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Reading in English language textbooks

Čestné prohlášení

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vlastnoruční podpis

Obsah

Abstract

This diploma thesis focuses on reading in English language teaching, textbooks as a device used during teaching reading as well as different ways reading is taught at elementary schools in the Czech Republic. The theoretical part is focused on the theory of reading, the development of reading skills and different tools that can be used during the teaching of reading. In the practical part, the interviews with teachers that have been made during the research are interpreted, the textbooks that are used by these teachers are described and the reading sections in these textbooks are analysed.

Introduction

Reading is an essential skill for students of any language. Reading provides a whole range of possibilities for students as it can become a leisure activity as well as a tool for further studying. Especially at higher levels of education, reading in a foreign language can become crucial for further study. Students usually ask why should they learn the topic or skill that teachers present to them. However, reading is a skill that is invaluable for students.

There is inherent value in reading for students as it can become their favourite hobby. There is a wide range of genres that can attract students' attention. Aside from compulsory literature, there is plenty of non-fiction and fiction literature that can eventually become a safe space, where all people can find their peace in this hectic world which is exasperated by people's time spent online in virtual space.

Reading is a skill that needs to be taught in foreign language classes. There is an enormous difference between reading in one's first language and reading in a foreign language. Especially for beginners who are still learning a foreign language. The level of understanding can hinder students' ability to enjoy reading even though it is an activity they enjoy in their first language. There are some tools that can be provided for the students that want to enjoy reading whilst acquiring new vocabulary and learning about new topics.

The aims of this case study are recognition of different ways reading is taught at six elementary schools in the Czech Republic, discussion with teachers who have been teaching reading during their English classes and the perspective of teachers on different aids that are used during teaching reading, including textbooks. The research will consider teachers' perspectives as well as their experience working with textbooks and students who are learning reading as an essential skill.

The theoretical part of this thesis is dedicated to the definition of reading as well as the reading skill. It also focuses on approaches to reading and the impact of reading on other skills. Next, it focuses on the different ways to develop reading skills. This part also considers different ways of reading. The last chapter is dedicated to textbooks and how they influence the teaching of reading as a skill.

In the practical part of this thesis, hypotheses about teaching reading are made and I analyse interviews with six teachers that teach English in various types of elementary schools and ask teachers questions about their attitude to teaching reading as well as their opinions on the reading of their students and their attitude to different theories on teaching reading. These interviews consider the size of each school and the age of the textbooks that these teachers use during their classes. In the next chapter, there are analyses of different sets of textbooks that these teachers use during their classes with a focus on reading and reading instructions. The conclusion of the practical part is dedicated to the results of this case study.

Theoretical part

Introduction to the Theoretical part

The theoretical part of this thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter focuses on the reading skill on its own, the definition of reading and the position of reading as a receptive skill as well as the influence of reading on other language skills. The second chapter considers the development of reading skills, and the way students can develop their reading skills, including tools that students can use in their development of this skill. The third chapter describes the different ways of reading. The fourth chapter is dedicated to various aids that teachers can use during teaching reading. The fifth chapter discusses the theory of coursebooks and the advantages and disadvantages of using them.

1. Reading

Reading is a gate to the imagination. There are different reasons for reading, however as Ellis and McRae (1991) write, reading leads to reading. When a person finds joy in reading, it can become a hobby that can be beneficial. As Cunningsworth (1995, p. 73) claims, it is an activity that except for reading material and, in the case of foreign language text, a dictionary or a wordlist "can be done easily and without any equipment." Reading in English lessons helps students develop tools that expand students' knowledge of the English language.

1.1. Defining reading

This part of a chapter should be initiated by a question. What is reading? To read is a transitive verb that Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010, p. 1219) defines as "to look at and understand the meaning of written or printed words or symbols". Reading is thus defined as receiving a message that the reader understands as reading words without understanding them is not considered reading according to the definition.

Reading can be perceived as an interaction. An interaction where the writer believes that the reader will not have a problem with understanding of writer's message. As Chastain (1988, p. 216) claims "Reading is a process involving the activation of relevant knowledge and related language skills to accomplish an exchange of information from one person to another." However, as the writer cannot get immediate feedback from the reader, they have to hope that the message will be passed on to the readers.

Reading, aside from being a tool that helps students in their process of reading, also functions as a vehicle of social interaction and gaining of world knowledge. As Teixeira (2012, p. 15) points out in her article, reading "allows students to have access to ideas communicated by people in different locations and eras, giving them the opportunity to broaden their horizons and deepen their knowledge of the world." Plenty of resources for students are written in a foreign language. Additionally, because "reading is a skill that students can only acquire through practising", as Nuttall (1982, p. 23) states, students should not undermine their own potential even though reading in a foreign language is challenging, especially in the early stages of language learning.

As Grellet (1990, p. 4) argues in his book, there are usually two reasons for reading, either for enjoyment, where the reader approaches reading as a pleasurable activity, or for extracting information, where the reader sees reading as a way to achieve something else, as a process that could be pleasurable, but the pleasure is not the main goal of reading. As Watkins (2017, p. 3) states, "reading for pleasure might include reading humorous posts on social media or reading a novel." Reading for information also consists of different categories. There is a difference between reading railway information on the platform or reading a study for a school project. The main goal as is already suggested by the definition of reading is decoding a message. Reading is in the first place a means of communication, a tool that is beneficial for all people and can become an important part of a student's personal and study life.

