaction suggests that foreign language classroom activities should offer opportunities for communication and interaction both between learners and their teacher and among learners themselves – a piece of advice often reflected in handbooks on teaching languages to young learners, which for instance suggest that foreign language is best to be approached 'as a vehicle of communication and not [as] grammar' (Phillips 1993: 8), as something 'to [be] use[d] in real experiences' (Dunn 1983: 2). These publications, however, frequently promote above all relevant, practical and communicative language input, and do not mention that not just the language that is worked on but also nature of the activities through which it is conveyed and atmosphere of the lesson on the whole should invite social interaction among participants. Such a requirement is fulfilled as regards picturebook, its reading in class being essentially a collective activity which allows learners a 'shared social experience' (Ellis 2006: 95). This process often evokes personal reflection on the story on the part of the learners who, by voicing how they comprehend the narrative, mutually support each other's understanding (Read 2006: 15-16). This generally corresponds with Vygotsky's concept of learning through social interaction with others.

As for Vygotsky's concept of ZPD, Cameron proposes that it is especially useful for teachers' decisions. 'In deciding what a teacher can do to support learning, we can use the idea that the adult tries to mediate *what next it is the child can learn*', she writes, which can then be applied 'in both lesson planning and in how teachers talk to pupils

minute by minute', helping the teacher to meet many important decisions about children's further learning (2001: 7-8). Theory of ZPD is further closely connected to the idea of scaffolding which, as Read believes, 'is a powerful metaphor for encouraging teachers to reflect on the nature and degree of support that they give young children […] in English language lessons' (Read 2006: 12). (Interestingly, the issue of scaffolding actually comes up later, during the research experience, as described in chapter 4 of the thesis. The research report among others illustrates how excessive scaffolding provided by teacher during a picturebook-reading activity can influence picturebook's potential – or rather the way in which it shows during the particular language class, and can thus strongly affect overall development of the lesson.)

Returning to Vygotsky, there is one last notion of his to be noted here – that of internalization. It suggests that children's learning cannot suffice with one-time input of e.g. certain language structure, but needs numerous opportunities to encounter and experience it further, and in relevant context, in order for the child to truly master the particular language function and to be able to use it in own speech, to make it their own (Cameron 2001: 8). While it *is* considered typical of picturebooks that they are to be read and re-read multiple times (Klippel 2006: 81), this concept of Vygotsky's might rather suggest that picturebook, when aiming at learners' mastery of the language input it presents, should be used as one of several aids or sources introducing learners to the particular language. In this way, picturebook-reading can be employed as a possibility for learners to recycle (and internalize) the vocabulary or language which they already know.

Scaffolding

The term scaffolding, as has already been mentioned, refers to 'guidance, collaboration and support provided by the teacher [or other competent person] to guide a child through its ZPD in order to reach new independence in learning' (Read 2006: 13). The concept is anchored in Vygotsky's belief that if they are provided with competent assistance, children can complete tasks or master skills which they could not manage alone (Galguera 2003) – an idea adopted and further developed by Wood, Bruner and Ross, originally in the context of parental tutoring of very young children and their first language acquisition (Read 2006: 13). For Bruner, 'scaffolds are *intentional*, *temporary*

and flexible structures built to match the learner's development' (Galguera 2003); intentional since they are set up with the distinctive wish to help the child move on, temporary as they are to be removed once the child can act competently and independently, flexible because they are being dynamically adjusted to the child's changing needs (Read 2006: 13).

Wood, Bruner and Ross originally identified six components of effective scaffolding, among them for example generating children's interest for a task, simplifying it, or emphasizing its key points; still more supportive features have been suggested and discussed in literature for teachers and language teachers since then (Read 2006: 15, 17-19). Among all these many notions there is one to be commented on here, provided still by Bruner – that of 'formats and routines' as tools of scaffolding. As Cameron puts it, formats and routines are extremely useful for they 'combine the security of the familiar with the excitement of the new' (2001: 9). In other words, while providing scaffolding in form of familiar, predictable context (Cameron 2001: 9) and a familiar, secure environment for learning (Lugossy 2006: 24), routine events also open up space for learners' further development as they grow increasingly complex and are gradually adjusted to learners' shifting needs (Cameron 2001: 9-10). In this way, routines provide learners with 'space for growth [which] ideally matches the child's zone of proximal development', and are also compliant with Vygotsky's concept of internalization (Cameron 2001: 10-11). In addition, formats and routines ensure safe learning environment, an issues considered also by Steven Krashen's concept of language acquisition and language learning, which will be in more detail discussed next.

Picturebook used in young learners' language classroom would actually count as a scaffold, due to its power to capture learners' attention and evoke their interest. Furthermore, the repetitive act of picturebook-reading does in itself create a classroom routine of a sort, especially when implementation of picturebook into language lesson is not an isolated, sporadic occurrence. In addition, when reading a picturebook in class, young learners can draw on their previous experience with similar reading-related routines from home, which both aids their successful reading and helps establish secure learning environment.

Language learning and language acquisition

Concluding this subchapter, views of Stephen Krashen, American applied linguist widely known for his Theory of Second Language Acquisition, are to be outlined here. Krashen's concept is built up around five central hypotheses, three of which will be discussed here, along with brief sketch of critique they provoked.

First among them is the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, which is considered fundamental for Krashen's concept, and which claims that there are two different ways of developing foreign language competence – acquisition and learning (Schütz 2007). Language acquisition is, according to Krashen, a subconscious process similar to that through which children acquire their mother tongue, by means of which learners achieve competence without explicitly focusing on the form of language (Stern 1983: 20). Language learning, on the contrary, refers to 'conscious language development' as it usually arises in 'formal, school-like settings' (Stern 1983: 20); a process during which 'conscious rules about language are developed' (Richards and Rodgers 2001: 181). Although this distinction has been widely criticized, mainly as regards Krashen's presentation of the two systems as distinctly separate (Mason 2003a), it is my opinion that it presents a helpful pointer to the fact that, in Mason's words, 'human learning is a multi-faceted skill, that calls on a number of different processes that work together' (1999), language learning notwithstanding, and language teachers should therefore attempt to create such conditions in classroom that would allow coupling of learning and acquisition – an opinion shared e.g. by Stern (1983: 393).

Acquisition-learning distinction is complemented by the Input hypothesis, which attempts to explain how second language acquisition takes place. Its claim is that language acquisition can only occur when learners are exposed to sufficient amount of comprehensible input which is linguistically slightly beyond their current level of competence (– an assertion resembling Vygotsky's idea of learning within the ZPD) (Richards and Rodgers 2001: 182). Comprehensibility of such input is ensured either by modification of input into a form intelligible to the learner (Mason 2003b), or by means of situational and contextual clues (Richards and Rodgers 2001: 182). Also Input hypothesis has been subjected to a considerable amount of criticism; it is for instance argued that implementation of Krashen's notion of comprehensible input would expose learners to poor, substandard language samples; that it would not require them to

actively attempt to understand language at all as they could 'read the environment'; or that the attitude significantly downplays the role of production in learning a language; it is also attacked for providing insufficient amount of empirical evidence for its claims (Mason 2003b). Still, I perceive the hypothesis useful in its essence, as it in fact points out relevance of providing rich, contextualized language input into language classroom.

Finally, Affective Filter hypothesis expresses Krashen's view that there is a number of 'affective variables' which act in individual learners as an 'adjustable filter that freely passes, impedes or blocks the input necessary to acquisition' (Richards and Rodgers 2001: 183). Krashen identifies motivation, self-confidence and anxiety as those variables; while learners with low affective filter – motivated, self-confident learners, suffering a low level of anxiety –are better equipped for acquisition, high affective filter in a learner – caused by 'low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety' – can significantly limit acquisition, or even prevent it from taking place (Schütz 2007). Although Affective Filter hypothesis received some amount of critique related to lack of standard definition of terms used, most of its claims are generally accepted (Mason 2003c).

For the sake of completeness of the outline, Krashen's concept further comprises the Natural Order hypothesis (arguing that acquisition of grammatical structures follows in a predictable order), and the Monitor hypothesis (claiming that while acquired language plays the role of 'utterance initiator', the learned system only acts as a 'monitor', or 'editor' of what is being said) (Richards and Rodgers 2001: 181-182). These are not elaborated on, as they do not seem to relate to the issue of picturebook's use as a teaching aid too closely.

If viewed in the light of Krashen's concept as presented above, picturebook-centred work seems to be well-suited to allow combination of acquisition and learning in language classroom. First, picturebook appears to contribute helpful target language input into the language lesson: it surpasses the risk of providing a poor language sample by being authentic, yet the input can still be rendered comprehensible, considering the strong contextualization ensured by the accompanying illustrations. The input can be worked with as both language to be acquired (for instance during simple, story-focused picturebook-reading activity) and language to be learned (by means of related activities, exercises etc.). Also, as has already been mentioned previously, the activity of

picturebook-reading might help establish safe, non-threatening environment in classroom, lowering the anxiety factors, and possesses a potential to boost learner's motivation for language learning, in effect increasing learners' chances for successful acquisition, and learning in general.

3.2 Picturebook in young learners' language lessons

Generally speaking, primary language teachers make use of variety of resources in their lessons. Although they, similarly to language teachers in higher levels of education, frequently reach for a textbook in order to help them create at least a rough framework for their course, it is common that a multitude of other material also finds its way into primary language classrooms. There are posters, pictures and flashcards, worksheets and colouring sheets, even of own devising, toys and other real objects, CDs, DVDs and video cassettes with much interesting material in the target language, and a lot more. And, among all those, there are usually also some books – diverse stories and fairy-tales, poems and rhymes, picture dictionaries, easy-readers, and perhaps a few picturebooks, too – although, it seems, these are not yet so common in our (Czech) language classroom context. Following pages attempt to show what it is that picturebooks in particular have to offer to the primary language classroom, how they can support and enrich primary language instruction. At the same time, this chapter does not want to suggest that picturebooks are in any way 'better' than other resources of similar nature, nor that they could or should replace them; it only aims to show that picturebooks make a competent match for all those – that they present one another alternative with some useful specifics of its own, and that language learners can benefit from their use in their classes.

3.2.1 Authenticity

At the outset, it is to be mentioned that picturebooks fall to the category of 'real books' – authentic books; having been originally written for native English-speaking audience, they incorporate both native-like language as well as authentic cultural values. This authenticity is generally valued in language teaching materials, and it is a characteristic which many other common teaching resources of similar character, such as easy-readers, stories included in textbooks or generally any texts written with

particular language learning objectives and learner audiences in mind, miss (Klippel 2006: 84). Yet, while authenticity serves as a reason in favour of picturebook's application in language classroom, it has also been a subject which provides ground for much concern and argumentation against using picturebooks in young learners' language instruction, which is why I want to discuss the issue before turning to other areas of picturebooks' potential.

Of course, there is the question of what authentic material brings into the language lesson, besides authentic language and cultural background. After all, there is a range of educational materials available which, carefully prepared, lack neither on attractiveness nor on functionality, and even if they do lack on authenticity, they can mediate both language and cultural values splendidly. Janet Enever expresses her viewpoint on value of authenticity in the classroom through comparison of authentic picturebooks to stories incorporated into textbooks and other published educational material. She claims that while the latter 'could best be described as readers, designed to support learners by providing "practice in English" […] – with the implied message that learners need to focus on learning words and phrases rather than enjoying stories' (2006: 59), authentic picturebooks prioritise the pleasure of reading, the fascination with the imaginary world, '[the] thought-provoking experience, aiming to facilitate the child's engagement with the construction of meaning relevant to their world', and thus seem much more interesting and motivating to learners (2006: 66). Clearly, this interpretation would to some extent depend on the way picturebook texts are worked with in the classroom; Wright points to this issue when discussing general use of stories in the classroom, yet his warning can be readily applied to implementation of picturebooks, too:

> 'If the teacher uses stories merely to introduce and practise grammar or particular lexical areas or functions, children may lose their faith in the teacher and what he or she means with the word "story". When focusing on features of the language, be careful not to lose the magic of the story altogether!'
> (Wright 1995: 8)

Nevertheless, from this point of view, authenticity does not only make the picturebook-reading experience a highly pleasurable and motivating activity, associated by children rather with fun than with learning, but it also addresses learners' imagination and encourages them to creatively construct meaning (thus practising their cognitive

strategies), promotes their language learning through relevant language input which they wish to understand, and helps generate their positive attitudes to both foreign language as well as books and literacy.

Desirability of authenticity in texts for beginning language learners has, however, also been doubted. Friederike Klippel, for example, warns that though authenticity is 'trendy', it might be counterproductive, and adds that suitability, not authenticity should be the principal factor when selecting classroom resources (2006: 84). She points to the fact that emergent language learners need 'small steps', support and scaffolding in order to learn or acquire language efficiently (as was argued by both Vygotsky and Bruner), and she rightly claims that published educational materials often provide linguistic and cultural support and explanations that authentic ones lack, which makes them far too difficult for young learners to grasp (Klippel 2006: 84-85). Admittedly, Klippel's arguments are generally valid; yet, as for picturebooks in particular, they are not exactly in place. Even though picturebooks lack linguistic scaffolding commonly provided by educational texts, such as the use of limited range of vocabulary or implementation of simple grammatical structures only, they efficiently compensate for this absence by supporting understanding in other ways, mainly through scarceness of text combined with strong expressiveness of the universally present visual narrative. Since picturebook story is narrated as much in pictures as in words, children can understand a substantial part of the narrative already from the illustrations; in this way, the language used is contextualized and made more comprehensible (an effect which can be further supported by scaffolding efforts of the teacher involved in picturebook reading). Such a method of scaffolding seems to be quite suitable to the holistic nature of children's learning, perhaps even more so than purely linguistic support, especially if one considers the inclination of children's minds towards unlocking meaning of messages rather than understanding their linguistic form, or their ability to acquire language if presented with relevant, contextualised, comprehensible input (in compliance with Krashen).

