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Developing Reading and The Evaluation of Didactic Aids

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Zásady pro vypracování:

Student se ve své bakalářské práci bude věnovat problematice rozvíjení čtecích dovedností žáků ve výuce anglického jazyka. V teoretické části charakterizuje již zmíněnou dovednost v rámci výuky anglického jazyka a popíše možnosti rozvíjení této receptivní dovednosti u žáků a zaměří se zejména na volbu textu, vhodných strategií a technik. Praktická část bude věnována analýze učebních materiálů za použití kritérií stanovených v teoretické části. V závěru práce student učební materiál kriticky zhodnotí a navrhne případná opatření pro zvýšení jeho efektivnosti v oblasti rozvíjení čtenářské gramotnosti žáků.

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis deals with developing reading skills and evaluation of teaching materials. The theoretical part consists of five chapters. In the first chapter, there is the introduction to the theoretical part. The second chapter deals with foreign language teaching, a brief historical development of communicative competence and reading in the foreign language teaching with a division of reading as such and also, for example, phases of reading. The third chapter contains various aspects of language that influence the text difficulty. The fourth chapter covers types of texts and the fifth chapter contains a description of coursebooks. The practical part contains the introduction, also a list of criteria for the practical analysis and, of course, conclusion of the bachelor thesis with resume.

Key words:

reading comprehension, text choice, evaluation of didactic materials

Souhrn

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá rozvíjením čtecích dovedností a hodnocením učebních materiálů. Teoretická část obsahuje pět kapitol. V první kapitole se nachází úvod k teoretické části. Druhá kapitola se zabývá vyučováním cizího jazyka, stručným historickým vývojem komunikativní kompetence a čtením ve výuce cizím jazykům s rozdělením čtení jako takového a také, například, fázemi čtení. Třetí kapitola obsahuje různé aspekty jazyka, které ovlivňují obtížnost textu. Čtvrtá kapitola pokrývá druhy textů a pátá kapitola obsahuje popis učebnice. Praktická část obsahuje úvod, také seznam kritérií pro praktickou analýzu a, samozřejmě, závěr bakalářské práce a resumé.

Klíčová slova:

čtení s porozuměním, volba textu, hodnocení didaktických prostředků

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1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to check how teaching reading comprehension in English as a foreign / second language (especially choice of the text, various reading strategies and also techniques during reading) is respected in teaching materials.

This thesis is formed with two basic parts and these are theoretical part and also practical part.

In the first chapter, the theoretical part contains the introduction. The second chapter of the theoretical part consists of with the nature of reading in the foreign language teaching, there is also mentioned a brief historical development of so called communicative competence and also the skill of reading with various divisions and characteristics. The third chapter of the theoretical part contains many aspects that may influence the text difficulty (such as unfamiliar vocabulary, shared assumptions of text authors and readers, grammatical structures and many more other aspects). The fourth chapter contains types of the language input and the fifth chapter that closes the theoretical part of this thesis covers the description and characteristics of the coursebook package. The practical part consists of the introduction of the practical part, after that the analysis of the teaching materials (particularly the Project 3 coursebook package for ninth grade students) follows and then the overall evaluation, conclusion and resumé summarize the whole thesis. The last part of the thesis contains bibliography and appendixes.

Theoretical part

2. **Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) and reading**

2.1 The aim of foreign language teaching

The communicative aim, as Hendrich et. al. (1988, p. 89) calls it in foreign language teaching, is to acquire the foreign language by learners in order to communicate. The realization of the communicative aim, which means to acquire the foreign language as a means of communication, means the acquirement of four language skills. These skills are speaking, writing, listening and, of course, reading. Learners should, in reading comprehension, acquire both reading aloud (with correct pronunciation and intonation) and silent reading. It is also important for learners to be

able to read kinds of text that contain several words that learners are not familiar with. (Hendrich et. al. 1988, p. 89 – 90) Choděra states (2006, p. 74-75) that the communicative aim is to achieve so called communicative competence.

2.2 A brief history of the communicative competence development

Communicative competence, according to Hymes (1972 in Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 159) means that a person who acquires it acquires knowledge and ability that are important for the language use. In other words (Hymes, 1971 in Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 121), the communicative competence acquirement means the knowledge of when to say what and also to whom and how.

Another analysis of communicative competence was made by Canale and Swain who identified four different dimensions that form communicative competence. First of these dimensions is grammatical competence that deals with grammatical and lexical capacity. Sociolinguistic competence is another one and consists of social context with its role relationships, participants and their shared information and the communicative purpose for interaction. Third one is called discourse competence dealing with interconnectedness of message elements and also with the meaning that is represented to the text or discourse. The last competence is called strategic and, as the word strategic itself hints, deals with strategies that communication participants use in the process of communication such as redirecting, starting and finishing the communication process. (1980 in Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 160)

Language competencies can be, according to Bachman (1990, p. 86 - 87), classified into two competences and these are organizational competence and pragmatic competence. The components of language competence (p. 86, 87) include grammatical, textual, illocutionary and sociolinguistic competences. Grammatical competence, consisting of the knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, morphology and phonology or graphology (Widdowson 1978 in Bachman, 1990, p. 87), and textual competence, which consists of cohesion and rhetorical organization, are comprised in organizational competence. (Bachman, 1990, p. 87 - 88). Pragmatic competence consist of illocutionary competence, which enables us to express a range of functions, and also sociolinguistic competence that deals with performing language functions in ways appropriate to the context. (Bachman, 1990, p. 87, 94 - 95)

In the Common European Framework, which is a document that sets out what students "can do" at various levels" (Harmer, 2007, p. 95), is stated that Communicative language competencies consist of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competencies.

Requirements for education in foreign languages that are set in The Framework Education Programme for Basic Education are based on The Common European Framework.

Education in the foreign language (in the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education) aims at the A2 level. (p. 21) In the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education is set that the aimed outcomes in reading include fluent and phonetically correct reading aloud, also the understanding of the simple texts content of coursebooks, the understanding of authentic materials that are accompanied with visual aids, the ability to look up familiar expressions, phrases and answers to questions. Another outcome is deducing a probable meaning of new words that are in context and also the ability of using bilingual dictionary and to look up the meaning of words in suitable monolingual dictionary. (p. 27)

In reading, as is stated in the Common European Framework, learners may read for gist, specific pieces of information, detailed understanding and also for implications. (p.

2.3 The process of communication in reading

In reading, the communication process appears between the reader and the author of the text (writer) in which the author put some piece of information. When the author encodes some message into the text, it is the task of the reader to find and decode it. And when the message is decoded and understood, the process of communication between the two communication participants is finished. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 4) As we can see, the position of a reader during reading is not passive. Therefore, as Grellet says, we can characterize reading as an active skill. (1991, p. 8) Moreover, as well as listening does, reading belongs to receptive skills. Receptive skills are, as Harmer says (2001, p. 199), the ways in which people extract meaning from the written (heard) discourse.

2.4 Definition of Reading

The nature of reading is, as Penny Ur in her book *A course in Language Teaching,* about decoding and perceiving letters in order to read and understand words. Moreover, learners also need to understand words to understand the meaning of a text. The understanding of the text itself comes from understanding the words that compose

the text. (1996, p. 138) The term “text” can be defined as a succession of sentences that are thematically related. (Grellet, 1991, p. 6)

2.5 Reasons for reading

Realizing that reading should have its purpose is the first step that all readers should take. (Wallace, 1980, p. 9) In other words, the aim of reading should be present on readers` minds. Harmer, similarly to Wallace, summarizes that the more readers realize why to read a text, the better they can measure the results of reading. (Harmer, 2001, p. 208) Reasons for reading can be divided into two broad categories. (Grellet, 1991, p. 4; Hamer, 2001, p. 200) Reading for information (Grellet, 1991, p. 4) is done in order to find (and use in the future) some piece of information. Harmer, instead of reading for information uses “instrumental reading”, but the purpose is the same. (Harmer, 2001, p. 200)

Reading for pleasure is the second category. (Harmer, 2001, p. 200; Grellet, 1991,p. 4) The word “pleasure” itself hints that the purpose of it is in enjoying reading of any piece of a text such as illustrated cartoons, various magazines or poetry, simply reading that brings pleasant feelings to readers. (Harmer, 2001, p. 200) Moreover, between these two categories can exist a “crossover”. This means that readers interested in areas such as history can read history books for their own pleasurable purposes and at the same time in order to seek some facts that can be useful. (Harmer, 2001, p. 200-201)

2.6 Is there a connection between reading in native and foreign languages?

Readers that do not read efficiently in their native language (L1) usually tend to read the same way in the foreign language (L2) as Christine Nuttall in her book *Teaching Reading Skills in a foreign language* states. The transfer of L1 reading habits to L2 reading can be strong. Therefore, improving reading habits in the native language can support the process of developing reading in the foreign language. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 58)