1.2. Reading as a receptive skill

Reading is a receptive skill, which means that the reader is not producing messages as the speaker or writer can. Receptive skills, reading and listening, are therefore often regarded as passive skills. However, readers or listeners receive these messages from writers or speakers, thus communicating even though writers sometimes do not receive a message back.

According to Grellet (1990, p. 8), reading is an active skill, one that is a process, where the reader brings their bias and hypotheses to the text before reading and deduction is then based on not only the text but also the reader's predictions. This makes reading more complicated more students understand language as they can be deceived by the flow of reading and do not notice changes in the text. As Ur (1991) writes, during quick reading, a good reader looks for meaning and desires to understand the text as a whole, which can result in conflict with the actual words that are written on a page. Hedge (1991, p. 32) argues that individual words are virtually not important to good readers as they usually depend on the prediction of the text. That fluent readers mostly read in phrases, which means that they do not read individual words, but rely on the context of the phrase or sentence. As Grellet (1990, p. 8) suggests, among other skills that reader uses during reading, they need to use critical thinking.

Chastain (1988, p. 216) claims that reading as a foreign language skill, is probably easier for students to acquire than any other skill and it can eventually

function as a primary source for learning other skills. However, reading does not exist in a vacuum and is influenced by other skills as it should be. People during communication with others employ multiple skills at once. As Hinkel (2006, p. 113) points out, "to engage in a conversation, one needs to be able to speak and comprehend at the same time." Reading is usually taught in a way that emphasizes reading comprehension. Council of Europe in their Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) in regard to recognition of language skills evaluates reading mainly as reading comprehension and different skills that are associated with it.

Teixeira (2012) in her study draws on CEFRL and claims that this document also describes different skills that students need to learn during their language learning, such as visual skills (described as perceiving the written text), orthographic skills (recognising the script), linguistic skills (being able to identify the message), and semantic skills (understanding the message). These skills should be developed during students' work that involves reading comprehension skills and interpretation of the text. (Teixeira, 2012)

Reading comprehension is one of the most important skills in teaching reading. According to Chastain (1988, p. 217), "When readers are not comprehending, they are not reading." Nevertheless, as Grellet (1990) points out, it should not be separated from the other skills. Reading comprehension exercises should be flexible and varied and should be suited to the texts and to one's reasons for reading them. Grellet (1990, p. 11) claims that reading comprehension exercises can be individualized and matched to students based on their abilities. The correct choice of exercises should be stimulating to students.

1.3. Impact of reading on other skills

As was already mentioned in this thesis, reading should not be perceived as an isolated skill. Reading has an impact on other skills, such as vocabulary acquisition and spelling. As Hedge (1991) points out, reading can help students develop the kind of study skills in English that students might need in their further studies.

Krashen (1989) claims that children who read in their spare time have better results on vocabulary tests. In his study, he claims that both vocabulary and spelling improve with the increased amount of reading activity. Krashen (1989, p. 443) argues

that "first and second language acquirers acquire rules of grammar that have never been taught." Despite lack of instruction, learners gain knowledge of spelling and learn new vocabulary during reading inside and outside of the classroom. Free reading programs in school can help students perform better during the testing of grammar, reading, and writing.

Lightbown and Spada (2013, p. 162) argue that reading important source during of growth of vocabulary, however, second language learners do not usually read the amount of target language that would be necessary for a major difference in growth. Students benefit from reading material that is interesting to them but students still need to learn vocabulary differently, as Lightbown and Spada (2013, p. 206) claim that "in order to successfully guess the meanings of new words in a text a reader usually needs to know more than 90 per cent of the words in that text."

Reading undoubtedly has a positive influence on the development of different language skills. Learners who read in their spare time in a foreign language have better results in tests. Although, reading in a foreign language is not common and teachers should encourage students to try reading not for the developmental advantages but for pleasure. Better results in tests should be a positive side effect of reading in learners' spare time.

2. Developing reading skills

As Lightbown and Spada (2013, p. 117) state, reading is affected by opportunities to practice. This chapter will explore different ways that reading can be influenced by different approaches to the development of reading skills. As Chastain (1988) points out, if the students have difficulty with reading and reading comprehension activities, their teacher should first determine the specific difficulties students might have. If they stem from a misunderstanding of the text, or if there is some form of learning disability. The students may also struggle with the difficulty of the reading material or the activity that the teacher chose, that is connected to the text.

The aim of a programme that is related to reading development is according to Nuttall (1982, p. 21), "to enable students to read without help unfamiliar authentic texts, at appropriate speed, silently and with adequate understanding." This means that reading should eventually become a personal activity for students, who could read fluently at their level. Although, some of the points in Nuttall's definition can be for foreign language learners problematic and this chapter will focus on these points and why they may be considered problematic.

At this point, various types of disabilities that affect learners' ability to learn a reading skill should be acknowledged. However, although the challenges that learners might face regarding their disability can be numerous, this thesis does not address the issue as my study focuses on reading skills and their development in the mainstream population. By this comment, I merely acknowledge the existence of this issue and of challenges that learners face regarding their disability that affects their ability to read.

2.1. Development of receptive skills

This thesis already pointed out reading's position as a receptive skill. Harmer (2007, p. 270) claims that a typical procedure, during the teaching of receptive skills, involves tasks of two types. These two types will be marked as Type 1 and Type 2.