In addition, it is my opinion that authenticity and suitability do not necessarily oppose each other, and can be combined. Picturebooks vary considerably among each other and some are definitely more suitable for classroom implementation, or for a particular group of learners, than others; moreover, there are uncountable ways how to

work with picturebooks in language lessons, and still new ones can be devised in order to fit just the needs of a given class. Thus, Klippel's critical view should definitely remind teachers that 'circumstances and goals need to be taken into account, and the most appropriate choice needs to [be made]' before an authentic picturebook is implemented into a language lesson (Klippel 2006: 85), yet it should not discourage teachers from using authentic materials at all.

It seems that, despite the 'linguistic challenge' they bring along, authentic picturebooks have much to offer to young language learners. After all, challenging tasks slightly beyond learners' current level of competence, when scaffolded and performed with the help of a teacher who guides them through the process, are just what Vygotsky identifies as the best (and only) ground for learning to take place.

3.2.2 Multiple aims of primary language instruction

'Language teaching at primary level which emphasises the development of language skills alone is not adequate,' claims Gail Ellis in her paper on story-based approach in language teaching (2006: 104); and the same idea is echoed in most academic publications dealing with language instruction of young learners. Phillips, for example, states that '[t]he years at primary school are extremely important in children's intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development' and consequently even 'primary language teachers have a much wider responsibility than the mere teaching of a language system' (1993: 5-6). Enough has been written on this issue also by authors discussing picturebook in foreign language teaching to prove that picturebook as a teaching aid can aptly match the requirement for learners' multilateral development, for it is not solely capable of contributing to learners' linguistic progress but also to their overall cognitive and affective growth, 'holistic development and general education' (Ellis 2006: 95).

Firstly, picturebook-reading in language classroom has the potential to promote social and emotional development in young learners. The act of reading the book aloud in a group, when children '[share] the book as a social experience' (Enever 2006: 60), can indeed be organized as a pleasurable social event when children sit on the carpet close to the teacher and to each other and enjoy the group dynamics of being there together, listening and reading together, and unlocking the meaning of words and

pictures both individually and together (as reflected e.g. in project report by Sadowska-Martyka, in Enever and Schmid-Schönbein 2006: 134). This shared experience 'provokes a response of laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation [and it] also acts to socialize children by showing acceptable ways of living and behaving, morals, beliefs and values' (Ellis 2006: 95). Moreover, picturebooks undeniably impress emotionally on their individual readers through the 'aesthetic experience' they mediate (Kierepka 2006: 123), through the 'affective impact of a work of art' (Arizpe 2006: 35), which stems chiefly from the presence of illustrations in picturebooks and will be discussed in more detail in subchapter devoted to the role pictures play in facilitating language development.

Also, picturebooks are believed to contribute to development of learners' 'communicative and cognitive strategies in understanding the story' (Kierepka 2006: 123). Lantham explains the facilitative effect of reading on cognition when she writes that reading (or listening to) and understanding a narrative involves a complex mental process during which the children engaged 'are greatly enlarging their strategies for grasping meaning, their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and their imaginations' (Lantham in Hughes 2006: 152). As for picturebook stories in particular, the blend of pictures and words which constitutes them makes reading experience become a kind of 'psycholinguistic guessing game' where illustrations support learners' understanding of the storyline, provide explanations for the key vocabulary, and along with the verbal text invoke 'continuous anticipation and prediction', allowing children to develop cognitive strategies while reading (Kierepka 2006:123). From this angle, picturebook-reading presents itself as a process during which learners are actively engaged in the process of meaning-making, figuring out the sense concealed in the picturebook both individually – when drawing on their prior knowledge and experience (in compliance with Piaget's views), and collectively – being supported in their comprehension by commentaries provided by their peers as well as their teacher (similarly to Vygotsky's viewpoint on learning). Hughes, for instance, enumerates that during the activity children are simultaneously creating and image in their mind of what they understand is happening, trying to predict what will happen next, following the illustrations to help them unlock the story and looking and listening out for any language they would recognize for the same reason, then following the oral

storyline to catch and perhaps also watching the teacher with one eye in order to catch any paralinguistic support coming form that side, such as gestures, facial expressions or intonation, and interpreting all those (2006: 154). Even if one does not consider the input provided by fellow classmates as another point to be noted and interpreted, this proves that young learner plays a very active part in picturebook-reading indeed. This fact should above all remind teachers that if they want picturebooks to be understood and to effectively perform their many useful functions in language classroom, they must give their learners enough time to work on the multitude of information provided, starting with the picturebook story and ending with its whole context and implications – that if the activity is to be successful, young learners will need adequate time to think (Hughes 2006: 154).

Returning to picturebooks' potential for language classroom, it is furthermore asserted that picturebooks used for language instruction, as mediators of target cultural values, can encourage cultural learning and awareness (e.g. Klippel 2006: 84-85, Ellis 2006: 95); that, in the long run, picturebook-based activities promote development of both visual and written literacy in a variety of ways (e.g. Lugossy 2006: 23-24, Enever 2006: 59-71); and finally, yet still importantly, that they are highly linguistically meaningful. The latter is in essence what the following two subchapters are devoted to: they discuss narratives and illustrations within picturebooks – the two elements which play a crucial role in how picturebooks facilitate linguistic development.

3.2.3 Stories and storytelling

Stories and narratives, as Klippel explains in her paper, are central to daily communication: people often tell stories when they talk among each other; stories are what one mostly reads in the newspapers and hears on the news (2006: 85-86). Thus even children get closely familiar with the story frame already at a young age, and even very young learners are accustomed to the format. Stories are also universal means of instruction, education; anthropologists actually believe that 'all human knowledge is based on stories constructed around past experiences' and that 'new experiences are interpreted in terms of old stories' (Schank and Abelson in Lugossy 2006: 23). As a result narratives and stories can often provide their audience with helpful patterns of behaviour or practical solutions to real-life situations. In both these senses, narrative

discourse represents a context and a discourse type familiar, relevant and interesting to children; stories are linked to their daily lives, can be related to their own experience, can provide them with helpful ideas, advice, warning, inspiration. As such, stories represent an excellent environment for introducing foreign language, and should certainly find their place in the language lesson. And although picturebooks are not necessarily all storybooks, many (if not most) of them do contain a narrative of some kind.

In the introduction to his *Storytelling with Children* Andrew Wright agrees that stories material is relevant and thus highly motivating for young learners, and that it certainly belongs into the primary classroom (1995: 5-6). 'Children have a constant need for stories,' he says, 'and they will always be willing to listen or to read, if the right moment is chosen'; and as they are indeed interested in the matter, learners will listen or read 'with a purpose', trying hard to unlock the story's meaning (Wright 1995: 6). Furthermore, Wright asserts, such attentive focus on story narration allows learners to 'become aware of the general feel and sound of the foreign language', and at the same time it provides an excellent opportunity for the teacher to introduce new language in a relevant, interesting context, to listeners who are really paying attention (1995: 7). Wright emphasizes that in this way children can gradually get familiar with language structures yet unknown without being pushed to reproduce them immediately, which significantly simplifies their situation when they are to learn and start using the particular language productively later on (1995: 7). What Wright does not specifically mention is the fact that this gradual familiarization with new language items is to a high extent linked to meaningful repetition – a feature often employed in stories (as well as in picturebooks) and an attribute particularly important for learners' language learning and acquisition (Hughes 2006: 153). Interpreted in the light of Vygotsky's concept of internalization, one might say that new language input provided during story-reading or storytelling, or used during communication related to it, will through frequent encounter and recurring comprehension become increasingly familiar to the learner, until the point when understanding of the language will be 'transformed and internalised to become a part of the individual child's language skills or knowledge' (Cameron 2001: 8).

Learners' familiarity with the story pattern as well as with the very activity of reading or listening to stories in mother tongue also plays a significant role in their

learning. For one, it supports comprehension, as it allows children to build on the knowledge of stories that they already possess from their mother tongue and to apply this understanding when making sense of new narratives presented in the classroom (Lugossy 2006: 24). From their mother tongue experience with stories, children might be accustomed for instance to their sequential nature and development from the beginning towards the end (Hughes 2006: 153), or to the most common patterns occurring in narratives, when events are intentionally organized so as to evoke emotions such as surprise, suspense or curiosity in the audience (Klippel 2006: 86). Secondly, from the point of view of Krashen's Affective Filter hypothesis, the well-known story format and familiar process of story-reading support language learning and acquisition, as they help create 'an environment in which children feel secure and, as the affective filter is low, learning occurs in natural way' (Lugossy 2006: 24).

Wright mentions several other benefits that stories proffer to language instruction – among them the capacity of narratives to 'encourage responses' from their listeners or readers (1995: 7). Such a potential to trigger reactions from audience is invaluable for language classroom, for it propels communication in a natural way – using Wright's commentary, '[i]t is natural to express our likes and dislikes and to exchange ideas and associations related to stories we hear or read' (1995: 7); it motivates pupils both to express what they have to say as well as to listen to and try to comprehend the viewpoints of others. In addition, this potential renders stories to be a rich, stimulating material which, however presented, can act as the initial step within a whole set of associated tasks and activities (Wright 1995: 7).

Having read this much just about stories within picturebooks, one might ask whether picturebooks are not to be treated simply as another form of storybook in the classroom; whether there is any difference between application of picturebooks in language lesson and that of storytelling. Though there are similarities, even overlaps between the two techniques, a closer look at them can reveal, in Enever's words, 'the quite different nature of their potential' (2006: 60). To put it simply, storytelling and picturebook-reading both attempt to relay language to children through the relevant, appealing story format, and to contextualize this language input as much as possible in order to scaffold understanding; in both cases children are expected to gather the overall sense and meaning from a mixture of language input and extra-linguistic clues provided

either by the teacher (in case of storytelling) or by the picturebook, eventually by both. The role of the teacher as well as situation of the learners during these two activities does, however, somewhat differ.

As Enever describes, a child listening to oral storytelling 'has to focus entirely on guessing meanings via the scaffolding offered by already known key words, with the support of any paralinguistic features that the teacher may offer' (2006: 60). This sets relatively high demands on teacher's performance, especially if we consider the audience to be young learners, whose existing linguistic knowledge is generally fairly limited and thus their comprehension strongly depends on teacher's support. In contrast, when engaging young learners in a picturebook-reading process, 'much of the visual information is contained (to a greater or lesser extent) already in the pictures', which leaves the teacher free to provide any amount of additional support to the learners while reading out the story, yet on the whole still takes a lot of strain off their shoulders (Enever 2006: 60). This basically allows two simultaneous levels of scaffolding, one conveyed by means of the picturebook material, another coming from the teacher. Enever further argues that oral storytelling would prove much more challenging than working with a picturebook also to young language learners (2006: 60). She describes listening to storytelling as 'a complex cognitive "guessing process" […] which many young children may simply give up on when accessing the meaning is too difficult'; with picturebooks, on the other hand, there is '[n]o need for any guessing – the meanings are all there' (2006: 60). In this way, Enever points to the fact that while a story to be told relies primarily on the language used – it is vital to comprehend at least some of the language involved to understand the story, and paralinguistic features are only secondary, in picturebook the message is told just as much through the illustrations as by means of language, which leaves children to decode the meaning from the pictures while the verbal storyline is read by the teacher as a 'voice-over', 'as an additional element of meaning – to be acquired at a range of levels by individual children within the class' (Enever 2006: 60-61). From this point of view, picturebook-reading perhaps indeed means lesser strain for young learners than oral storytelling does, and it also fits well with Krashen's opinion on how children learn, or acquire, languages.

3.2.4 Illustrations

It is evident from what has already been written that illustrations are a vital component of the art form of picturebook: conveying a part of picturebook's message – a fraction of its story, pictures are essential to full comprehension of the book and cannot be omitted from it; value of illustrations also lies in their affective influence – in their capacity to capture, enthral, impress upon their readers. The role of picturebook illustrations remains equally significant when picturebooks are regarded as a teaching aid in foreign language classroom.

Much that can be said about pictures in language teaching in general might be readily applied to describe the function of illustrations within picturebooks. For instance, pictures are said to have the power to 'create and maintain interest' in learners (Lugossy 2006: 25); they contribute to 'a sense of the context of the language' (Wright 1989: 2); they provide 'a specific reference point' to talk about, and 'a stimulus' for further activity (Wright 1989: 2); they act as a means of personalization – when reading pictures, readers create their individual interpretations which derive from their socially and culturally formed knowledge, yet are still very much unique and their own (Enever 2006: 63). In picturebooks, however, illustrations are inseparably blended with printed text, which creates quite a unique context within which pictures play similar, yet slightly more specific roles.

Let us begin with illustrations as a means of contextualization in picturebooks. In his *Pictures for Language Learning*, Wright remarks that 'verbal language is only a part of the way we usually get meaning form contexts. Things we see play an enormous part in affecting us and giving us information' (1989: 2); there is a Chinese proverb which expresses roughly the same: 'A picture tells a thousand words.' That illustrations or visual support in general are important in meaning-making is twice as true for picturebook-reading, as some of the information which readers need to comprehend the story is not even provided in verbal form, and can only be 'extracted' from the accompanying pictures. Thus, illustrations perform two tasks at one: on one hand, they participate in the process of creating the story, and at the same time they act as a means of scaffolding, providing context for the verbal line of the narrative. By contextualizing the language input that comes along with them, picturebook illustrations significantly facilitate learners' understanding of the verbal narrative, helping them 'unlock' the

meaning of the whole story (Ellis 2006: 95) and rendering the language input comprehensible, and thus (in the light of Karshen's theories) supporting language learning and acquisition (Linse 2006: 72).

A few other roles that illustrations play within picturebooks stem from the fact that pictures are in a way 'open to interpretation'; they require one's own ideas, experience and imagination to be interpreted, and, consequently, ten people are most likely to 'read' the same picture narrative in ten different ways (Enever 2006: 63). Thus, as has already been mentioned, pictures can act as a means of personalization during picturebook-reading activity, inviting every learner to relate the story to their own experience and to arrive at an individual interpretation. This openness is also of value when it comes to providing for the affective aims of language instruction, especially that of confidence-building: first, pictures offer a fair amount of tolerance when it comes to their correct interpretation, which makes it difficult to be completely wrong about them; also, illustrations support learners' self-confidence by granting them a certain amount of immediate feedback on whether they have understood the language input provided along with them correctly (Kierepka 2006: 128) and thus scaffolding their way to more correct conclusions and comprehension.