2.7 Reading in the foreign language

In foreign language teaching, to achieve a certain level of the reading skill is the partial aim, as is stated in the book *Didaktika cizích jazyků* written by Hendrich et., al. (1988, p. 222) Moreover, reading is a very useful way of developing a foreign language in all its aspects, for example grammar as Choděra says (2006, p. 78). In addition,

people who read a lot acquire words with more meanings and many other phenomena. (Hendrich et. al., 1988, p. 222) Reading is, quite often, marked as the most useful and sought demanded target skill. (Choděra, 2006, p. 78)

2.8 Division of reading

2.8.1 Silent reading vs. Reading aloud:

The reason why mainly silent reading should be taught in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) is that in real life people read silently more often than aloud. (Hendrich et. al., 1988, p. 226) There are many criteria that can be used in order to evaluate the reading process and its results. In silent reading, reading speed can be measured. It is possible to measure the length of a piece of a text that was read together with a certain amount of time. In addition to reading speed, it is, of course, necessary to control the reading comprehension via a brief reproduction, comprehension questions and so on. (Hendrich et. al., 1988, p.235) Reading aloud means that the written form of texts is transferred to the sound. (Hendrich et. al., 1988, p. 186) Teaching of reading aloud is important as well, mainly in the early stage of learning reading, reading aloud should be practiced and as the development of learners in reading progresses, the importance of reading aloud becomes smaller, nevertheless at least reading aloud of short texts should be, with higher level learners, included as well. (Hendrich et. al., 1988, p. 226) During reading aloud, learners improve their pronunciation, accent, intonation, fluency and rhythm (Hendrich et. al., 1988, p. 226, 235) and teachers correct learners if needed. (Choděra, 2006, p. 142)

2.8. 2 Intensive and extensive reading

Students should be engaged in both intensive and extensive reading. Therefore the distinction between these two types is outlined in this section. (Harmer, 2001, p. 210) Intensive reading is about approaching the text under the guidance of the teacher.

(Harmer, 2001, p. 204; Nuttall, 2005, p. 38) There are several roles of the teacher in intensive reading such as the organizer (who gives students instructions about achieving reading purposes), or the observer (who mainly observes the progress of learners and restrains himself or herself from interrupting reading processes). Moreover, teachers can also act as feedback organisers (who usually check the results of completed tasks by learners) and also to work as prompters who stress, for example, language features in the text. (Harmer, 2001, p. 213) On the contrary to intensive reading,

extensive reading is defined as reading at length, for pleasure purposes and also more relaxed activity than intensive reading and in addition, it takes place when learners are on their own (Harmer, 2001, p. 204).

2.9 Reading techniques

The understanding of a written text means that the required piece of information is extracted as efficiently as possible. (Grellet, 1991, p. 3) Moreover, flexibility and the right choices of reading techniques concerning how to approach any piece of a text, in order to satisfy reading purposes, are principal characteristics of a skillful reader as Nuttall says. (2005, p. 48) Being flexible is a basic reason why learners need to know and practice various reading techniques that should be used. Skillful readers, during a fire (for example), skip the technical details about the fire extinguisher and read only the instructions describing how to operate it. But when such readers have to decide which fire extinguisher to buy, they read the technical details about the extinguishers properly. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 48) In other words, it is necessary to decide what techniques to choose in order to satisfy reading purposes.

2.9.1 Skimming

Reading for general understanding called skimming means that readers are able to understand the gist of a piece of a text. Such a "general" comprehension in practice means that readers do not stop to reveal meaning of every word or analyze any deeper thoughts that the author of the text includes in it. (Harmer, 2001, p. 202) Scrivener adds that typical task (for the practice of skimming) are general questions so that learners do not have to focus on every single word, but try to quickly find the main text ideas, themes and so on. (1994, p. 154) Wallace divides skimming into two forms and these are surveying and scanning. (1980, p. 27) Surveying a book, a chapter and even first and last lines of a text is a way of building up anticipation. (Wallace, 1980, p. 14)

2.9.2 Scanning

Scanning is about focusing on detailed or specific pieces of information. During scanning, readers do not focus on the overall theme of a text, but they are focused on concrete pieces of a text such as quick reading of a film review in order to find the name of the director. (Harmer, 2001, p. 202) Typical activities that practice scanning are those that enable students to focus on key words or clues in small sections of the text (in other

words, without the necessity of understanding the text as a whole). (Scrivener, 1994, p. 154)

2.9.3 Reading for detailed comprehension

And there are, of course, situations in which readers need to be focused on everything in detail. As typical examples of the necessity of detailed comprehension, when it is important to go carefully through the whole piece of a text, written instructions or directions are suitable. (Harmer, 2001, p. 202)

2.9.4 Inferring meaning

Inference means making use of syntactic, logical and cultural clues in order to reveal the meaning of unknown elements. (Grellet, 1991, p. 14)

2.10 Skills in real life

In real life, listening, speaking, writing and reading may be generally integrated. (Gower et. al., 1995, p. 85 – 86) It means that, for example, during conversation of two people, it is necessary both to be able to speak and also to listen.

But in practicing more than one skill at the same time we can find both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of integrated skills such as reading and listening are that readers can hear the pronunciation, word stress and intonation. Possible disadvantages are that readers cannot, during listening, set their own pace and moreover, the listening process may encourage learners to sub-vocalize or vocalize that, during reading, slows readers down. (Cuningsworth, 1995, p. 73)

2.10 Top-down and bottom-up processing

Harmer (2001, p. 201) and Nuttall (2005, p. 16-17) distinguish two kinds of text processing. In top-down processing, learners try to absorb the overall picture of the reading passage. (Harmer, 2001, p. 201; Nuttall, 2005, p. 16-17) In addition, learners` schemata and expectations based on – for example – the topic of the text are important. (Harmer, 2001, p. 201; Nuttall, 2005, p. 192) Schema is some kind of an assumption that we make about the world and also how our minds have organized the knowledge gained from our own experiences (Nuttall, 2005, p. 7) On the contrary to the top-down approach, bottom-up processing means building up a meaning from letters, words, word phrases or single sentences and the understanding of the whole text is achieved by connecting these elements together. (Nuttall 2005, p. 17; Harmer, 2001, p. 201) Readers

should be able to use both these ways of text processing because during reading, sometimes one of them predominates the other. (Harmer, 2001, p. 201; Nuttall, 2005, p. 17)

2.11 Phases of reading activity and comprehension checks

Grellet recommends, during reading comprehension exercises, as a consequence of the necessity of understanding not only the structure and meaning of single sentences as such, but also longer units (for example paragraphs), to start with a more global understanding and later to move towards more detailed understanding. The reason why to set a global task and to start with a global comprehension is both to avoid the dependence on understanding every single sentence that forms the text that is read and also to prevent students from being reluctant to infer the meaning of paragraphs or sentences from what comes before or after in the text. (Grellet, 1991, p. 6)

Scrivener, in his book *Learning Teaching,* recommends the task-feedback circle that should work for both listening and reading activities during which both general and more detailed comprehension is sought. (Scrivener, 2005, p. 174-175, 184).

2.11.1 Before reading

Before starting to read, a lead-in, which may consist of introduction to topic, looking at pictures and discussions should be done. (Scrivener, 2005, p. 174) In addition, Nuttall stresses the importance of providing a reason for reading, because in real life people usually have a reason why they read. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 154 – 155) Moreover, there are many things that teachers can do in order to prepare meaningful reading introductions and besides giving learners a reason to read in order to motivate them, teachers should try to relate the text to the experiences and interests of students themselves. Another possible step that is possible to take is the discussion about the topic of the text or to set several questions. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 154 - 157). Here I would add the relevant schemata activation and so called pre-existing knowledge of the world (Cook 1989:69 in Harmer, 2001, p. 199 - 200) without which the reading process is more difficult. Grellet recommends that by considering the layout of the text, which may be accompanied with photographs and so on, learners can be encouraged to anticipate what could be found in the text. (1991, p. 6 - 7) Pre-teaching key vocabulary is what teachers can do, but only when the task of the reading activity is not to

understand, for example, the gist of a text where, of course, it may not be necessary to understand every single word that the text contains. (Harmer, 2001, p. 203 – 204) Dealing with unknown words, if needed, can be done with dictionaries, but teacher should limit the period of time during which learners can look for meaning of unknown words. The time limit is important because of avoiding spending too much time with translating unfamiliar words only. (Harmer, 2001, p. 214) Nuttall, as the last point for the text introduction characteristics, points that the introduction should be short in order not to take up time (2005, p. 155, 157).

2.11.2 While reading

When the reading process begins, the task sequence starts with the general ones, the feedback of the tasks is checked and if the students do the task successfully, another task that is more detailed can follow. If the students do not do the task successfully, the process of dealing with the task can be repeated. The final task, as the task sequence shows, is to deal with the focus on language. (Scrivener, 2005, p. 174, 175) During reading, I consider the activities that follow from the general understanding to the more detailed understanding. For example, reading for gist as a first step, then to read for particular pieces of information and finally to read for detailed understanding and bits of language.