Type 1 task usually involves students which read for general understanding, where they are not required to point out details. Type 2 asks students to look at the text with the aim of pointing out specific information. Generally, teachers start teaching with Type 1 and then follow up with Type 2 as it is more challenging for the students. Students might be motivated by the teacher even before the start of the Type 1 task

with predictions of what the text will be about, or with the discussion of the topic of the text.

Both reading and listening skills are typically taught using this procedure. Although reading has the advantage that learners can read at their own pace and usually during classroom tasks and outside of classroom reading, they can re-read the text. On the other hand. listening is typically played only twice or thrice during classroom activities and during a conversation, the listener has to ask for the speaker to repeat themselves or has to replay the tape.

2.1.1. Ways of processing

There are two ways to approach the learning and processing of a skill. These two ways are called top-down and bottom-up processing.

During the top-down processing, the reader first focuses on the general meaning of the reading passage. It usually combines the knowledge and expectations of the reader with the content of the written text and is usually less focused on details. Bottom-up processing, on the other hand, pays attention mainly to individual words, phrases, and grammar patterns in written language and as Harmer (2007, p. 270) states, "achieves understanding by stringing these detailed elements together to build up a whole."

Wallace (1993, p. 42) points out that second language learners usually tend to use bottom-up processing more, as they do not have the linguistic competence of first language learners. This means that they are not able to search for the meaning of the text as they are not able to see the cues in the text.

The combination of the two strategies is quite important because as Harmer (2007, p. 270) argues, sometimes the details help us understand the whole narrative, and sometimes we need global understanding to be able to process the details. A balance between these two strategies can vary in different situations. Watkins (2017, p. 2) argues that this balance depends on multiple factors such as the type of text that is being read or the purpose for reading. Reading for pleasure, for example reading a magazine in one's spare time, is usually not as focused on details as reading for instructions during the construction of a shelf. Moreover, during foreign language learning, the reading task that is set for students can influence the type of processing for students.

As Ur (1991, p. 141) suggests, "learners should be encouraged to combine top-down and bottom-up strategies in reading." That is mainly so learners are able to understand the text through learning the vocabulary necessary for sufficient understanding of the text, however, it is also important for students to be able to discuss the topic of the text and combine references in the text with their real-life experiences.

2.2. Addressing the difficulties during the development of receptive skills

There are several problems that have to be addressed during the development of receptive skills, in this thesis, this subchapter will mainly focus on the development of reading skills.

One of the problems can be the difficulty of the text. Harmer (2007, p. 272) points out mainly the length of the words and sentences or the number of unfamiliar words that are present in the text. This is addressed by a teacher who brings literature to the learners. Literature that learners will be able to read. There is a way to address the problem of the suitability of literature. As Wallace (1993, p. 77) states, "'Readability formulae' are used, though more in the United States than in Britain, to assess the difficulty of published reading material." These formulae judge the material based on criteria such as word length, where is the greater frequency of long words or sentences taken as a mark of more difficult text. However, even these criteria might not be accurate, as it only judges the length of words and sentences and not additional factors such as repeated use of words that could be learnt from context and then used to fixate readers' knowledge of these words.

On the other hand, all types of language can be only beneficial for students. As Harmer (2007, p. 272) points out "the more language we expose students to, the more they will learn." Strategies of addressing the difficulty of texts presented to the students include pre-teaching vocabulary, alternatives to authentic language, and using the extensive reading method. The extensive reading method will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.2.1. Pre-teaching vocabulary

The main aim of teaching reading is to be able to read confidently and with the ability to understand the general meaning without directly translating the whole text that they are reading into their first language. Pre-teaching vocabulary could prevent

translation during reading, by teaching vocabulary first. According to Cowell (2012, p. 20), pre-teaching vocabulary should aid students to gain the ability to accurately determine the meaning of words while reading and reinforce comprehension of the text. Pre-teaching vocabulary would thus erase the use of a dictionary during reading the text.

Cowell (2012, p. 21) argues that "when the classroom teacher introduced the vocabulary before reading, the student has a head start on what terms and content will be addressed in the text." This illustrates the benefits of pre-teaching vocabulary. As Harmer (2007, p. 272) suggests, pre-teaching vocabulary may remove some barriers between the text and the student that hinder students' ability to understand the text fully.

This, however, also present a problem of lack of authenticity of the text, as a student in real life may not have the possibility to search or translate the words they do not understand within a short time. Pre-teaching vocabulary prevents students from using the skill of deducting the meaning of the word from the context of the surrounding text and information in it. On the other hand, as pre-teaching vocabulary is the quickest and especially for beginner level students less complicated way to completely understand the text, there should be a balance between using pre-teaching vocabulary and learning vocabulary from the general meaning of the text.

2.2.2. Authenticity

Authenticity as was already mentioned in the previous paragraph can become quite a problem during learning reading skills. Authentic texts in this thesis will be considered the texts that are not written for pedagogic purposes.

Watkins (2017) claims that authenticity can be viewed as a binary concept, where either the material is authentic or not. Nevertheless, there is not always a simple distinction in foreign language learning materials regarding authenticity. Grellet (1990) claims that authentic text should be used as much as possible and addresses the reasons why the use of authentic texts is extremely important for students. One of which is that the simplification of texts can result in alteration or erasure of the structure that is unique to the original text.