Furthermore, the 'open nature' of pictures and picture narratives advocates repetitive perusal of picturebooks in classroom. It is quite likely that children will not take in everything the pictures say in the first reading; at first the second or third read-through of the same picturebook might allow the learners to notice things they failed to see before and comprehend the story more fully. This makes re-reading the same book interesting for the children themselves. From the point of view of learning, then, repeated work with the same picturebook material seems to be a most 'valuable technique in enabling children to acquire the story script' (Mourão 2006: 58) – it allows learners to repeatedly re-engage with the picturebook story and with the language input it comprises, and thus to understand both the storyline as well as the language better; to remember them both better.

Additionally, the individual nature of decoding pictures constitutes strong reasoning in favour of organizing picturebook-reading in the classroom as a collective activity. Put simply, two pairs of eyes see more than one, and commentaries about the story made by individual learners throughout the picturebook-reading activity can help

the others within the classroom to understand the story better, to see it from a point of view they might have not considered, or to notice a thing they had overlooked before, which renders shared reading constructive and helpful. In addition, as Lugossy asserts, these commentaries give learners feeling of success as they effectively guess the meanings hidden on the picturebook pages and in its language (2006: 28).

In connection to the commentaries made by young learners during picturebook-reading, it should however be mentioned that most of these observations are chiefly expressed in children's mother tongue. Though this can seem counterproductive for language instruction, it might by argued adversely that even one's mother tongue plays a supportive role in language learning. Read explains that 'building on children's knowledge of L1[4]' is important for scaffolding young learners' 'initial understanding and learning when using storybooks in foreign language lessons', and she presents use of mother tongue during such activities as a useful 'link between the familiar and the new', as some prior knowledge children can 'kick off' from (2006: 18). Using an example, Read demonstrates that mother tongue 'allows children to express individual responses, relate the story to their own lives, enjoy humour, predict, guess and imagine, in a way that would not be available to them if they used English alone,' and she further explains that children's need for a scaffold in the form of L1 is gradually decreasing '[a]s children become increasingly familiar with the story through repeated re-telling and participation in related activities' and the use of mother tongue subsides to be replaced by more confident use of commentaries in the target language (2006: 19).

Finally, let us get to the aesthetic aspect of pictures – to that which is, according to many, the 'fundamental perspective' in pictures (Klippel 2006: 84), that which will undoubtedly be among the factors influencing teacher's selection when looking for a suitable picturebook for their class (Klippel 2006: 84), and which is especially important for the art-form of picturebook. In picturebook, after all, it is design of the whole volume, including covers, endpapers, text font, colour and size, shape and dimensions of the whole book, and importantly also the quality of pictures, what works to impress a certain mood on its readers, and aims to use the huge affective capacity of art to seize their attention (Matulka 1999b). Thus, as Arizpe remarks, picturebooks own the potential to capture young learners' minds at the first sight (2006: 39); already their

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[4] Abbreviation 'L1' refers to the first language, or mother tongue.

unusual physical aspects have the capacity to arouse curiosity and interest (Hughes 2006: 155) and pictures then possess the power to maintain children's attention throughout the reading (Lugossy 2006: 25). Illustrations in picturebooks are what efficiently 'make[s] up powerful memories' (Klippel 2006: 87) and helps create a 'meaningful, natural and memorable context for acquiring and learning language and for developing positive attitudes towards the foreign language, culture and language learning' (Ellis 2006: 95). Eventually, the real affective power of pictures is implied in the warning Arizpe gives to teachers working with picturebook whom she, with regard to her earlier research on young children's response to picturebooks, cautions 'not to undervalue the emotional impact some picturebooks may have' on younger learners and emphasizes that teachers need to 'make sure that [children's] engagement with certain potentially frightening images is carried out within what they perceive as a "safe environment"' (2006: 40).

4. Research

This chapter is devoted to description of a small-scale research project carried out by the author for the purposes of this thesis. Following pages will introduce the reader successively to the research problem and research questions, general context, participants and organization of research, research methodology and selected data collection tools, and eventually to the data obtained, its analysis and interpretation.

Throughout the text, the author is referred to as *teacher*, *researcher* or *teacher-researcher*. Examples from collected data material are always provided in English; in case of data originally obtained in Czech, the original version is provided in the footnote. Lengthier examples, such as reflective diary excerpts, are formatted using font size 11, line spacing 1, so as not to take too much space. Document samples and data evaluation graphs and tables are attached as appendices, with references at corresponding places in text.

4.1 Introduction

The focus of this research project lies, compliant with the focus of the theoretical part of the thesis, on the application of picturebook as a teaching aid into foreign language instruction of young language learners in the context of elementary language classroom. While the first part of the paper outlines potential of picturebook in elementary language teaching on an abstract basis, relating mainly to theoretical concepts associated with implementation of picturebook into language lessons, the research part attempts to view the issue from the opposite point of view and to reveal particular aspects of teaching with picturebooks as they come up during the actual classroom experience. A general question which would correspond with this aim, such as:

What are the specifics of teaching English to young learners in elementary classroom by means of picturebook?

would be far too broad for the limited scale and possibilities of this research. Therefore, on basis of working analysis of collected data, researcher further progresses to ask those partial questions:

How does picturebook-centred teaching facilitate language learning?

How are teacher's expectations projected into preparation and consequently conduct of picturebook lesson?

The research is in its nature qualitative and it is designed as a case study, examining a series of picturebook-based English lessons taught by the researcher herself to three classes of elementary English learners within the context of a particular elementary school. As for methods of data collection, the investigation makes use of several different sources of data as well as of a variety of methods, notwithstanding data collection procedures applied usually in quantitative research studies. Primary concern was to assemble sufficient amount of information to examine picturebook-centred teaching process from as broad an angle as possible, and data collection methods and tools were chosen accordingly. Reflective diary content analysis provides data from the standpoint of teacher (major data source); semi-structured observation sheets supply the viewpoint of a non-participant observer; learners participating in the investigation are addressed by means of a simple questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Further details on selected design of research, choice and application of data collection methods and tools as well as on techniques of data analysis are provided in subchapter 4.3 devoted to research methodology.

Eventually, findings presented by this research might in particular prove useful to language teachers working with young learners who look for new materials, ideas, innovation for their classes, as they present picturebook as an appealing new option for teaching English to young learners, along with a rough sketch of some aspects connected to its application into language instruction. Similarly, the outcomes could be helpful to those teachers who already work with picturebooks in their lessons, who might obtain some fresh insights into the picturebook-centred teaching process from this research.

4.2 Context, sample and organization of research

The research was carried out in the time-span of two weeks in February 2008 in an elementary school with extended foreign language teaching in a city of approximately 80,000 inhabitants, situated in Moravia[5]. The choice of school was chiefly influenced by its accessibility (regarded from the point of view of the

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[5] Researcher refrained from using concrete names of people and places in the report, so as to secure participants' confidentiality.

researcher), by its extended language teaching programme, which guaranteed abundance of young learners' English classes[6] (which constitute basic context for the research), and last but not least by the interest in the research topic expressed on previous occasions by one of the English teachers working at that particular school, along with her offer of cooperation.

The research was executed with three different classes of young learners (labelled group A, group B, group C) during their regular English lessons. The choice as to which groups would participate in the research was made with assistance of the cooperating English teacher, among whose classes the researcher was allowed to choose. Eventually, three classes of young language learners were selected, with regard to several factors. First of them was age: pupils within the selected classes were all attending the first grade, their age thus corresponding both with the age group of young learners as presented in this thesis and with the estimated target group of the picturebook-centred teaching sequence designed by the researcher beforehand, which was then to be used in the English lessons to be examined. Furthermore, these first-graders were ideal as all three groups were taught English by the same teacher, and were thus used to similar approaches and methods in language teaching. They were all attending their first year of formal English instruction, following the same teaching syllabus and having covered more or less the same topics in their English lessons so far, which rendered them all to be at approximately the same level of proficiency in English. Moreover, according to the information provided by the learners' English teacher, these children had already had a chance to experience some amount of work with stories and picture narratives in their English classes up to now due to the fact that the English syllabus for the first-grade was loosely framed around the outline of *Happy House* textbook – a course-book focused on story-work where stories are presented in a richly illustrated context.

As for composition of the individual groups: group A consisted of 14 children, 8 girls and 6 boys; 7 of these learners had already been marginally introduced to English learning during their kindergarten years, the rest were complete beginners. Group B, also counting 14 learners, comprised 9 girls and 5 boys, of whom 6 had previously had some kindergarten experience with English. Lastly, in group C there were 13 children

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[6] Foreign languages are taught here from the first grade on.

altogether – 7 girls and 6 boys; 4 of them had had English lessons previously (in kindergarten and at home). Once again, all the learners were first-graders, aged 6 to 8.

Groups	Number of young learners	Number of young learners girls/boys	Number of young learners with previous English experience
Group A	14	8/6	7 (50%)
Group B	14	9/5	6 (43%)
Group C	13	7/6	4 (31%)
Total	41	24/17	17 (41%)

At the heart of the research lay a teaching sequence designed by the researcher, which comprised introducing learners to a particular picturebook[7] by means of repetitive collective reading of the story, and a set of related activities. The sequence had a soft structure, following a certain pattern, yet at the same time offering several variants of picturebook-related activities at each step. Researcher designed this sequence on basis of previous study of materials devoted to language teaching through picturebooks (as they are reflected in the theoretical part of the thesis) along with her limited prior experience with teaching English to young learners using picturebooks. The teaching sequence was then divided into two blocks of approximately thirty minutes each, and was to be applied into two consecutive English lessons[8] of each of the groups, being taught by the researcher herself. (These two lessons are referred to as *picturebook lessons* in the further course of the report.) The groups participated in the research successively – picturebook lessons were held at first in group A, then in group B, and finally in group C. All picturebook lessons took place in the particular classes' 'home classrooms', just as their English lessons usually did.

Finally, it is to be mentioned that throughout the investigation researcher made sure that identities of all subjects of research were protected.

4.3 Research methodology

As has already been stated above, the research is qualitative in its general nature: the scope of data collection was not limited by any explicit, pre-established parameters

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[7] *Push the Dog* by Allan Ahlberg (author), Charles McNaughton (illustrator); published by Walker Books, in 1987; Red Nose Readers edition.
[8] The remaining time of the English lessons (approximately 15 min.) was mainly spent with introducing researcher to the class in the beginning of picturebook lesson 1, and with data collection procedures (such as filling in and collecting questionnaires, or carrying out interviews) at the end of lessons 1 and 2.

or factors to be observed; research questions are not based on any specific, pre-existing theory and there are no hypotheses to be validated; research data was gathered with a single design to investigate into the process of picturebook-based language teaching and to collect as much information about it as possible; collected data is qualitative, non-numerical in its character, and is mostly treated by means of qualitative analysis, although occasionally also quantitative approach is employed during its processing (Švaříček 2007: 24).

The investigation is designed as a case study, examining a series of picturebook-based English lessons taught by the researcher herself to three classes of elementary English learners within the context of a particular elementary school. The case study format seems appropriate for this research as it allows detailed examination and comprehension of the object of research in its authentic, realistic context (Švaříček 2007: 98) – in this case, it is picturebook being implemented into English language teaching within the environment of elementary school classroom.

Regarding data collection methods and tools, this research makes use of several sources of data and various elicitation techniques, combining qualitative and quantitative approach. Ensuring variety among data collection methods and tools employed, and addressing a number of potential sources of information instead of just one bring about – compliant with the principle of triangulation – a multiplicity of viewpoints on the issue researched, thus widening the scope of data obtained and contributing depth and consistence to the investigation (Švaříček 2007: 204). Furthermore, different tools and techniques of data collection are capable of producing different kinds of information, which in effect enriches integrity of final perception of the research problem as well.

Following subchapters provide an outline of the individual data collection tools and techniques employed during the research, along with argumentation of the choice and brief description of particular techniques used to analyse the data obtained.

4.3.1 Reflective diary

The main (and most sizeable) body of data was collected in the form of reflective diary, which was written by the teacher-researcher, recording her experience

of the picturebook lessons, and was later evaluated by means of content analysis. A sample of the reflective diary is provided in Appendix 1.

Dadds and Lofthouse quite correctly express researcher's reasons for the choice of this technique when they assert that reflective diary as a method of qualitative data collection is usually welcomed by teacher researchers, who perceive it as a 'device for recording a range of impressions from daily classroom experience' (1990: 166). Beside a descriptive, retrospective account of events or situations, reflective diary includes also author's thoughts and reflection on the experience, their personal observations and interpretations of situations observed, and possibly emotions these evoked in them (Bell 1993: 102). Thus, in effect, reflective diary provides a detailed and versatile record of certain situation, phenomena, student, or whatever the focus of the investigation is (as it is perceived by the author of the diary), proffering a broad range of data for later analysis and interpretation. Enright further suggests that using reflective diary, one does not necessarily need to know the exact kind of information they are looking for in advance – the diary can capture the classroom reality in its complexity, and researcher can look for any significant, marked issues, or categories, emerge in the course of diary writing, or later during the process of its analysis (1990: 166). Such a capacity in data collection tool conveniently matches broad nature of the primary, general research question of this investigation, which simply asks for different aspects of picturebook implementation into language teaching. Considering the above mentioned characteristics, reflective diary appeared to be an appropriate choice of data collection tool to record the picturebook-lesson experience from the point of view of teacher – participant observer.

As for the diary writing process, researcher recorded the individual reflective diary entries within a short time span after the actual teaching experience, so as to be able to provide as much detail as possible. Frequently, researcher made use of field notes generated during or right after the individual picturebook lessons, which helped her to keep in mind various incidents, exact expressions, sudden thoughts and reflections occurring to her throughout the lesson etc. until the time when these recollections could be written down in full into the reflective diary.

Data recorded within the reflective diary was continuously (and repeatedly) subjected to content analysis by means of open coding (the process is described in detail e.g. in Švaříček 2007: 211-221.)