2. 11. 3 After reading

After the tasks are done, the control what has been learned should be done and also it is possible to follow other activities that may be connected to the reading passage. (Scrivener, 2005, p. 174) As far as the understanding control is concerned, reading comprehension activities should be suited to the text. (Grellet, 1991, p. 9) The variety of comprehension checks is really wide, so as an example I mention open questions, multiple-choice questions, right or wrong questions and activities such as matching the correct order of paragraphs or pictures and so on. (Grellet, 1991, p. 9)

2.12 Developing reading speed with respect to the reading purpose

Logically, if readers are able to use adequate reading techniques, their reading speed develops as well. But mastery of reading techniques is not the only factor that influences the reading speed. One of the secrets in developing reading speed can be in

practicing reading under timed conditions. This means that readers should have a certain amount of time for reading a piece of a text that is unfamiliar to readers but not complicated. Students can – for example - start with reading for general understanding and after finishing it they should check whether they are fast enough to meet the time requirements. (Wallace, 1980, p. 13; Nuttall, 2005, p. 57) An important aspect is that the level of the chosen pieces of text should be similar so that the learners themselves can measure the progress of reading speed. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 57, 61)

But what needs to be stressed is that the demands of speed and understanding should be balanced according to the purpose. Reading a manual on a fire extinguisher so fast – during a fire – that you still do not know how to use it is pointless. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 44) On the other hand, finishing a time limited reading test too late, although knowing every single detail about it, is not worth doing as well. Flexible readers are skilled at judging what they want to get out of a text. They – during a fire – skip the technical details about the fire extinguisher and read only the instructions describing how to operate it. But when such readers have to decide which fire extinguisher to buy, they read the technical details about the extinguishers more properly. In other words, flexible readers always have in mind how and what to read in order to satisfy their purposes. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 48) In other words, learners should be able to flexibly approach the text according to the purpose. Therefore, learners should not, for example, read a whole telephone book with the list of thousands of names and numbers if there is only one name and number (in the middle of the book) that they want to look up.

2.13 Reading habits with both positive and negative aspects

Subvocalizing, which means forming the sounds of the words that are read, is one of habits that is commonly present during elementary native language readers, supports the spoken language that usually is more familiar for them. But on the other hand, subvocalizing during reading slows the reading process down because the eyes of readers move faster than their tongues, as Cunningworth claims (1995, p. 73), as well as Nuttall does. (2005, p. 58) Reading aloud, similarly to subvocalizing, is slower than silent reading as well. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 58) Nevertheless, reading aloud can have positive consequences on readers such as associating the spelling of the words with correct pronunciation. (Gower et. al., 1995, p. 96) Finger-pointing may help readers to stay focused. But, the reason why fingerpointing is criticized is basically the same as with subvocalizing. It slows readers down during pointing word by word. (Nuttall,

2005, p. 58-59) Regressive eye movements are another often-criticized reading habit because the reading process which involves regression is slower. But regression can be characterized as a positive quality of a reader as well. The positive effect of regression may appear when a reader reads through one piece of the text more that once because of unfinished modifying of his or her thoughts and interpretations of the text content. Such a regression can be, on the other hand, characterized as a positive quality of a reader that wants to ensure himself or herself that beliefs gained out of the text are really valid. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 59)

As well as the awareness of what slows the reading process down, learners should also be aware of habits that are recommended in reading.

2.14 Reading habits that should be practiced

It has been discovered that good readers do not read word by word. They are able to cover whole lines in several jumps that are called fixations and it means that eyes of readers take several words at a time which, of course, is a faster process than the word by word reading. The lesser fixations are being done during reading, the better, of course. But it is not a random choice of several words read together. The notion is to chunk words into "sense groups" (units of meaning). (Nuttall, 2005, p. 54-55)

3. What makes text difficult

3.1 Vocabulary

3.1.1 Unknown vocabulary and the length of words (and sentences)

Wallace (1992, p. 77 in Harmer, 2001, p. 203) claims that one of the factors that influence the text difficulty is the length of words and sentences (if we accept that longer words and sentences tend to be more difficult). On the other hand, Paran (1996 in Harmer, 2001, p. 203) claims that the problem is about the number of unknown expressions. Harmer accepts both the length of words (sentences) and the number of unknown words that are present in texts. (2001, p. 203) It is possible to measure readability based on the average word length by picking a typical stretch of (for example) 100 words of text and the more syllables there are in the text, the more difficult the text is (as long as we agree that the longer words tend to be less familiar). Similarly to the word length, length of sentences can be measured the same way. Again, for example, the 100-word stretch that contains fewer sentences can be considered as

more difficult, because the sentences contained in the measured text are longer, in other words are more complex. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 175)

3.1.2 Expressions with misleading meaning

One of these examples is an idiom. Idioms are lexical items that consist of several - often simple - words and the meaning of idioms cannot be revealed by translation only. “Seeing red” is a typical example of (Nuttall, 2005, p. 66). Students who are able to translate both these words still cannot see the true meaning of the idiom. Idiom explanations usually need some contextualization. The real meanings of having a red vision of the world and, on the contrary, being in anger (that is in real life commonly expressed by “seeing red”) are different and it is not possible to shuffle them. Learner may also come across words with more than one meaning. Readers should expect that these words can occur and when they face them, it is necessary to decide whether to accept the familiar meaning of these words or whether to doubt the meaning and try to reveal another one. Using vocabulary is a good way how to deal with words with more meanings because out of several possibilities that vocabulary can offer, learners should be able to, according to the context, find the right meaning (Nuttall, 2005, p. 66) Another typical complicated phenomenon in meaning of words is the usage of words or word phrases in ironical way. The meaning of words meant as irony may seem simple, but the difficulty lies in the way in which the writer uses the ironical expressions. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 68) Here I would mention the word “great” in two different context in order to stress the usage of irony: It is really great that she passed the test. Here, the meaning of “great” is obviously positive and common in every day meaning of the word. On the contrary: “She failed the test and also broke her leg, which is great too.” Here, the word “great” represents irony. To these kinds of problematic words I would add slang expressions that are in real world present a lot and, of course, phrasal verbs with meaning that usually cannot be revealed by word-by-word translation.

3.2 Structural difficulty

3.2.1 Unfamiliar grammatical structures

Ur states that it is very important to put the emphasis on both form and meaning of the introduced grammatical structure (1996, p. 75, 81, 82). Cunningsworth uses the term “use” instead of meaning, but equally, as Ur does, puts the emphasis on the fact that both form and use should be learned and, if possible, as closely as we can. (1995, p.

32) Ur stresses the importance of having plenty of contextualized examples of the particular new structure and also recommends the usage of visual materials that can also contribute to the new structure understanding. (1996, p. 82) There are several functions of visual materials (pictures), such as decorative, representative and mainly interpretative that can help learners to understand via its content what is taught. (Čáp and Mareš, 2007, p. 498 – 502) To the structural difficulty I would add morphological and syntactical aspects of language.

3.3 Text cohesion and coherence

Larsen-Freeman describes other phenomena that make text difficult (when learners work with reading exercises in which sentences are scrambled). The task in such reading exercises usually is to unscramble the sentences and students learn about cohesion of sentences. Text cohesion is formed through linguistic devices, for example with pronouns. (2000, p. 133) Or as Čáp and Mareš state, text cohesion is about inner consistency. (2007, p. 485 – 486). Text coherence, which is bound together through semantic propositions, unifies the text. (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 133) Čáp and Mareš summarize text coherence as a thematic relation. (2007, p. 486)

3.4 Knowledge of the world, schemata and assumptions

Other aspects that I would like to mention are knowledge of the world (Nuttall, 2005, p. 7, 221) and relevant schemata. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 7 - 8, 221) The problem with previous background knowledge is that learners usually do not have the same knowledge and experiences about the world from the past and the result is that one text is easier for some learners than for others. The possible way of dealing with it is to work with various topics and genres in order to, at least a little bit, balance the advantages of some learners that deal with familiar text and sometimes the same learners deal with text about which they know hardly anything. (Harmer, 2001, p. 206; Nuttall, 2005, p. 221) Shared assumption that learner have with the text author are important as well, because it makes the process of communication between readers and writers easier. (Nuttall, 2005, p. 6-7)

3.5 Reading instructions

In the book called Authentic assessment for English language learners, Fielding and Pearson 1994 in O`Malley and Pierce (1996, p. 95) define four components that can

lead to the reading success and these are having enough time for reading, strategy instruction, collaboration opportunities and discussions about reading responses.

3.6 Other factors influencing the process of reading

Besides the support of pictures, which can make the reading process easier by hinting what the reading passages may be about, it is very important whether (or not) learners are interested in the reading content. (Harmer, 2001, p. 206; Nuttall, 2005, p. 170-171) What can also help during reading is getting rid of negative expectations that learners can have, which is a task for teachers that can be fulfilled by giving learners achievable reading purposes. (Harmer, 2001, p. 206)

4. Types of input

4.1 The authentic input (text authenticity)

The usage of authentic materials in English Language Teaching (ELT) is often criticized, mainly with connection to lower level students, because authentic texts are considered too difficult. Authenticity as such, according to Grellet, means that nothing of the original text is changed, as well as the presentation remains in the original form. (1991, p. 8) The reasons why authentic materials should be used in the classroom teaching are summarized in the following five arguments. (Gower et. al., 1995, p. 83) Students tend to be motivated to understand authentic materials and if they do, their confidence rises. Authentic materials also contain real language and it is possible to acquire it during dealing with them. In addition, the cultural content of authentic materials supports involvement and comparison of students (mainly in multicultural groups). Another advantage of using these materials is that it can be easy to prepare authentic tasks. The fifth argument is that the use of these materials can be linked with making predictions, guesses and the use of grammar books and dictionaries.

