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Diploma thesis

EXTENSIVE READING
Position and Practices of Using Graded
Readers in Prague Grammar schools
and Students' Attitudes to a Particular
Programme

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Abstract

This diploma thesis *Extensive reading - Position and Practices of Using Graded Readers in Prague Grammar schools and Students' Attitudes to a Particular Programme* presents the phenomenon of extensive reading. It looks into its history, theoretical grounding, the existing body of empirical research, graded readers and benefits for English language teaching and learning.

The analytical part gives reasons for the contrast between the great potential of extensive reading for the student's improvement on the one hand, and the implementation which has been infrequent and often at odds with the principles on the other. To find the reasons, the theoretical part analysed the situation of the English language teaching in countries which had implemented extensive reading into the curriculum.

In the research part it assesses the scale and the practices of using graded readers in all relevant grammar schools in Prague. In the second part of the survey of grammar schools, it focuses on a grammar school in Mělník, which has been systematically using GRs. It examines the students' attitudes towards the practices of reading GRs in order to assess the potential and the limits of the European Union financed project *I read, you read, we read*.

Key words: Extensive reading, Methodology of English Teaching, Implicit learning, Graded Readers, Implementation to curricula.

Abstrakt

Diplomová práce *Extenzivní čtení – pozice a praxe využívání adaptované literatury na Pražských gymnáziích a postoj studentů ke konkrétnímu programu* představuje fenomén extenzivního čtení. Zabývá se jeho historií, teoretickými východisky, empirickými studii, materiálem pro extenzivní čtení – graded readers and přínosy tohoto souboru praktik pro výuku a učení se anglickému jazyku.

Analytická část práce nabízí důvody pro vysvětlení velkého kontrastu mezi potenciálem extenzivního čtení a implementací do výuky, která je spíše výjimečná a jejíž praxe je často v rozporu s principy extenzivního čtení. Pro nalezení důvodů pak práce analyzuje charakter výuky anglického jazyka v zemích, kde je extenzivní čtení součástí kurikula.

Praktická část práce posuzuje rozsah a charakter pronikání extenzivního čtení do výuky na relevantních pražských gymnáziích. Ve své druhé části se zaměřuje na praktiky gymnázia v Mělníku, kde probíhá systematické čtení adaptované literatury. Dotazníkovým šetřením jsou zjišťovány postoje studentů k projektu *I read, you read, we read* financovaného Evropskou unií. Odpovědi slouží k posouzení úspěšnosti tohoto projektu.

Klíčová slova: Extenzivní čtení, metodologie výuky cizího jazyka, implicitní učení, adaptovaná literatura, implementace do kurikula

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Introduction

I have always seen reading as the essential condition for the improvement of language ability. At university I realized that most of the language instruction revolves around reading large amount of text. While the main objective of the reading has been the study of the content of the text, it has also served the function of offering a textually rich environment. It occurred to me that with the ever-growing range and variety of graded readers, it should be possible to design English courses which offer textually-rich environment even to less advanced students. The discovery that this very idea has been the subject of a wide academic research, and finding that the methodology has already been developed only intensified my interest in the topic.

While the research and practice of extensive reading is thriving in some Asian countries, in Europe, including the Czech Republic, the topic is rather marginal. Graded readers are being published, advertised and read, but they are, judging from the relevant literature, generally perceived as an optional extra.

The main objective of the thesis is to assess the actual position and practices of extensive reading in English language teaching in Prague Grammar schools. Another objective of this thesis is to explain the huge gap between the vast evidence of its effectiveness, and the fact that ER has the overall status of a minor supplement to English curricula. The thesis also assesses one particular example of a systematic use of graded readers in a grammar school in Mělník.

1. THEORETICAL PART

1.1. Introduction of the phenomenon of extensive reading

Characterized by the motto “Reading gain without reading pain” (Day 121)

The basic concept of extensive reading (ER) is relatively simple. It draws on the experience with L1 that the more one reads the faster and the better reader one becomes, thereby creating a self-sustaining learning environment.¹ Very little strategy of reading needs to be taught because students learn to read just by reading. Moreover, there is the claim (in line with Crashen’s *Comprehensible Input Hypothesis*) that the gradually increasing amount of text the students have read fosters the desired improvement in overall L2 ability. Then, the main objective of the teacher is to convince the students to read as much as possible and make them regard this activity as a pleasurable experience. “The characteristics of ER generally include the relatively fast reading of a large amount of longer, easy-to-understand material, with the reading done mostly outside of the classroom and at each student’s own pace and level”(Powell 28). The central characteristic is that the reading is an enjoyable activity. “The watchwords are quantity and variety, rather than quality, so that books are selected for their attractiveness and relevance to the pupils’ lives rather than for literary merit” (Davis 329). The majority of material for ER mainly consists of graded readers because they offer comprehensible input to each student. “There is substantial research evidence to prove that learning best occurs when the teaching methods provide a great deal of comprehensible input in the second language” (Yu 4). Nuttal states that “to acquire a language, reading extensively

¹“It has been consistently shown that those who read more are better readers. With an increased amount of reading, reading ability improves, which in turn encourages more reading (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1998). Furthermore, Clark and Rumbold’s meta-review (2006) showed that reading for pleasure is positively linked to text comprehension and grammar, breadth of vocabulary, greater self- confidence as a reader and pleasure of reading later in life.(Teaching)

is the next best way to living among its native speakers” (162). Although it is now widely regarded as the single most effective way of acquiring and maintaining a foreign language (Maley 133), it is not reflected in the EFL practice the way we would consider it appropriate.

1.2. History and basic landmarks in the development

Extensive reading is a concept that has been around for quite a while, having “survived the methodological swings and roundabouts of the past 40 years” (Maley 133). The first pioneers were Harold Palmer and Michael West in the 1920s. Palmer came out with the term extensive reading to distinguish it from intensive reading. Many names have been given to ER programs, including Book Flood, Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR), Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), Silent Uninterrupted Reading for Fun (SURF), Extensive Reading and Information Literacy (ERIL), pleasure reading, or Krashen’s term: *free reading*. West, working in Bengal, first perceived that reading interesting texts with a carefully controlled vocabulary was far more effective than decoding original texts. Palmer, after meeting West in 1931, published *The Grading and Simplification of Literary Material* (1932) and with A.S. Hornby the *IRET 600-word Vocabulary for Story-Telling* (1932), which later evolved into yet another jointly written book, *Thousand-Word English* (1937). The work culminated with the publication of *General Service List* (1953) which served as the bible for writers of simplified and graded readers (GRs) well into the late twentieth century, when it was superseded by computer corpora.(Maley)

Extensive reading gained notoriety around 1966 with Shaevitz’s book *hooked on books*, and it has been a source of claims that “many good things will happen to readers who read extensively” (Grabe 312). Book floods, recommended since the 1950s, often

involve stocking a classroom library with 50-100 books and encouraging students to read these books independently. The ground breaking research project dealing with book floods in Fiji was published in 1983 by Francis Mangubhai and Warwick B. Elley. Fijian book flood was nominated by Stephen Krashen as “the most significant event in the history of ER” (qtd. in Stewart). The details of the research are related in the chapter:1.3.2.2 Here only in short: The experimental group of students who spent three quarters of class time reading interesting books surpassed the control group in all measures of English proficiency by the end of the second year of the experiment.

However, with the strong position of communicative language teaching (CLT), ER advocates have found it hard to raise the status of ER from the level of voluntary pastime activity. CLT, which has dominated language teaching since the 70s, emphasizes speaking and listening rather than reading and writing. Moreover, CLT promotes the use authentic texts. It may not be a coincidence that in some Asian countries where ER found its way into the curriculum the CLT has never been widely practiced.

In 1986, a serious study of GRs was taken up by David R. Hill, who founded the Edinburgh Project of Extensive Reading (EPER). Towards the end of millennium, the cause of ER in the second language was taken up by Richard Day a Julian Bamford, who in 1998 published the most comprehensive and probably most cited book on the topic called *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Class*. Bruton claims that it was this book that has resuscitated the issue of extensive reading. In the book Day and Bamford posited 10 principles of ER (8):

1. The reading material is easy;
2. a variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available;
3. learners choose what they want to read;
4. learners read as much as possible;
5. the purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding;
6. reading is its own reward;
7. reading speed is usually faster rather than slower;
8. reading is individual and silent;
9. teachers orient and guide their students;
10. and the teacher is a role model of a reader

However, ER is quite a broad concept and not all the principles need to be fulfilled for a programme to be considered ER.

In 2004, Day established Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF) which is an independent non-profit organization that promotes ER and which adopted the agenda of EPER. It awards the “Language Learner Literature” awards (LLLA) to the best GRs each year, maintains a bibliography of research on extensive reading and helps educational institutions set up extensive reading programs through grants that fund the purchase of books and other reading material. Four executive members (out of six) of the Board of Directors are employed in Japanese Universities. This fact indicates that it is mainly Japan and some other Asian countries where ER is taken seriously. The status of ER in Asia is elaborated in chapter: 2.3

1.3. Theory behind extensive reading and research into effectiveness

It seems that the intuitive knowledge supported by the anecdotal evidence that the more one reads the better reader and consequently the more proficient user of language one becomes does not need any hard evidence. It might be the fact that ER has played only a minor role in EFL teaching/learning which motivated a considerable amount of research to be carried out into the effects of ER.

Reading theorists and researchers widely prove that extensive reading is a language-enriching experience that develops multiple language skills. The limitations of the research are dealt with in chapter 1.3.2.1. The following chapter explores the theoretical framework of extensive reading.

1.3.1. The theoretical framework

Christine Nuttall, a major Cambridge ESOL expert argues that “[t]o acquire a language, reading extensively is the next best way to living among its native speakers” (Nuttall 162). Analogically to living among the native speakers, ER brings the broad exposure to the target language and offers a large quantity of input in the language acquisition process. “Contrary to the limited and insufficient language input a learner receives in the English classroom, extensive reading transforms the quantity of input dramatically” (Criper). The crucial role of the large quantity of input in second language acquisition and the character of it was elaborated in Krashen’s *Input Hypothesis* (1982, 1997) and *Comprehension Hypothesis* (2004).

1.3.1.1. Discussion of Crashen

Crashen claims that comprehensible input is not sufficient for the language acquisition to occur. The comprehensible input must be present in a *low affective filter*

environment. “Affective filter is a metaphor which is often used to describe the blockage caused by negative attitudes towards learning a second language. It proposes that learners who are anxious, unmotivated or lacking self-confidence will experience a mental block which will impede language from being understood and retained” (Tavakoli).

To emphasize the important role of the emotional state of the student, Krashen uses the term *free voluntary pleasure reading*. He considers it the most efficient means to acquire new vocabulary, to improve reading ability, to develop positive attitudes and to increase motivation to read.

Krashen is seen by Philip Prowse as a proponent of the strong case for ER. It is because Krashen claims that simply by reading (exposure to comprehensible input) you can learn a language. “When second language acquirers read for pleasure, they can continue to improve in their second language without classes, without teachers, without study, and even without people to converse with” (qtd. in Philip). Another view is the one of Prowse himself who assigns ER a more limited role. He states that reading just consolidates and reinforces language which learners have already learned. In other words: only exposure to comprehensible input alone does not guarantee language acquisition.

Another competing view with Krashen’s strong case for ER is that of Swain’s, who argues that comprehensible input alone is not sufficient and that a combination of input and output focusing on form is necessary. Swain’s concept is known as *Output Hypothesis*. Yet another view, or rather elaboration of the role of comprehensible input in language acquisition is put forward by Rob Waring, who claims that only the massive exposure to language within student’s *comfort zone* can give the learner the opportunity

to consolidate and deepen the knowledge of the language that was learnt discretely and abstractly in the *studying about phases* during working with course books.(Waring)

1.3.1.2. Language acquisition and the appropriate level of input

Krashen distinguishes acquisition from learning. “Learning is a conscious process with the rules of language in mind, whereas acquisition is a subconscious process, similar to the way children develop their mother tongue” (*Principles*). The acquisition of L2 will occur only if the level of the message is little beyond the learner current level of language ability. Krashen uses the term *optimal input*. It is often illustrated as $i+1$. He compares the learner’s situation to a child listening to a caretaker speech. However, the level of the optimal level of the language input is a matter of debate. The most respected authorities in the field of language acquisition through practising, ER Julian Bramford and Richard Day, suggest that at early stages of ER programs even $i-1$ (level of English which is below the level of the student) can be used as long as it reflects the choice of the reader. Part of their concept of ER is the build-up of confidence which in turn leads to increased motivation.

1.3.1.3. Implicit vs. explicit learning

Another theoretical framework which is closely associated with ER and Krashen’s *acquisition theory* is the distinction between implicit and explicit learning. As the terms suggests, implicit learning denotes the act of learning without awareness of what has been learnt. “Explicit learning, unlike implicit learning, involves conscious attention to, and awareness of, the specific skills or language knowledge that a reader is focusing on” (Grabe 61). An example of an activity which involves explicit learning is learning word meanings using flashcards. However, ER is an activity where implicit learning prevails. Another link to ER is that implicit learning relies on extensive amount of input. (Elaborated in chapter 1.4.1) The character of the input should meet certain criteria for the implicit learning to occur. These are: “frequency of repetition, co-occurrence of

items that build associations, sequences that are repeated and gradually imprinted as larger units (chunking), and gradual generalization of similar exemplar forms and features to produce categories and prototypes” (Grabe). “Enough exposures to the same input and to repeated procedures lead to habitual processing of the input and to processing automaticity” (Grabe 60).

Implicit learning goes hand in hand with fluent reading, which is the basic characteristic of ER. The concept of implicit learning helps to explain the relatively long time before ER programmes take any noticeable effect, especially in productive skills.² “Implicitly acquired knowledge, the outcome of implicit learning, requires considerable time to emerge as stable, automatized knowledge” (Grabe 60).

The two concepts of learning are by no means mutually exclusive and both play a role in the development of reading abilities. The question remains which one of the concepts of learning (if any) should be given the priority in ESL and when. The author’s experience with course books and teaching practice in the Czech Republic seems to suggest that it is the explicit learning which is accented. For the illustration of the two concepts in reading tasks a table is included.