4.3.2 Observation sheets

While all of the picturebook lessons were recorded and reflected upon from the perspective of teacher-researcher – participant observer – on the pages of her reflective diary, they were at the same time also observed and commented on by another, non-participant observer (in the person of learners' regular English teacher). The technique of non-participant observation was chosen as it presented a perspective of collecting data related to the very same picturebook-teaching experience, yet from another point of view, which could cross-check and/or supplement information obtained by means of reflective diary. Sapsford and Jupp, for instance, notify that accounts provided by any direct participant of a researched situation 'may be shaped by the particular role the person plays' in it, or that '[m]any important features of the environment and behaviour are taken for granted by the participants and may therefore be difficult for them to describe', adding that a non-participant observer 'may be able to "see" what a participant cannot' (2006: 59).

The observation was conducted on basis of a semi-structured observation sheet designed by the researcher. (Examples of the observation sheet, empty and completed, are provided in Appendix 2.) The instrument consisted of a series of open-ended questions, aiming to elicit detailed descriptions of the picturebook-reading process and related issues, a commentary on the use of English and Czech by the learners, and notes on scaffolding provided by the teacher during the picturebook-reading process. Furthermore, each question offered an assorted list of actions which researcher believed possible to come up during the particular activity observed; importantly, these suggestions were only optional, supposed to provide inspiration and universal direction as to the nature of description that the researcher expected to gain from the filled-in instrument. Before the first picturebook lesson, the observation sheet was introduced to the observer in detail in order to ensure her comprehension.

In effect, the technique proved to be rather less fruitful than expected. Observations recorded in the observation instruments stayed mainly on the level of

description of individual phases of the particular lessons, rather than description of the concrete processes involved, although the observer was usually very particular about marking suitable phrases to describe the proceedings of the picturebook-reading among the pre-established optional categories suggested by the questionnaire. Consequently, as neither of the observation sheets relating to first picturebook lessons proved to relay new, unexpected, in-depth or indeed useful information, the technique was for further picturebook lessons (implementing second part of the teaching sequence) abandoned.

Surprisingly, however, while the instrument of observation failed to deliver results of the value that was expected, the technique itself did not; the unplanned, spontaneous collective reflection undertaken by the researcher and observer together after each of the picturebook lessons brought up a considerable amount of valuable data, usually in the form of critical assessment of methods, suggestions for improvement of researcher's picturebook-presentation techniques, or minute observations of various particulars of the lesson. As the observer repeatedly expressed reluctance to note those down into the observation documents (in her own words, wishing only to present the researcher in positive light, since she loved the picturebook lessons), the researcher decided to write those down herself in the form of field notes.

Completed observation sheets were eventually subjected to analysis by the same technique as the reflective diary; as for field notes obtained during the post-observation reflections, these were incorporated into the reflective diary and analysed along with it.

4.3.3 Questionnaires

The point of view of participant learners was explored by two means: that of a questionnaire distributed to all participating young learners after their first picturebook lesson (an example of an empty and a completed questionnaire is provided in Appendix 3), and that of a semi-structured interview carried out with six of the participant learners after their second picturebook lesson (a sample in the form of record of one interview is provided in Appendix 4).

The choice of questionnaire – a tool used more typically used in quantitative than qualitative research – was made chiefly due to its capacity to address a number of respondents at once. Obviously, beside the kind of information that was expected to be gathered by means of this tool, also age-related specifics of the target group (such as

their limited ability to read and write) had to be taken into account when designing the questionnaire. Finally, the instrument took the form of a simple, printed document comprising a list of four clear-cut inquiries investigating into quality of the picturebook lesson experience as perceived by the individual learners; two of these inquiries were presented in the form of closed questions, the other two were structured as unfinished sentences to be completed by the respondents. Data obtained from the latter, being much more specific, authentic and respondent-framed (Cohen 2000: 255), was expected to slightly illuminate the answers from the former, potentially enriching the evaluation in terms of positive/negative with pointers as to reasons, emotions etc. that underlay the general impression.

Questionnaires were distributed in all groups at the end of the first picturebook lesson; each individual question was read out and carefully explained by the researcher, and children were provided with a period of time to fill in their answers. Throughout the process, researcher was available (and asked) for further explication and assistance.

Data collected by means of questionnaires was treated both quantitatively (with the objective of charting distribution of certain factors, as for instance assumed comprehension the picturebook story, within the research sample) and qualitatively (drawing on its explanatory potential).

4.3.4 Semi-structured interviews

Information obtained from questionnaires was further supplemented by data acquired by means of several semi-structured interviews, conducted with six of the participant learners and moderated by the researcher. Interviews were taken up so as to better understand (and in a way confirm or contradict) some of the data provided by the same learners in the questionnaires. Learners to be interviewed were chosen non-randomly, on basis of their questionnaire answers or their remarkable, prominent activity as it was observed by researcher in the course of picturebook lessons, two per group (the number being determined mainly by restricted amount of time provided for the research).

In Patton's typology, these interviews would fall into the category of 'interview guide approach', where 'topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form' and 'interviewer decides sequence and working of questions in the course

of the interview' (Patton in Cohen 2000: 271). Accordingly, researcher used a series of questions prepared in advance, inquiring after interviewees' comprehension of the picturebook story, possible difficulties with it, and their individual perception of the picturebook-reading process in general. During the actual interviews, these questions always followed each other in the succession suggested by the pre-established soft structure, yet they were often adapted, re-worded or even enhanced by extra, on-the-spot invented interrogatives, so as to ensure both interviewee's full comprehension of questions and interviewer's comprehension of the answers. Individual interviews took approximately 2-5 minutes, and their proceedings were recorded by the researcher in the form of field notes taken down immediately after each dialogue was over. The interviews were conducted in each group right after their second picturebook lesson; the observer – regular English teacher – took charge of the class for the rest of the lesson time (about 15 minutes), taking on another picturebook-centred activity, while the researcher used the remaining time to carry out interviews with two selected learners in a secluded corner of the classroom, on the carpet. Interviewees were always asked whether they were willing to go through the dialogue with the researcher (all agreed, except for a boy who, in his own words, preferred to take part in the whole-class activity to come, and was replaced by another candidate).

Data obtained from the interviews were, in the same way as reflective diary and observation documents, subjected to content analysis by means of coding.

4.3.5 Test

Lastly, this research made use of the data collection technique of testing. Researcher, wishing to gain at least a general idea of whether and to which extent learners' actual English knowledge was enriched by the two picturebook lessons, found non-parametric test – with its capacity to provide 'quick, relevant and focused feedback on student performance' (Cohen 2000: 318) – to be a useful tool as regards collection of the data in question. Domain-referenced, or achievement test format was selected as best-suited to the purpose, clearly limiting the focus of testing to assessing whether and how well learners have mastered certain aspect (or aspects) of language within the content domain previously covered (Cohen 2000: 319). Subsequently, a simple vocabulary-focused test was developed, built up using the very pictures from the

picturebook and drawing strictly on the vocabulary items covered throughout picturebook-reading and related work. Learners, provided with a copy of the test each, were to be asked to find and circle items called out in English by the teacher-researcher. (An example of an empty and a completed test is provided in Appendix 5.)

The test was implemented by the researcher in all groups during their second picturebook lesson, and the process of test completion was presented as a game, not as an act of assessment.

Data obtained by means of this technique were processed quantitatively, providing an overview of learners' level of achievement and suggesting most problematic vocabulary items.

On the whole, this data could be considered subsidiary to the purposes of the investigation, since it is strongly context-bound and collected over too short a period of time to possess any general interpretative value. Nevertheless, researcher's original purpose of providing focused feedback on learners' language learning in the limited context of picturebook lessons they attended was served, and although the information is of only little value as regards finding answers to the research questions, it still vouches for certain extent of language learning in progress within the temporal and contextual boundaries of this research.

4.4 Data analysis and interpretation

Data collection process, drawing on several different sources of information and employing numerous techniques in its acquisition, brought forward a considerable amount of data to be processed and subsequently interpreted. Data collected by means of language test as well as some of the information acquired from questionnaires were processed quantitatively (overview of outcomes in Appendices 6, 7), but majority of the material, as has already been mentioned above, was subjected to qualitative content analysis executed by means of open coding. Due to unavailability of required technology, the process was undertaken manually, employing so-called 'pen-and-paper method'[9]. Firstly, the analyzed text was broken down into smaller units – into sequences of text differing in length which all carried a particular meaning, or presented a theme or issue. Such units were then labelled with codes expressing their significance –

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[9] „Metoda papír a tužka" (Švaříček 2007: 213).

describing what they represent. The coded pieces of text were subsequently, when code allocation within all of the material was completed, organized into broader units referred to as categories, each of which embraced more of the identified codes under a common, unifying heading. Within some categories, also subcategories were established, for the purpose of further differentiation of the data structure. Codes and categories identified within the data were emergent, not pre-established – they were recognized and named at first as they were identified among the coded sequences or as they surfaced throughout the examination of text bodies analyzed. All materials in question were read and re-read repeatedly, and codes and categories were frequently altered and re-organized or supplemented by others as new meaning units were identified within the data. During final stage of the analytical process, the indexed information (which was way too extensive, yet not always in-depth or compact) was searched so as to identify points researcher found most interesting, surprising or striking, and lessons learned throughout the research that seemed of major importance to her. On basis of these chosen themes two focused research questions were formulated. Categories of data which contained the themes selected were then structured into several groups, or superordinate categories, according to their reference and value as for answering the individual research questions; a number of other codes and categories were discharged in the process. The individual research questions and areas they relate to were eventually used as a framework for the written interpretation of results, as it is presented below. An illustration of how the text was coded (with concrete examples from reflective diary) is provided in Appendix 8, along with overviews of those established categories and codes that relate to the two research questions and were used for data interpretation as presented in this report.

4.4.1 Picturebook and language learning

In the theoretical part of the paper, much has been written about the various ways in which picturebooks and their implementation into language teaching can enhance young learners' learning and development, among others also as regards foreign language. One of the obvious pre-requirements for foreign language learning would be target language input; and while one of picturebook's main assets is the item being a source of authentic, relevant language (and so it may be), data collected

throughout the research brings about some interesting insights as to how this input is processed by learners during picturebook-centred lesson.

Throughout the examined picturebook lessons, learners were exposed to continuous English language input in the form of teacher-talk, whether the activities in progress were or were not picturebook-related; obviously, teaching English through English is no specific of picturebook-centred teaching only, and the amount of language exposure is anyway to a high extent distinguished by the approach of each particular teacher. Let us therefore move to language input provided by picturebook itself.

While the book's contribution of a certain amount of English to the lessons is undisputable – its story comprises a verbal storyline next to the picture narrative, it seems questionable to which extent this language is taken notice of by young learners during the very act of picturebook-reading.

When picturebook is read in young learners' classroom, the verbal narrative is usually mediated to children orally by the teacher – at least as regards learners in their first years of schooling. (These are neither used to seeing written English, nor expected to put up with English words in written form until later; as first- or second-graders, they can barely read and write yet.) Thus picturebook-reading experience for young learners seemingly comprises of reading a picture narrative, and simultaneously listening to a spoken story (which represents the language input of the activity). One could ask, however, whether young learners can indeed manage, or whether they at least attempt, both at once. Data obtained from interviews suggest that young learners often perceive pictures in picturebook to be more helpful and more important to their reading and comprehension than the words they hear when it comes to reading a picturebook in English class. Relating to the experienced picturebook lessons, one learner even expressed the opinion that 'without the pictures there would be nothing' (in the book), and another asserted that 'no [verbal] story wouldn't matter much'.[10] So, it seems, description of picturebook-reading process as it is offered by Enever could be correct: she claims that, as for young learners, all the meaning is provided already in the illustrations, and '[t]he voice-over acts as an additional element of meaning – to be

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[10] R: „Když jsme četli, co bylo pro tebe v tom příběhu důležitější, ty obrázky nebo to povídání?"
L1: „Bez obrázků by tam ani nic nebylo."
L2: „Ty obrázky. Asi bez toho povídání by to moc nevadilo."

acquired at a range of levels by the individual children within the class' (Enever 2006: 61).

Such acquisition would definitely require, among others, also frequent repetitive re-reading. Re-reading is, in the case of picturebook, not despised by young learners, it appears – using explanations of two of them, there is a lot to see at once in picturebook, and re-reading helps to notice it all, to understand[11]. Still, frequent use of the same book, or even of the very activity of reading, might lead to loss of interest on the part of the learners[12].

Nevertheless, the fact that its reading does not exactly 'push the language to the front' – present language learning as the primary aim of the activity – does not make picturebook ineffective as regards needs of English classroom and foreign language learning. Reading a book for the sake of its story seems more natural, relevant and comprehensible to young learners than using picturebook as a variant to textbook, and in addition the collective reading activity has many implications for other than linguistic levels of learning, too (e.g. social learning, development of attitudes to books and reading, reading strategies development – to use some of the categories that emerged during data analysis). Furthermore, the picturebook story, even though perceived by learners rather in terms of its pictures than its language, can be an ideal initial point for a variety of activities that might, for a change, draw distinctly on the linguistic potential of picturebook, thus allowing coupling of conscious (language-focused picturebook-related activities) and subconscious (picturebook reading) learning. Such strategy proved relatively successful as regards picturebook lessons experienced during the research, or so does researcher assess the outcomes of vocabulary-focused test implemented during the second picturebook lesson (see Appendix 6 for an overview of results). Additionally, picturebook recurrently succeeded in provoking learners' spontaneous reactions to things they could see (while reading) or expected to see (before reading) in the picturebook – though sometimes provided in mother tongue, these were often also expressed in English, encouraging use of new words as well as vocabulary recycling.

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[11] R: „Co myslíš, mělo smysl číst tu knížku víckrát?"
L1: „Ano." [A proč?] „Protože tam toho je moc naráz." [A všeho naráz si nevšimneš…?] „Ano."
L2: „No, aby tomu člověk rozuměl."
[12] R: „Co myslíš, mělo smysl číst tu knížku víckrát?"
L3: „Mě už to pak nebaví."