Nevertheless, it is, for several reasons, not recommended to use authentic materials as well. One of the reasons is that if learners consider the authentic text too difficult to work on, it can have negative consequences in the form of frustration about the inability to cope with authentic language. (Ur, 1996, p. 150; Harmer, 2001, p. 205) But Ur, on the other hand, supports the usage of authentic materials because it is important for learners to be able to cope with the exact materials with which native speakers of the target language cope. (Ur, 1996, p. 150)

4.1.1. No certain level of difficulty for authentic texts?

Authentic materials are not designed for the English as a foreign language learner and that is the reason why authentic materials are not graded for any level (Gower et. al., 1995, p. 82).

One particular authentic text can be, interestingly, used for both lower level students and higher level ones as well. The key aspect for using one piece of an authentic text by different level students is the task choice. Lower level students can be, for example, asked to find the price of tickets for a show in an entertainment guide and, on the contrary to the previous task level, higher level learners can be asked to pick up a telephone and book the tickets as a more challenging activity. (Gower, et. al., 1995, p. 83) In other words, the difficulty of the reading exercise depends a lot on the required activity than on the chosen piece of the text. (Grellet, 1991, p. 7) For students of earlier stages Ur recommends the usage of simplified texts instead of authentic (1996, p. 150) On the contrary to Ur, Nuttall says that authentic texts can be used by lower level learners through, for example, top-down strategies where no detailed understanding of the text may be required. (2005, p. 177, 192) Simplification of texts, as Ur recommends for earlier stages students (1996, p. 150) may mean, according to Grellet (1991, p. 7), for example replacing unknown words by the expressions that are familiar to students. But Grellet himself warns that simplifications may, paradoxically, result in the increased difficulty of the "simplified text" in the cases when the simplification is done carelessly. (1991, p. 7) As we can see, it is actually possible to advocate the usage of authentic materials even with lower level students, but the choice of the materials must be carefully made and the aims of tasks as well. At least some work should be done and practiced with authentic materials so that learners can face real world circumstances during reading.

4.2 Input "slightly above"

It is necessary to mention the language input, together with the comprehensible input background. It was Krashen who saw the acquisition that was successful by second language students as being bound up with the nature of the received language input. The language input should be comprehensible, but can have a form of a level that can be slightly above the productive level of students. Moreover, the setting in which learners are exposed to the input should be relaxed. Such a roughly-tuned input, as Krashen claims, aids acquisition. (Harmer, 2001, p. 71) According to Krashen,

acquisition is the basic process that is involved in the development of the proficiency of language and he distinguishes acquisition from learning. (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 161, 162)

Language that is acquired subconsciously is available spontaneously during conversation because it is easily used when it is needed. (Harmer, 2001, p. 71) Acquisition refers to the development (that is unconscious) of the target system of language as a result of the use of the language for communication that is real. (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 162)

Language that is learnt (such as vocabulary and grammar), is not available spontaneously. The only situation in which learning is usable is the monitoring of our spontaneous communication. (Harmer, 2001, p. 71) Conscious representation of grammatical knowledge (learning) results from instruction and cannot lead to acquisition. (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 162) Language learning, according to Krashen and other second language acquisition theorists, comes about through the use of the language as communication, rather than to practice the skills of language. (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 162)

5. Coursebooks

5.1 Coursebooks and their functions

A coursebook can function as a curricular project, also as a source of the content of education for learners and also as a didactic aid for teachers. (Průcha, 2002, p. 272-273) Curriculum can be defined as the content of education. (Průcha, 2002, p. 235, 243)

5.2 Coursebooks used in English Language Teaching (ELT)

Coursebooks that are used in ELT have many roles, for example a resource for presentation materials and self-directed learning, a syllabus, a support for less experienced teacher, a source of classroom activities and so on (Cunningsworth, 1995, p.7) It is a general truth that the role of coursebooks should be at the service of teachers as well as learners. But coursebooks should not be the master of anyone. The key aspect should be that teachers, via coursebooks, teach learners the language and not the textbook. (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 7) Harmer adds that the sameness that may appear during using coursebooks can have de-motivating effect for both teachers and students. (2001, p. 304)

5.3 Coursebook package

Gower et al., (1995, p. 77) defines coursebooks as published materials (that are not authentic). And, as well as Cunningsworth does (1995, p. 25), Gower et al. stresses that learning package of certain coursebooks may consist of a student`s book, a teacher`s book and, as a material that gives students more practice in those items that were already introduced, a workbook. (1995, p. 77) Moreover, media with audio files are usually in the coursebook package as well. (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 25; Gower et al., 1995, p. 77) Gower et al. adds a video as a part of the whole package. (1995, p. 77) Reading together with the rest of skills (speaking, writing and listening) should be included in coursebooks because skills complement the dimension of grammar, lexis and phonology. (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 64)

5.4 Syllabus

A syllabus can be characterized as a document that consists of a list specifying what should be taught in the course for which the syllabus was designed. (Ur, 1996, p. 176 -177) There are many kinds of language syllabuses such as the grammar syllabus (with a list of grammatical structures), the lexical syllabus (which consists of lexical items with associated colloations), the functional syllabus (which stresses language functions), the situational syllabus (consisting sequences of real-life situations), the topic-based syllabus (with topic-based headings), the task-based syllabus (with a series of tasks) and the multi-syllabus syllabus (with the combination of any items from, for example, grammar, topics, functions and so on). Moreover, there is a syllabus called the process syllabus and is, in a way, experimental. The content of such a syllabus is not specified in advance and also predetermined goals are missing. (Ur, 1996, p. 177 - 179; Hamer, 2001, p. 295 – 300; Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 54 – 59)

5.5 Reading and the text purpose

It is possible to use reading texts for several various purposes. Cunningsworth states, for example, the extending of vocabulary, presenting grammar items or the oral work stimulation. But for the intentions of this thesis the development of reading skills and strategies is the basic purpose of the text. (1995, p. 73) A special focus will be made on reading activities, which can be characterized as activities that consist of a text and also comprehension questions that follow the text. (Ur, 1996, p. 143)

5.6 Conclusion of the theoretical part

In the practical part of this thesis, I will focus on the evaluation of the coursebook and the workbook from the Coursebook package Project 3 that consists of Student`s book, coursebook and also Teacher`s book **(see Appendix 1**). The list of areas that I will focus on together with criteria for assessment will be, according to the theoretical part of this thesis, mentioned at the beginning of the practical part (section 6.2).

Practical part

6. Introduction

The analysis of teaching materials will be in-depth, as Cunningsworth says (1995, p. 2), according to the chronology of the coursebook Project 3, (and also according to reading exercises from the workbook) the analysis will be presented through the list of criteria which was adapted from several checklists made by Cunningsworth (1995, p. 73 – 80), also several criteria from the Framework Education Programme for Basic Education (criteria for the language level A2 can be used because it is the level for which Project 3 is written) and also from the Common European Framework (particularly reading techniques, which are basically the same techniques mentioned in the chapter 2.9.) Several more criteria will be added from the content of the theoretical part of the thesis and as I already said, the checklists that I had to adapt from Cunningsworth consists of not all the possible criteria that Cunningsworth mentions, because some of them, as for example "To what extent does the material involve the learner`s knowledge system (knowledge of the world?) are pretty difficult to assess, or at least, pretty relative. At the very beginning of the analysis, the syllabus of the coursebook package will be described as well.

6.1 Definition of the syllabus

As a first step I will describe the syllabus of Project 3. According to the Student`s book and the contents **(see Appendix 2)** I consider the syllabus type to be the multi-syllabus syllabus (Harmer, 2001, p. 299 – 300) because it consists of parts that are

divide according to topic, grammar, vocabulary, functions and skill development and study skills (aimed mainly at pronunciation).

6.2 The list of criteria

1. Is the practice of 4 language skills balanced?

2. Does the material practice various reading techniques (skimming, scanning, reading for detailed comprehension, inferring meaning) and is it balanced? (the balance of techniques will be written immediately next to the technique occurrence into a bracket)

3. Does the material help comprehension by:

- **setting the scene?**
- **providing background information?**
- **giving pre-reading questions and activities?**
- **giving the support by pictures with interpretative function?**
- **pre-teaching expressions with difficult (misleading) meaning (e. g. idioms, etc.)?**

4. Does the material contain variety of text types (genres)?

5. Does the material include exercices for both intensive and extensive reading?

6. Does the material explain unfamiliar (new) language items (e. g. grammar) in context, separately or both?

7. Does the material seem to remain fresh in the future?

8. Does the material support the work with dictionaries?

9. Does the material integrate skills?

11. Does the material contain authentic materials (according to the definition of authenticity by Grellet set in the theoretical part)?