² See chapter 1.3.2.2

Table 1 Reading tasks that Involve Implicit and Explicit Learning (Eunsol)

Implicit Learning	Explicit Learning
Improving word recognition with known words through fluent text reading and rereading	Learning new words on first encounters through explicit definitions
Stabilizing and expanding word meanings by being exposed to words again in similar and new contexts	Learning new word meanings by noticing new uses of words and figuring out their meanings
Expanding word meanings through multiple incidental contacts with a word in consistent supporting contexts	Learning new word meanings by intentionally making inferences from context information
Processing letter-sounds correspondences by reading easy texts	reading easy texts Attending to letter-sound correspondence by direct instruction
Increasing word reading fluency through large amounts of extensive reading	Attending to words that are not well established by noting words that reappear of intentionally using the word
Increasing text reading fluency by rereading texts and by extensive reading with easy texts	Intentionally practicing passage reading to improve reading accuracy

1.3.1.4. Extensive reading vs. intensive reading

The distinction of explicit and implicit reading is expressed in the two basic approaches to reading. The term extensive reading was coined in 1917 by Palmer (Day) and is derived from the term intensive reading. Intensive reading (IR) refers to “careful reading (or translation) of shorter, more difficult foreign language texts with the goal of complete and detailed understanding” (Bamford qtd. Kredátusová). The reading usually takes place in the classroom and the type of the text is the one which can be found in course books hand in hand with various activities which very often test the

comprehension. IR is typically done with a certain task in mind. The tasks typically serve the purpose of illustrating particular grammar or vocabulary points in context, or they are designed to foster reading strategies. IR text can thus be seen as vehicle for language learning/teaching, and which is primarily read not for its content (piece of information, story etc.), but for its formal language features. On the other hand, it is primarily the content for which an ER text is valuable. It is the attractiveness of the text for a reader which should be the main concern when choosing a particular piece of text. (This draws on the Day and Bramford's principle that the purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information, and general comprehension.)

This principle is reflected in the character of an ideal ER text which is relatively easy and contains mostly one or two unknown words per page. "Laufer (1989) and Nation (2001), and many others have shown that unless we have about 98-99% coverage of the vocabulary of the other words in the text, the chance that an unknown word will be learnt is minimal. This means that at minimum there should be one new word in 40, or 1 in 50 for the right conditions for incidental vocabulary learning" (qtd. in Waring 60).

While in IR it is usually the teacher who makes the choice of the text, in ER it is mainly the student who chooses what to read. The role of the teacher in IR does not end with choosing the material, but the presence of the teacher is in most cases of IR reading necessary, unlike in the case of ER. A teacher participating in IR needs to supervise, instruct and check. The role of a teacher performing ER is the role of a facilitator and a role model who stimulates students' interest in reading by providing an example to follow. It is obvious that the ideal ER closely approximates leisure time reading in L1. ER seem in concord with the modern approach in pedagogy, the aim of which is to bring the school activities as close to the real life as possible.

However, both IR and ER have their place in the classroom. “Intensive reading lessons provide students with training in the strategies and skills they need to become successful readers and extensive reading provides opportunities for putting that training into practice independently at an unsupported level of learning. The two are two mutually dependent” (Hedge 68). A well-arranged overview of the differences is offered by Waring:

Table 2 Comparison of Intensive and Extensive Reading

INTENSIVE READING Reading in textbooks		EXTENSIVE READING Using graded readers
Learning new grammar, vocabulary, reading skills	<i>What are the objectives of reading?</i>	Fluency, confidence and pleasure
Usually a little more difficult than learner's level	<i>How difficult should they be?</i>	Should be easier than learner's level
Passages are usually short	<i>How much do learners read?</i>	As much as possible; usually a lot
The teacher	<i>Who chooses the reading material?</i>	Each learner
The same reading passage or text book, magazine article, newspaper clipping decided by the teacher	<i>What do learners read?</i>	Whatever they choose, usually graded readers.
In class or at home as homework	<i>Where do learners read?</i>	Out of class when and wherever they want
Comprehension questions, exercises, etc.	<i>How is the learner's understanding checked?</i>	If at all, through book reports, sort summaries, discussion with teacher, etc.
Usually	<i>Does the teacher give tests?</i>	It is not always necessary

Often within the reading passage only	<i>Is key language recycled?</i>	A lot
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1.3.1.5. The theory of reading fluency

While IR is focused on reading accuracy ER focuses on reading fluency. The most widely accepted theory for reading fluency is the automatic information processing proposed by La Berge and Samuels (1974). Samuels argued “that the essence of reading fluency is the ability to decode and comprehend a text simultaneously. [...] Decoding words automatically is essential for fluency in reading. [...] Words that learners can recognize rapidly, accurately, and automatically have been called *sight vocabulary*. When learners encounter the same words a number of times, these words may enter their sight vocabulary Sight vocabulary is elemental for improving reading fluency. When learners have a large sight vocabulary, they decode more words automatically. As a result, they can save their finite cognitive resources to comprehend a text” (qtd. in Iwahori).

1.3.2. Research into the effectiveness

The research into the effects of ER is vast and for most of the ER enthusiast persuasive enough. Yet, for Rob Waring, though being an ER enthusiast himself, the evidence of ER effectiveness seems only circumstantial. “The presence of contamination factors undermines the research as it cannot provide unequivocal evidence of the effectiveness of ER. This is hardly a strong research foundation upon which the house of ER rests” (*Research*). It should be said that this observation does not speak against the researcher’s good intentions or erudition, but it is, among others, rather the consequence of the nature of ER which defies designing controlled experimental conditions.

It has been mentioned that the research is vast. In 2010 Tamrackitun made an effort to sum them up. “There are eight studies on gains in vocabulary, eight studies on

gains in writing, one on spelling, one on oral proficiency, one on listening and 44 four on motivation and attitudes which reveal that the body of research points in the same direction towards the efficacy of ER”(43)

Let us have a brief inventory of the scope of the questions that have been asked in relation to this issue. Waring summarized that there have been studies that ask (i) whether students can actually learn from ER (including many incidental learning from reading experiments), (ii) studies that compare ER approaches with other methodologies (such as with 'normal' approaches or 'translation' approaches), and yet others (iii) that have looked at the effect of ER on other aspects of language learning (such as on writing, speaking, confidence and motivation and so on). Among each of these fields, one can always find some research which speaks in favour of ER. Yet, as it has been suggested, “we should be extremely cautious in proposing that there is ‘strong evidence for the value of ER” (Waring *Research*)

1.3.2.1. A critique of the L2 ER studies

The first general objection is rather philosophical and is concerned with the observation that we know very little about reading and the criteria according to which its impact could or should be assessed. In order to devise a test or assessment procedure for reading, we must surely appeal, if only intuitively, to some concept of what it means to read texts and understand them. “How can we possibly test whether somebody has understood a text if we do not know what we mean by 'understand'?” (Alderson qtd. in Waring *Research*)

Another serious objection is of a more practical kind. The volume of reading that subjects have to undertake in order that the research can be labelled 'Extensive Reading' means that it will take a considerable amount of time. This entails that the subjects of

the research come into contact with English in a non-controlled environment, which in effect contaminates the research by the non-acknowledged language input. In other words - it is not possible to control all the variables over an extended period of time.

Although the range of questions asked in the research is wide, the learners as subjects of the research lack variety. Firstly, the “research has mostly been conducted with the learning of English and on Asian and Oceanian learners” (Ibid). Secondly, the research has been conducted mostly on highly educated individuals rather than on the general population. Next, there is also a very narrow ability range of subjects who have been investigated, most of whom might be considered 'intermediate' level. And finally, most of the research has been conducted with people who are older than fifteen.

“Despite the above problems it is almost certain that measurable gains for learners reading can be found” (Ibid). The most persuasive field of research is the one which claims that ER is good for the learners in terms of affect (motivation to read more, positive attitude to language etc.). “However, the research does not yet support a stronger conclusion” (Waring *Research*). Waring concludes his review of 28 ER studies by rather tentative statements. “Reading is probably one way, and only one way we become good readers, it seems that through ER we can develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and it may help us to become good spellers [...] but we still do not have the evidence to be sure” (*Research*).

Although the research has been wide-ranging, there is still an area of study which calls for some investigation. We do not know the position of ER among other pleasurable language rich instruction such as watching films, surfing the web, playing computer games etc. The practical part of our thesis attempts to address this area.

1.3.2.2. **The Book Flood Study in the Fiji**

For illustration we include a detailed description of one of the most cited experiments. The Book Flood Study in the Fiji Island was published in 1983 by the authors Elley and Mangubhai. “They provided what was to become the first in a series of large-scale research studies on the benefits of extensive reading and book flood curricula in a number of countries around the world” (Grabe 316). The experiment involved twelve rural schools. Eight of these were experimental and four were control groups. The advantage of the rural Fiji for such an experiment resides in the fact that there is comparatively little sustained exposure to English outside the classroom. The Fijian and Hindi speaking pupils were from eleven to twelve years old. More than 500 students and 25 specially trained teachers participated in the project. The study itself examined proficiency gains over two years amongst three groups of learners, differentiated by three different kinds of instruction: (i) *The shared book experience method* (reading by both the teacher and students plus follow-up activities); (ii) *the silent reading method* (students reading alone, with no book reports or other activities); and (iii) was a control group with traditional audio-lingual instruction. In the experimental schools, the classroom teachers were asked to replace 20- 30 minutes of their normal ESL program with either sustained silent reading (ii) or shared book reading (i), whichever the particular school had been selected to do. Experimental classes were given 250 books each for a class library.

While the book flood students were superior to the audio lingual students only in reading comprehension and listening comprehension by the end of the first year, by the end of the second year they outperformed the regular students in all the remaining tested categories of language proficiency. That is in vocabulary knowledge, language structures and written composition. Not only did the experiment proved the

effectiveness of ER over the traditional audio-lingual method, it also showed that for the programme to take some effect other than in receptive skills, it needs to be run over a longer period of time.

Nevertheless, Rob Waring has some reservation towards the experiment. Although the number of books available for reading is included in the report of the experiment, there is insufficient reporting on how much was actually read. “Not knowing how much was read makes interpretation almost impossible, but a lack of detail can also affect interpretation” (*Research*). Despite this reservation, the Fiji experiment was generally accepted and has been cited as a proof of ER effectiveness and what is more, many EFL and ESL teachers have promoted extensive reading to their students ever since the report of the results was published”(Macalister 248).

1.4. Benefits of ER

Despite the problematic character of empirical evidence of ER effectiveness, the literature features benefits of ER.

1.4.1. Vocabulary gains

When we speak of vocabulary gains as a result of ER we mean incidental learning as opposed to intentional learning. Research has proved that incidental vocabulary acquisition in a foreign language situation is possible (Richart). At first sight, intentional learning seems to be more effective. Even some researchers, Nozaki in particular, (qtd. in Waring) found in a recent study that the words met with word cards (intentional learning) were learnt not only 16 times faster (words per hour of study), but were also retained longer than words learnt incidentally from reading. However, as Waring points out, it would be a mistake to reject incidental vocabulary learning on the basis of this research. “To really know a word well, learners need to know not only

meanings and spellings, but the nuances of its meanings, its register, whether it is more commonly used for speaking or writing, which discourse categories it is usually found in, as well as its collocations and colligations, among many other things” (Waring).

One might suggest, knowing the effectiveness of intentional vocabulary learning over incidental one, that it should be possible to learn all the layers of (English) verbal texture intentionally. The reaction to this is that first - such a learning material does not exist and second - it would demand a great amount of stamina from the learner to plod through the numerous uses and collocation of a vocabulary unit. This argument for ER is especially clear and convincing in the situation of advanced learners in academic setting, who, after they have learnt around 3000 basic word families, are required to know thousands of words³. It is highly improbable that such a student would be using word cards and would be able to learn them in the classroom. Thus, it is expected that vocabulary will be acquired incidentally during extensive reading.

What are the conditions of a successful incidental learning? One of the main factors affecting learnability includes the ratio of unknown to known words in a text. “The more dense a text is” (i.e. featuring a large number of unfamiliar words), “the less likely incidental learning can occur” (Waring). The crucial factor is then comprehensibility. Laufer (1989), Nation (2001) and many others have shown, that “unless we have about 98- 99% coverage of the vocabulary of the other words in the text, the chance that an unknown word will be learnt is minimal” (qtd. in Waring). This means that at minimum there should be one new word in 40, or 1 in 50 for the right conditions of incidental learning. Taking such figures into account, it may be surmised that with a relative slow rate of incidental vocabulary growth the volume of text a

³ The occurrence of general English words above about the 2-3000 headword level becomes rather random, unstable and unpredictable for selection (Waring).

learner needs to meet is immense. In turn, this fact helps to explain why one of the invoked characteristics of ER is the virtually incessant reading of massive amounts of text.

The benefits of ER to vocabulary, however, do not so much lie in learning the new vocabulary as in enabling the learner to recycle and deepen the knowledge of the already familiar vocabulary. This characteristics of ER makes it an ideal complement to course books which generally focus on presenting new vocabulary items and do not give the learner much chance that a vocabulary item or a phrase will enter the learner's *comfort zone*. Waring's term *comfort zone* is understood or defined as a state in which students "feel confident of using it without looking like a fool". This desired stage comes from experience with the language and in fact draws on the well-known fact that a language is a matter of practice. "The more times they meet a word, a phrase, a grammatical feature, the more chance it has to enter their comfort zone and the greater chance there is for it to become available for production." (Waring). The benefits of ER thus lie in extending, consolidating and sustaining of the vocabulary growth

1.4.2. Complement to a course book

Our case for ER in practice, together with Waring, is the case for ER which has at least the status of a complement to the course book. While course books serve the function of presenting new language items, ER is a vehicle for recycling. With such a view, it is particularly unfortunate that the vast majority of the current course books generally do not reflect on it. In 2008 Brown wrote that "[e]xtensive reading [was] almost wholly ignored by textbooks", arguing that they made "no reference to extensive reading" and implicitly left it "up to individual teachers and institutions to convince others of its merits, integrate it into the curriculum, and deal with the practicalities

involved” (238) However, it seems that the situation has changed and at least Oxford does make a reference to GRs in the course book New English File Elementary. The limits of course books and almost indispensable part of ER in most of language courses are elaborated in the following chapter.

1.4.3. Oral fluency

Because of the elusive character of the variable of oral fluency (speaking skills, speaking proficiency) there has not been any empirical study of the potential gains in this skill. However, in terms of literary input, there is one study by Cho and Krashen from 1994, which is often cited. It is also referenced by Waring who wrote: “Oral proficiency was (anecdotally) said to have improved after reading large amounts of text” (Research). With the reported gains in other areas such as vocabulary and writing we can infer the likelihood of improvement in oral fluency as well. Nevertheless, to argue for gains in oral fluency one does not necessarily need hard evidence. A convincing argument is that of Waring’s comfort Zone. The experience with the language in the classroom or via the course book cannot, by its nature, offer the amount of language which is needed to really understand and feel comfortable with a certain part of language. The nature of a typical course book is such that it focused on introducing given items in a linear fashion without much revision. “As each unit has its own vocabulary, the words tend not to be re-taught or even met again (even in review units) as there is a constant focus on learning new words and new grammar at the expense of recycling previously taught words. [...] By recycling a vocabulary unit, not only can it be kept in a working memory, but a deeper knowledge is being built and the students can make *sense* of language for themselves”. (Waring)

To sum up the argument: Only by a massive exposure (via reading, listening, or both) to the language at a comfortable level (ER) can the student really learn the vocabulary and structures. The deep knowledge of them is the prerequisite for speaking proficiency.