Moreover, picturebook as a teaching aid exerts a vast influence over young learners' language learning by means of affective aspects of its implementation – it indeed appears to have the capacity to engage learners in current lesson and, in the long run, can help to shape their attitudes towards English learning by means of providing enjoyable classroom experience. As regards learners' enjoyment, it is clear that much would depend on particular situation, choice of picturebook and manner of its presentation and application in class etc., but the research experience shows that majority of learners enjoyed work with picturebook, and that seems valid even in case when teacher-researcher herself expressed discontent with her achievement in the picturebook lesson in question (see Appendix 7, figure 1, group A). Positive impressions, and consequently positive attitudes, are also being reinforced by feeling of success, such as picturebook lessons managed to affect upon majority of learners participating in this research (see Appendix 7, figure 2). As for directly engaging learners, several factors could be observed from the data collected (illustrative examples provided here are taken from reflective diary). Firstly, picturebook is a colourful, appealing item that children like to look at and put their hands on; the very fact might motivate to active participation.

> 'We worked with flash cards, and the picturebook lay behind my back on the carpet. […] Some time into the activity, I realised someone must have fell out of the circle and is sitting behind me, and turning I found two girls browsing through the book together; one was holding it, the other turning the pages. […] A while later, while we were still working with flashcards, they asked me, pointing behind my back, whether they would be allowed to have a look at the book again later - a wish which, when answered positively, was immediately echoed by half of the rest of the class […] and not forgotten by the end of the lesson.'

Also, when read, picturebook seems to maintain learners' attention by generating a number of emotions in them, for instance drawing on their sense of humour ('… they laughed at jokes…'), their curiosity ('When I got stuck with one page, they showed impatience and prodded me to move on, curious what's next'), or else emotionally engaging them with the story or its participants ('Oh no, oh no!'[13] – one learner's immediate reaction to the double-spread where robbers are putting the dog into a sack). Similarly, picturebook can take hold of learners – just like stories can – by allowing them to relate what they see or hear to their own experience ('I'll also become a

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[13] „Né, to né!"

policeman like dad when I am working.'[14] – comment made by a learner while watching police vs. robbers double-spread).

On the whole, as far as language learning is concerned, though picturebook-reading by itself perhaps does not strongly emphasize the language input it provides, at least as regards young beginner language learners, it does supply a wide initial platform for a range of different, possibly more language-focused activities; furthermore, picturebook seems to have the capacity to engage young learners' interest and attention, and to shape their attitudes to language learning, also on longer-term basis.

4.4.2 Teacher's expectations and picturebook lesson

Theoretical part of this paper suggested that picturebook as a teaching aid adopted by elementary foreign language instruction has the capacity to address young learners' development in a number of different ways; last subchapter then focused on one of them, and attempted to illustrate picturebook's potential to facilitate children's language learning in particular. What this subchapter attempts to demonstrate is that whatever picturebook's capacity in language instruction really is, it is strongly defined by the manner of picturebook's implementation into the classroom, which – in return – depends significantly on the expectations[15] of particular teachers as regards both their learners and the item of picturebook itself.

Of course, teachers' expectations shape the teaching reality in any and all classrooms; they provide ground for teachers' estimations, influencing their decisions about what is to be taught, when and how. Similarly they affected the picturebook lessons examined. When tracing this influence, the gradual, step-by-step organization of research proved to be of advantage: due to the fact that individual picturebook lessons were held successively, each picturebook-teaching experience influenced teacher-researcher's perception of the process, consequently altering also her conduct of the next lesson. Thus, two significantly different approaches to presenting picturebook in classroom happened to be recorded within the collected data, allowing the researcher to uncover and analyze the experience, and now perhaps mediate its value to any teachers,

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[14] „Já budu taky policajt jak taťka až budu pracovat."

[15] The word has been borrowed from the name of one category identified during data analysis; it is used as a neutral term with neither positive nor negative connotation, to refer to degree of quality teacher associates with e.g. learners' various abilities or picturebook's potential.

or readers, concerned with using picturebooks. Importantly, the objective here is not to provide a complete overview of issues shaping teacher's choices and decisions, but to chart those factors that can be traced within the research data and which at the same time seem to exercise influence over the manner of presentation of picturebook during language lessons, even to the extent of changing children's (and teacher's) perception of the experience.

Drawing on the acquired data, teacher seems to approach picturebook lesson preparation (and subsequently also its conduct) with several particular issues in mind. These could be divided into two broader categories: teacher's expectations related to learners, and those associated with picturebook. As concerns preparation of picturebook language lesson, it is perhaps the former group which is more pronounced. During the planning stage, teacher needs to estimate learners' language skills, considering both their current language level, as well as what might be described as their 'capacity to learn', assessing the amount of new input that can be introduced (and successfully processed) during the lesson. Such estimations are among the major factors influencing teacher's choice of picturebook; also, they might affect teacher's decision about implementation of pre-reading activities into the lesson, with the objective to support learners' later understanding (e.g. through vocabulary pre-teaching). Pre-teaching language needs not be the only intention of such activities, though.

> Reflecting on why she included a key-words pre-teaching phase into one of the picturebook lessons, teacher-researcher remarks in her diary that she 'did not do this because of fear that the class wouldn't understand the words as they appear in the book – the pictures would take care of that' (though she later gives in that she 'wanted them to have a chance to recognize the words within the spoken sequence' which reveals some wish for linguistic scaffolding). She further explains that by means of this simple vocabulary-centred activity (focusing on words from the book to be read) she intended, among others, 'to arouse [learners'] curiosity as to the book a bit, as well as activate their story concepts, start up prediction.' In other words, she rather wanted to prepare children for the act of reading itself, not that much for the English involved.

Clearly, within the act of selecting pre-reading activities (and even seemingly language-oriented ones), teacher's assessment of young learners' language level already fuses with reflection on another issue – on children's command of reading strategies. It predictably follows that among possible pre-reading activities, teacher might also opt for such ones which are particularly focused on reading preparation (e.g. discussion about the expected topic). Let us sum up in short that teacher's learner-related expectations appear to exert quite some influence over picturebook lesson, although it is

only its structure and choice of individual activities what is affected. The subject this narrative wants to point at is, however, that the actual presentation and work with picturebook is affected, too.

A real incident extracted from the research experience, which is mirrored by both the reflective diary as well as observation sheets, grants a useful starting point for demonstration of the point. This episode happened during the very first picturebook-lesson among those researcher taught in the course of the investigation; as for the manner of presentation of picturebook in this lesson, in the diary researcher reports that she 'provided a lot of scaffolding while reading, things one would use while story-telling – intonation, emphasis, miming, gestures… […][She] actually stood up and "acted out" a scene once.' To put it shortly, teacher did so many things other than just reading while supposedly 'reading' the picturebook with children, that at the end of the lesson one learner in fact expressed frank surprise when she mentioned that they had managed to read a whole book during the lesson, asking if 'Really??'[16] Similar observation – that there was no evident picturebook-reading – was echoed also in the corresponding observation sheet and in field notes from after-class joint reflection of teacher-researcher and observer.

Reflecting on the feelings she experienced during the first picturebook-reading, teacher admits she was afraid that her learners 'wouldn't be able to fill in the gaps left after the pictures and language were combined; that they would need help with interpretation.' In other words, her expectations as to learners' ability to figure out the story on basis of a picture narrative and accompanying words made her work with picturebook the way she did – present it with excessive scaffolding. The choice could be further clarified by mentioning another of teacher-researcher's expectations: in the reflective diary, it is described as a doubt of whether 'the claim about picturebooks being able to capture children's attention singularly and continuously' is absolutely true. Elsewhere in the text, teacher also voices another picturebook-related observation, saying that 'sometimes the pictures seem pretty disconnected' – perhaps voicing her expectations as to picturebook's actual capacity to relate its story comprehensively. It follows that, by means of excessive scaffolding, teacher wanted to assist the picturebook in both conveying the story and engaging, amusing her class; her

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[16] „Fakt??"

expectations of learners' reading strategies and of picturebook's potential defined the way she presented picturebook in the classroom. The ultimate effect was that the picturebook-reading activity eventually failed to involve either the picturebook or reading – both become rather 'invisible' in the process.

The important point is that when picturebook turns 'transparent', its capacities seem to follow the lead and become invisible, too. Although teacher captured the image of very intensive and enthusiastic use of English by learners throughout the lesson in the corresponding diary entry, in addition to her being 'positively impressed by how much of the words from the book the children caught and remembered' (– an impression confirmed by other data sources), her diary and observation documents also report a significant amount of off-task and disruptive behaviour among learners, as well as of gradual loss of interest in the picturebook-related activities. Teacher-researcher comments on the issue of indiscipline in terms of referring to her let-down hopes as to book's capacity to engage young learners, writing that picturebook has 'turned out to be an object of *much* less attractiveness to them than [she]'d expected it to be'. When she, however, reflects on the experience later, she admits fairly that her 'activity overshadowed even the colourful picturebook, made learners overlook it a bit; so it obviously couldn't have had real 'grip' on the children, as it should have…'. To briefly comment also on the issue of successful vocabulary learning on the part of learners, researcher recurrently remarks throughout the diary entry that learners in this group seemed really eager to learn new language as well as to show-off their present knowledge, creating an impression of vocabulary 'competition'. To use her own words, it seemed 'as if they didn't really care about the story, but rather wanted to learn vocab, or show they've learned some; as if they preferred working through the book in 'the hard way', like through a textbook or something' – the picturebook and its story appear to have been forgotten. This made the teacher feel perplexed – she explains she did not expect children to be thrilled by a 'who-knows-more' or 'who-is-faster' kind of vocabulary race, but by the experience of the story.

Now, here would be a place to illustrate that if teacher overcomes low expectations of either learners' creativity in interpreting or picturebook's capacity to capture their attention and presents picturebook with emphasis on the book itself, things work differently. However, although the data material mirrors for instance considerably

less discipline issues in its description of other picturebook lessons, along with a pronounced focus on the picturebook story, it is impossible to reliably use comparison with the other groups due to the fact that the three classes comprised of significantly different assortment of learners, as portrayed in detail in the reflective diary.

Nevertheless, it can be concluded that mistrusting learners' imagination and creativity was a sheer underestimation in this case, as demonstrated both by learners' impression of success as regards understanding the book, which was expressed by majority of them in the questionnaire (see Appendix 7), and further confirmed in the interviews, which showed that though each of the interviewees reads the story slightly differently, in an own way, highlighting or skipping its different parts etc., all of them have understood the essence of the narrative. This renders teacher's excessive scaffolding activity rather unnecessary, needlessly imposing high demands on her performance, making her feel tired and stressed, and lowering her capacity to observe and monitor the classroom – as was all recorded in reflective diary. Furthermore, learners were almost entirely robbed of the picturebook-reading activity, which was actually replaced by storytelling technique – and picturebook was, in return, probably robbed of some of its alleged potential, such as capturing children's attention, which also had to be replaced by teacher's effort.

Coming to a close, let us conclude that teacher's expectations do have the power to alter picturebook lesson significantly, for both the learner and the teacher, and that the effects might be, as in the particular case discussed above, involuntary, or even unwelcome. To link this conclusion to what was written on picturebook's capacity in language lessons in the theoretical chapters would mean to admit that many of the possibilities described are highly relative. Therefore, language teachers should not forget to provide picturebook with sufficient 'space to function' within their lessons if they count on its alleged manifold potentials, because with restricting picturebook's area of influence, they restrict also the degree of authority it can exercise.

4.5 Conclusion

Let us conclude with a short summary of research results. This research principally attempts to address two questions concerned with particular aspects of teaching languages to elementary learners using picturebooks: how picturebook-centred

teaching facilitates language learning in particular, and how teacher's expectations are projected into preparation and consequently conduct of picturebook lesson.

As for language learning, while picturebook does introduce new language into language classroom, the particular activity of picturebook-reading does not seem to stress language input as such, rather addressing objectives within the affective domain, engaging young learners for language learning on both short- and respectively long-term basis. Still, picturebook's contribution presents a platform for a multitude of language-focused activities, to be devised according to teacher's particular intentions and needs. Considering priorities of elementary language classrooms, picturebook's prominent address of affective domain objectives (as concerns young language learners) seem to sort it among very useful teaching aids.

However, whether the focus of picturebook-reading activity in a particular lesson setting turns out to be on the picturebook with its story or rather on the language input it contributes, that relies strongly on the way the book is worked with in the classroom. This is essentially in the hands of the teacher – obviously, it is them who create the whole setting by planning the lesson structure; yet, importantly, it is also their expectations what counts, their perception of what picturebook has to offer to their learners as well as how well these learners can process the experience. These expectations set limits for picturebook within the class – they settle, for instance, whether the teacher becomes the protagonist-storyteller, or whether they let the picturebook take its turn and prove its strengths. When planning and conducting a language lesson with picturebook, teachers should therefore consider that it can only manage as much as they agree to.

5. Conclusion

Principal idea behind the pages of this paper was to introduce reader to the unique art form of picturebook in the same way as it might be perceived through the eyes of a teacher examining an unknown (or yet not considered) tool or teaching aid in order to judge its usefulness for their elementary language classroom.

Thus, since such a teacher would have probably begun with a thorough observation of the item, this thesis commenced with depiction of the picturebook's form, in an attempt to describe it and define it. The resultant chapter (*Defining picturebooks*) hence relates what picturebook developed from and what it developed into, capturing the specific features that make the form unique as well as its major components – pictures, words and total design, and presenting the different viewpoints picturebook can be regarded with. At this point, it was also considered who picturebooks appear to be written for, which directly linked the initial, descriptive part with the next step to follow: discerning picturebook's benefits as regards a particular group of learners whose classes it was to be used in – young learners, in this case. The corresponding chapter (*Picturebooks in language teaching*) then, in a logical sequence, contemplates firstly what young learners might need for successful learning, and successful language learning in particular, and then moves on to assessing whether and how picturebook can possibly cater for such needs, identifying and discussing several domains of consequence. Finally, on basis of their observation and judgment, teacher would perhaps decide in favour of picturebook and settle on trying it out in the classroom in order to be able to review picturebook's suspected capacities on basis of own, real classroom experience; which is what the author of this paper chose to do. Entering the classroom reality with open mind and willingness to see how well picturebook does (or does not do) within the context of authentic young learners' language class, the researcher was eventually overwhelmed with a surprising amount of data of value, of which only a fraction could be forced into the research report presented in the fourth chapter. The author, being made to choose, finally opted for presentation and interpretation of such data which represented areas or incidents of most interest, surprise or importance to her (and which was at the same time recorded in a sufficient amount in the materials collected); these turned out to be the question of (whether and) how picturebook in particular facilitates young learners' language learning during a

picturebook-centred language lesson, and the issue of distinguishing teacher's influence on the progress of picturebook lesson, or strictly speaking the specific role teacher's expectation play in this matter.