Authenticity, as Grellet (1990, p. 8) argues, means that "nothing of the original text is changed and also that its presentation and layout are retained." This means that

newspaper articles should not be stripped of pictures and the headline should be of the same size, the best solution would be a photocopy. Watkins agrees with this statement as he claims in his book (2017, p. 8), "once the text is taken from the sphere for which it was intended, it loses its authenticity."

According to Harmer (2007), deciding what is authentic and what is not can be difficult. "A stage play […] is a playwright's representation of spontaneous speech […] so it is, in a sense, both authentic and inauthentic" as Harmer (2007, p. 274) states. This further complicates the notion of authenticity, as apart from the text itself, it challenges the authenticity of genre and situation.

As Harmer (1998, p. 68) claims, "the greatest controversy has centred on whether the text should be 'authentic' or not." That is because it is usually challenging to find authentic texts for students at lower levels. Newspaper articles that are authentic for native speakers are challenging for non-native learners. There is some material for low-level students that is authentic, such as timetables, however, the topic that is supposed to be learnt at each stage does not always allow using the simplest versions of authentic texts. It is also important to consider the age and interests of the learner group. Especially mixed groups need varied sources.

Ur (1991, p. 150) claims that learners during earlier stages of learning are less likely to profit from the use of authentic text as it could be too challenging for them. Nuttall (1982) claims that students should be introduced to authentic texts after they are no longer linguistically challenging for them because translations during the reading would hinder students' time for reading itself. According to Watkins (2017), the use of authentic materials should be increased proportionately to students' higher levels of language learning. Nuttall (1982, p. 32) suggests that a simplification is a good tool for teachers who provide students with literature. Authentic literature at the correct level is still considered the best option, however, simplified versions should not be disqualified from being exploited for students' benefit. There are plenty of simplified resources that can help teachers during teaching.

2.2.3. Interference of the first language

The first language undoubtedly affects second language learning in multiple ways. For example, in the case of Czech and English, both languages write using the Latin alphabet. On the other hand, Lightbown and Spada (2013, p. 205) argue that "the

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transfer of patterns from the native language is one of the major sources of errors in learner language." Basic principles of syntax can inhibit learners' progress as they must learn new patterns and separate their knowledge from their first language and the new language they are learning.

Foreign language learner starts reading with a limited knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, which, amongst other factors, makes reading a difficult task. On the other hand, while learning a second language, the learner usually is quite knowledgeable about his first language, which can become an asset but also a hurdle. When students see a word that is familiar to them, they can link it to the meaning in their first language. This can become a great tool if the real meaning of the foreign word is identical to the first language word. However, if the word only visually resembles the first language word, it can create a false connection, that reader needs to overcome.

Watkins (2017) points out that "A key goal for any reading course should be to develop learners' ability to transfer L1 reading skills to the L2." The reading comprehension, ability to differentiate important and unimportant information and more should become as natural as they are for students in their first language. Even though there are many obstacles that are associated with the interference of the first language with the new language, there are some advantages that can help students in their pursuit of new knowledge.

2.2.4. Silent reading

Readers in their personal time rarely ever read aloud. However, during learning a second language, students are usually obliged to read to the rest of the students. This practice, though, can be controversial.

Chastain (1988, p. 217) states that "reading aloud to establish the connection between the pronunciation of a sound and its written symbol should be limited to the initial stages of second language learning for most students." For advanced students reading aloud should be an activity that is linked with the text for another reason such as a role-play reading exercise. Students, especially in the early stages of learning a new language, need to read aloud to practice connecting the written symbols to the sound that needs to be spoken. This would mean that to read for another purpose, students first need to be able to read for the sole reason of connecting sound to a symbol.

Wallace (1993) supports this claim and points out that learning to read can be seen as learning a particular set of skills. The students need to learn to understand the visual representation of words. They need to build their confidence in the meaning of these words. In the case of reading aloud, it also means connecting it with the correct pronunciation of the words. For foreign language learners, it can be challenging to assign correct sounds to a word of which similar or identical version they might recognize from their first language.

Grellet (1990) argues that students during reading classes should not read aloud. He believes that only teachers should be allowed to read aloud and only when it is necessary. Nonetheless, even during the silent reading, he does not view reading as an individual activity. According to Grellet (1990, p. 11), "it is particularly interesting to encourage comparisons between several interpretations of a text which will lead to discussion and probably a need to refer back to the text to check" Reading is considered a personal part of a larger exercise, where students discuss the text after the silent reading.

However, Wallace (1993) claims that silent reading can be problematic. Readers can be brilliant at reading in general, but the second language that they are learning might complicate the reading as they can make mistakes without noticing them during reading. Even the more experienced readers can make a mistake during reading, even if it might happen more rarely than to beginners. Readers can make a mistake in reading which can then completely change the meaning of the word or sentence.

Watkins (2017) suggests that both reading aloud, and silent reading are important. Silent reading is most common in a personal setting, reading aloud can be efficient in the classroom. Reading aloud done by a teacher can be helpful for students as an example of fluent reading. Reading aloud by students should be done either alone or in smaller groups. Reading in front of the whole class can be beneficial for younger learners. However, Watkins (2017) points out a situation, where reading aloud by students can become harmful. In a classroom setting, it can become a stressful activity, which can be for students demotivating. Overall, it should not be the main strategy for all learners.