1.4.3.1. The role of follow-up activities

We claim, though rather intuitively, that for the speaking proficiency to fully realize its potential, ER program should not be limited only to reading, which means that the primary reading input should be expanded and cultivated by means of follow-up activities. This conviction is predicated on the assumption that a well-chosen ER material has the potential to offer meaningful and stimulating content for interaction in the classroom and it would be a waste not to turn it into oral interaction. “CLT has been criticized for lacking content and purpose. In part because it often revolves solely around the skill of speaking” (Fenton-Smith 54). Waring notes that “stories (in graded readers) not only provide an overarching structure for verbal recounts, but also engender a rich variety of linguistic features in output and provide a genuine reason for interaction (i.e. hearing others’ stories)” (Waring qtd. In Fenton Smith 54). In different words: “Reading exposes students to new experiences and points of view that can then be shared and discussed” (Schmidt). Helgesen goes further, pointing out that having students evaluate stories – in addition to merely re-telling – engages them in higher order thinking” (qtd. in Fenton Smith 54). Though it should be added that this role of ER is more relevant to more advanced students.

1.4.4. **Gains in motivation and attitudes**

None of the studies into this area even suggests that ER does not have positive effect on motivation or confidence, neither does it in any way undermine the perception of the usefulness of ER. In the study of Al-Homoud and Schmitt, the extensive reading participants (including relatively weak students in an environment where pleasure reading is atypical) reported much more positive attitudes towards reading, their class surroundings and towards learning in general than the participants in the intensive reading group. While monitoring the progress of a particular group of learners, Takase in 2003 observed a strong impact residing in the learner's increased sense of achievement. The group was characterized by its relatively low number of books read.

1.4.4.1. **The concept of Virtuous Circle**

The possible explanation of the positive effect in affective area might be Nuttall's concept of *virtuous circle* as opposed to *vicious circle* of reading. She described the vicious circle of the weak reader of intensive reading instruction as follows: "Reads slowly; Doesn't enjoy reading; Doesn't read much; Doesn't understand; Reads slowly..." (172). On the other hand, ER can help readers "enter the cycle of growth instead [...] the virtuous circle of the good reader: Reads faster; Reads more; Understands better; Enjoys reading; Reads faster[...]" (Ibid).

Another representation of a virtuous circle is that of Tamrackitkun's: "improved ability → positive attitude → improved ability" (201). To conclude this chapter with Maley's words: "The effect on self-esteem and motivation of reading one's first book in the foreign language is undeniable" (148). A well-chosen graded reader offers this very opportunity.

1.4.5. Autonomy of a learner

“One of the most important challenges facing foreign language teachers is that of making students self-sufficient, autonomous learners who can manage their own learning and survive outside the sheltered environment of the classroom”(St. Louis). The importance of self-learning, which is the prerequisite for lifelong learning, is highlighted in the *National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic - White Paper*. The implementation of lifelong learning has become a goal for both international government organisations (European Union, Council of Europe, OECD and UNESCO) and all developed and developing countries. According to Allan Maley, “There is no cheaper or more effective way to develop learner autonomy than by reading. It is, by its very nature, a private, individual activity. It can be done anywhere and at any time of day” (147). A well designed ER program is the one in the course of which the role of the teacher is becoming less and less important. To instil the habit of lifelong reading is the single most important goal of any ER programme.

1.4.6. Extensive reading can work well in mixed ability classes

“The ER enthusiasts’ best ally is the failure of many current courses to raise any but the smallest minority beyond an elementary stage. All too often in schools and colleges, (the weaker) students of foreign languages are bored by communicative syllabuses that focus on functions, and are left further and further behind in mixed level classes, and gradually disengage entirely” (Hill 187). Programmes offering self-selected reading of GRs “can offer not only stories that can restore interest in the language but also books of different levels that cater for a wide range of proficiency” (Ibid).

The issue of mixed-ability classes is especially relevant for smaller schools in which it is not possible to fine-tune the groups according to their ability. Teaching in heterogeneous groups poses a great challenge for any teacher. One of the possible answers to such a challenge lies in establishing the school library containing GRs of different levels and in assigning individual reading tasks.

1.5. Characteristics of ER Material

ER often tends to be equated with reading graded readers, but other types of material can be used as long as they adhere to the principles mentioned in chapter 1.2. To define GRs we use Hill's⁴ definition: "Graded readers are books written for learners of English using limited lexis and syntax, the former determined by frequency and usefulness and the latter by simplicity" (185). "In order to escape the prejudice against graded readers the Extensive Reading Foundation have promoted the term 'Language Learner Literature'(LLL) and sought to raise its profile by instituting an award"(Ibid 186).

Because only GRs offer students the choice of the right level of language complexity the simplified readers form a vast majority of ER material. In the list of GRs maintained by ERF there is over five thousand items (sic)⁵. Out of these, over three thousand are labelled as still being in print. For illustration of the list, the thesis includes the image of table in which the winners of Learner's Language Literature Awards are filtered and ordered according to the number of headwords. "The sheer number of series and titles suggests that graded readers play a more significant part in language learning than ministries of education and university departments of applied linguistics or

⁴ Probably the most respected authority in this field, who regularly surveys the offer of GRs on the market.

⁵ An item equals a single book (title) published by a single publisher.

education are prepared to admit” (Hill 189) Hill also noted that learners are parting company with the teachers given the fact that “publishers increasingly rely for sales on direct selling to the public rather than on orders from institutions” (Ibid 186).

1.5.1. A critique that restricted language is not authentic

A critique that restricted language is not authentic and so a poor model for learners has been levelled especially from the position of CLT ever since 1970s. With its tendency to authenticate the language input and “replace the stilted, step-by-step focus-on-form that characterized traditional language teaching, it suggested that students read authentic texts written by and for native speakers. [...] Paradoxically, however, it is the very communicative insistence on authentic texts that makes extensive reading all but impossible for less than linguistically proficient students”(Bamford). Even for proficient students, the reading will often be reduced to slow and often painful decoding of the meaning, which brings us back to the traditional language teaching. Grabe sees the issue of authenticity as non-existent. He cites the argument of Widdoson’s “that taking any text into a classroom setting and using it for pedagogical goals removes the context assumed by the writer, in effect, rendering the text non-authentic”(qtd. in 327). The whole problem then lies in the understanding of the word authentic. “For the current thought in reading pedagogy authentic implies real in the sense that students find it meaningful as well as pertinent to their lives” (Christmas 24).

Nevertheless, how can we oppose the objection that the language form, especially collocations, is far from the natural or real use? The answer lies in the publisher’s use of the language corpus. Allan, by comparing the collocations of the word “deal” in the British National Corpus and the same word in Graded corpus of the B2 level, proved that the latter one closely reflects the authentic language usage.

1.5.2. Basic Types of Graded Readers

1.5.2.1. Adapted originals

Adapted originals used to be typical for ER until quite recently when original stories started to attract wider attention. A wide category of adapted originals, abridged classics, has been criticized for trivializing the content of the original. But “it would be naïve to expect a simplified 70-page version of *War and Peace* to convey the richness and subtlety of the original” (Susser). Hill reacts to the objections that adapted texts are “insult to the original” by comparing adapting texts for learners to adapting a book for stage or screen. “Just as we first ask if the dramatized version of *Of Mice and Men* works on the stage or if a film version of *Pride and Prejudice* works on the screen, so we should ask if the L2 rewrites of these novels work for learners. In each case, faithfulness to the original is of secondary importance, though generally the more faithful in content and style, the more satisfying it will be” (186).

It has also been shown, among others by Maley, that the good intention to simplify may “sometimes make a text more difficult to decode by removing precisely those connective features⁶ which signpost the thread of the story” (136). This objection applies especially to graded readers at more elementary levels.

Simplified classics can be “defended on the grounds that they afford the readers access to quality texts which have stood the test of time” (Maley 136). Simplified classics tend to be favoured in the investigated the grammar school in Mělník, cursorily mentioned in the introductory part of the thesis. The reason for it is the fact that the classics constitute an integral part of the Literary Canon - the knowledge of which is tested at the *maturita* school-leaving exam. One might rightfully object that the knowledge gained through reading adapted originals is rather superficial. But in the era

⁶ (cohesion, coherence, and discourse structure)

when even university courses tolerate, or even embrace the film medium as a means of studying literature, such an objection can easily be refuted.

1.5.2.2. Original Fiction

Original fiction has gained prominence in the past few years (Maley 137). The Cambridge English Readers publish originals exclusively and at all levels. All the major publishers include at least some original titles. However, original fiction takes up a much bigger share in elementary levels than in more advanced ones. Cambridge is unique in another area as well. It publishes titles consisting of 3800 headwords which corresponds to C1 and which is 800 more than the highest levels of other publishers. Cambridge is different from the rest by its focus on making the reading experience as close to reading in L1. It is achieved by getting rid of all association to learning such as glossaries and comprehension questions. “What makes this series different is the way it treats the target audience. It deals with themes and topics of contemporary relevance and does not fall into the traps of treating the learner as a child, equating low language level with low intellectual level or limited experience of life, or of offering watered-down versions of the classics.” (Prowse 4). Original fiction, especially the one which is stripped off any educational connotations, can be seen as a vehicle through which the principle of ER that reading is a pleasurable activity close to reading in L1 can be best fulfilled. But it would be wrong to expect that graded readers can represent a competition to student’s favourite kind of literature in L1. The merits of reading graded readers are primarily seen in language gains.

1.5.3. Assessment criteria

Apart from the most prominent criterion of the levels of language complexity (most often understood as the number of headwords), there are some more which are taken into account when helping a student to choose the right book. These are: content/age, format and artwork, support for reading, support for teachers and Each publisher has its own scale (generally 5-6 levels) of difficulty. Because of the that one level (for example level/stage 3) of two publishers may sometimes entail a different proficiency level, it is recommended that a library has its own system of grading, which can be based on The Extensive Reading Foundation Grading Scale. (See

Figure 1 in the Appendices)

All age groups are catered for by the six major publishers on the Czech market, including special series for the category of young learners (5-10). However, for the purposes of our study, we are interested in the 16+ age group. David Hill, in his latest survey of grader readers, offers this assessment: “The quality of the titles is generally high, but they suit only a small proportion of the population[.] There is no lowbrow series, i.e. no westerns, adventures, crime, and romances which would be comparable to TV soap operas. There is a need for straightforward, undemanding but interesting stories, in which the meaning is explicit, allowing learners to read fluently and confidently. [...] Cambridge English Readers come nearest to this type, since their stories, originals at all levels, are relatively simple” (189).

Support for reading is, according to Hill, very important (given the fact that GR is the learning/teaching material), yet it is very often a neglected feature of GRs. There are several options to help students understand the text better: (i) Background information about the setting and the author (especially important with classics – only Cideb and

Scholastics publishers include it, (ii) list of characters (only Scholastic Readers and Express Illustrated Readers give information about each character, which students can look up and so remind themselves of who the characters are and how they are linked in the story) and (iii) chapter heading. “It is remarkable how many editors simply number chapters and do not provide a heading, as though they wanted to make the reading task more difficult” (Hill 193). However, this flaw can be turned into a benefit when the students are given the task of assigning a suitable title to the chapter.

Another means of helping students to read more easily and thereby become more avid readers is the *aid to the appreciation* of the literary qualities of the text. “Many and perhaps the majority of learners are not experienced in reading fiction, it may be also accepted that they would benefit from a commentary that points out how the author is maintaining interest in the plot, differentiating characters, and setting out a theme. [...] The aim would not be to turn extensive reading into literary study but to raise students’ appreciation of the story and so encourage them to read more (Hill 193).

1.5.4. The lack of aids in appreciation might partly explain the minor status of ER

Most of the additional (either in the book or online) material consists of comprehension questions. “These may have the indirect effect of increasing learners’ understanding, but, without answers, probably serve rather to alienate them, especially when the questions run to several pages” (Hill 192). We think that this approach is rather in concord with intensive reading, which is the more common approach to reading in ELT in the Czech Republic. It seems that the publishers see this as a way to approximate the material to the common teaching practice and the work with course-books. Comprehension questions have many advantages for the teacher (especially in terms of the accountability), however, the student’s motivation to read (the key concern

here) will decrease. On the other hand, if the questions seek to discuss the story, characters, or the theme of the book, the students' interest in reading has the potential to increase. We may speculate that the teachers willing to use graded readers might find giving appreciation aids to their students an indispensable part of their teaching. However, when they do not find support for this in GRs, they might find teaching ER and motivating the students to read too hard a job and they might retort to the safe area of common (traditional) teaching practice of IR.

1.5.5. Other ER materials

At the beginning of this section we mentioned that it is not only GRs that can be used in ER. As a material other than GR, Maley mentions fiction for native audience written in a straightforward style like Sue Townsend's *Adrian Mole's Diaries*, Roald Dahl's shorter fiction or Harry Potter's collection. The students in Mělník gave the following books as their favourites: *Hunger Games* trilogy and *50 Shades of Grey*. To have read an English or American book in the original wording is definitely a great motivation and self-esteem boost, but it does not mean that such a student has gained oral fluency, having read the books. It can be expected that such a student will not read GRs any more with the assumption that he or she is well past this stage and that GR books have nothing to offer him or her any more. However, we think that GR might bring benefits even for such a student. We see GRs as an effective way of learning the essential 3000 words, the control of which is the prerequisite for oral fluency on general topics. Reading GRs is effective, because these words are encountered more frequently than when reading original fiction and an incidental learning is more likely to occur. The author's personal experience with learning and teaching English can testify to the fact that reading fiction for native speakers often lead to the use of vocabulary from an

unsuitable register (often literary word in casual conversation). The awkwardness of such a situation is even amplified when the student cannot remember a simple high frequency vocabulary one moment later. The validity of the argument for the benefits of GRs for advanced students' oral fluency can be supported by a study on reading fluency. Beglar, Hunt and Kite (2011) published a study of an extensive reading program carried out over a period of one year. The learners who read many pages of difficult non-simplified text did not make the same fluency gains as the students who read mostly text with restricted language. This is not to be understood as a dismissal of non-simplified literature as a tool for language proficiency. The point is that even incipient readers of books for native audience should not overlook the potential of GR which lies in its controlled vocabulary.