Coming to a close, an evaluation of the entire diploma work experience as it is perceived by its author might be in place. At this point, I would like to accentuate the importance of the research experience granted by this project, which in my opinion strongly affects integrity of this paper. While the theoretical part gave the author a chance to present picturebook in its strengths, considering principally the positive capacities picturebook could grant to young learners' language classroom, the authentic research experience seems to have brought more realism into the whole concept. This was perhaps partly achieved by the research outcomes foreshadowing potential drawbacks of picturebook-reading technique in class, or some weaker points in picturebook on the whole, but most importantly it was done by stressing the relativity of any estimation as to how useful a teaching aid can be – by highlighting the inescapable tie between picturebook and the teacher who uses it, between picturebook and the manner it is used in. Therefore, I think, it is fair to conclude that while picturebook presents many attractions for young learners' foreign language classes – as was, I believe, illustrated by the research, it is not a magic wand to be waved either anytime, or by anyone, in any way, within any classroom, yet still with success – which was certainly illustrated by the research as well.

6. Resumé

Jedním ze současných trendů ve výuce i ve společnosti je tendence začínat s výukou cizích jazyků u dětí v čím dál mladším věku. Tento trend se odráží i ve vzdělávacích strategiích podporovaných školstvím u nás; dokladem tohoto tvrzení může být např. Národní program rozvoje vzdělávání v České republice (Bílá kniha). Ještě patrnějším svědectvím je ovšem fakt, že zatímco před deseti lety se našla v Čechách jen hrstka škol, které začínaly s cizojazyčnou výukou žáků dříve než v páté třídě, v dnešní době si jazykové vyučování našlo své místo často už v prvních třídách základních škol, a dokonce i v předškolním vyučování. Důsledkem toho se strhla velká sháňka po vhodných výukových materiálech, které by odpovídaly potřebám a preferencím i těch nejmladších žáků. Učitelé těchto tříd pátrají po atraktivních, zajímavých pomůckách, které by děti oslovily, ale zároveň také dokázaly podpořit jejich všestranný vývoj a rozvíjet jejich jazykové schopnosti. Obrázkové knihy podle mého názoru splňují obě výše zmíněná kritéria: na jedné straně je v jejich moci upoutat pozornost žáků a výrazně jim zpříjemnit jazykové vyučování, současně mají také výrazný potenciál jako výukový prostředek v cizojazyčném vyučování. Podstatou této práce je rozšířit a podpořit toto tvrzení, jak teoreticky, tak i prakticky (s využitím výzkumu), se zaměřením na výuku cizích jazyků u žáků mladšího školního věku, jejichž potřebám povaha obrázkové knihy dle mého názoru vyhovuje nejlépe. Je třeba dodat, že ač se má praktická zkušenost omezuje v zásadě pouze na výuku anglického jazyka, věřím, že naprostá většina závěrů o možnostech využití obrázkových knih ve vyučování, tak jak jsou popsány v této práci, je zobecnitelná, a lze ji tedy s minimálními úpravami aplikovat na výuku cizích jazyků všeobecně. Z tohoto pohledu práce také obrázkové knihy běžně postihuje, s výjimkou praktické části práce, jejíž těžiště je konkrétně umístěno v hodinách anglického jazyka.

Práce je rozdělena do pěti kapitol; dvě z nich se detailněji věnují teoretické bázi popisovaného tématu, jedna je přímo zaměřená na praktické pojetí věci a popisuje náležitosti a výstupy výzkumu realizovaného v rámci práce.

Teoretická část začíná druhou kapitolou, která podává bližší popis obrázkové knihy jako specifického druhu, ať už literárního či uměleckého. Kapitola nejdříve ve stručnosti nastiňuje vznik a postupný vývoj obrázkové knihy až do podoby toho osobitého typu textu, jak jej známe dnes, čímž předestírá některá specifika dané formy. Navazuje přehled současných přístupů k obrázkovým knihám, jak se objevují v četných

odborných publikacích na toto téma. Zde je zdůrazněn náhled přijímaný prací samotnou – tedy pohled na obrázkovou knihu jako na nedílnou kombinaci textu a ilustrací, které se ve své sounáležitosti doplňují a vyvažují, a vytvářejí zcela jedinečné médium typické pro obrázkové knihy, kde nejen slova, ale i ilustrace zásadně spoluvytvářejí dějovou linii.

V další podkapitole se práce konečně dostává k samotnému popisu formátu obrázkové knihy. Text nejdříve poukazuje na výraznou rozmanitost charakterizované kategorie, když řadou příkladů ilustruje, že ač jsou obrázkové knihy na pohled výrazné a jasně odlišitelné od většiny ostatních svazků, v detailnějších prvcích se nijak zásadně neshodují; nadále se kapitola ovšem detailně věnuje těm elementům, které jsou obrázkovým knihám principielně společné. Nejdříve diskutuje nepostradatelné propojení obrázků a textu v obrázkové knize, jejich schopnost vzájemně se doplňovat a jejich oboustranný podíl na vyprávění příběhu; poté se vyjadřuje k zásadní roli celkového designu díla, který doplňuje kombinaci textu a obrázků a podtrhuje celkový dojem příběhu i knihy; v další podkapitole popisuje jednotlivé aspekty fyzického formátu obrázkových knih s důrazem na jejich konečné spojení v rámci už zmiňovaného celkového designu díla, který je považován za jedno ze základních kritérií celé kategorie obrázkových knih; a konečně poukazuje na nečekaně různorodé spektrum čtenářů, které obrázkové knihy oslovují. Zde je také vytyčeno, že práce se nadále věnuje výhradně obrázkovým knihám ve spojitosti s mladšími z jejích potenciálních čtenářů - se žáky mladšího školního věku.

Třetí kapitola, věnovaná již konkrétně využití obrázkové knihy jako materiální vyučovací pomůcky ve výuce cizích jazyků, navazuje na závěr kapitoly předchozí, když ve svém úvodu předkládá reálné důvody pro své zaměření na výuku žáků mladšího školního věku. Kapitola je strukturována do dvou větších částí: první je zaměřena čistě na povahu žáka mladšího školního věku z pohledu jeho učebních potřeb a charakteristik, se zvláštním důrazem na aspekty dotýkající se výuky cizích jazyků; druhá část potom analyzuje možnosti obrázkové knihy jako specifického vyučovacího prostředku v kontextu těchto žáků v rámci jazykového vyučování na základní škole. V rámci výše zmíněné první části třetí kapitoly představuje autorka nejdříve některé obecnější koncepty definující učební charakter žáků mladšího školního věku (např. nadšení a chuť do učení, omezená schopnost soustředění, holistický přístup k učení,

potřeba vedení a zaměřenost na učitele), ale také některé výrazné koncepce jednoznačně spojené se jmény význačných autorů, a ve stručnosti spojuje jejich východiska s předpokládanými kapacitami obrázkové knihy. Práce se konkrétně odkazuje na Piagetovo pojetí učení jako aktivní interakce mezi jedincem a prostředím, na Vygotského zdůraznění sociálního rozměru učení a jeho koncept zóny nejbližšího vývoje, na Brunerův pojem „scaffolding" vystihující představu určitého podpůrného vzdělávacího lešení, či na některé z Krashenových hypotéz o osvojování cizího jazyka.

Čtvrtá kapitola konečně představuje přesun od teoretického náhledu k praktické zkušenosti, protože je cele věnována zachycení organizace a výstupů kvalitativního výzkumného projektu realizovaného v rámci diplomové práce. Ten byl uskutečněn autorkou v reálném kontextu základní školy za účelem posoudit možnosti obrázkové knihy v jazykovém vyučování žáků mladšího školního věku i z hlediska vlastní aplikované zkušenosti s touto pomůckou ve třídě. Výzkum byl prvotně pojat dosti široce – v rámci prvního sběru dat bylo záměrem výzkumnice nahlédnout zkoumanou situaci (hodinu s obrázkovou knihou) s co největším záběrem. V průběhu výzkumu se potom vykrystalizovalo poněkud přesnější zaměření na několik oblastní, jejichž výčet byl v konečné fázi výzkumu zúžen na dvě, k nimž pak směřovaly i konkrétní výzkumné otázky: *Jakým způsobem podporuje výuka s obrázkovou knihou rozvoj cizojazyčné kompetence žáků?* a *Jakým způsobem se učitelova očekávání/předpoklady promítají do přípravy a následně průběhu hodiny s obrázkovou knihou?*

Výzkum byl navržen jako případová studie zkoumající sérii dvou hodin angličtiny zahrnujících aplikaci obrázkové knihy do vyučování. Tato série byla odučena výzkumnicí ve třech rozdílných skupinách žáků první třídy jedné základní školy v průběhu jejich obvyklých hodin angličtiny. Ústřední aktivitou hodin s obrázkovou knihou bylo její opakované kolektivní čtení (kniha byla během dvou hodin přečtena třikrát), kdy žáci sledovali vývoj příběhu v obrázkové podobě na stránkách knihy, a učitel jim zároveň předčítal slovní linku příběhu, která jim jako žákům první třídy základní školy byla v psané podobě, navíc v cílovém jazyce, zcela nedostupná. Kolem tohoto centrálního ohniska v podobě společného čtení bylo zorganizováno několik souvisejících aktivit (práce se slovní zásobou, predikce, dramatické hry, hry s kartičkami s obrázky z knihy atd.).

Pro sběr dat bylo v tomto výzkumu využito tří různých zdrojů (učitelka-výzkumnice, pozorovatel, žáci), a většího počtu technik, z nichž nejvýraznější podíl dat obstaral reflektivní deník vedený učitelkou-výzkumnicí (dalšími metodami bylo nezúčastněné pozorování, dotazník, polostrukturovaný rozhovor a test). Primárním záměrem takto mnohostranného přístupu bylo, jak už bylo zmíněno výše, získat data nahlížející výuku s obrázkovou knihou z co možná nejrůznějších úhlů. Vzhledem k povaze dat byla valná většina z nich analyzována pomocí kvalitativní techniky otevřeného kódování; pouze test a dvě položky dotazníku byly podrobeny kvantitativnímu hodnocení.

Výsledky výzkumu lze shrnout v rámci zodpovězení výše uvedených výzkumných otázek. Co se týče otázky první, tedy jazykového rozvoje žáků, ukázalo se, že ústřední aktivita celé hodiny – tedy společné čtení – sama o sobě neklade důraz na osvojení jazyka, který prezentuje (ten je v porovnání s obrázky vnímán spíše jako nadstavba, dodatečný zdroj informací). Na druhou stranu se tato činnost však zdá mít pozitivní afektivní dopad na žáky – dokáže je získat pro výuku, a z dlouhodobém hlediska spoluutváří jejich kladné postoje k učení se angličtině, resp. cizím jazykům (např. skrz zprostředkování kladné zkušenosti nebo pocitu úspěchu). Obrázková kniha navíc představuje bohatý, zajímavý kontext, jež může posloužit jako odrazový můstek pro vytvoření velkého množství nejrůznějších aktivit, zaměřených podle potřeb hodiny a přání učitele. Již v rámci zodpovězení druhé výzkumné otázky můžeme k tomuto dodat, že konečný průběh a zaměření jazykové hodiny s obrázkovou knihou nemusí být jen vědomě ovlivněny učitelovými volbami a rozhodnutími, ale mohou být směrovány také nevědomky, skrz konkrétní způsob jakým učitel pracuje s obrázkovou knihou. Tento konkrétní přístup je především podmíněn očekáváními, která učitel vkládá do svých žáků i do obrázkové knihy samotné. Tato očekávání mohou učitele vést k omezení prostoru, který obrázkové knize ve své hodině poskytne, a toto omezení pak limituje i některé možnosti a kapacity obrázkové knihy, např. schopnost udržet si pozornost žáků.

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample of reflective diary
(with field notes from teacher-observer joint reflection)

(Excerpt from diary entry describing picturebook lesson 1, group A; re-formatted to font size 11, line spacing 1 due to length.)

[Group A/Lesson 1 (14 children)]

When I first came to the class, I was slightly nervous but I tried to seem as comfortable, as calm as possible... I was afraid the class might feel more nervous if they see that I am, and I did not want that my presence – as of a new teacher – disrupts the usual lesson progress. At first, the lesson was started and I was introduced to everyone by the regular English teacher; she gave the class my name and briefly explained who I am and that I'm going to spend a few English classes with them. And then it was my turn.

I had a feeling the children were a bit inhibited by my presence, despite my efforts; they were mostly smiling, and seemed thrilled about the prospect of a lesson with me (some bobbing up and down in their desks), but obviously they were still rather cautious, too, mouths tight shut, all eyes on me and everyone waiting to see 'what I will be like'.

I wanted to activate them, set them in motion, so – as it was the first lesson – we did some exercises together on the carpet (with a poem). I thought it was a good start not just as it acted as a warm-up and as it was in English but also because I wanted the class to sit still for a while afterwards. And then it was time for the picturebook.