3. Ways of reading

Readers usually use multiple ways of reading. As Grellet (1990, p. 3) points out, "understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible." Readers use various means to get the information from the piece of writing while they read. It depends on writing and the style of writing and how the reader reacts to said text.

The way readers approach text also depends on what is required from the reader. As Chastain (1988) puts it, "As readers' purposes for reading change, they vary the way they read." Reading of newspaper is different from the reading of a romance novel. If readers are asked to search for specific information, or if they want to get an overall understanding of the text. Furthermore, it depends on readers and how capable they are in filtering unnecessary information from the text that they see. Although this capability depends on readers' experience and can be trained.

There are a few ways of reading, and this thesis will discuss skimming, scanning, extensive reading, and intensive reading methods. As Grellet (1990, p. 4) states, these ways of reading are not mutually exclusive. When people read, they can skim through passages before deciding in which passage, they could find the information they look for. In the case of intensive reading people can use scanning as a way to find out, if they want to read the piece of writing. And because people in real life use different ways of reading, teachers need to provide students with various exercises in their lessons.

3.1. Scanning and skimming

According to Nuttall (1982, p. 34), skimming and scanning are both skills, where the reader does not read in the normal sense of the word. Both skills are mostly using reading at such a high speed that the reader can take in maybe the chapter headings or beginning and end of a paragraph. However, both skills are very useful for the reader as they can help the reader to select the text that they need to focus on. Nuttall (1988, p. 40) furthermore suggests teaching scanning and skimming as exercises that can help students increase their reading speed.

3.1.1. Scanning

Scanning is supposed to give the reader a preview of the content they have in front of them. It means that readers do not read individual words, they search for key

words in the reading text. Watkins (2017, p. 3) points out that during scanning, the reader does not develop an understanding of the text. As scanning is a very fast type of reading, it is impossible to read the text with enough accuracy that would allow the reader to grasp the meaning of the text. Chastain (1988, p. 220) in his book claims that reading the back of a novel or reading the headlines of a newspaper is an example of scanning.

3.1.2. Skimming

Skimming means that the reader looks for the general meaning of the text, rather than for a single message. Chastain (1988, p. 220) claims that skimming of the material can be beneficial for readers who are pressed for time and need to decide if the piece of writing is what they are searching for. Nuttall (1982, p. 34) suggests, that skimming is a more detailed way of reading than scanning, however, both are very fast ways of reading and the reader cannot get concrete information from the text just by scanning and skimming.

3.2. Extensive and intensive reading

According to Brumfit (cited in Nuttall, 1982, p. 23), better labels for intensive and extensive reading might be reading for accuracy and reading for fluency. These two labels indicate the different approaches that need to be taken during the classroom procedures. Both of these ways of reading are necessary and complementary to each other. Harmer (2007, p. 272) claims that extensive reading suggests reading at length whereas intensive reading is more concentrated, less relaxing and more dedicated to the achievement of a study goal.

As Nuttall (1982, p. 24) points out, "the same text can usefully be employed for training in both, key passages from it being used for intensive study and in turn illuminating the book as a whole." Nonetheless, these two labels indicate the different purposes for reading.

3.2.1. Extensive reading

According to Harmer (2007, p. 283), reading is beneficial for students' word recognition and their overall improvement as readers. Ellis and McRae (1991, p. 5) claim that "extensive reading involves encouraging learners to read a range of materials, read them quickly and well, for pleasure and or language development." As Grellet (1990, p. 4) suggests, extensive reading is usually for the reader's pleasure, one

that is mainly focused on fluency of reading. An extensive reading programme promotes reading out of class, as class time is quite short and the amount of reading that needs to be done in order to achieve fluency in reading is major.

Ellis and McRae (1991, p. 5) point out that "reading leads to reading", thus students should develop the habit of reading. Reading should be done outside class, preferably in students' free time, as reading at this stage should be pleasurable. Students should read for themselves and for pleasure, whereas general language improvement should be the beneficial by-product. Nevertheless, students need motivation and, to an extent, monitoring. Some class time should be dedicated to extensive reading, as teachers need to motivate students to read, and students need help in choosing what they want to read and with coping with longer texts as they can be daunting for readers. Though the amount of class time depends on the curriculum requirements and individual teachers and classes.

Ellis and McRae (1991) suggest that students should be encouraged to choose their books, as reading is affected by the way the piece of literature relates to the learner and their existing knowledge. Students who read books that relate to their interests are more likely to enjoy reading, which inherently leads to more frequent reading.

As Ellis and McRae (1991, p. 7) state, "100 per cent comprehension is not necessary to understand the overall meaning." They furthermore claim that students should restrain from using a dictionary, as it interrupts students reading. Ellis and McRae (1991) also advocate for using as many authentic books as possible. However, as Harmer (2007) suggests, students need to be presented with materials they can understand. Furthermore, Harmer (2007) suggests, that reading material that is too difficult can discourage students from reading.

Harmer (2007, p. 284) advocates for establishing of libraries that provide students with literature that is suitable for learners. There is an option of either a school library or personal library where a teacher can provide students with readers or books that match students' capabilities. During an extensive reading programme, the main role of the teacher is one of a motivator, who can encourage students by their own example. Displaying the books, they enjoyed as a student or even now as a teacher. They can suggest a wide range of genres the students can choose from.