1.6. Extensive listening

The benefits of aural input as a complement to reading can hardly be disputed. The research (Chang) demonstrate that the reading plus listening group produced the most consistent and significant outcome compared with the reading-only and listening-only groups. The fact that almost all graded readers are published with audio version might reflect the fact the publishers are aware of the benefits themselves and/or that they react to the demand of their customers. The inclusion of extensive listening in ER classes is justified "because it affirms the importance of intonation, helps establish an oral foundation, and encourages speakers of L1s that are linguistically distant from English to process English words in their natural order" (Stephens). According to Wells, English make "more elaborate use of intonation to signal meaning than do most other languages"; intonation expresses attitude, grammatical and pragmatic functions, discourse, and psychological and indexical functions" (qtd. in Stephens).

It has been established that reading is best learned through reading. Can we say the same for the listening? Is the listening best learned through listening? Willy A. Renandya believes that extensive listening might be just the kind of approach that may help EFL students deal with their listening problems. He refers to the lack of clear evidence and a number of EFL teaching methodologists “who have recently expressed some reservations about the use of substantial instructional time for strategy training” (Renandya 55). He also refers to the Zhang’s experiment (2005) in which the extensive listening students not only outperformed the strategy-based students on the receptive measures, but they also outscored the control students on the measure that required a productive use of the language.

2. ANALYTICAL PART

2.1. Results of implementation

We have tried to put together the rationale behind extensive reading. When doing so, we have accumulated evidence that shows that ER is has a great potential for student's language improvement. Despite this, "implementation has often been infrequent and a less than complete success" (Jacobs) and a "general status of ER is that of an optional extra for a small minority" (Hill 183). The analysis of this great discrepancy is the subject of the following part.

While ER has been the subject of scientific enquiry trying to answer wide range of questions (See chapter 1.3.2), there is only one study by Maley, which tries to capture the actual practice of ER in the ELT worldwide. Unfortunately, only few details of the study were published. Nevertheless, the results of the study confirmed our working hypothesis (and partly the results of our survey) that actual practice is often at odds with principles of ER

The first finding is hardly surprising, namely the discovery that students do not read much or often. Another finding is that materials are often narrow in range and the texts read are only rarely considered interesting by the readers themselves. It is easy to see the interdependency of these two findings. Furthermore, students are rarely given a choice of what to read. "In most cases reading takes place in class, often with the whole class reading the same title or the same extract at the same time. While this facilitates control and 'coverage' of the syllabus [...] it is a seriously distorted version of ER" (Maley 143), because students cannot read what they like (in terms of the title and level of English) at their own pace.

Reading is rarely regarded as sufficient in itself. “The insatiable urge to teach, to test, to monitor, to intervene often means that the flow of the reading experience is constantly being interrupted”(Maley 136). Reading under such conditions, Maley imagines what conclusion a student must draw: “Reading is a chore to be endured and is of little use to them in passing the examination!” (Ibid). It seems that the reasons explaining such a distortion of ER go much further beyond the most prominently stated reasons that are lack of time and money.

2.2. Reasons for failure and/or not doing

In this part I want to write a comprehensive overview of the reasons behind the failure of ER to become more widespread and to fulfil the high expectations aroused by the experiments proving its value.

2.2.1. Missing consensus

The first reason to elaborate is Hill’s observation that there is no consensus among the (E)LT profession as to what extensive reading is how it contributes to the process of learning a language, or how it should be promoted in the classroom. These shortcomings in methodology are partly blamed on the part of the general omission in the teacher’s training curriculum in tertiary education. The publishers of GRs supply the teachers with guidebooks of ER programmes but it just doesn’t seem enough for the teachers to feel confident in promoting the benefits of ER. The few countries, namely Japan and South Korea, in which systematic ER programmes found its way into the high school classrooms, are characteristic of the fact that ER is part of tertiary education. Both as a reading programme for students themselves and/or a subject of

scientific enquiry. Apart from the poorly informed teachers⁷, the absence of ER in tertiary education has the repercussions in the low legitimacy of ER.

2.2.2. Lack of legitimacy

It cannot be expected that ER gains legitimacy and teachers' conviction of its benefits on the basis of a few instances of a successful programmes which “tend to have been the result of individual initiative by enterprising teachers who have, usually for a brief time only, been able to bypass the institutional culture (Maley 146). We hold, that it is the very institutional culture (represented by universities and governmental offices responsible for education) the change of which is the prerequisite for ER to become more widespread. However, it is not to think that this top-bottom approach alone is safe to ensure the appropriate implementation of ER. Green, in his report on ER in Hong Kong observed, that despite the sound theoretical and logistical frameworks the government had provided, “schools interpreted government-issued guidelines in strikingly different ways” (Green 307). The government initiative was often met by teacher's resentment and resistance. The lesson learned from Hong Kong is that any changes in educational policies must respect the current educational climate. Revolutions in educational policies never seem to be successful. In the following part we would like to sketch out the features of the educational climate in the world in general and in the Czech Republic in particular.

⁷ Teachers think that intensive reading is enough. Teachers are not prepared to radically rethink how reading should be taught and learned. They do not have the language and reading skills to spontaneously respond to many types of questions when students need help in class (Grabe)

2.2.3. Educational climate

Even without going into much detail, it might be clear that ER is at odds and sometimes in sharp contrast with the practices in public education as we know it. The ER's emphasis on pleasure, though it might seem as a win-win situation for both the teacher and the student, is in fact something which renders it rather dubious and reinforces the status of extensive reading as an optional extra. Furthermore, "the emphasis on pleasure militates against pedagogic intervention, reducing the teachers' role to facilitation, which can become passive supervision or even total inactivity" (Hill 187). Maley cited Cunningham's experience with teachers in Zanzibar which seems to capture the general attitude of teachers as we know it: The teachers "like the visible results of vocabulary list learning, words pronounced correctly, answers rightly given and skills accurately performed" (150). It is hardly compatible with ER which is more indirect and the building of the four skills takes longer.

2.2.3.1. Issue of the ER's accountability

Public education is hard to imagine without examination and the official assessment of student's performance. The problem of testing is that even the best designed test cannot fully capture the student's performance, nor can it capture the desired skills and qualities the student should possess. When the programmes are focused solely on the test results, it often leads to the practice of narrowing the goals of education and to the practice of designing the programmes' form and content to fit the form and content of the upcoming examination. Again, ER does not fit into the culture of official and formal examination. The way to make ER programmes and the general focus on examination in schools compatible is to design such a test which takes ER into account. We think that unless ER enables accountability of the similar kind the teachers

are used to, it will not have the credibility and among teachers. It brings back the indispensable role of institutional changes. The results of the survey in the grammar school in Mělník indicate that if not ER as such than at least graded readers can serve the function of helping students in preparing for the school part of the maturita exam. In particular, it concerns the questions dealing with British and American literature.

2.2.3.2. Changes in technology

Since the expansion of TV to most of the households, reading as a leisure-time activity has been competing with ever growing range of other pastimes. This stiff competition lead to the relative decline of reading, which, according to Hill, has the consequence “that for the majority of students, extensive reading is a new and unfamiliar activity that needs to be taught” (Hill 188). This fact makes the absence of aids for appreciation even more serious. (See chapter 1.5.4) However, the claim about the decline of reading refers rather to the decline of reading printed fiction than to the decline of reading as such. A recent survey conducted in the United Kingdom (Clark, Osborne and Dugdale, 2009 shows that technology-based materials are “the most frequently read, with nearly two-thirds of children and adolescents reading websites every week” (qtd. in Teaching 115). At the time when children learn to read using tablets or other electronic devices, it would be naive to think that the majority of this generation would consider reading printed texts as a natural way of reading. It has been shown, that the use of electronic media brings many learning opportunities. For upper-secondary students, Nævdal found that achievement in English was higher when more time was spent on computer use at home.⁸ (qtd. in Teaching 115)

⁸ When adjusting for gender, subject interest, reading disabilities, and different computer activity categories

It turns out that unless ER material reflects this shift towards reading as a multi-media experience, ER will not only remain a minor activity, but will be playing even more minor role.⁹ It seems that some publishers are aware of this necessity and three out of six publishing houses¹⁰ on the Czech market offer series for teenagers supplemented by the interactive activities.

2.2.3.3. Communicative approach

Another characteristic of the educational climate which might hinder the wider use of ER is the emphasis on spoken rather than written language. For almost half a century the communicative approach has been dominating the world of ELT with the emphasis on speaking and listening, rather than reading and writing. “The syllabus of functions and notions is intended to enable learners to converse in defined contexts. This further discourages learners from reading even though most have no opportunity to practise speaking outside the classroom” (Hill 188). It seems that CLT is firmly established and a more radical change in ELT in the form of ER programmes substituting CLT is not to come.

⁹ However, it remains the fact that reading a fiction and technology-based interactive materials are very much different in nature. For example the different requirement for the student’s attention span

¹⁰ These are: Cambridge, Penguin and a publisher which makes the biggest effort in this area: Black Cat (Cideb)

2.3. Hotspots of ER

From the European point of view, the instances of ER experiments and implementation have a flavour of something rather exotic. Both for the reason of the image of the faraway countries and its relative scarcity. While GRs are published worldwide, it is practically only one region – South Asia - where ER is taken seriously. “ER is booming in Asia” ¹¹(extensive). Not only has ER been an area of academic interest for many years in countries including Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Korea, but the ER programmes has also been adopted and adapted there. But most importantly, unlike anywhere else, the experience with ER programmes has been reflected by researchers. The following discussion might serve as demonstration of a problematic interaction between the educational policies and educational reality.

2.3.1. Japan

It is the country in which the value of ER “has been recognized in various institutions, including [...] yobiko (prep schools), colleges or universities. ... Although ER seems to be attracting the attention of high school teachers who appear willing to adopt it as part of the high school curriculum, the majority of teachers are still sceptical and reluctant to implement it”(Takase).

The interest in ER was spurred by the need to substitute the grammar translation method and to raise English language proficiency of Japanese students, who, according to Powell, had been lagging behind students in the Asian region. While the ministry of

¹¹ „A few years ago, many teachers had never heard of Extensive Reading (ER) but now that is changing fast. In Japan it is known as tadoku or rakudoku, in Korea it's called Tadok. Until recently, many teachers believed the only way to teach reading was by working intensively with short difficult texts sentence by sentence, or word by word, and through translation if necessary. This tradition still continues in many institutions in Asia and around the world. Teachers realized that this only helps students build their knowledge about English, and it wasn't really helping them to actually read fluently and confidently, nor read quickly. Importantly, they realized that this knowledge- based approach to reading wasn't helping students do better on tests, nor help them read real-life materials” (extensive)

education proposed oral communication approach, Japanese teacher started considering inclusion of ER because it seems much better suited for Japanese education setting.

2.3.1.1. Educational context

The grammar translation method had traditionally been ubiquitous. Japanese history of an isolated country meant that almost all of the information from abroad was gained through printed matters. “As a result, studying a foreign language came to mean just reading and writing for most of the Japanese people” (Yoshida). In Japan, lexical knowledge is regarded as the most important thing in order to master a foreign language. Moreover, according to Hill: “Students find it embarrassing to speak English before they feel confident of their use of lexis and syntax” (qtd. in Powell). Yoshida shares his experience: “Although the situation is gradually changing, many Japanese students don’t want to be involved in classroom activities and prefer instruction by lecturing even if they are in language classes” (Yoshida 91). Another characteristic of Japanese setting is that many English teachers in Japan are not good at spoken English. An often cited reason for this is “that most of the English teachers major in English literature or American literature. [...] Unfortunately without any language teacher’s lesson” (Yoshida 91). The last factor which speaks against the easy implementation of oral communication method, but is well suited for ER, is the average class size of English which is around 30 or even more. The educational context in Japan is too much different to serve as a direct example to follow when trying to implement ER in the context of Czech secondary education.

2.3.2. Hong Kong

It is important to note here that English language has the status of a second language (not a foreign one) and together with Cantonese it is an official language¹². ER scheme (known under the acronym HKERS) was introduced in secondary schools in 1991 as a part of promoting reading culture. “Cultivating a habit of independent reading in students is regarded as one of the major learning goals in the 21st century” (Ng 1). Not only were the aims commendable, the scheme had a sound theoretical background. However, the results did not live up to expectation. The most serious drawback reported was the failure to motivate student to read. “Yet, as of 2001, after a decade since its introduction ... The attitude Towards English reading among the students of Hong Kong remains negative, and the motivation to read stays at the same low level” (Wong 2001). Despite the formal importance of the scheme the programme had a marginalized status in the curriculum and was not integrated with other components of language instruction. Green attributes low motivation and minor status of ER to the already mentioned top-down approach of implementation which did not differentiate between school settings. Another explanation is that the rationale and basic principles of the scheme were not explained to the teachers, which lead to their misconception of ER or even defiance which in turn led to bad practices. “The opportunity for sharing the challenges and joys of reading in a foreign language—in small groups or through oral presentations to the whole class—is excluded by the individualized and silent nature of the scheme ... The role of the teacher was limited to the one of a prison guard enforcing the rule of silence” (Green 308).

¹² English is spoken by around 38% of the population, of whom some 3.1% regard English as their 'usual' language. 34.9% claim to speak English as 'another' language (Hong Kong Government by-census 1996). Since 1995, the official language policy has been to educate a 'trilingual' (Cantonese, Putonghua, English) and 'biliterate' (Cantonese, English) population.

Wong noted that the teachers, not being the committed readers themselves, could not promote enthusiasm about reading and in general they failed to guide the students in the book selection.

Despite these negative observations, successful examples of the ER scheme and reading programme can also be found in the study of *Good Practices in the Teaching and Learning of English* conducted by the Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong between 2003 and 2004. To help create a culture conducive to ER they, among others, had to adapt the scheme to suit local circumstances, give the teachers training and strategies especially in helping with the less capable students. To motivate students they awarded the best readers (those who read the most).

The government educational authorities adapted their policies to suit ER as well. They introduced the School-based Assessment component focusing on reading, reflection and discussion to the English Language examination syllabus of the HKCEE 2007. As we have already mentioned, in order for the ER to gain credibility among the teachers, it must be reflected in the examination.

The lesson learned from the Hong Kong experience might be manifold. However, the most important finding lies in the confirmation of our experience that however well intended and logistically supported the educational policies are, it is a single teacher's knowledge, skills and commitment that make a difference.

2.3.3. Singapore

Singapore is another country where ER came from government initiative and has been receiving considerable backing from the ministry of education. Within a *paradigm of educational renewal* a number of government programmes have been started which

are compatible with ER¹³. The English language syllabus places literacy development at the centre. “The aim is to help pupils become independent lifelong learners, creative thinkers and problem solvers who can communicate effectively in English. To achieve this (among others) students will read widely” (Singapore 2).

When considering Singapore as a potential model for implementation in the Czech Republic, it is important to realize the status of English. English is an instructional language in all government schools. However it does not mean that English proficiency comes naturally to students in Singapore. ER has proved to be particularly helpful in assisting forty of the weakest secondary schools in the Singapore school system¹⁴.