12. Are there extensions that involve the experience of students?

13. Does the material contain pieces of advice on the usage of various reading techniques?

14. Are the techniques of reading, which should be used in reading activities, explicitly set in instructions?

15. Does the material contain exercises aimed at the practice of cohesion / coherence of text?

7 The evaluation of materials

7. 1 The introductory unit

The coursebook Project 3 does not start with first unit, but, clearly from the lay-out, with the introduction part. According to the instructions from the teacher`s book, the purpose of the unit is to introduce the material to the learners.

The first exercise (p. 4) practices reading and listening together and as far as the reading is concerned, the technique of scanning is practiced. (scanning 1) On the following page, the first activity with dictionaries is present.

7.2 UNIT 1

In the first unit called "Home and Away", in the "language in use" section and the aim is to practice grammar and vocabulary. Moving presented as the magazine article (p.6). Three pre-reading questions aim at personal experiences of learners. These questions are topically connected to the text content, so I consider them as the pre-reading activity. The text purpose is to present grammar in context (the usage of the word "ago"). The comprehension is checked via another scanning activity (scanning 2) and also via true/false questions. Moving is integrated with listening of the whole text too and attached with pictures with decorative function.

In the text (p. 8) "Kelly`s first day" practices personal questions and requests. The text starts with a topically connected warm-up questions, also is accompanied with pictures that hint the content of the story and, again, is integrated with listening. Reading for gist (gist 1) is present in the second activity and questions serve as a check of comprehension.

The purpose of another reading activity (p. 10) "How was your weekend?" serves for practicing grammar and likes (dislikes). Personal questions are again present as a warm-up and learners correct several statements with false information, which is a new comprehension check.The reading activity (reading for detailed understanding Reading 1) is connected with listening and accompanied with a picture with interpretative function.

The section that should deal with functions and skills development (section "D") contains an essay (another text type) and develops detailed comprehension (reading for detailed comprehension 2). The warm-up is oral, set by a teacher (according to the instructions from the Teacher`s book). The pictures indeed help in the orientation and vocabulary topically connected to the family is recycled. The comprehension is checked with three exercises that aim at practicing scanning (scanning 3), one speaking exercise and one that is based on the vocabulary.

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7.3 UNIT 2

The second unit (p. 14) is called “Having fun” and starts with a magazine article and pre-reading questions about sports and another scanning activity follows (scanning 4) Thanks to the pictures of golf clubs, green and so on, the content of the reading part is clearly hinted. The text recycles grammatical structures from the previous unit, later is integrated with listening and finally aims at detailed comprehension. (reading for detailed comprehension 3)

Another text “Kelly feels homesick” (p. 16) starts with a warm-up about the previous events (the story continues from the unit 1) and is accompanied with interpretative pictures (gestures of people in the pictures hint a lot what the story is about). The reading is integrated with listening and scanning (scanning 5) is practiced. The purpose of the text is to present a new grammatical item and both accepting and refusing invitations, so another practice of language functions. Students also use expressions from the text in other situations rally.

Page 18 is the first one to present a reading activity with setting the scene of the story. It starts with a cartoon (another text type) that will have its continuation in the Project 3, as well as the story about the kids. As a warm-up there is a simple question about the pictures and as such serves as another scanning task (scanning 6). The purpose of the text is to practice present simple and continuous tenses and also vocabulary connected to time. Comprehension checks are true / false questions and also a role-play. The role-play is based on acting the whole story, so I consider this reading/listening activity as another one aimed at detailed comprehension (reading for detailed comprehension 4). Continuation of the plot of the text continues on the following page, but this is a pure grammar practicing activity.

On the page 20, there is a *“study skills”* section with pieces of advice about pieces of advice during coming across unfamiliar words during reading or listening. It stresses the fact that there is no need to reveal the meaning of every word that learners do not know. There are ways how to deal with these situations, such as attempts to work out the word meaning from the context or looking them up later in the dictionary and putting them down in order to remember them. This is the first piece of advice that is present in the Project 3 material that focuses on reading.

Moreover, to my mind, the most difficult part comes immediately. On the same page learners come across another reading activity that deals with an idiom. The idiom "couch potato" is presented in a magazine article, accompanied with two pictures (one of them presents a medicine doctor and the other one an angry mother talking to a combination of a boy and a potato watching TV and eating crisps, or in other words, it helps with reading comprehension a lot). The very first task, moreover, supports guessing of learners on the content of both the meaning of the picture and the content of the text as well. "The couch potato generation" and the content of pictures guide the learners in the right direction. The second activity task is to find what the couch potato generation means and also to find reasons approving this criticized idiom, so it can be considered as another reading activity for detailed comprehension (reading for detailed comprehension 5). The activity is integrated with speaking and demands the expression of personal experiences concerning couch potato and the opinions of the doctor that approves the couch potato criticism.

The page 22 is the first one to contain so called "extension 1". The first reading/listening activity on page 22 called "Families" focuses on personal experiences of learners connected to their families and friends, which seems to be a great way how to active background knowledge connected to this another culturally acceptable topic. The activity provides a clear comparison of different cultures and is accompanied with perfectly chosen pictures that, via its content, stress the cultural differences. Those three pictures show houses in Britain, British wedding and so on. The problem is whether, for example, the picture of the house is still fresh enough for learners in order to have a clear view of current British culture. Comparing the whole page aims at another reading for detailed comprehension (reading for detailed comprehension 6).

Page 22 contains a song on which learners are encouraged to guess the meaning of unknown words. Other questions on the song text represent another activity that practices reading for detailed comprehension (reading for detailed comprehension 7).

On the page 23, tasks to draw a family tree and to describe learners` families are based on the reading activities that were already examined. Another possibility instead of the family tree is to create a fictional story (another text type). Moreover, Another activity about families is available. This time, it is about collecting pieces of

information about family members and, as with the previous two tasks, the reading activity from page 22 serves as an example for another a writing activity.

And on page 23 there is a text of a song and the first of several tasks is to look quickly at the lyrics and to guess the meaning of any unknown words (reading for gist 3) and to underline any words connected to particular topics (*sleeping* and *resting*). As we can see, the lyrics of songs can serve as the extension of vocabulary during reading it.

In the first of revision parts (p. 24, 25), which is present after second, fourth, sixth and the last unit, the aim at two previous units. As far as the reading skill is concerned, there is a text presented as an email (so another text type). The purpose of this text is to revise present simple/past simple tense and also the usage the past tense. The task of this exercise, which is presented as en e-mail (another text type that was not used before) is to find what is written in the text about six particular items. This is another particular pieces of information reading (scanning 7) Moreover, the text serves as an example for a writing task.

7.4 Unit 3

In unit 3 "*Tomorrow`s world"*, the reading purpose of the magazine article in section "Drive into the future" called "Only five years away – the flying car" is to present the usage of a new grammar item – future tense via reading about a model of a car form the future. The future tense is, as the coursebook calls it, present also in the "short version" (won`t). But the very first task before the dealing with the text is to start a discussion, as a warming activity. The discussion is about the age at which people in our country can drive a car and so on, so it is a culturally connected activity. Another scanning activity follows the warm-up. (scanning 8) and grammar is in the focus as far as the following activities follow. Well, this is the first topic with which I am not sure whether, for example, girls really like it.

Another part of the "Kids" story continues on the page 28 with, again, a summary of what happened in the previous part of Kids, as a warm-up. The setting is clearly set in the first picture and moreover, there is another piece of information about the setting. The purpose of the text, besides the integration with listening to the whole text content, is to practice a grammatical structure (future tense) and also the stress on language

functions is present. Now it is about making offers and suggestions. The text, besides the future tense recycles present tense and practices everyday expressions that are in a closer focus after the reading part as well as expressions for making suggestions and offers. The comprehension is checked via searching for specific information (scanning 9). As the last task that is connected to the story, learners should act out the story, so the importance of detailed comprehension is necessary (reading for detailed comprehension 7). Moreover, what seems to be important to mention is that no exact words, phrases and so on are set to use. The order of pictures is also marked and judging by the facial gestures learner must know what is going on. Another example of the brilliant interpretative function of pictures is here.