However, this would put another strain on teachers that would be obligated to purchase these readers themselves if the school does not have the funding to purchase them. The teacher would also have to become a librarian and would thus gain another responsibility and work. Despite this, Harmer (2007) sees major advantages in setting up a library.

Even though an extensive reading programme is based on students' ambition and reading in their spare time, students need to have tasks that are connected to the reading that can motivate them to continue reading the text. Harmer (2007) advocates for various exercises such as the writing of book reviews or keeping a reading diary. Ellis and McRae (1991) also promote the use of a reading journal, as it could not only monitor students' progress but also include notes and new vocabulary learnt from the literature they read. Harmer (2007) suggests that students can also write book reviews for their classes. The most important task of an extensive reading programme is for students to read as much as possible.

Davis (1995) claims that an extensive reading programme should supplement English courses, where students are given material, time and encouragement to read at their own level. Davis (1995, p. 330) in his study reports, that students in an extensive reading programme improve in categories such as reading skills, language skills and personal growth.

In his study, Davis (1995, p. 330) found that students during the programme became more positive about starting to read a new text and their imaginative responses improved. Students during the study developed a wider active and passive vocabulary and improved their writing and grammar skills. However, the problems of this type of programme include the amount of money that the material costs, and it requires a lot of organization and time within the curriculum that would be dedicated to private reading. Teachers, thus, should consider all the benefits of extensive reading with the negatives it could have on the school and themselves and if they are able to provide students with such a programme.

3.2.2. Intensive reading

Grellet (1990, p. 4) states that intensive reading is aimed at the accuracy of reading, where the reader studies shorter text and searches for specific information. Harmer (2007) claims that intensive reading is often teacher-directed, designed to help

students to develop specific receptive skills such as scanning, skimming or reading for detailed comprehension. The aim of intensive reading is a detailed understanding of the text, not only the meaning but also how the meaning was produced, which is an easier task when the reader is working with shorter texts.

Nuttall (1982, p. 146) claims that intensive reading can help students start using the reference system that can help them while they are reading difficult passages of literature. And if the reading becomes too difficult, it can help them realize where the misunderstood piece of the text is and overcome the difficulty. There are ways that teachers can help students, especially if they choose to dedicate some amount of lessons to intensive reading, however, some learners still may fail the accompanying tasks, this might be because of the unsuitable choice of text or the tasks may be too difficult for students. Or students simply start with these lessons and they are not used to them. As Nuttall (1982, p. 148) points out, for students to succeed in this programme teachers need "to be patient and tenacious, not expecting miracles overnight."

Intensive reading can be viewed as a similar term to detailed reading. Detailed reading is by Watkins (2017, p. 4) described as reading "carefully to understand as much of the content as possible, such as when we read instructions on a medicine bottle." Both are used for the approach to reading material, where the reader wants to acquire as much of the content as possible. Intensive reading tends to be slower, as it can mean reading of a more complicated text, as Chastain (1988, p. 220) suggests.

As Nuttall (1982, p. 23) states, "Intensive reading involves approaching the text under the close guidance of the teacher." As Harmer (2007, p. 286) suggests, a teacher during an intensive reading programme has four important roles. As an organiser, the teacher needs to provide students with clear instruction and tell them what the purpose of an exercise is. The teacher needs to be an observer, who observes students who read without interrupting them. The role of a feedback organiser involves checking if the students completed the given task successfully and asking for an explanation of students' answers. Explanation helps the teacher decide if students understand the text. The teacher's role as a prompter allows them to prompt students to notice certain features of the text. According to Harmer (2007, p. 286), teachers can highlight certain features of the text, direct them to notice text structure and clarify possible ambiguities of the text.

During reading lessons, teachers usually encourage students to read for general understanding and not to worry about the meaning of foreign words they do not understand. On the other hand, in students' nature, curiosity hopefully prevails, and they usually want to know every single word as they might think that the word, they do not understand is crucial for the understanding of the whole text. This should be addressed by the teacher who should help them balance the desire to know every word with the ability not to be hindered by said word. Harmer (2007, p. 287) suggests that teachers should have different strategies such as a time limit with a dictionary or dividing students into groups with each searching for the meaning of a different word. The process is individual for each class as students as individuals have different needs in their studies.

The text teachers present to students should be engaging. As Harmer (2007, p. 288) points out, "One of the most important questions we can ever get students to answer is Do you like the text?" This question asks rather for feelings about the text than for technical response. It allows students to express their opinion on their perception of the quality of the text and how difficult it is for them to read said text. Intensive reading is not as taxing in terms of time spent reading as extensive reading, however, it demands full involvement of students and the teacher who helps students during either programme.

4. Aids teachers can use during teaching

Some aids can help teachers in teaching reading skills. Next to textbooks, which will be discussed in the last chapter of the theoretical part of this thesis, there are online sources and so-called "readers", which will be discussed in this chapter.

4.1. Online sources

Teachers during their reading lessons can exploit digital sources as well as printed sources. Online reading is useful for learners as it combines working with technology with reading. Watkins (2017, p. 135) claims, that next to the variety of printed sources exists a range of digital text types. Reading of different sources, especially digital sources, is also influenced by the range of devices readers can use. As Watkins (2017, p. 135) suggests, teachers have to help learners develop the skills that can enable them to read a range of digital devices that are provided to learners in this century.