To promote the reading habit, the uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR) program has been implemented by almost all primary and secondary schools (Mok qtd. in Loh). In USSR students read silently in a designated time period every day in school. They select their own reading material and are not asked to answer comprehension questions or write book reports. USSR is far from being a novelty. The term was introduced as early as 1960. McCracken (1971) set forth some basic rules for initiating USSR. Since then, it has been implemented in reading classes at all grade levels (Chow).

USSR seems to be better suited for the educational culture in the above mentioned Asian countries than for the ELT in the Czech Republic. Especially one of the above mentioned conditions is of relevance here. It is the high number of students in class, which, according to OECD, is around 30 in Japan and Korea.

¹³ Among these are READ! Singapore, Teach Less.

¹⁴ The Project to Assist Selected Schools in English Skills in Singapore ran an extensive reading program from 1985 to 1990, and by the end of the five years the program succeeded in raising the target schools' English Language pass rate to above the national average (Davis qtd. in Loh).

2.3.4. General characteristics of countries implementing ER

Apart from the high number of students in class, the countries have more things in common. There has been a defined need to make a fast improvement in student's proficiency in English. When looking for the means of achieving this goal, ER seemed viable, especially in comparison with other means at hand. While the grammar translation method had been outdated, there was the option of CLT. However, not only in Japan, the implementation of CLT has meets several obstacles. These are: class size, teacher's low ability to speak, tradition of a teacher-centred approach and exam¹⁵ oriented syllabi. Another method to consider might have been the Audio Lingual Method, but, as Elley in 1983 showed, results of ER classes were superior to this method. For these reasons, ER has been attracting more and more attention from the researchers, policy makers and teachers. "There are extensive reading associations in Korea, Japan, Taiwan and other places; thousands of Extensive Reading programs throughout Asia, and millions of students reading extensively"(Extensive).

There is an interesting fact to mention in this context. Korea and Japan were in the top ten OECD countries in the average students reading performance in 2009. Korea scored second (after China-Shanghai) and Japan was seventh. What is more, PISA reveals strong associations between reading enjoyment and reading performance. "Enjoyment being an important precondition for becoming an effective reader" (Highlights 94). The status of ER in Asia is very much different from the status of ER in Europe where, to our knowledge, there is no systematic support from neither governmental nor nongovernmental institutions except for the publishers.

¹⁵ It expects that the exams are focused on the form rather than the communicative goals

2.3.5. Conclusion of the analytical part

The reasons of the minor status of ER might be that there seems to be little motivation to make a more radical change in the approach to teaching English. The lack of motivation might be explained by the established CLT method which, when viewed superficially, might seem contradictory and sometimes even superior to ER. But as we have seen in the chapter 1.4.2 and 1.4.3, the current practice of CLT and work with course books is not often sufficient and ER can work as an effective complement to such practices. The case for the wider use of ER applies to the ELT situation in the Czech Republic.

3. RESEARCH PART

3.1. The practices of using GRs in Prague Grammar schools and in Gymnazium Jana Palacha in Mělník

3.1.1. Status Quo in Europe and the Czech Republic

Prior to giving results from the survey into Prague Grammar schools, we want to assess the status quo in Europe and the Czech Republic. Referring to the status of ER in Europe, we can claim only with certain reservation¹⁶ that there is no support for ER from governmental institutions. When we narrow the field to the secondary general education in the Czech Republic, we can be sure. ER is non-existent in official educational documents issued by the state institutions. This fact might be partly explained by the character of the most relevant document, which is the *Framework Educational Programme for Secondary General Education*. The document states only the general objectives in particular areas and the choice of the means to achieve the goals is left to each individual school. With the objectives being quite broad, the principles of extensive reading might be easily subsumed under the following objective: “Forming an individual, objectively critical and overall positive attitude towards literature and towards the development of habits of reading both artistic and non-artistic literature individually, which are later reflected in the pupil's lifelong reading”(Czech 13)¹⁷ The area in which the role of the material issued by governmental educational institutions is felt as lacking is the methodological support or any form of endorsement. Without any guidelines for practising principles of ER and without any serious research,

¹⁶ We base our claim on the cursory research on the Internet only.

¹⁷ However, even those grammar schools which make use of graded readers do not feel the need to include this practice in their School Educational Programmes. Only one school mentions using Penguin Readers among educational strategies such as reading the Bridge magazine, working with the Course book, going abroad etc.

there was only one option left when trying to get a general image of the ER practice. It was to directly approach certain schools

3.2. Objective and the scope of the research

The objective of the research was not to statistically assess the extent of the ER practice. The research attempts to capture the various practices in dealing with graded readers. The practices are viewed not at the level of a single teacher and his or her methods but rather as a part of the school conception of ELT. We narrowed the scope of the study to GRs, because we consider ER to be a rather unfamiliar concept among teachers of English in the Czech Republic. To fulfil the objective of the research, we decided to contact grammar schools only. This choice is based on the assumption that for a programme of reading GRs to work in the Czech secondary education, it needs to have students with at least some basic reading habits. For convenience, we contacted all grammar schools in the area of Prague.

3.3. The methods and proceedings of the research

3.3.1. Survey of Prague grammar schools

We obtained the email addresses of the 60 schools in concern and contacted all of them with the question whether there is a library in the school containing GSs. Such a library is the prerequisite for any ER programme. Eighteen schools answered positively. We sent a Questionnaire A (see Figure 2 in the Appendices) to fifteen schools.¹⁸ Eight schools sent back the questionnaire with their answers filled in. The objective of the questionnaire is to give a rough description of the practices of ER in Prague.

¹⁸ Three schools showed as irrelevant to our purposes. (to obtain an general image of ER practices) One had only 10 books, the other two did not seem to approximate the average grammar school. One was for the Aurally impaired students, the other had German as a language of instruction.

3.3.2. The questionnaire into the attitudes of students towards reading GR

While questionnaire A serves the function of providing a general image, another part of our research is focused on a more detailed description of a particular ER programme. It provides more details concerning the organizational issues and a description of practicalities of one ER programme. But most importantly, it looks into the attitudes of students towards the programme. (See Figure 3 in the Appendices). The questionnaire was distributed on March 14th this year among students within the classes of the 4th year of the eight-year programme and first three years of the four-year programme. We received 160 filled-in questionnaires. For details, you will see the table 3.

Table 3 Students Distribution

YEAR	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Kvarta	22
1 st year	40
2 st year	45
3 st year	53

The examined school is Gymnázium Jana Palacha in Mělník ran programme *I read, you read, we read* financed by the European Social Fund of the European Union. The school was brought to our attention by an internet bookseller. We had asked several booksellers and publishers for some information about customers who had been buying larger numbers of GRs. The description of the program's properties and the practices of use is based on the official materials, electronic and personal interview with teachers and library statistics.

3.4. Status of ER and its practices in Prague grammar schools - Findings from the survey of Prague schools

First of the main findings of the questionnaire is the fact that none of the schools has an explicitly formulated programme and methodology. It means that dealing with graded readers is more or less up to each teacher. Two respondents (out of eight) stated that there is a verbal agreement among the teachers of English that all of them will endorse graded readers and enforce reading a particular number of GRs.

The purchase of the books is financed from various sources such as gifts, parent's funds¹⁹, a fund allocated to buying textbooks etc. (As expected, the choice of the books is in the hands of the teachers and is not the responsibility of a headmaster or headmistress nor of any outside authority).

Despite the possibility for the teachers to opt out of using GRs, seven out of eight respondents chose the answer: a) *All classes use GR* rather than the answer b) *Classes with an enthusiastic teacher use GRs*. It suggests that despite the non-existence of an explicitly formulated programme, each student has the opportunity to gain some experience with GRs during the time at school. None of the respondents answered that GR are used since a particular year. On the other hand, two respondents suggested that at the level of B2 (3rd or 4th year) and above the focus of reading is shifted towards reading non-adapted materials.

A straightforward result from the questionnaire is the finding that there is no literary seminar dedicated to reading GRs. However, GRs play a role in the facultative seminar *English Conversation – Literature and History of Great Britain* in one school and in the seminar *British Literature and American Film and Literature* in the other.

¹⁹ SRPŠ

All but one respondent claimed that they had been noticing positive effects of reading GRs. They mentioned overall improvement in language ability and increase in the positive attitudes toward the study of the language.

Six respondents expressed their belief in the development of the practices of using GRs. One of them expressed a reservation that it can develop only with the massive contribution from the teachers. One respondent's attitude was neutral, claiming that in addition to enthusiast teachers, there will always be some opposition. The only pessimistic attitude was accompanied by the words that "all it comes down to are the reading habits learned at home".

Two respondents answered that the choice of the books to read is exclusively up to the students. Only one school limits the work with GR to the work with compulsory titles. The rest practices combination of these two approaches. This result suggest that the practice at the examined schools enables students to choose the material at the suitable level and of the student's interest.

One piece of advice concerning establishing the school library is to unify the different scales of various publisher by giving the books extra labels. We asked whether the schools librarian did so. Four respondents answered that they do have the unifying labelling, one uses books form a single publisher (Pearson Longman – Penguin) and one claimed that they consider the publisher's scales similar enough. Two respondents did not answer.

The questionnaire sought to establish the ratio between the amount of the text read at school and at home. Unfortunately, given the fact that there is no explicit programme and each teacher chooses their own practices, the clear answer was not found. However from the respondent's answers we can infer that most of the reading is done at home as homework.

Another question was focused on the character and type of follow-up tasks. We can state that oral presentation is preferred to a written report. Five respondents answered that they make use of the comprehension questions. Another follow-up task which schools practice (five schools) is some form of dramatization. The teachers draw either on the historical period or on chosen dialogues.

Seven respondents include the assessment of the follow-up tasks in the overall assessment on the school report. Out of these, two schools are putting the accent on the positive motivation.

The number of books the students have to read within one school year ranges from one to five. The teachers choose various means of motivating students to read. The most prominent one seems to be pointing out the benefits of reading. However, it seems that none of the schools tries to establish the competitive atmosphere by making the number of books read by a certain individual or class public. Such a practice is claimed to induce competitive atmosphere and was proved to be collaborative towards the amount of the books read.

3.4.1. Conclusion

The use of graded reader as a material seems to be well established in most of the schools, running for “several years” in two cases and four or five years in three cases. Nevertheless, despite the expressed belief in the development of the practices, their continuation seems to be dependent on the enthusiasm of an influential part of the teaching staff.

So far in the research part, we have been assessing the practices of using GRs as a learning material comparable to course books. We haven't considered whether the practices may be classified as an extensive reading, or in other words whether they are

in accord with its principles. To fully justify the claim that there are certain grammar schools in Prague which practice ER, we would need to continue with our research. The missing part is the information on the number of books actually read and/or the proportion of the student's time spent on graded readers to the student's time spent studying English.²⁰ However, being aware of the educational climate, elaborated in chapter 2.2.3, we can assume that reading done in the examined schools is still too much a minor part of the English syllabus to be considered extensive. Simply put, too few pages are being read. At the current stage of our research we can state that there are eight grammar schools in which students read graded readers in a manner which in general does not seem to run counter the remaining principles of ER.²¹

3.5. Practices of using GR at Gymnázium Jana Palacha and students attitudes towards them

3.5.1. Character of the school

The school is attended by roughly 400 students. The school does not accent any particular subject area. There are 7 classes of a four-year programme and eight classes of an eight-year programme. English language is taught in 28 groups (max. 16 students) while the groups within one year are made up of students of both four and eight-year programme. The make-up of the groups change every year on the basis of annual testing. The school is relevant for our purposes because there are not only 419 GRs (173 different titles) in the school library, but because there is an agreement among the teachers of English to incorporate GRs into the lessons.

²⁰ Ideally about one-quarter of the total course time (including class time and homework time) should be spent on extensive reading or listening. This includes extensive reading or listening for fluency development. (42)

²¹ The findings from the questionnaire give a fairly different picture from the one given by the Maley's research in chapter (2.1)

3.5.2. The EU programme Brána jazyků otevřená

The purchase of most of the books (92 titles) in the library was financed by the EU programme *Brána Jazyků otevřená*.²² in 2011. The content of the programme was to develop educational materials for students of the first, second and third year of the eight-year programme. Part of the EU financed programme was the project *I read, you read, we read* which, apart from the purchase of the books, gave rise to a development of worksheets based on 12 titles. The project also led to a development of 30 e-learning tests in moodle.

3.5.3. The overview of the practice of using GRs

The core of the programme lies in eleven²³ titles: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Three Great Plays of W.Shakespeare*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Matilda*, *Frankenstein*, *Black Cat and Other Stories*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Henry VIII and His Six Wives*, *The Fugitive*, *The Jungle Book* and *My Fair Lady*. With the exception of *Henry VIII and his Six Wives* the publisher is Penguin. Each of these titles has 16-18 exemplars in the library to cater for the whole group. They form the core of the practice of using GR because there are additional materials to them in moodle and teachers do make use of the books in their classes.

Only three out of seven teachers of English were actively involved in the EU programme. It means that it was less than half the teaching staff that wanted to be active in making use of GRs in their teaching. However, the enthusiast group of teachers have managed to push through a list of books which are to be read in each year of the four-year programme. The compulsory list consists of books/authors which are part of the

²² For more information you will see: <http://www.risy.cz/cs/vyhledavace/projekty-eu/detail?Id=99626>

²³ Apart from the eleven “core books”, other five titles are in 16 exemplars and have worksheet based on them in moodle. However, based on the library data, they are not read.

maturita exam and most of them are present as GRs in the library. Whether the teacher makes use of it or not and how, it remains in the competence of each single teacher. From the answers in the questionnaire we can infer that the majority of the students (68% included the number of the books they had read) have read GRs during their study.

3.5.4. The description and the assessment of the practices of using GR

To give a clear description of the practices of using GRs we decided to take 10 ER principles as the outline. The indispensable part of such a description is the assessment of the level of agreement with those principles. However, a disagreement with the principles does not necessarily mean that the project is failing. Though being called principles, which might suggest that they are the description of a working practice, we tend to view them more as ideals.

3.5.4.1. The reading material is easy.

Although we have not addressed this topic directly in the questionnaire we can claim that the compulsory books for the maturita exam are well within the learners' reading competence. The vast majority of them are at A2 level of Common European Framework. Several students, mostly from the 3rd year, felt the need to give an additional comment that the compulsory books are too easy. However, the library offers an even distribution of the titles.