I had some lead-in activities ready. I wanted to make sure the children are actually a bit used to my voice and my almost continuous English before we really read out the book (though, according to what I'd found out from their teacher, they were quite used to being addressed in English). So I had the class sit on the carpet and we talked. I told them what we were about to do: read a book. There were positive reactions, chiefly – positive, or none. Generally said, they seemed still quite silent. I flashed the book several times, in several different ways, and we played a guessing game: 'What do you think the book's about?' I tried to use as much English and possible, and it mostly worked, though I sometimes switched into Czech, just when I saw the class don't know what I mean, or want them to do, at all. The guesses about the book were quite many, and quite close, at least some of them. As for the language, children used both, English and Czech for guessing, and in roughly the same amount; in English, it was mainly animals, words connected to school, and word connected to family – words I supposed they knew from their regular language classes. They seemed to be ready to use this vocab quite spontaneously, though in very different context. In the end we worked our way to the title – 'Push the dog'. I wanted to explain the title, so we rearranged ourselves to form a circle on the carpet (it was fast, we almost were a circle before) and demonstrated 'pushing' on each other, going around the circle and nudging our left-hand neighbours, always crying 'Push!' as we did so, creating the effect of domino-blocks arranged in a circle and falling in chain reaction. The children seemed to enjoy this immensely, they were laughing and everyone happily took their turn. Interestingly, they waited for this turn of theirs, did not skip each other, or otherwise disrupt the progress around the circle. I say interestingly, because by this time, it seemed, the class got very comfortable around me, and were no longer these shy children of ten minutes ago: throughout and at the end of this 'pushing' activity, I already noticed a boy looking out of the window rather then keeping his mind 'with us', and the children felt free enough to talk and joke to each other, the pushing activity being over. I decided to move on.

Immediate change in activity worked well, at least for a while – we started working on the vocabulary that would come up in the book. I did not do this because of fear that the class wouldn't understand the words as they appear in the book – the pictures would take care of that; I only wanted them to have a chance to recognize the words within the spoken sequence, to see

how their pronunciation was, and to arouse their curiosity as to the book a bit, as well as activate their concept, start up prediction. So we sat in the circle and the class looked at the flashcards and repeated the words I gave them for the individual pictures. As we were doing this, it was increasingly obvious that a significant break-up to this activity will have to be made at the end, it they were all to sit calm and view the book – because by now, everyone was pushing towards the middle of the circle, over and across each other, trying to get as close as possible to the cards, not wanting to miss anything. Necessarily, some people did not fit into the circle anymore, then, and set aside, either unhappy and angry, or just unconcerned and indifferent. Something was to be done. We finished with the vocab work speedily, and I placed myself in front of the class (against the wall) asking the pupils to create a semicircle around me on the carpet, so that everyone can see. It worked quite well; we fought a bit with everyone wanting to be as close to the centre as possible, but finally they settled. I made sure everyone could really see me – and the book ('Can you see me?'), and then I was ready to start.

So I began reading. I provided a lot of scaffolding while reading, things one would use while story-telling – intonation, emphasis, miming, gestures… trying to help the picturebook to tell the story (sometimes the pictures seem pretty disconnected). I actually stood up and 'acted' out a scene once. Children listened and watched; they sometimes repeated what I said in English, in fact quite often, especially short sentences, or sentence endings; now and then, when I turned the page, they shouted out English words for the things they saw on the new double-spread; they often laughed and once, when I got stuck with one page, they showed impatience and prodded me to move on, curious what's next ('Tak už dál!!'). It surprised me that they actually said very few other things in Czech; they rather restrained from talking at all, or just said individual words in English when they could name a thing they saw in the picture. I expected them use much more mother tongue, to comment on the story and so on. But they seemed so willing to show off their English, to be seen as successful learners – really eager to 'name things' at least, if that was all they could do.

Having read the book at once, we talked about it shortly. 'Was it good?' 'What was the best?' 'What was not good?' Then we worked shortly with the flashcards once again, playing some acting/miming game. Afterwards, I asked whether they'd like to go through the book once more. Majority expressed agreement, saying 'Yes!', and nodding their heads – as I'd expected. One boy said he'd rather not read it again ('To už stačilo…'). The few others were perhaps indifferent. I noticed that while most children settled themselves again so that they could see well, others (two boys on one side and o girl on another) stayed slightly out of the circle, as if they weren't really interested anymore. I asked them whether they were alright where they were sitting, whether they could still see me from there, and they moved a bit closer. The second reading was faster – not quite fast, because I always tried to give children time to take in the picture, to understand the situation; I read out this time, with less acting, miming or anything, and I kept on the lookout, curious what the children were actually doing while we were reading (I realized I did not manage to notice much of that during the first round). Somehow, this time, I had a feeling that quite a few children within the group were just taking the whole activity as a competition now, trying to elicit the biggest amount of English words anyhow connected to the book, and as fast as possible. As if they didn't really care about the story, but rather wanted to learn vocab, or show they've learned some; as if they preferred working through the book in 'the hard way', like through a textbook or something. Not all the learners were like this, but really some half or more seemed so. On the other hand, they were extremely thrilled by this race they'd imposed, in my view – still moving further inwards in the circle, sitting quite upright, with their chins high, and fighting for a clear outlook on the book… Well, I was a bit perplexed, nevertheless; this disturbed my idea of how *pleasant* a story (and this story) could be for children, and I think it also disturbed those children who wanted to enjoy the picturebook story once again. Generally, throughout the reading, I could see that the activity within the classroom seemed to start shifting slightly in the direction of off-task and disruptive behaviour – children were crying out the English words a bit too loud unless stopped; a pair of boys started prodding each other as if about to start a brawl if not prevented from it immediately; one girl was staring

indifferently out of the window; and several times I noticed a few other children glancing uncomfortably from the picturebook to this disturbing commotion creeping up among them. It sounds like a terror of a lesson if I write it like this – but I really don't think it was not so bad, as these things happened rather gradually and I always did my best to handle them immediately (and even managed quite efficiently). Yet, I had to employ all my tricks to immediately act in these different cases of off-task behaviour, and I found it quite demanding and distressing. Also, I was disappointed, because I expected the picturebook to impose much firmer grip on the class… Nevertheless, I was positively impressed by how much of the words from the book the children caught and remembered – of course, mostly it was those we worked with on the flashcards, too, but not always – and it seemed they really managed to remember much. I had the feeling they know the majority of the words. That was a good feeling, definitely.

And the overall impression was quite good, too, because most of the children seemed to enjoy the lesson, almost all, actually – it seemed to me. I thought they liked the picturebook and working with it, too, though it turned out to be an object of much less attractiveness to them than I'd expected it to be. And they definitely learned something new.

An interesting thing happened at the very end of the lesson, though. I asked the class whether they had ever read an English book before. Some of the children suggested their textbook, an idea which someone else, however, immediately dismissed ('To není normální knížka.' 'Tam nejsme na konci…'). Well, I continued, saying that now they had already read one, which brought up a serious, and extremely curious answer from one boy: Really? ('Fakt?'). Some of them haven't even realised we read the book together! This, along with my slight disappointment (and perhaps a slight bewilderment – what went wrong) connected to the second reading really put forward the fact that something didn't turn out right in this picturebook lesson. In addition, I was pretty tired at the end of the lesson, what with all this maintaining discipline, running around acting, trying to engage the children, and all the rest… Nevertheless, I still found a moment to think on the lesson proceedings after it was all over, when I didn't have a lesson to conclude, questionnaires to handle and ten children demanding my attention…
[…]

Field notes from joint reflection on the lesson with the observer (as included in reflective diary)

*I (involuntarily) managed to cast the picturebook and its role and importance into a secondary position, drawing most attention towards me;
*(I mistrusted children's imagination?) and consequently I didn't leave them to enjoy the picturebook and its story as they would see it, in peace and quiet, but I forced them to wade through my own presentation/interpretation of the picturebook story… perhaps a little more boring for them than the other variant, and *much* more work for me;
*My (hyper)activity overshadowed even the colourful picturebook, made learners overlook it a bit. So it obviously couldn't have had real 'grip' on the children, as it should have…
*– could also be what caused the class of shy angels turn into relatively disruptive crowd – having to bend their attention to a single person for about half an hour in one piece…
**less might mean more sometimes.

Appendix 2: Observation sheet

Picturebook Lesson 1

Describe pupils' activities during the first reading (R1):
(listening and watching silently; commenting; asking questions; repeating words/phrases; predicting; off-task/disruptive behaviour; other)

Describe teacher's activities during R1:
(reads out; adds to or explains the story; provides prompts for better understanding; reacts to comments, questions, predictions; disciplines pupils; other)

Describe pupils' activities during the second reading (R2):
(listening silently; watching silently; commenting; asking questions; repeating words/phrases; predicting; joining in from memory; off-task/disruptive behaviour; other)

Describe teacher's activities during R2:
(reads out; adds to or explains the story; provides prompts for better understanding; reacts to comments, questions, predictions; disciplines pupils; other)

Compare R1 and R2 (in terms of continuity of reading; understanding shown by pupils; use of L1/L2 by pupils; any prominent dissimilarities)

Comment on language use by pupils (predominant language; when/what for do they use L1; when/what for do they use L2; format of L2 utterances etc.)

In which ways does the teacher scaffold learning?
(evokes pupils interest in reading; provides feedback to comments, questions, predictions; poses comprehension questions; praises; acts out; emphasises key words; repeats language etc.)

Picturebook Lesson 1

Describe pupils' activities during the first reading (R1):
(listening and watching silently; commenting; asking questions; repeating words/phrases;
predicting; off-task/disruptive behaviour; other)

! commenting !

*Good - behaved children ... They have
really interest in the story*
*When the children are tired, Kristyna interupts the story
with the body - exercise and disciplines them*

Describe teacher's activities during R1:
(reads out; adds to or explains the story; provides prompts for better understanding; reacts to
comments, questions, predictions; disciplines pupils; other)

*• Short morning exercise; "What's the book about ... guess ...."
• The teacher Kristyna is acting out the introduction of the book.
She is an excellent actress.
1st step: pre-reading - vocabulary
2nd step: R1 Kristyna checks all the pupils can watch the book
and feel and sit comfortable. The changes
her voice sound ...*

Describe pupils' activities during the second reading (R2):
(listening silently; watching silently; commenting; asking questions; repeating words/phrases;
predicting; joining in from memory; off-task/disruptive behaviour; other)

*• 1st step: pupil's pantomime
Children enjoy this activity very much*

Describe teacher's activities during R2:
(reads out; adds to or explains the story; provides prompts for better understanding; reacts to
comments, questions, predictions; disciplines pupils; other)

*Kristyna explains the story using flesh-cards, papers in
colours and body language.*

Compare R1 and R2 (in terms of continuity of reading; understanding shown by pupils; use
of L1/L2 by pupils; any prominent dissimilarities)

*Children understand the story without using
mother-tongue. They can act out the story.
Communication is perfect.*

GROUP A   1.B/1st group

Picturebook Lesson 1

Comment on language use by pupils (predominant language; when/what for do they use L1; when/what for do they use L2; format of L2 utterances etc.)

Pupils can show the vocabulary of the story by their body-language. They repeat useful words.

In which ways does the teacher scaffold learning?
(evokes pupils interest in reading; provides feedback to comments, questions, predictions; poses comprehension questions; praises; acts out; emphasises key words; repeats language etc.)

Kristyna evokes pupils interest permanently!

Appendix 3: Questionnaire

1. Jak se ti líbilo číst anglickou knížku?
   ☺   ☹

2. Jak na tebe příběh působil?
   Cítil/a jsem se ....
   Příběh byl ....

3. Porozuměl/a jsi knížce?
   ☺   ☹

Examples:

1. Jak se ti líbilo číst anglickou knížku?

   😃   ☹️

2. Jak na tebe příběh působil?
   Cítil/a jsem se _DOBRE_
   Příběh byl _ZAJIMAVÍ_

3. Porozuměl/a jsi knížce?

   🙂   ☹️

---

1. Jak se ti líbilo číst anglickou knížku?

   😊   😞

2. Jak na tebe příběh působil?
   Cítil/a jsem se _STŘEDNĚ_
   Příběh byl _VESELÝ_

3. Porozuměl/a jsi knížce?

   😊   😞

---

1. Jak se ti líbilo číst anglickou knížku?

   🙂   😞

2. Jak na tebe příběh působil?
   Cítil/a jsem se _nic moc_
   Příběh byl _nanic_

3. Porozuměl/a jsi knížce?

   🙂   😞

Appendix 4: Interview 4 (field notes)

(Notes were translated from Czech and transcribed; R=researcher, L=learner; text in bold constitutes the original frame pre-established for the interview – intended for all interviewees)

(Group B; boy; questionnaire answers – ☺/He felt bored; the story was funny./☹; test – 4/6; notes – not really active in lessons, from the very beginning on; seemed rather uncomfortable during the interview, or uninterested – hard to say)

1. Have you understood the story?
L>> Not really.
R>> Why not? What didn't you understand?
L>> It's strange, it ends in a strange way.
R>> [briefly recounts the ending of the book in terms of how events happened after each other] What's the strange thing?
L>> Something should happen there.
R>> That's why you were bored? [mentioning his questionnaire]
L>> [nodds]
R>> But else the story was funny..? [L nodds] What, for example?
L>> The dog in the pie, the policemen catching the robbers.

(2. Could you re-tell it for me? was left out due to the negative answer given before.)

3. Did the pictures in the book help you when reading?
L>> Yes, they are good.

4. What was more important, what helped you more, the pictures or the words?
L>> There would be nothing without the pictures.