In *Language in use*, the story "*Detective of the year"* continues with another integrated part with listening to the whole content that recycles future tense (*will* for decisions), which is closely examined later in another exercise, and past tense (p. 30). The comprehension is checked via two connected questions and what is interesting is that in order to be able to answer the questions, learner need to understand the whole content of the story. The questions are thematically connected to the end of the story. (reading for detailed comprehension 8) After that, another true / false questions aim at reading for specific information. (scanning 10)

The part "*D*" , which is as always a section in which skills are developed, starts (p. 32) with a reading for general understanding (reading for gist 4). The page consists of a questionnaire about learners` opinions and expectations concerning their future that, of course, practices future simple tense. The questionnaire with several questions about concrete future events is accompanied with one picture with various motives (perhaps in order to stress that our future is open). The first task is to reveal what the text is about. In other words, I consider the purpose of this exercise in practicing reading for general understanding (reading for gist 5). Another task is to work with a dictionary in order to translate any words that are not familiar to learners. This is another activity that encourages learners to work with questionnaires, but, sadly, there is no encouraging in guessing the possible meaning of expressions. The ability to work efficiently with dictionaries is, of course, very important. Nevertheless, translating all the unknown words by students should, if they decide to do it, extend their vocabulary which may be

a positive consequence of it. Another task of this page is to ask partners in the class about the questions from the questionnaire and as the last exercise, students

should find someone from their schoolmates and discuss the answers, which is a integration of reading and speaking

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7.5 UNIT 4

"What was happening" on the page 34 opens another unit and the name itself hints that the past continuous tense is in focus. And the expectations are right. The text has also its function, together with vocabulary about houses and furniture, it presents past continuous tense. The first reading activity (reading for specific information 11) that is integrated with listening and consists of several warm-up questions prepared for learners. Another task aims at more detailed information (reading for detailed comprehension 9). The text of this exercise is accompanied with a picture of the Earth and, as learners should know, there is not the same time shown all around the world at the same moment. That is the reason why I consider the usage of this particular picture, with various activities of persons living somewhere else, to have the right interpretative function. Brilliant! What a great way how to show many various activities that are happening at the same time.

Another activity (on the page 35) focuses on the fact whether (or not) learners are aware of the location of the countries where the persons from the previous activity live. Other two exercises practice searching for past continuous occurrences and creating sentences out of prepared names of persons and activities (taken out from the text). It is not a reading activity, indeed. But it is an activity in which learners use new grammatical structures from the reading activity in different context.

The page 36 starts with the integrated reading/listening exercise that is called "Virtual soap" ant it is accompanied with three pictures (again, telling a lot about the story content). Thus, the comprehension of this dialogue is made easier thanks to the pictures. First two questions focus on specific pieces of information (reading for specific information 12) and after the reading/listening activity, there is a more demanding comprehension activity aimed at true/false correction (if necessary). (reading for detailed comprehension 10) The text itself recycles again presents (recycles) present simple/continuous tense and introduces/practices, as the coursebook calls it, everyday expressions. The text "Virtual soap" serves as a starting point for other activities on the page 37.

In another “Language in use” there is another reading activity integrated to listening (p. 38) and it is called *Twister!*, accompanied with two pictures (one illustrated as a comic picture and the second one with a real appearance that hints a lot what a twister is) practices the usage of past simple/continuous tense. The activity starts as a warm-up and the task is to guess what twisters are and what they are capable of. The text is presented as the news item and the very first two questions are supposed to be answered before reading and are aimed at personal opinions of learners. Another task is to read/listen to the dialogue about the twister and after that to answer five questions (reading for specific information 13) and one question which answer demands a total comprehension of the text. The text itself later serves to practice grammar (p. 39).

Another reading activity called “Who killed John Ross”activity is on the page 40 presented as a report. It practices *grammatical structures (past tenses).* The comic picture added to this exercise shows the scene of the plot and makes the orientation in the text easier. The comprehension exercises focus on specific pieces of information searching and also serves as the material on which a discussion should be based (with the usage of set phrases) on the page (P. 41) This reading activity is definitely another one that aims at detailed comprehension. (reading for detiled comprehension 11)

Extension 2 and (p. 42, 43) the very first task is to write down everything that learners know about Canada (which is a great activity for brainstorming) and to discuss the results. The reading/listening task is to fill in particular pieces of information (scanning 14) and the text itself recycles present/past simple tense. The pictures added to this reading/listening task are mostly real photos that definitely interest learners with its exotic content. This text about Canada, together with the reading parts about future and also the text about the dead man incident serve as three examples for homework.

The Revision 2 (p. 44 – 45) contains hardly any materials that can serve as reading activities. Mostly it is about grammar rules in the contexts, but there are no activities developing reading comprehension.

7.6 UNIT 5

The school magazine article serves as the first reading/listening activity on the page 46. And seven real photos of British interesting places are in the focus during the very first activity (to discuss any of them that students are familiar with) that should

activate schemata of students, in other words, through looking at photographs a discussion (or at least some kind of oral work) can be based on the reading activity. The purpose of the text is to presents new grammatical items (the usage of articles with places, rivers and so on) and recycles present, past simple and past continuous tense in context. Several comprehension activities aimed at specific pieces of information (reading for specific information 15) that are thematically connected to the text (dealing with British sights and their location and so on) are present on the page 47 together with the "Exceptions to a rule" part in which is recommended how to deal with exceptions that learners can meet.

On the page 48 another part of the *Kids* story continues ant the text presents new items present continuous tense for future arrangements and also another several everyday expressions and also recycles several grammar items from previous units. The first task is prepared as a warm-up for learners (the task is to summarize everything they know about the story heroes). In addition, the usage of at least one picture helps to comprehend, via its content, what one particular everyday expression means, so event the one (the last) picture helps the reading comprehension with its interpretative function. The tasks checking comprehension of this text are (p. 48, 49) to correct statements if needed (other true or false questions, scanning 16) and also to act out the whole story, so the detailed comprehension is necessary (reading for detailed comprehension 12). The support in reading comprehension via using visual materials is great.

On the page 50 there is a headline "Asking the way" and focuses on giving directions, in other words, the practice of language functions is here again. The only exercise that hardly practices reading comprehension is integrated with listening and the task is to read the conversation with a partner and at the same time it is important to follow the illustrated picture which, as I think, spoils the whole page with its look. Yes, it is true that during activities like this the key aspect above all is to have a map that does not to look like a real photography, but I believe that it was possible to come up with a more attractive one. But, it is clear that the purpose that was hidden in practicing language functions (asking the way and giving directions) must be fulfilled even with such an unattractive pictures. But the most important aspect that indeed needs to be stressed is that no matter how the pictures look like, because the importance is the simulation of a real-life situation and showing learners that it is really possible to use language in everyday situations.

The headline "London`s burning the headline of another text that is present for reading on the page 52 and the title, with its color together with the fire in the background must attract learners. As far as the presentation of the pages is concerned, this part leads, so far, with its look. The purpose of this text, which is integrated with listening as well, is to recycle the usage of past simple and continuous tenses and, moreover, to practice articles. But mostly, as we will see later according to the appearance of the pages, there is a new kind of the exercise.

The first task is about gaining the general view of what the text and pictures are about (reading for gist 6) and later to mark the correct order of text paragraphs, because the paragraphs are shuffled. This I consider to be the first exercise that practices about text coherence! (first exercise to practice either coherence or cohesion) And the last activity is to examine several particular words (places, persons, etc.) and to describe them closely, which points at a detailed comprehension (reading for detailed comprehension 13).

7.7 Unit 6

"Andy the Android" is the name of story that starts with a gist reading activity (reading for gist 7) because the purpose is to find out who is Andy and, as everyone must notice, there is only one character that is unknown to learners, thanks to the brilliant functions of interpretation. The purpose of this text is to present a new grammatical item (present perfect) and also to practice reading for specific information (scanning 17). The eight comic pictures are ordered exactly as the story (about the two detectives) continues and even when the pictures are cartooned, the colors, which are bright and almost stand out from the coursebook, look much better than the part with asking the way. Indeed, the way of presentation, maybe even the impressionistic overview (Cunningsworth 1995, p. 1) seems to be pretty valid. Moreover, people with a knowledge of the world connected to the sci-fi genre usually know who androids are, thus, as we can see, it is really important, as it states in the theoretical part that knowledge of the world can help with comprehension a lot. The usage and the whole explanation of the present perfect is present after the text, not before and this is the moment where I would expect some pre-teaching of the present perfect, because from the pictures it is not always possible (at lest to my mind) to reveal the difference between present perfect and past. For some learners, I am afraid, it may seem pretty unclear.

Another part of the *"Kids"* story continues on the page 56 and the first activity starts with the task to summarize the previous *"Kids"* part, so there is, as almost always, a pre-reading activity. Thus, it is possible to take the task purpose as the schemata activating activity. In the following activity learners are asked to guess, according to the story pictures, what is going on in the story, which is great because after guessing they can confirm their own expectations, and after guessing the reading activity begins together with listening to the text. The text purpose is to practice present perfect, past simple tense, present continuous tense for making future arrangements, future tense, also everyday expressions and also phrases expressing making decisions and turning down suggestions. The text purpose seems to be more and more complex. The comprehension is, on the following page, checked via searching for particular pieces of information (reading for specific information 18).

On the page 58, another reading activity starts with a task to find out where the setting of the story is (according to the clear content of added pictures), thus these pictures work as comprehension clues and again, in a brilliant way. (reading for gist 8) It is also set that another ordering of pictures is waiting for learners. Another reading activity is here during which the text coherence is in focus. (reading for gist 9). This is the second exercise that practices reading the dialogue and according to it, it should be easier to match the story as should be. The first comprehension check is aimed at how students deal with reordering pictures (because they are shuffled) and another comprehension check is linked to deeper text understanding. (reading for detailed understanding 14) The usage of negative present perfect and also present perfect serving as questions is deeply examined later.