Table 4 Distribution of the levels

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6
Number of titles	12	38	48	32	31	13
Number of items	45	102	113	49	64	13

3.5.4.2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available

When we focus on graded texts in the library, we can state that the range of choice is satisfactory, but only with some reservation. It offers not only the adapted classics, but also a considerable number of popular titles such as *About a Boy* and *Pirates of Caribbean* (practically all of them have been filmed) and several non-fiction books such as *Gandhi* and *the Beatles*. However, there is one category of GRs which we miss in the library. It is the category of original fiction. The reason for this might be that Penguin – an almost exclusive publisher in Mělník does not publish this category at L2 and above unlike Oxford or Cambridge. The presence of this category, which brings reading experience closer to the reading in L1, has the potential to dilute the image of GRs as a predominantly learning material. The image of GRs as a primarily learning material similar to textbooks and course books might stand in the way of making students read more.

3.5.4.3. Learners choose what they want to read

The majority of the books the prototypical student reads is made up by compulsory titles. Three teachers who were involved in the project²⁴ assign 3-5 compulsory books per school year. Apart from the compulsory books, students are required to read a book of their own choice and write a report (see Figure 4 in the Appendices) to receive the final classification on the school report.

3.5.4.4. Learners read as much as possible

Bramford and Day claim that “a book a week is probably the minimum amount of reading necessary to achieve the benefits of extensive reading and to establish a reading habit” (Day *Principles*). The library lists 282 active members. Between February 10th, 2002 when the library system was launched and March 14th, 2014, the library lent 818 books. In the questionnaire we asked the students about the number of GRs they have read. Unfortunately, only 69% gave their answer. The average number for students of 1st to 3rd year, based on the questionnaire, is 3.7 books. It means that some reading is done outside the school library, but the amount of books is still too far from Bramford and Day’s ideal. It is obvious that Mělník grammar school fails to meet this crucial principle. However, Mělník by no means lags behind the other grammar schools which we examined and reported upon in chapter 3.4.

A different kind of a question is the actual share of the instructional time spend on reading GR. The three enthusiast teachers generally make the following practice: When a book is being read, one in three lessons in a week is devoted to reading. However, there are some breaks between the readings dedicated to different activities.

²⁴ The EU programme is finished but at least three teachers continue using the books. They buy new books into the library and they develop additional material.

The teachers estimated that reading GRs makes up one fifth of the total time spend in classrooms.

3.5.4.5. Reading is its own reward

“The learners' experience of reading the text is at the center of the extensive reading experience, just as it is in reading in everyday life”, claims Bramford and Day. “For this reason, extensive reading is not usually followed by comprehension questions.”²⁵ To rely on positive motivation gained from reading itself seems too much of an ideal, especially among teenagers. Then, teachers generally use incentives which lie outside the actual reading experience such as marking of the follow-up tasks.

In Mělník, comprehension question make up the majority of follow-up task. Students work with worksheets available on moodle. There are basically two kinds of them. First is to familiarize the students with the author and the period. (See Figure 5 in the Appendices) The other serves the function of checking up the reading progress and comprehension. It also includes some language exercises. (See Figure 6 in the Appendices) The division of the worksheet according to a certain number of chapters enables the teacher to assign and check reading homework.

The word count of the example worksheet (Figure 6) is around 1000 words while the book on which it is based has 4003 words. The relatively large volume of the worksheet seem to run counter the principle of another influential figure of ER, Cambridge Readers Series Editor, Philip Prowse, who considers comprehension questions as demotivating.²⁶ In an interview he cites Henry Widdowson:

²⁵ „teachers may ask students to complete follow-up activities based on their reading. The reasons for this are various: to find out what the student understood and experienced from the reading; to monitor students' attitudes towards reading; to keep track of what and how much students read; to make reading a shared experience; to link reading to other aspects of the curriculum.

²⁶ Researchers such as Fox (1990), Hsui (2000), Lida and Smith (2001) and Prowse (2002) point out that assessment activities undermine students' willingness to read (25).

“Comprehension questions [...] commonly require the learner to rummage round in the text for information in a totally indiscriminate way, without regard to what purpose might be served in doing so” (qtd. in Philip). The teachers’ objectives of using follow-up material such as in Mělník are clear: to easily and clearly assess the reading tasks and to use the body of the text for practising grammar and vocabulary. It seems that the follow-up tasks in Mělník do not see the books as the work of a creative mind to which it is natural for the reader to respond in a creative way. This important function of graded readers is omitted and students are not guided to interpret the extra-textual meaning of the book.

One strand of our research tried to find out the students’ attitudes toward the follow-up activities. Our hypothesis was that most of the students would find the follow-up tasks too difficult and/or boring. This would have the consequence in only a minority of students’ thinking that reading GRs is fun. Our hypothesis was not confirmed.

Only eight percent of the students consider the follow-up task difficult. (See Figure 7) 46% (the highest figure) expressed a neutral attitude to the statement that *follow-up tasks are a bore*. One third of the students agreed with the statement. However, the most important question in this context is whether they would prefer to read next book instead. Again, the most common attitude was a neutral one. Of those who could decide (90 students), 65% (59 students) agreed that the follow-up tasks are a bore and that would prefer to read another book.

The conclusion concerning the first half of the hypothesis (Students find the follow-up task difficult and/or boring) is that while the students do not consider the task difficult, they tend to view them as a bore and prefer reading. However, taking relatively high proportions of neutral answers into account, this conclusion is rather tentative.

The principle that reading is its own reward excludes marking. In Mělník, the enthusiast teachers have chosen the following practice: After reading a certain number of chapters and filling-in the worksheets, the reading of the books is assessed by a 15-minute marked moodle test on comprehension. Students are also required to write a review of the assigned compulsory books. The form of the review is the one presented in the students' course book. The facts from the book and information about the era and the author are the content of oral examination.

It is obvious that reading of the compulsory books is far from the ideal of reading GRs in a manner closely resembling leisure time reading. In Mělník, the compulsory books (we remind the reader that they form the core of the programme) are viewed by the teachers mainly as a material for language study. Such an observation might suggest that students will not find reading GRs a pleasurable activity. In this light, the results from the questionnaire B are rather surprising. 45% agrees with the statement that reading GRs is fun. Moreover, only 15% consider reading GRs a boring activity. (See Figure 7 in the Appendices) However, in the light of another finding, the positive tone of this discovery is rather fading. 59 % of the students agree with the statement: *I find reading generally (that is in Czech as well) entertaining*. It means that while 103 students out of 160 enjoy reading, only 72 out of 160 say the same about reading GRs. Even though the straightforward connection between L1 and L2 reading habits has not been confirmed, and the direct connection between the each student's answers has not been established, we interpret the difference between the two findings as the loss of a reading potential in students. It is the loss of the students who have the disposition to make the most of reading GRs. The loss of the students' willingness to read is explained by our understanding of the nature of the follow up activities. As we have already suggested, we consider them to be too narrow in their focus on facts, comprehension

questions and assessment by marks. Also, we think that there is simply too much of the follow-up work which stifles the appetite for reading.

To be fair, it must be added that in the task of preparing the students for matura exam by means of GRs, teachers in Mělník do very well. At least in the opinion of the students. Full 80% students agree with the statement that *reading GRs will help me at the exam*. It is not just the final exam towards which the reading of GRs seems to be collaborative. 59% of the students think that their ability to read text in English has improved thanks to reading GRs.

3.5.4.6. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower

Based on the fact that the level of GRs student are required to read is well within their competencies, we can expect that the practice in Mělník adheres to this principle.

3.5.4.7. Reading is individual and silent

When the three enthusiast teachers choose to read the book in class, the practice has generally this tendency: The better the level of English in a group, the more individual and silent the reading tasks are. The weakest classes read together and aloud. All students read with a particular tasks in mind which is to fill-in the worksheet. The tasks are checked after a variable number of finished chapters. Sometimes, especially with the weaker classes, the teachers choose to play the students the CD recording of the book.

3.5.4.8. Teachers orient and guide their students and the teacher is a role model of a reader

The ideal role of the teacher is the teacher who primarily teaches to read by being a role model of an enthusiast reader. This ideal seems to be somewhat far away from the reality in Mělník where the teachers are still in the centre. They direct the tempo of reading and the reading is based on the correct answering of the questions devised by the teacher.

Under this heading we also focus on the ways in which teachers motivate and guide their students. While ER accents affecting the intrinsic motivation found in the reading (reading is its own reward), even extrinsic motivation is taken into account. An example of good practice is a chart of students based on the number of books/words read. However, in Mělník, the understanding of the books is different and a detailed

understanding of the text is more important than the amount. It might be for this reason that there is no practice of public awarding of the extensive readers.

The opportunity to read is advertised on two noticeboards. On one of them there is only a simple message in large bold letters: *Read, read, read!* On the other there is a list of all GRs in the library sorted according to the level. If a student wants to borrow a book, s/he needs to approach one of the two teachers who are the librarians. An interested student can do it either during the break – the library is in the teachers' room – or during the consultation hours which are, unfortunately, only one hour per week. Despite the existence of the noticeboards, the library still gives the impression of something rather hidden away. A relatively simple improvement of such an image might be the placing of a showcase in the corridor. On the display there are popular or recently bought books. The books are accompanied by the blurbs and by the snippets from the students' book report.

3.5.5. Other findings from the questionnaire

3.5.5.1. The comparison of GRs with other text-rich material which is primarily seen as a form of entertainment.

„ER is typically compared with instructional approaches²⁷ which do not have the benefit of the 'rich' environment of the ER approach ... The question of how ER is comparable to other rich environments has yet to be resolved“ (Research). The questionnaire B attempted to address this issue by investigating students' attitudes towards the learning potential of watching films with subtitles and playing computer games.

²⁷ „Comparisons are made with 'audiolingual approaches' (Elley, 1991), or 'translation' (Yamazaki, 1996), or 'regular classes' (Mason and Krashen, experiment 2), or classes which were 'taught in the conventional way' (Lituanas, Jacobs and Renandya)“ (Research).

Almost half of the students (48%) agree and only 15% disagree with the following statement: *I can learn more while watching films with subtitles than by reading GRs.* The attitudes towards games were almost identical. (See Figure 7 in the Appendices) We consider the share of students who prioritize watching films or gaming as rather high. We interpret such a finding as another explanation of the fact that students do not read much. (See chapter 3.5.4.4) While the students are aware of the GRs learning potential for the Maturita exam, it seems that they are not motivated to read more GRs than they are required to. Rather than interpreting the results as a suggestion to develop a didactic practice of exploiting the potential of student's leisure time film watching or gaming, we understand the results as an indicator of the fact that students have not understood or accepted the potential benefits of ER. Or it should be said: The students have not been convinced about the benefits by the teacher and/or by the practice of using GRs.

3.5.5.2. Changes in attitudes within/during three years

Between twelve statements in the questionnaire, there are five which look directly into the students' attitudes towards reading in general and GRs in particular. (See Obrázek 1 in the Appendices) The similarity of the trends of the five attitudes is remarkable. In all of the five statements, it is the second year whose attitudes are the least favourable. We can speculate about the array of possible reasons for it, but whatever they are, we cannot see their identification as leading towards the improvement of the current practices.

3.5.5.3. Miscellaneous observations

We found a connection between the number of the books a group had read and the level of the group. The better a group is the more books the group had read. However, it

would be a fault to explain the high level of a group on the grounds of the positive effect of reading. We also separated a group of students who disagreed with the statement that they like reading in general. A group of 22 *non-readers* was established and its attitudes were compared with the attitudes of the whole sample of students. We carried out the same operation with the group of 17 students who revealed that they like reading non-adapted books. The results of the confirmation of all attitudes were as expected. For example, a relatively bigger share of non-readers think that reading GRs is boring. We understand such results as a confirmation of the coherence and validity of our questionnaire. However, there are findings which we want to pick out. The follow-up tasks are thought of as a relatively bigger *bore* for the group of the readers of originals. We take it as another argument for our critique of the character of the follow-up tasks. The tasks do very little to enhance the reading experience and 70% of avid readers (readers of the books for the native audience) would prefer reading another book.

As we have already suggested, the character of the worksheets is such that it treats reading GRs as a task of intensive reading. In this light, the students' attitude towards GRs in comparison with the attitude towards their course book (*Maturia Solution*) seem rather apt and relevant. 58% of the students agree (and 9% disagree) with the statement: *To work with GRs is a more interesting activity than the work with the course book*. The reasons for favouring are GRs to be partly attributed to the perceived novelty of the practice. While 77% students from the group of the youngest students prefer GRs, the percentage decreases to 52% among the students of the third year. Even in this index, the students of the second year demonstrate the lowest level (44%) of the positive attitude.

3.5.6. Conclusion of the research in Mělník

Our hypothesis that due to a character of the follow-up tasks, only a minority of the students will consider reading GRs fun, was not confirmed. Although the GRs are used for language study rather than to boost the students' enjoyment from reading, only 15% of the students consider it a boring activity and almost half of the students agree with the statement that *reading GRs is fun*. We can call the project *I read, you read, we read* a successful practice. Although the students lag behind their reading potential and do not read as many books as we would like to see, the reading of GRs is perceived by 59% of the students as collaborative towards their reading skills. The important goal of the project, to familiarize students with the works of British and American literature before the maturita exam is fulfilled - judging from the 80% of the students believing in the benefits of reading GRs for passing the exam.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the first part of the thesis we gave a historical overview of the phenomenon and we mentioned the most important concepts which can legitimately be seen as the foundations of ER. We presented ER as an activity during which implicit learning takes place. We summed up the vast body of research which seem to prove the effectiveness of ER in all areas of language proficiency, but mainly in affect and motivation. We put forward our case for incorporating ER into ELT. ER generally takes the form of a complement to the course book in a common CLT course. We presented various benefits of ER which are relevant to ELT in the Czech Republic. We made an effort to analyse the great offer of GRs on the Czech market with the aim to give some guidance to a potential teacher in the secondary school.

In the second part, we gave several reasons seeking to elucidate the contrast between the great potential of ER for student's improvement on one hand, and the implementation which has been infrequent and often at odds with the principles. To help us understand the contrast, we looked into the reasons for implementation and experience with ER in three South Asian countries. We have concluded that the ELT practice is too much different there to serve as a direct example. The most relevant difference lies in the CLT. Unlike the practice in the investigated countries, CLT is well established in the Czech Republic and when viewed superficially, it might seem contradictory and sometimes even superior to ER. But as we have seen in the chapter 1.4.2 and 1.4.3, the current practice of CLT and work with course books is not often sufficient and ER can work as an effective complement to such practices. But at the time, there seems to be little motivation to make a more radical change in ELT.

The objective of the research part was to assess the scale and the practices of using graded readers in all grammar schools in Prague. The focus was not on particular practices of a single teacher, but we viewed the practices in the context of the whole schools and their approach to ELT. We found out that in Prague, there is not a single grammar school in which the practice of reading GRs forms a main part of English syllabus. We found eight grammar schools which have a library with GRs. In those schools, students read from one to five books in a school year. However small the number might seem, the practices of reading in general do not seem to run counter the remaining principles of ER. Only one of the eight investigated schools has the practice of using graded readers included in its School Educational Programme. This fact is the most direct indicator of the low status of GRs in Prague grammar schools.