5. Was it good that we read the book more times?
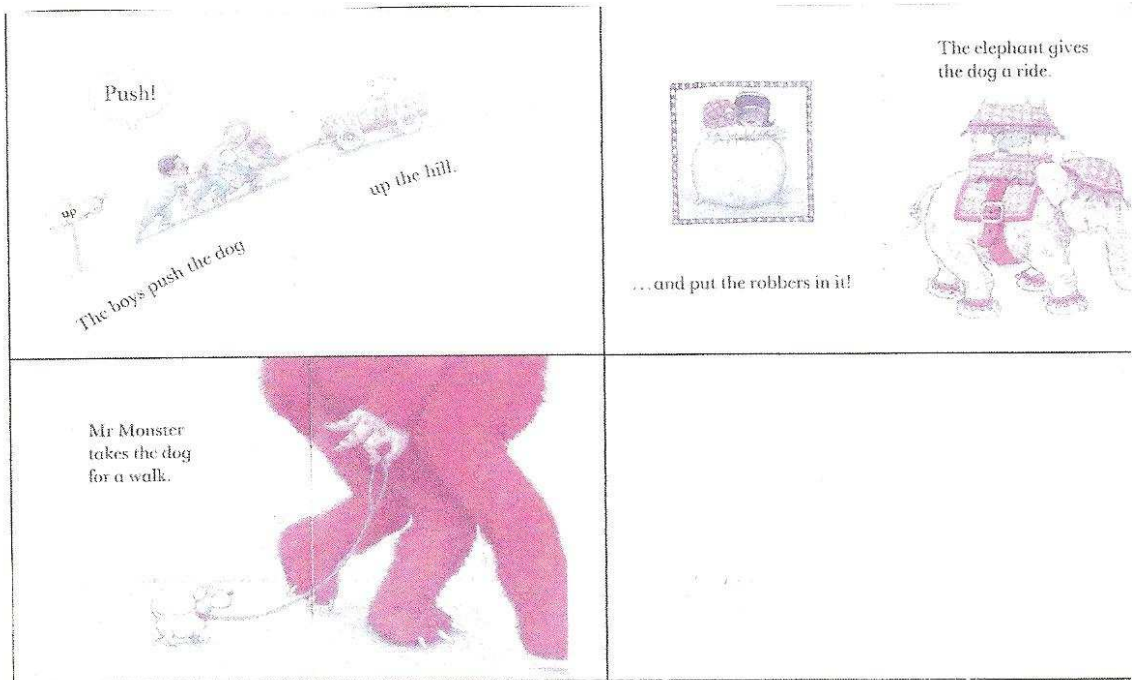L>> [shrugs his shoulders] Don't know, don't care.

6. Have learned anything, remembered anything from the book?
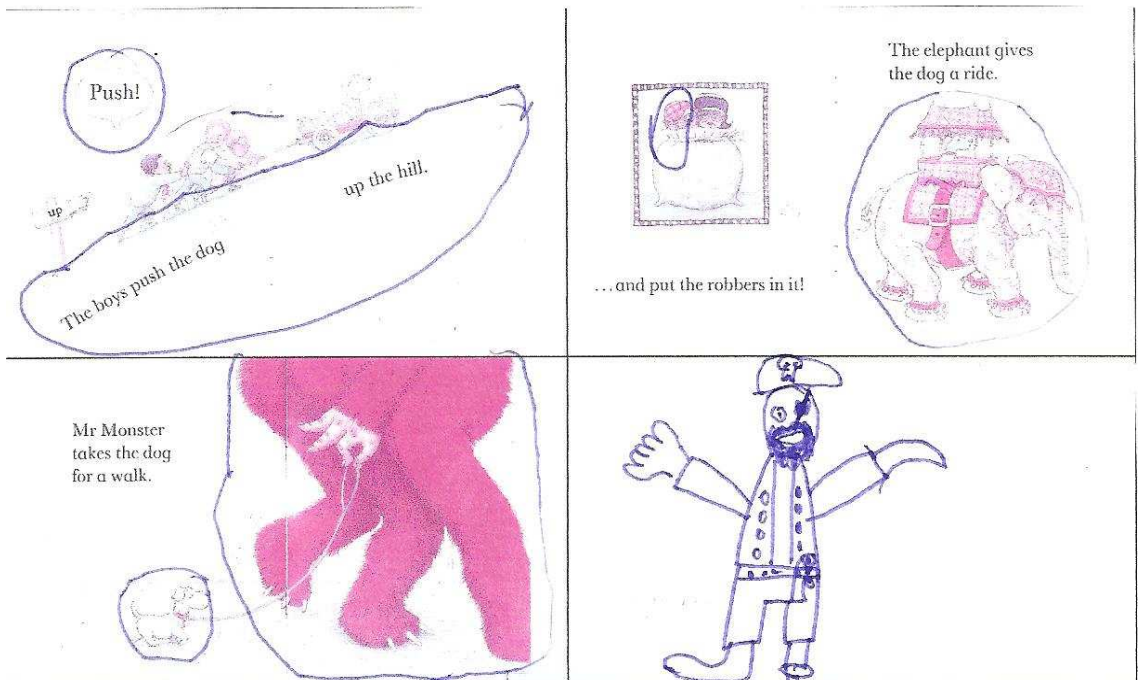L>> [shrugs shoulders again] Yes
R>> [shoves the book to him and asks if he liked something there, what he liked best]
L>> [finds the dog in the pie picture, then browses through the book, starts pointing out things and saying words in English] Monster, ghost [pronounced wrong], robbers, dog.
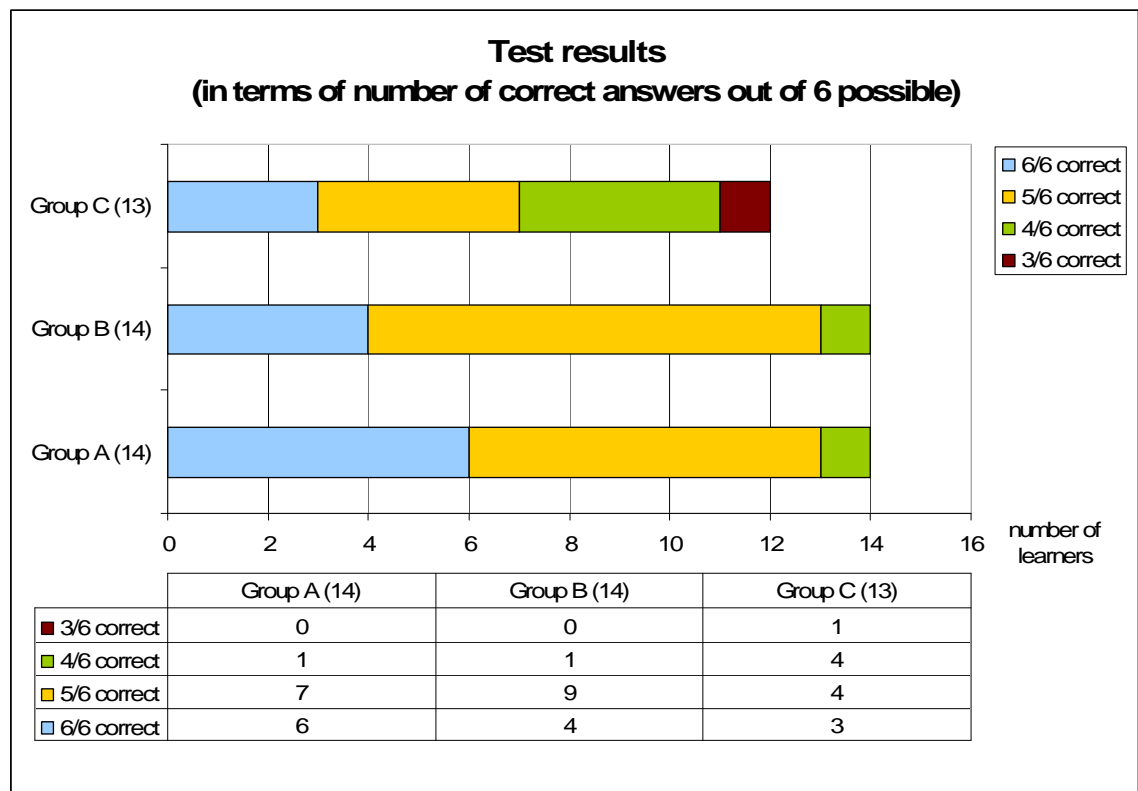
Appendix 5: Vocabulary test

Examples:

Appendix 6: Test results

Test results
(in terms of number of correct answers out of 6 possible)

	Group A (14)	Group B (14)	Group C (13)
■ 3/6 correct	0	0	1
■ 4/6 correct	1	1	4
■ 5/6 correct	7	9	4
■ 6/6 correct	6	4	3

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Correctness	89%	86%	79%

Total	85%

Appendix 7: Questionnaire results (quantitative)

Figure 1: Summary of answers, question 1

Did you enjoy reading an English book?

	Group A	Group B	Group C	All groups
▪ I enjoyed it.	13	12	12	37
▪ I didn't enjoy it.	1	2	1	4
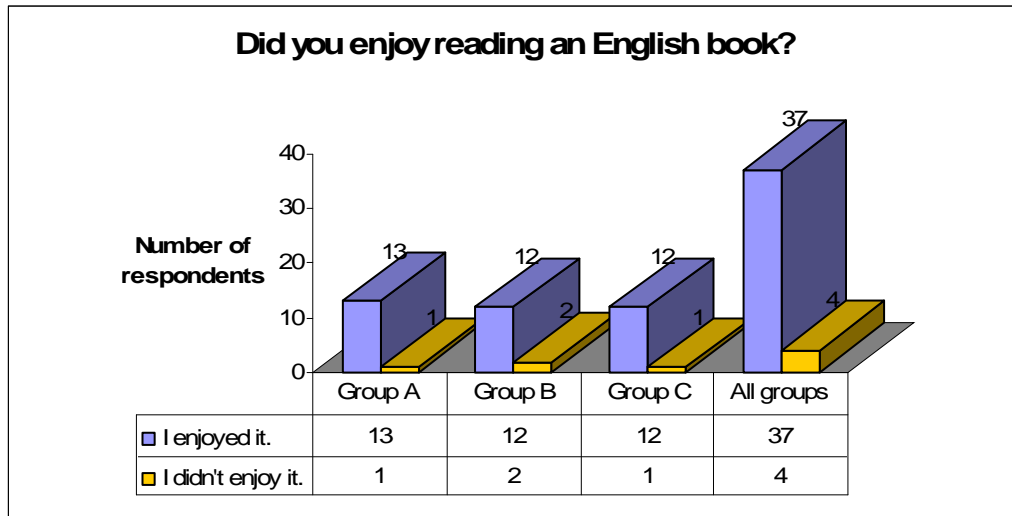
Figure 2: Summary of answers, question 3

Did you understand the book?

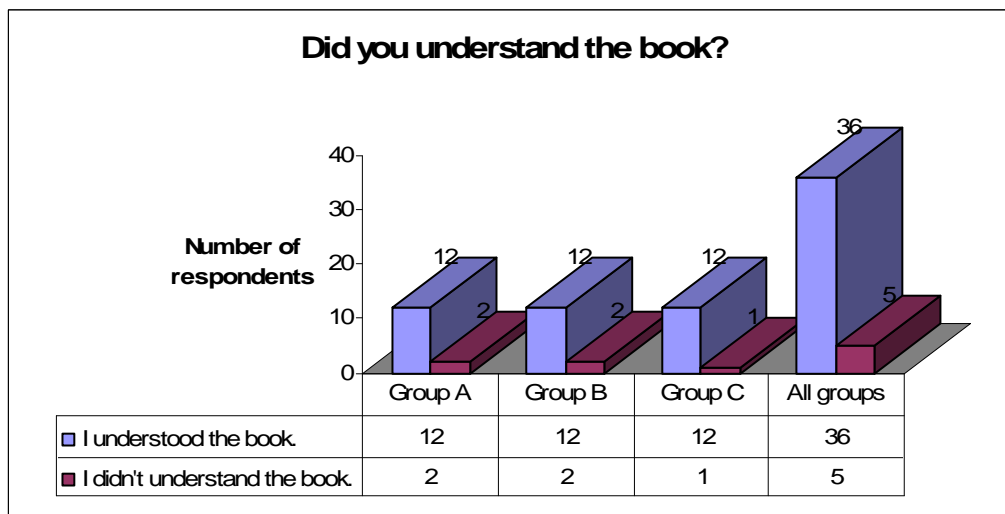|	Group A	Group B	Group C	All groups
▪ I understood the book.	12	12	12	36
▪ I didn't understand the book.	2	2	1	5

Appendix 8: Coding agendas

Figure 1: Coding agenda for *New teacher* category, with examples from reflective diary

Code	Example from the reflective diary
New teacher introduced	'I was introduced to everyone by the regular English teacher; she gave the class my name and briefly explained who I am and that I'm going to spend a few English classes with them.' (p. 1, l. 5-6)
Ice-breaking efforts	'I was slightly nervous but I tried to seem as comfortable, as calm as possible... I was afraid the class might feel more nervous if they see that I am…' (p. 1, l. 2-3)
Disturbing presence	'I had a feeling the children were a bit inhibited by my presence, despite my efforts; […] obviously they were still rather cautious, too, mouths tight shut, all eyes on me and everyone waiting to see "what I will be like".' (p. 1, l. 8-11)
Thrilling presence	'they were mostly smiling, and seemed thrilled about the prospect of a lesson with me (some bobbing up and down in their desks)' (p. 1, l. 8-10)
Learners gradually getting accustomed	'by this time, it seemed, the class got very comfortable around me, and were no longer these shy children of ten minutes ago' (p. 2, l. 36-37)

Figure 2: Codes in *Picturebook and language learning* super-category

Category (description)	Codes	
Language input (input in English provided throughout the lesson)	not picturebook-related input:	RITUALS; ORGANIZING; INSTRUCTING; PROMPTING; FEEDBACK; DISCIPLINING
	picturebook-related input:	VOCAB PRE-TEACHING; VOCAB GAMES; PICTUREBOOK READING
Language use (learners using English)	not picturebook-related:	RITUALS; RESPONDING
	picturebook-related:	NAMING; REPEATING; RESPONDING; READING; RECYCLING
Affective aspects (affecting learners' attitudes to learning)	APPEAL; SUCCESS; HUMOUR; CURIOSITY; PERSONALIZATION; EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT; POSITIVE IMPRESSION	

Figure 3: Codes in *Teacher's expectations and picturebook lesson* super-category

Category (description)	Codes		
Teacher's expectations (anticipations influencing preparation and conduct of picturebook lesson)	learner-related:	language skills:	CURRENT SKILLS; CAPACITY TO LEARN
		reading strategies:	CAN INTERPRET PICTURE NARRATIVE; TIME TO READ
	picturebook-related:		CAPACITY TO RELATE STORY; CAPACITY TO CAPTURE ATTENTION
Lesson planning (expectations projected into lesson preparation)	BOOK CHOICE; VOCAB PRE-TEACHING; ACTIVATING READING STRATEGIES		
Lesson progress (T's expectations projected into lesson conduct)	pre-reading:		VOCAB PRE-TEACHING; ACTIVATING READING STRATEGIES
	while reading:		PICTUREBOOK READING; LINGUISTIC SCAFFOLDING; EXTRA-LINGUISTIC SCAFFOLDING; SPEED OF READING