According to Watkins (2017), reading of texts on digital devices can be detrimental to readers' ability to comprehend texts, as reading from a screen can lead to frequent use of skimming and scanning and lower the amount of focus the readers have on the text. Teachers need to help students develop skills and strategies that can improve their reading in digital space. Readers during the reading of digital texts do not take in as much information as they do during a reading of printed texts. However, as Watkins (2017) suggests, reading online sources is crucial in the twenty-first century and students need to learn how to read effectively even though the reading of digital sources might be more difficult for them.

According to Baron (2017, p. 19), students are aware that reading digital sources can be detrimental to their abilities to concentrate on the text. However, the lower cost of digital materials versus paper ones is more important for students, especially at higher levels of education. Baron (2017, p. 19) claims that if the cost were equal, students would prefer printed sources, as with digital materials, highlighting and taking notes is not as comfortable as with printed sources. Generally, the practical nature of digital sources and low cost is convenient for students and sometimes they can choose to print the materials they want to.

4.2."Readers"

As was already mentioned in this thesis, the best option is an authentic text. However, authentic texts are not always available and ideal sources and "readers" can provide varied literature for students on their level of language capabilities. "Readers" are tools that students can use during studying a language. According to Harmer (2007, p. 286) readers "can take the form of original fiction and non-fiction books as well as established works of literature." These books are adapted to be at the appropriate level for students who want to read them. "Readers" can provide students with additional exposure to foreign language text next to textbooks.

Next to simplified works of literature that "readers" often contain, there are plenty of "readers" with original stories. According to Wallace (1992, p. 78), "there are also original narratives specially written, often to publishers' guidelines, for an EFL readership." These stories are already written with vocabulary that corresponds to a certain level.

Teachers can help students in the development of reading skills by providing them with tools, such as "readers" that are available at many levels. According to Cunningsworth (1995, p. 85), "readers are graded according to different formulae, and students progress through the stages as their knowledge of the language and their reading skills develop." These formulae can relate to the use of vocabulary in the "readers" or levels of difficulty in grammatical structures. The difficulty of reading material helps assess the level of language "readers" contain.

As Hedge (1991, p. 35) suggests, "readers" can help students in the development of various study skills that students might need in their further studies, as "readers" are published with various topics, which can help students gain for example technical knowledge next to learning of the language during reading. Some "readers" also include worksheets that contain reading comprehension exercises, vocabulary checks, or dictionary that helps students understand the vocabulary that is used in the "reader".

On the other hand, Cunningsworth (1995, p. 85) argues that "readers" can sometimes be more difficult for students than the original works, as they can be too dense in information and thus more complicated to understand. The most important thing is for students to find joy in reading. Even though original works might be the

best option, teachers should provide students with a range of materials, such as "readers", as they can help students abridge the gap between original works of literature and not reading in a foreign language at all.

5. Textbooks

One can debate if textbooks are important for learning. Mikk (2007, p. 11) claims that the majority of students work with textbooks and that teachers draw upon textbooks during preparation for classes. Textbooks are basic educational tools that influence every level of education. However, as Mikk (2007, p. 12) furthermore claims, unsuitable textbooks that are filled with a huge amount of terms and concepts that are mentioned only once or twice can be detrimental to students' progress.

Some teachers use them completely, some use selections of textbooks and some teachers do not use them at all and use their own supplementary materials. Harmer (1998, p. 112) claims that "using textbooks creatively is one of the premier teaching skills." There are plenty of advantages to their use as well as some disadvantages. This chapter will explore the reasons why textbooks should or should not be used in second language learning.

5.1. Characteristics of foreign language textbooks

Foreign language textbooks are often unsatisfactory mainly in their reading skills departments. As Nuttall (1982, p. 19) claims, "One common feature of the early stages of course is that material […] is rather a series of disconnected sentences." Texts that are often chosen in these textbooks are mainly used for students to identify the message and understand what the writer wanted to say. This means that students can translate the message based on the vocabulary they start to learn. However, even for more advanced learners, the reading texts are quite different from materials students can read outside of the classroom.

Texts in foreign language courses, mainly in textbooks, are usually written in a way that uses as many words of the vocabulary they aim to teach as possible. Especially when they deal with subjects, that are familiar to students. This is understandable, as a foreign language is taught to beginners usually by first dealing with topics, which are known to students. However, if the subjects are too dull or too common, they can be discouraging for general reading. The dullness in the material should be counterbalanced by teachers' creativity, as Harmer (1998, p. 177) suggests.

According to Nuttall (1982, p. 20), "many FL textbooks are guilty of having virtually nothing to say." Writers of textbooks are obliged to use the vocabulary needed at a certain level, which can mean that they cannot deviate from the vocabulary enough

to be able to provide students with a message or meaning next to plain text. In the early stages, it is perhaps impossible to avoid the 'mechanic' texts that are crucial for developing vocabulary. Though, after these early stages of foreign language learning are over, it is important to start providing learners with more substantial reading materials so they will not get discouraged by the dull nature of these texts. As Nuttall (1982, p. 30) claims, "it is very difficult to do good work with a dull text."

Cunningsworth (1995, p. 52) suggests that the variety of English is also important in choosing of a textbook. He claims that coursebooks are usually written either in standard southern British English or standard American English. There are many varieties of English in the world and their existence is not diminished by American nor British English, in fact, American and British English have many varieties that differ from the standard. Since English is used as a lingua franca around the world, the phenomenon of 'International English' arose, according to Cunningsworth (1995, p. 53). This means that the English changes, however, learning a single variety is the most convenient for learners. Although, teachers should prepare students for the fact that even native speakers are not as intelligible as the voice recordings provided in textbooks.