In the second part of our survey of grammar schools, we focused on a grammar school in Mělník, which has a relatively large library and has been systematically using GRs. Apart from a detailed description of the actual practice, we examined the students' attitudes toward GRs. Based on the answers from the survey, we can claim with some reservation that the program *I read, you read, we read* is a successful practice, at least in view of its own proclaimed goals. It managed to incorporate reading GRs into an ordinary ELT curriculum in a way which students perceive both as fun and beneficial.

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4. APPENDICES

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Figure 1 The Illustration of a Grading Scale



The Extensive Reading Foundation Grading Scale

Beginner				Elementary			Intermediate			Upper Intermediate			Advanced			Bridge			Near Native
Alphabet	Early	Mid	High	Early	Mid	High	Early	Mid	High	Early	Mid	High	Early	Mid	High	Early	Mid	High	
1	51	101	201	301	401	601	801	1001	1251	1501	1801	2101	2401	3001	3601	4501	6001	8001	12001-18000 and above
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
50	100	200	300	400	600	800	1000	1250	1500	1800	2100	2400	3000	3600	4500	6000	8000	12000	

This scale is only for approximate leveling of Language Learner Literature by headword¹ counts by series. Some individual titles may need to move up or down as necessary. A list of where each publisher's Graded Reader series fits this scale is available at the website.

Extensive Reading Foundation
www.ERFoundation.org

Figure 2 Questionnaire A

Survey into the Practices of Using GRs

School level

- 1) Is there a collective programme and methodology a/or is it up to each teacher?
 - Is the programme included in School Educational Programme
 - How long has the programme been running?
 - Is there a connection to other subjects?.
- 2) What are the sources of financing the purchases of GRs and who is responsible.
- 3) Which classes work with GRs?
 - a) All
 - b) Only those who wish to
 - c) Beginning with a certain year
 - d) Across more years in a special seminar
- 4) Is there a special subject/seminar?
 - a) Compulsory
 - b) Facultative
- 5) Have you been noticing any positive effects? How?
- 6) What is your vision of the future of using GRs?
 - a) It will more likely be stagnating
 - b) It will more likely be developing

Class Level

- 1) Who chooses the books to read?
 - a) Teacher
 - b) Student
 - c) Combination – what is the ratio
- 2) Are the books labelled according to a unifying grading scale?
- 3) Student read:
 - a) At home:
 - How much time is dedicated to follow-up tasks?
 - b) At school:
 - How much time is dedicate to work with GRs
 - What is the role of the teacher at this time
 - c) Combination - what is the ratio
- 4) What is the form of the follow-up tasks?
 - a) Book report
 - b) Oral presentation
 - c) Comprehension questions
 - d) Others
- 5) Are the task asses by marking or/and by any other way?
- 6) How much books are the students required to read a year?
- 7) How does the teacher motivate the students to read?
 - a) Marks
 - b) Competitions
 - c) Pointing at the benefits of ER
 - d) Others

Figure 3 Questionnaire B

QUESTIONNAIRE: MY EXPERIENCE OF GRADED READERS:

Dear students,

The goal of this questionnaire is to find out your attitudes Towards s s learning English by way of graded readers. I kindly ask you to be maximally frank and to fill in the questionnaire independently of your classmate. This is very important for my thesis. I can assure you that the questionnaire is anonymous. It is perfectly enough if you would give me your class/group and the name of your teacher. (Just in case my papers get mixed-up) Thank you for your time and concentration.

A BIT OF INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

Class/group:

My English teacher's name:

A number of books (approximately) I have read:

HOW TO DO IT: Tick just one field which best corresponds to your attitude Towards s s the following twelve statements. It should not take you more then 20 minutes.

	I totally disagree	I disagree	Neutral attitude	I agree	I totally agree
1. <i>I find reading in general fun</i>					
2. <i>I can tell that my ability to read English text has improved</i>					
3. <i>Follow-up tasks (writing a report etc.) are a bore</i>					
4. <i>Reading GRs will help me at the maturita exam</i>					
5. <i>I can learn more while watching films with subtitles than by reading GRs..</i>					
6. <i>Follow-up tasks are too difficult for me</i>					
7. <i>Reading GRs is boring</i>					
8. <i>To work with GRs is a more interesting activity then the work with the course book</i>					
9. <i>Follow-up task are a bore and I would rather read next book instead</i>					
10. <i>I can learn more by playing games</i>					
11. <i>Reading GRs is fun</i>					
12. <i>Reading English text is the most effective way of learning English in the Czech Republic</i>					

And finally: Write one book which you liked and if you want, give a brief reason for your choice. Thanx!

Figure 4 Book Report



INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

MY READER'S DIARY

LEVEL 1-2

TITLE:

AUTHOR:

TYPE OF BOOK:

SUMMARY OF THE PLOT:

GOOD POINTS:

BAD POINTS:

SCORE : _____ / 5 (1 is the best, 5 is the worst)

Figure 5 Worksheet 1 – Mark Twain



evropský
sociální
fond v ČR



EVROPSKÁ UNIE



MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY



OP Vzdělávání
pro konkurenceschopnost

INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

Mark Twain – The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Level 1 (Retold by Jacqueline Kehl)

Student's sheet

Pre-reading activities:

„ I came in with Halley's Comet and I expect to go with it. It will be the greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with it. „

Mark Twain

One April day in 20th century The Comet appeared in the sky again. Mark Twain died the next day.

When was Mark Twain born and when did he die?

1.Period:

Decide if these items could be in the Twain 's house :

ITEM	INVENTED IN	YES / NO
TELEPHONE		
GAS LIGHTING		
RADIO		
TYPEWRITER		
PHOTOGRAPHS		
BALL POINT PEN		
ELECTRICITY		
TELEVISION		

How did people live in the 1850s in America?

2. Mark Twain 's life and personality:

Mark Twain had a sharp tongue. No wonder that Mark Twain quotes are known to be some of the most sarcastic. *As an introduction to Twain's wit, read some of his more notable quotations below and translate them.*

Discuss these quotations in groups and try to draw conclusions about Twain 's personality

"My mother had a great deal of trouble with me, but I think she enjoyed it."

"My books are like water; those of the great geniuses are wine. (Fortunately) everybody drinks water."

"The public is the only critic whose opinion is worth anything at all."

"The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time."

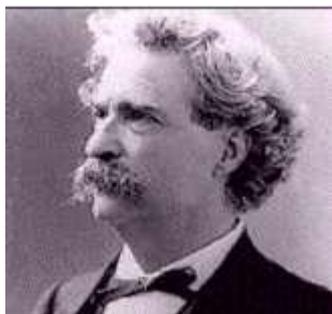
"I have never taken any exercise except sleeping and resting."

"I don't like to commit myself about heaven and hell - you see, I have friends in both places."

"Good friends, good books and a sleepy conscience: this is the ideal life."

"Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been."

“Classic.’ A book which people praise and don’t read.”



Fill in the missing words:

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (his real name) in in Missouri but he spent his..... in Hannibal on the Hannibal on the Mississippi river. Hannibal was a and town. He loved playing on the banks of the Mississippi river and he knew that his life would always be by this by this river in some way.

His father was an lawyer and after his death Sam the school at the age of 13 and started to work as a to support his family. A little later on, he worked as a journalist, writing short pieces for his brother’s newspaper. But the river was his true love and, at the age of 23, he got the pilot’s licence and worked as a pilot .The words *Mark Twain* was a phrase for two fathoms deep water (dva sáhy), the minimum for safe navigation.

When the broke out 1* in 1861, Mark Twain joined the Confederate Army but he and went to Nevada where he himself the Gold Rush. But he never found the However, he gained there good material for his writing career.

He moved to San Francisco at the age of 30 and started writing humorous stories for a newspaper. His first published book *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* was well received and he became a celebrity.

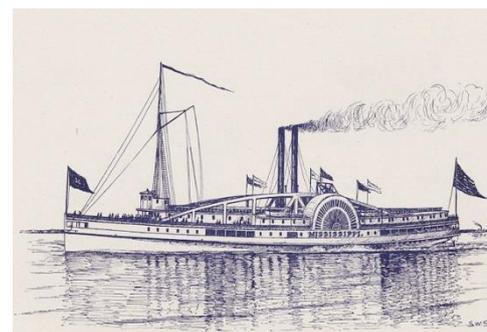
He was considered one of the pioneers of the American **short story**. He usedwords and humour. His work was filled with stories about how people trick experts or how the weak succeed in „hoaxing“ 2*the strong. He married Olivia when he was 35 and they had four children. They settled down in Connecticut where he continued writing. Towards the turn of the century Mark Twain changed from an speaker to a more realistic, serious, dark and pessimistic man because of the in the American society and his personal misfortunes 3*. He lost nearly all his money on some bad investments and was to sell his house. They had to move to Europe and they lived in France, Germany. In the early years of the 20th century Olivia became ill and died. He died 75 years after Halley’s Comet had made its first in his life.

1*)break out - vypuknout 2*)hoax - mystifikace 3*) misfortunes - neštěstí

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| unsuccessful | steamboat |
| printer | Civil War |
| ordinary | appearance |
| fortune | forced |
| deserted | atmosphere |
| quiet | rough |
| influenced | was born |
| left | small |
| entertaining | left |
| experienced | |
| childhood | |

Can you answer any of these questions?

1. What was the name he used as an author and where did he take it from?
2. What was the name of the comet which appeared in the month of his birth?
3. Apart from writer, can you name one other job that he had?
4. What was the name of the river he loved so much?
5. What 'events' happened in his country in 1861?
6. Can you name at least one story which he wrote?
7. Can you name at least one other country that he lived in during his life.
8. Why does he say he *had to* travel?



Img.2

3. Twain 's work :

Try to find out the correct names of his works according the following descriptions. Then write the Czech titles of these books.

You can choose from these:

The Prince and the Pauper The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Life on the Mississippi The Celebrated jumping Frog Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

	The story is about a stranger who cheats on a famous frog racer and beats him. The stranger fills the stomach of the other man's frog with tiny metal balls. The story brought him the fame	
	This book is based on his romantic memories and influenced by his childhood in Hannibal.	
	This story is about „ bad boys“ with good hearts living in a small town on the Mississippi. The Czech film „Páni kluci“ is based on this book.	
	This one is a social fairy tale describing an exchange of roles between a prince and a poor boy.	
	Two young boys come into a considerable sum of money as a result of their earlier adventures and they go down the Mississippi on a raft with a runaway slave Jim.	

Img.1-Mississippi (steamboat 1853) 01.jpg[online].[cit.2012-02-18].Dostupné pod licencí Public domain z www.
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mississippi_\(steamboat_1853\)_01.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mississippi_(steamboat_1853)_01.jpg)
 Img.2-Mark Twain [online].[cit.2012-02-18].Dostupné pod licencí Public domain z www.
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mark_Twain_by_AF_Bradley.jpg

Figure 6 The Adventures of Tom Sawyer



Mark Twain – The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Student's sheet

Pre-reading activities:

1. Look at the cover of this book and describe it.

Where do you think the story takes place?

Who are the main characters?

What part of Twain's life is connected with the story?

What item in the picture helps you to answer?

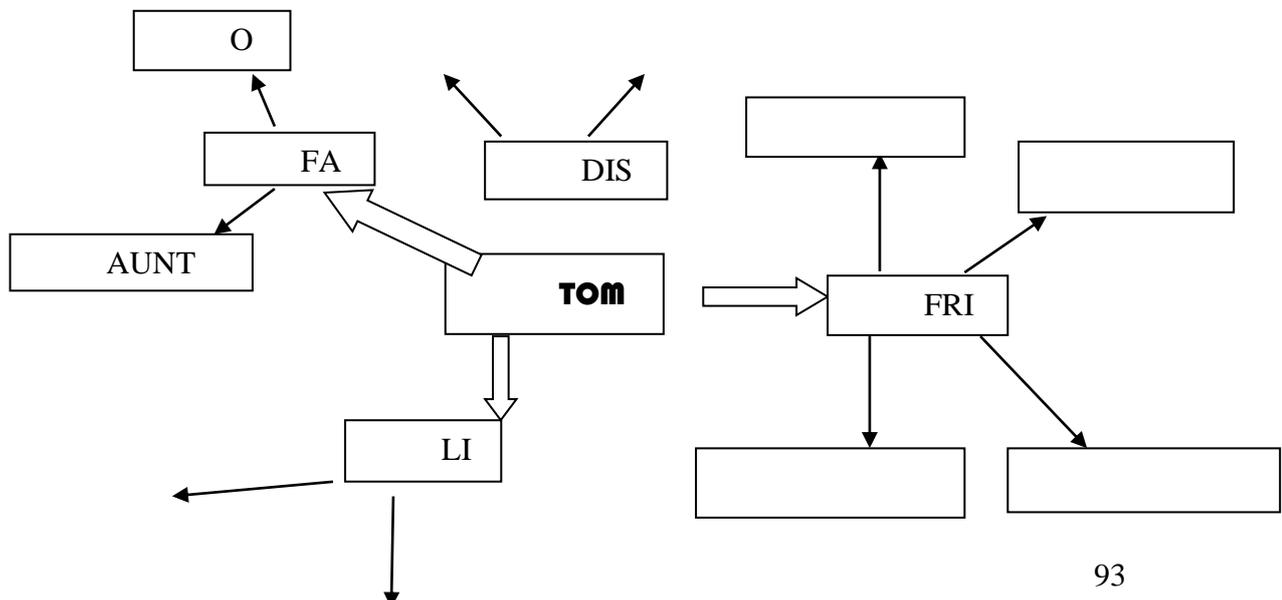
2. Answer these questions.

Do you like adventure?

What was the last one? Can you talk to your friend about it?

Chapters 1-3

A) In chapter 1 we learned a lot of things about Tom. Fill in this diagram.



B) *Who did it? Fill in the correct names. (Aunt Polly, Becky, Huck, Injun Joe, Ben, Joe Harper, Tom)*

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. gave Tom a punishment. | family. |
| punishment. | 6. didn't have a home. |
| 2. had to work on Saturday. | home. |
| Saturday. | 7. went with Tom to the river. |
| 3. gave Tom the fruit. | the river. |
| 4. was very beautiful. | 8. killed Dr Robinson. |
| 5. didn't have any family. | |

C) *Who said these sentences?*

1. I'm a very good painter.
2. You're a bad boy.
3. Let's have an adventure.
4. Do you love her?
5. We can't talk about it.
6. Why are you late again?

D) *Make questions about Tom. Ask about underlined words.*

He started to paint the fence.