Another piece of advice (in the form of pieces of information about reading/listening for specific information) is mentioned in the coursebook on the page 60 stressing the fact that there is no need to understand every single word of any piece of a text in order to find particular pieces of information. Great!

„Lights, camera, action!". This is the headline of another part for reading which purpose is, besides practicing various tenses (future, past, present and present perfect),to practice reading for specific information. (scanning 19) The headline itself, for people who are interested in movies and are familiar with common phrases that usually appear during making films, hints what the following reading exercises are about. The movie reviews of real films, accompanied with real photos hinting what type of films each of

them is, also serves as an example for practicing detailed reading. (reading for detailed information 15) The first task linked to the reviews is to discuss movies generally and later, several exercises practice searching for specific pieces of information (p. 60, 61). (scanning 20)

Another *"Extention"* part deals with culture and particularly the topic of it is NewYork (p. 62). The first task is to find out whether (or not) students have every visited NY and also to discuss what learners know about it. In other words, the first question itself encourages learners to use present perfect and during answering the other one learners discuss NY generally, in other words it serves as a warming activity. The text called *"New York"* serves for practicing searching specific information (scanning 21) and also for recycling present perfect, past tense, present tense and the usage of when to use articles. In the pictures from real life that are a part of the page 62 we can see several sights and places with which learners may be familiar with. But, in one of the pictures, the content serves as a typical coursebook that contains something that is outdated. The World Trade Center, described in the oursebook as the tallest building, is (as it is generally known) gone because of attacks that happened in 2001 in the US. This text about New York also serves as an example for a written project on the page 63.

The third "Revision" (p. 64, 65) contains a gapped text that serves as the article exercise, but, again, there are no reading exercices.

7.8 Unit 7

Problems and its first part School rules. But the phrase "School rules" can have two different meanings (one of them can mean a list of rules that must be respected and, on the contrary, the other meaning stressing the fact that schools, known as institutions, are the masters that must be obeyed by students). Nothing is done in the coursebook with the ambiguity. The first activity aims at a discussion about personal experiences (which is great when tasks can be used with experiences of learners themselves) of learners concerning rules at their school. It serves as a brilliant comparison of two cultures and, of course, as a topical warm-up. Next activity is to match the list of rules that Phil, who introduces this unit, must and must not do (which means reading for specific information 22) at school and also to match the activities to the cartooned pictures that present all the particular activities (which is another reading activity aimed at specific information 23). But the usage of "must (not)" is explained after the reading part, in the following page 67, but, again after the reading is done. Moreover, another

part focused on using English as a foreign language with pieces of advice how to develop a language is present. These two pieces of advice are: firstly - to read the same piece of a text in more (two) languages if possible, such as instructions that are present on goods and so on, and secondly – to focus on what learners would do in real life, if they were supposed to use the foreign language in everyday situations (such as shopping). Excellent! What a shame that the picture on the page 67 and mainly the description is so small that is not possible to practice reading on a real authentic material!

On the page 68 there is another continuation of the "Kids" story and the first task is to refresh the previous part, as a warming activity. The text that learners are supposed to read is again integrated with listening and besides searching for specific pieces of information (scanning 24) in comprehension exercises that follow after reading/listening, the text recycles present continuous (for future arrangements as well), future tense and also introduces modal verbs (practicing mainly giving advice) and another group of everyday expressions. The act out activity to which a deep understanding must precede) is attached to the story as well. (reading for detailed comprehension 16)

The page 70 starts with questions that, with their content, stress the topic (so another warm-up is present) of this section ("Problem page") and learners are expected to start a discussion about the letter that serves as the text for reading. The letter contains occurrences of modal verbs (practicing giving advice), present simple tense and future tense. The reading comprehension is checked via exercises that are focused on searching for both general and detailed comprehension (reading for gist 10), (reading for detailed comprehension 25). The reading process is also integrated with listening to it.

Another reading exercise (on the page 71) consist of a short dialogue that present "have to" and "can`t", so another exercise practicing grammar. The content of the picture hints more that clearly what is going on, thus, in other words the picture explains a lot what "have to" and "can`t" mean. Another purpose of this reading part is to practice "must (not)" and "(don`t)" have to and also to guess the possible continuation of the short story. The comprehension is checked during listening to possibilities that may appear in the discussion from the text. (reading for specific information 26) The following activity that is oral is based on it, so this part also serves as a material that is possible to work on.

The text on the pages 72 and 73 called “Ashley`s camera”, for reading practice, contains past simple tense, past continuous, future tense, going to expressed for future intentions, modal verbs and also practices the usage of articles. The tasks to this exercise are to look at the headline and pictures (showing the text content) and to describe what the content of the text is (reading for gist 11). During reading of the whole text, which is the longest one (so far) in this coursebook, learners are expected to number the shuffled pictures (in other words, another exercise that practices coherence is present and another activity that is possible to mark as reading for gist 12) and also to answer eight questions about details of the text. (reading for detailed comprehension 17)

7.9 Unit 8

“I don`t believe it!“. That is the title of the last unit of this coursebook. The first task (p. 74), in the part called “What have you done?” starts with a discussion aimed at personal experiences of learners that serves as a warm-up. The reading exercise that follows has shuffled pictures (reading for detailed comprehension 18) and presents large numbers as the new grammar item and also recycles past simple tense and the usage of articles. The pictures express via their content what is happening, so readers can easily pick up new vocabulary. The text is also integrated with listening and is followed by one exercise focused on detailed reading comprehension. (reading for detailed comprehension 19)

Another advice is given on the page 75 and refers to the workbook, which is a part of the Project 3 package, and particularly focuses grammar references and wordlist.

On the page 76 the “Kids” story continues via summarizing what happened in the previous part and another task is to read and listen and to find answers to two questions. In other words, another way of starting to tackle with reading activities is here. The answers are hidden both in the pictures and in the text (reading for detailed comprehension 20). The text serves for recycling present continuous tense for future intentions, present perfect, simple tense, past continuous and everyday expressions. And in the last picture, I consider the text attached to it “It`s terrible. Sam`s dead!“ that was, according to the clear picture content used ironically, because in the previous picture Phil wishes Sam were gone, so the word “terrible” is not, in my opinion, meant frankly, although some kind of a bad feeling must influence him.

The final part of the story about two detectives finishes on the page 78 and learners are supposed to read and listen to it as well. The text introduces another new grammar item - present perfect with *"ever/never"* and also recycles the usage of articles. The first task is to explain the end of the story and in order to be able to do that, it is necessary to gain some general understanding of the whole text. (reading for general understanding 13) Moreover, besides general knowledge about the text, another exercise focusing on searching for specific information is present as well. (reading for specific information 27) But the new grammar (present perfect with ever/never) is explained in detail after the reading/listening activity (on the page 79). It could have been explained beforehand as well in order to make the reading/listening process easier.

The page 80 opens another reading activity. The first task, nevertheless, is to discuss 5 questions to which specific answers are present in the text. Looking for the answers is another task. (scanning 28) The text recycles probably the biggest quantity of tenses (present simple/continuous, past simple/continuous, simple future tense and also present perfect). Practicing articles is involved as well. The comprehension is checked via true/false statements that students are supposed to confirm or deny. (reading for specific information 29) The pictures that are used to accompany the text form a king of collage, but the function of the pictures is pretty decorative (not able to hint what the text content is about, which is a bad aspect of pictures). They do not contribute to the revelation of meaning.

The fourth "Extention" (p. 82) of this coursebook deals with culture and famous Britons. Sadly, all the persons mentioned in the text that covers more than a half of the page (one of the longest texts in the coursebook) are dead. The extent of the reading passages also rises. The first exercise is to discuss what learners know about them before reading about it, which is a simple warm-up. Second task is reading and listening at the same time to the text and to match particular words to the persons that are somehow connected with them. (reading for specific information 30) And the last task is to find how old they were when they died.), which is, again reading about detailed information (reading for detailed understanding 21) searching. The text itself recycles various tenses, articles and big numbers and also one abbrevation (AIDS) that is not explained anywhere, but, to my mind, it should be. The text also stands as an example for the writing task that is present on the following page (p. 83).

The last reading activity opens the last revision of this coursebook (*Revision 4* on the page 84). The notice (genre) with simple pictures that have a clear instructive purpose describe via its content what people who notice it must, must not or have to do. The task is to use these three verbs in order to fill in ten gapped sentences. In other words, in this activity the aim is to practice the usage of must (not) and have to in situations that students may be familiar with from the real life. It is another example how pictures help in comprehension of learners.

7.10 Workbook

In the workbook Project 3, which is in black and white colors, I found only a few activities that are aimed at practicing reading comprehension.

The first of them is on the page 16 and, with its presentation of a newspaper story is aimed at detailed comprehension, because the task is to work with (basically) all the present information and, moreover, the text serves as en example for one writing exercise that is (thematically) based on the same exercise content. There is also a picture, but only with decorative purposes.

Another reading activity is on the page 18 and the piece of a text is gapped, which definitely increases the level of difficulty of the task (to fill in verbs, which are added in schemes). In other words, this exercise practices, maybe, rather grammar than reading. One added picture deals with the theme of the topic, so I consider the function of the picture as instructive, which is a positive aspect.

