



# FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA Univerzita Karlova

Ústav anglického jazyka a didaktiky

**Mgr. Martin Sedláček (2018) *The Efficiency of Graded Readers for Teaching Vocabulary: A Combination of Two Approaches***

Posudek vedoucího diplomové práce

The author of the thesis is an active English teacher, who set himself the goal of establishing whether using graded readers and especially graded readers accompanied with a recording of the text play a role in vocabulary acquisition. This is a sound topic in the context of foreign language teaching and one which can directly inform language-teaching practices.

The author decided to test the efficacy of graded readers in an experiment based on the test, post-test and delayed test model and set out to compare the two approaches mentioned above as a partial replication of two key studies in the field.

The theoretical part of the thesis touches upon several topics, all of which are highly relevant in the given context. They include intensive reading, extensive reading, graded readers and extensive listening. The author uses an interesting approach to structuring the chapter on extensive reading by basing it on an early influential text (Day and Bamford, 2002) on the topic and its key principles for establishing a successful extensive reading programme and discusses these principles in the light of his own teaching experience and existing research, eventually culminating the discussion by the topic of vocabulary acquisition and retention. The whole of the theoretical part is rich in references to relevant literature and provides solid foundations for the research part.

As the research itself is based on a replication of two studies (Waring and Takaki, 2003; Webb and Chang, 2015) and their combination, the design of these studies is described and critically evaluated first. The experiment itself is designed to test vocabulary acquisition and retention of words encountered in a simplified text. To make sure these words were unfamiliar to the participants, existing English words in the original text were replaced with substitute words which were constructed in such a way that they would resemble English words. These words appeared in the text with varying frequency so that the study could also evaluate the possible effect between the frequency of occurrence and the rate of learning and retention. Two groups of students participated in the experiment. The first one was presented with just the simplified text for reading whilst the other group was asked to read the text while simultaneously listening to its recording. The author aimed to explore whether reading accompanied by listening would yield better results for learning and retention.



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The design of the study and the carrying out of the experiment as well as the nature of the adaptation of the two replicated studies is highly competent and well justified. The main drawback of the experiment is the low number of participants (eight in each of the two groups), which makes the results more speculative, and the reduced time between the pre-test and the delayed post-test compared to the original study.

The results of the experiment are clearly presented. However, standard deviations could have been provided in Tables 8-11 and the ANOVA test could have been accompanied by a report on the distribution of the data. One of the strong points of the discussion of the results is the way the author compares them with extant research and suggests answers to his research questions not only basing these on his own results but also while taking into account other research findings. The author could have carried out more statistical tests to provide firmer support for the answers to the questions mentioned in sections 4.6.1–4.6.5, which would have provided not only descriptive comparisons but also measured the significance of the outcome. Despite these shortcomings the presented results are highly relevant to foreign language teaching and clearly show the value to vocabulary acquisition of both unaccompanied reading and reading accompanied by listening.

The thesis is written in excellent English and contains a minimum of typos. As the thesis supervisor, I would like to add that the author worked with a high degree of independence, was always extremely well prepared for our consultations and always responded to my suggestions. Taking into account the extent of the literature reviewed, the laboriousness and the long-term nature of the experiment and the thoroughness with which the author designed and carried out the study, as well as the fact that he thoroughly fulfilled the criteria set in the thesis proposal I pass the thesis for the viva voce and hereby propose a grade on the scale between **one** and **two (výborná to velmi dobrá)** depending on the final presentation during the viva.

PhDr. Tomáš Gráf, Ph.D.

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### Questions for the viva:

To what extent could the results have been affected by the type of participants to the experiment?