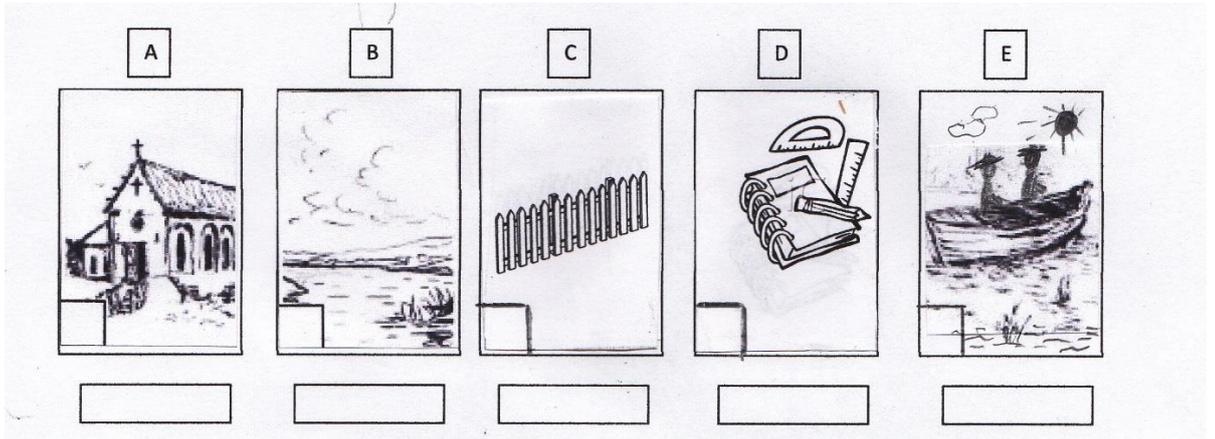
I'm going to swim.

Later, many boys came to Tom's house.

Injun Joe and the doctor talked angrily.

You're a very bad boy.

E) Name places in the pictures and put them in the correct order. Then retell the story.



Chapters 4 – 6

A) Fill in the missing word in each sentence. (Chapter 4)

1. Tom and Huck went in a small boat across the
2. Nobody knew the boys listened to the
3. Huck and Joe went to but Tom went
4. Aunt Polly came into his room and was.....
5. On Sunday boys decided to go to
6. Everybody turned round and looked. People were and

B) Answer the question.

How did the boys get across the river?

Why did they want to stay there?

Why did Tom return home at night?

Why were people at church surprised?

Why was the teacher angry?

.....

Why did Tom help Becky?

.....

Why was Tom sorry about Muff Potter?

.....

What did Tom say at the trial?

.....

Is Tom Sawyer a bad boy? Why yes/ why not?

.....

C) *Fill in the prepositions.*

He was angryBecky.

Tom waitedBecky.

Becky didn't listenhim.

I'm sorryMuff Potter.

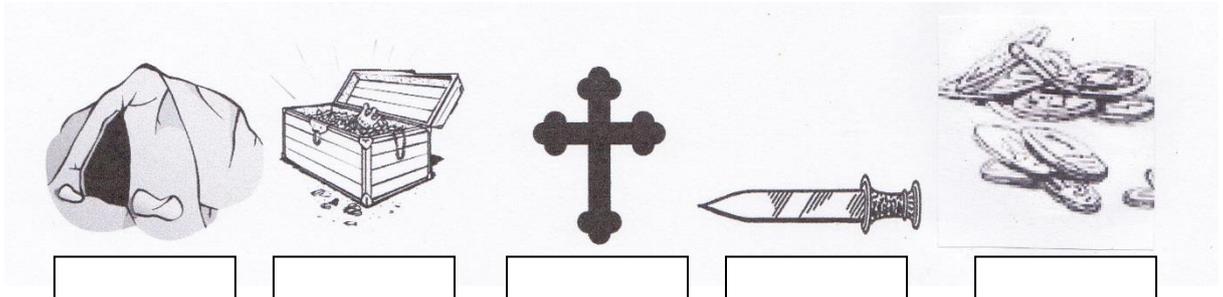
He is always friendly us.

He was afraidInjun Joe.

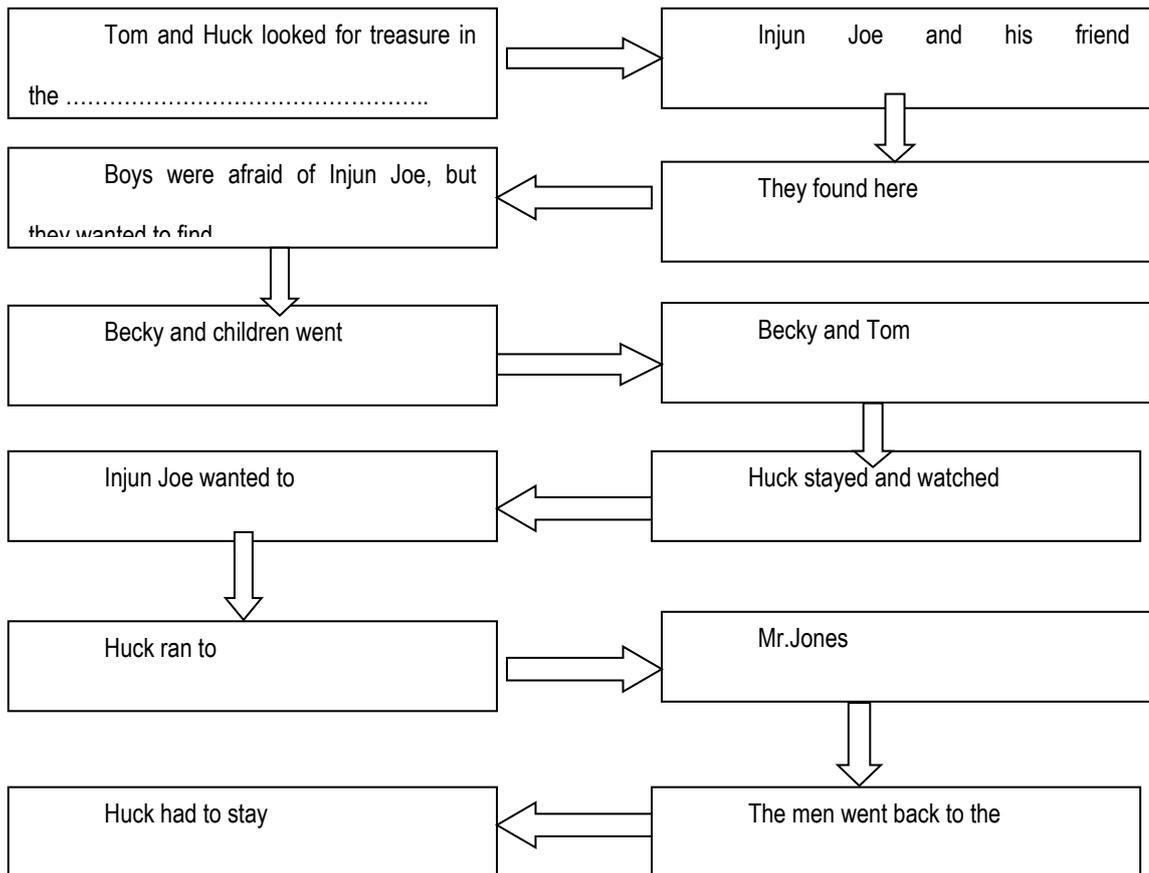
Peoplethe trial were surprised.

Chapters 7 – 9

A) Name these items from the story a say who and how is connected with them.



B) Use the step-by-step chart to record the events as they occur in chapters 7-9.



C) Finish the sentences (chapter 9).

Injun Joe wanted to kill Mrs. Douglas because

Huck liked Mrs. Douglas because

Huck went to Mr. Jones because

.....

The men escaped because from Mrs. Douglas yard because

.....

Mr. Jones didn't tell Mrs. Douglas Huck's name because

.....

Chapters 10 – 13

A) Fill in the gaps according the text (chapter 10)

Tom and Becky didn't find to the cave. Suddenly, there was a.....near here. It was Tom stayed They were in the cave for days. Then Tom went to a where was It came from a small Tom and Becky could of the cave. They felt Some men them home in the Tom talked to people about their in the cave.

B) Find five mistakes. Underline them and then write the correct sentences.(Chapter 11)

Tom and Becky stayed home for several days. Then, two weeks after their adventure, Tom went alone to the cave again. He opened the new door and went in. But Injun Joe wasn't there. Later in the week Tom went to visit Huck.

They wanted to find Injun Joe's money. That afternoon boys returned to the cave in a small boat. They found the place next to the cross. There was a treasure box which was very heavy. They left the money there and went out of the cave.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

C) Explain why Huck became a new person. Compare "old" and "new" Huck.

Old Huck	New Huck
----------	----------

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

D) Answer the questions:

1. How do Tom and Huck find Injun Joe's treasure?
2. How does Mrs. Douglas help Huck?
3. Is Huck happy?

After - reading activity:

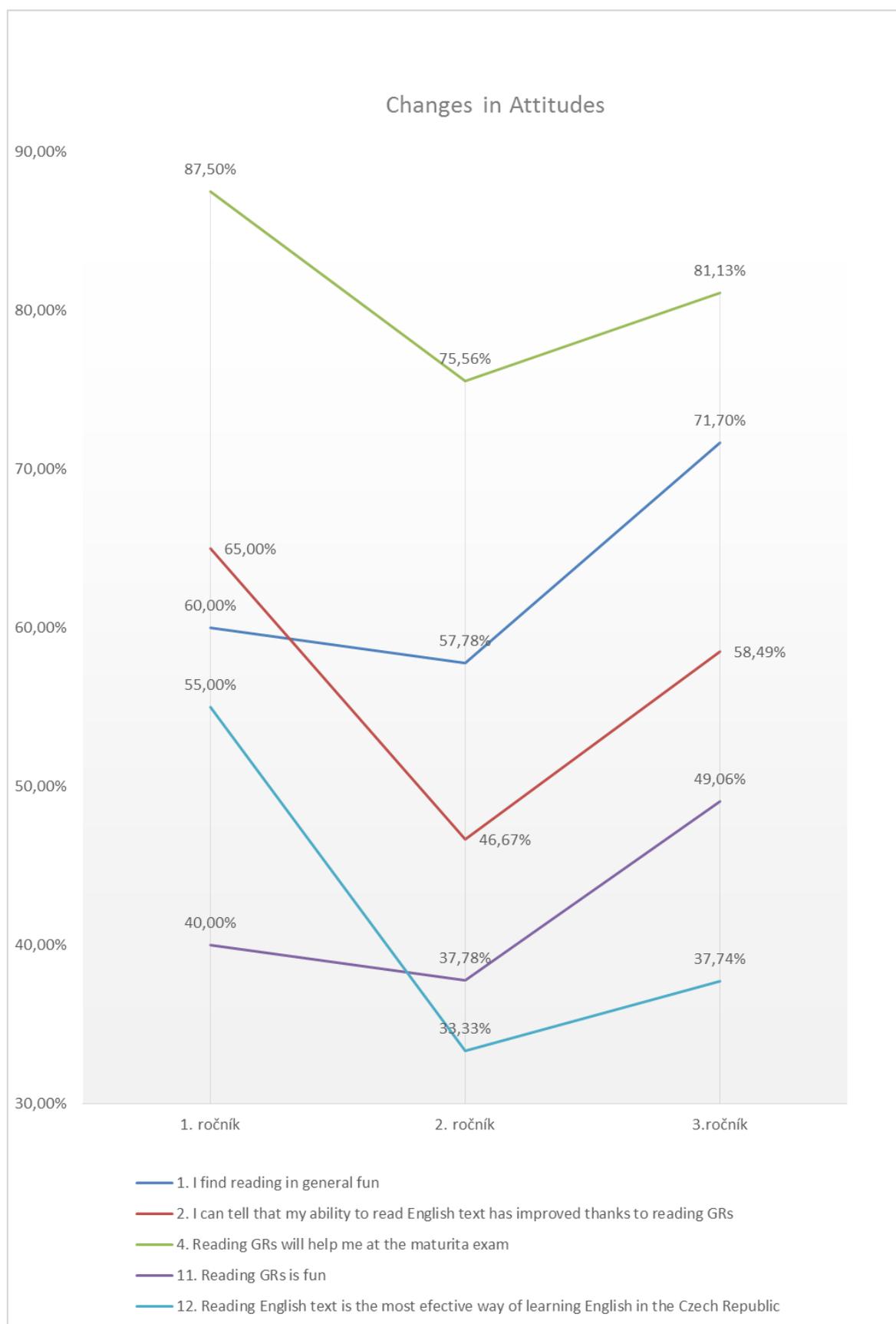
Answer the following questions

- a) How was Tom punished for not going to school?
.....
- b) How did Tom persuade the boys to paint the fence?
.....
- c) Why did Tom tell the teacher that he was talking to Huckleberry Finn?
.....
- d) Why did Tom and Huck go to the graveyard?
.....
- e) Why did Tom and Huck go away from the graveyard?
.....
- f) Why did Tom and Joe run away from home?
.....
- g) Why did the boys decide to come home?
.....
- h) What happened at Muff Potter's trial?
.....
- i) Who did Tom and Huck see at the haunted house?
.....
- j) What happened at Becky's picnic?
.....
- k) How did Tom and Huck find treasure?

.....
I) What did Huck decide to do at the end of the story?
.....

<i>Figure 7</i> Statements	I disagree	Neutral	I agree	Max
1. I find reading generally (that is in Czech as well) entertaining	13,75%	32,50%	59,38%	59,38%
2. I can tell that my ability to read English text has improved thanks to reading GRs	10,63%	30,63%	58,75%	58,75%
3. The follow-up tasks (writing a report etc.) are a bore	20,63%	46,25%	33,13%	46,25%
4. Reading GRs will help me at the maturita exam	3,13%	16,25%	80,63%	80,63%
5. I can learn more while watching films with subtitles than by reading GRs.	15,00%	37,50%	47,50%	47,50%
6. The worksheets are difficult for me	58,75%	33,13%	8,13%	58,75%
7. Reading GRs is boring	51,88%	33,13%	15,00%	51,88%
8. To work with GRs is a more interesting activity than the work with the course book	9,38%	33,13%	57,50%	57,50%
9. The follow-up tasks are a bore and I would prefer to read another book instead	19,38%	43,75%	36,88%	43,75%
10. I can learn more by playing games than by reading GRs.	13,13%	36,25%	50,63%	50,63%
11. Reading GRs is fun	15,00%	40,00%	45,00%	45,00%
12. Reading English text is the most effective way of learning English in the Czech Republic	31,88%	28,13%	40,00%	40,00%

Obrázek 1 Changes in Attitudes



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