The third reading exercise is, again, aimed at searching for specific pieces of information and ac a comprehension check there is a multiple choice (which is not such a common phenomenon in the Project 3 package). The range of comprehension checks is important as well and should be really wide (in order not to make learners bored during working on the same comprehension checks all the time). The text practices the use of various tense and vocabulary as well and one picture (that is as a decoration of his page (24).

Another exercise (p. 28) deals with scrambled sentences and, as an example, one of them is already ticked, which can help comprehension (as an example) too.

Fifth exercise deals with the usage of articles (as a new grammatical item introduces in the coursebook) and the task (which seems to me pretty unusual) is to delete already filled articles where they are not necessary. This I, though, consider as a very good activity because of its uniqueness. The text also recycles various tenses.

Another reading exercise deals with London (as in the coursebook) and it is a matching activity (matching names and numbers connected to the reading content). The text itself, again, recycles the article usage (during describing famous places of London). The added pictures (on the following page) are big enough in order to make the orientation clear, which I Consider to be a very good picture quality. On the page 49 there is a reading activity, again, which I consider to be aimed at detailed comprehension activity. Four various parts in order to study the text properly are present (such as matching persons and places together, and so on). The picture content is connected to the topic and helps to understand what the text is about. The page 54 starts with the reading activity as aimed at both personal experience of learners (who are expected to compare their daily habit to the character of the story) and the grammar, particularly the usage of have to (doesn´t have to). This exercise is accompanied with eight pictures and their content imitates real things and activities so I consider the function as a very good way that helps in reading comprehension.

Three pages later, another reading activity is present and the reading comprehension is checked via answering questions that are aimed at specific pieces of information and, as a more challenging task, paragraphs that form the reading content are shuffled. The task, of course, is to mark the correct order. Two pictures are added to this part and hint what the text is about, which helps the reading process. Another gapped text is present on the page 60 and presents various tenses an, of course, vocabulary that learners are expected to chose from the box and then to fill them in. One added picture hints the text content as well. Page 72 starts with the reading activity called Instructions and the task, of course, is to read instructions carefully in order to fill them in several gapped sentences. This activity I consider as the reading activity for specific information. The coursebook package contains a wordlist (also the list of irregular verbs), grammar summaries, (irregular verb list) and various comprehension checks.

8. The Overall Evaluation

The coursebook package that I analyzed (Project 3) seems to be a very good material for English language teaching. I had all the three basic components that form this package (a teacher`s book, a coursebook and also the workbook) and I have to conclude by saying that besides several aspects that I did not like so much (for example the absence of exercises for practicing the meaning inference, the unbalanced rate of

activities that develop gist reading and on the contrary the reading activities for reading for specific information or the absence of materials that support extensive reading or the absence of any work on authentic materials) the coursebook package is a very good material for the teaching practice. What I like very much about the package and particularly about the coursebook is the high number of the occurrence of pictures with functions that support the reading comprehension process. The organization of the package is very good. What I did not like so much was the balance of reading comprehension exercises aimed at various reading techniques and also the rate of integrated exercises of reading and listening is almost in every second exercise.

9. Conclusion

According to the variety of possible criteria that can be used in order to evaluate these two material teaching materials, I consider the Project 3 package as a pretty good teaching material. It is highly structured in its form and chronology, also the presentation of the content (such as the variety of different genres and topics and so on) is good.

But, as a coursebook package, I consider Project 3 as a good source of information and activities during ELT. Nevertheless, during the analysis of (mainly) the coursebook, there were present several aspects like pictures that had no function in the form of helping learners to understand the text, also I consider the range of particular activities slightly unbalanced (particularly the amount of exercises during which learners are supposed to search for specific pieces of information and this kind of activities dominates). Activities for, for example, inferring meaning were not present at all. And another aspect that can be criticized is the sameness of the structure of the coursebook. Of course, it has positive aspects in it as well, but I am afraid that if learners realize all the time that new units start with reading and reading only, then it can cause that students may become bored. And my biggest argument for criticism is that, in Project 3, there are hardly any pre-teaching activities of vocabulary and grammar as well. Moreover, there are no materials for practicing reading with authentic materials and also the absence of extensive reading materials was already mentioned.

9.1 RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce má za cíl popsat rozvíjení čtecích dovedností u žáků ve výuce anglického jazyka a jejím cílem je (v teoretické části) jednak popsat možnosti

rozvíjení této receptivní kompetence ve výuce. V teoretické části je nejprve popsáno čtení v cizím jazyce a poté komunikativní kompetence jako hlavní cíl ve výuce anglického jazyka (a také její stručný vývoj). Poté se práce zaměřuje na čtení s důrazem na proces komunikace mezi autorem textu (obecně) a jeho čtenářem. Poté je již práce soustředěna na čtení, a to i v kontextů různých druhů rozdělení této dovednosti (jako například čtení hlasité a tiché tak dále). Poté se práce týká různých čtecích technik (např. skimming a scanning) které jsou důležité k efektivnímu procesu čtení. Práce také zdůrazňuje důležitost propojení čtení s ostatním komunikativními dovednostmi (psaní, poslech, mluvení) a to hlavně z toho důvodu, že v reálném životě každého člověka se často tyto 4 dovednosti objevují zároveň. Dále se práce týká různými zvyky (zlozvyky), které se často (a často také jako pozůstatek z dob dětství) objevují i v dospělejším věku a některé návyky mohou mít za neblahý následek sníženou efektivitu čtecího procesu (jako například nedostatečná rychlost čtení a tak dále). Na druhou stranu, jsou zmíněny i čtecí návyky, které jsou všeobecně hodnoceny pozitivně. Jedna z nejrozsáhlejších částí této práce se zabývá různými aspekty, které dělají (svou podstatou a významem) čtení náročným např. jevy gramatické, které nejsou čtenářům známé, stejně tak cizí slovní zásoba , tak zvaná knowledge of the world, schémata a tak dále.

Jako další je zmíněna autenticita textu (input) kterou považuji zřejmě za nejsložitější část této práce, z důvodu různorodosti názorů na samotnou definici slova autentický, a také na použitá těchto materiálů ve výuce anglického jazyka. Jsou zmíněny argumenty jak pro, tak i proti používání těchto materiálů a nakonec této sekce vyjadřuji spíše souhlas s používáním „skutečných“ materiálů, když si uvědomuji případné problémy, které s jejich používáním mohou souviset.

Dále se mimo jiné teoretické části se, mimo jiné, zabývám stručnou analýzou materiálně didaktických prostředků (učebnic, pracovních sešitů). Je podána jednoduchá charakteristika těchto materiálů ve výuce a tu následují různé účely, pro které jsou učebnice (i texty samotné) používány (jako například prezentace nových gramatických

jevů, slovní zásoby a podobně). Také jsou zmíněny aktivity, které mohou čtecímu procesu nejen předcházet, ale i (svou podstatou a funkcemi) napomoci k efektivnějšímu procesu čtení.

Praktická část, ve které se zabývám hlubší analýzou materiálně didaktických prostředků (učebnice a pracovního sešitu Project 3 používaný žáky devátých tříd základních škol, jako například ZŠ Mládežnická. Analýza učebnice se týkala každého (jak pevně doufám) cvičení, které bylo zaměřeno na rozvíjení čtecí dovednosti. V

hodnocení jsem se mimo jiné zaměřil například na funkce obrázků připojených ke čtecím aktivitám, na prezentaci formou žánrů a mnoho dalších aspektů. Vyváženost čtecích aktivit nebyla taková, jak jsem podle úvodního schématu. předpokládal. Hledání konkrétních informací dominuje, řekl bych až drtivě, nad čtením pro všeobecné porozumění textu, nemluvě o nepřítomnosti cvičení pro vyvození odpovědí z kontextu. Jako další argument proti používání bych zmínil absenci autentických materiálů ke čtení, po kterých (v mém dotazníku) vyjádřili zájem drtivou většinou sami žáci.

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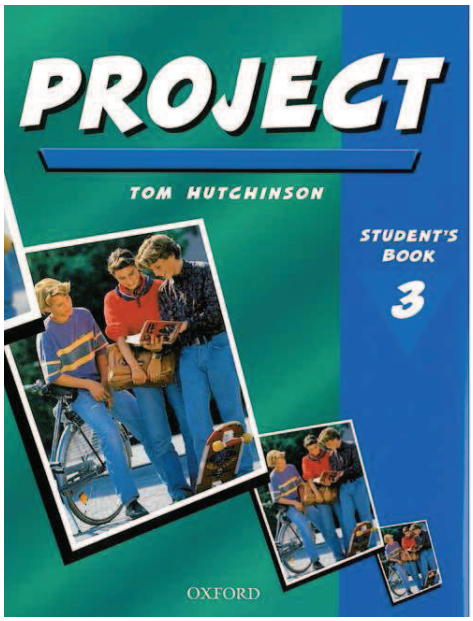
11. 1 - Appendixes



11. 2 Appendix 2

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