According to Cunningsworth (1995, p. 7), "coursebooks are best seen as a resource in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learner needs." Coursebooks should be tools that help students achieve a goal, the conquering of said coursebooks should not be the main goal. The materials that coursebooks give to teachers and students should be selected to reflect the teaching programme and chosen based on their appropriateness for students and the aims of the teacher.

It is important to point out that reading lessons as such are often dismissed in foreign language classes. As Nuttall (1982, p. 20) points out, "giving a lesson based on a text is not the same thing as giving a reading lesson." These lessons differ in texts that are used during these lessons, as reading lessons should be taught mainly with texts that have other purposes than to teach language. Reading lessons texts should be informative, entertaining, a text with a message. The text should be written in a way that a reader, who is not attending a reading lesson, would read them.

5.2. Assessment of textbooks

According to Ur (1991), textbooks need to be critically assessed and teachers who want to work with them should know about their stronger and weaker points. Cunningsworth (1995) claims that next to an impressionistic overview, a teacher should also perform an in-depth evaluation of the coursebook they want to work with. Some of the critical points in assessing textbooks should be "coverage, texts, tasks and administration" (Ur, 1991, p. 187).

According to Ur (1991), teachers should decide if the textbook has enough range of language content, and the skills students need to learn. They should also decide if the texts in the textbooks are satisfactory because if they are too simple, they might be insufficient and need to be replaced. Teixeira (2012, p. 16) claims that texts in elementary level textbooks provide only a limited range of vocabulary and a limited number of grammatical structures. The simplicity of texts is not motivating for students and the space for development is almost non-existent. According to Teixeira (2012, p. 16), "Like the textbooks for elementary levels, the ones for advanced learners […] offer a limited range of texts." In this case, the developers of these textbooks are not limited by the lack of knowledge of learners, therefore nothing excuses their lack of creativity. The lack of range of texts can hinder learners' development and it may discourage students from reading if it is not compensated for by substitutes. Teachers can offer substitutes to students in various forms some of which were already discussed in this thesis.

On the other hand, if the texts are too difficult, teachers need to focus on a proper introduction to the topic, such as pre-teaching vocabulary. The same consideration applies to tasks. They also need to be assessed and according to the difficulty or lack of satisfaction with them need to be either modified or replaced entirely. Teachers need to decide if the layout of the coursebook is logical and practical for their teaching. These assessments are individual for each teacher and there might be a teacher who finds a book perfect for their teaching the same book might be inadequate for a different teacher. Harmer (1998, p. 116) claims that some teachers find textbooks in general so insufficient that they rather rely on their materials.

Repetition is very important during learning of new language and textbooks should reflect that. Cunningsworth (1995, p. 28) claims that next to practice,

vocabulary and grammar items should be recycled at least three times and that coursebooks should reinforce new items that students just learnt. It should be covert as students do not need to know that during the next chapter, they revise items learnt in the previous. In the case of beginner levels, it is almost impossible not to reuse the vocabulary and grammar of the new language.

Harmer (1998, p. 119) claims that criteria such as price should be also considered. Students should be able to afford textbooks, thus their price and the merit of the textbook should be contemplated. Harmer (1998) also points out areas such as stereotyping, where he claims that textbooks should not display xenophobia, racism, or sexism, either overtly or covertly. The choice of a textbook is important for students and teachers and both these groups should be satisfied with their choice. Ur (1991, p. 184) presents some general criteria for choosing textbooks and points out which are in favour of using textbooks and which are against.

5.2.1. Advantages of using textbooks

Some advantages of using textbooks include framework, as students and teachers see the structure of the book and can trace their progress. According to Ur (1991), a textbook can function as a syllabus as the progress in the textbook aligns with the progress in learning. Textbooks also provide teachers and students with already prepared materials such as texts and exercises. Teachers who lack experience can rely on textbooks if they are correctly chosen, and it can help new teachers gain confidence in teaching and they can slowly supplement classes with their ideas and materials.

Textbooks are very convenient as next to all the advantages already mentioned they can be also used individually, and students are less dependent on teachers and the materials they would need from teachers. According to Harmer (1998, p. 117), textbooks can be reassuring for students, and they may be more satisfied with textbooks than teachers.

5.2.2. Disadvantages of using textbooks

On the other hand, the convenience of textbooks can also become a disadvantage. As Ur (1991) suggests, teachers can rely too much on the textbook and shift the teaching onto the textbook, where a teacher would become the guide to the

textbook. Teachers who rely on textbooks have a lower level of creativity in teaching techniques, according to Cunningsworth (1995, p. 10).

As the interests of students change frequently, the textbooks may not always interest the students. According to Harmer (1998, p. 117), textbooks can lack in variety of texts and teaching procedures and be overall boring. Also, the relevance of textbooks often depends on the edition. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports publishes a list of textbooks that are approved for use by the Czech Republic and according to this list, the textbooks are approved for six years since their publishing, which means that after this period of time, textbooks either have to be authorized again or their licence expires (Seznam učebnic a učebních textů se schvalovací doložkou pro základní vzdělávání).

The fact is that textbooks can be useful tools if they are correctly chosen and if the teacher is capable to work with them efficiently.

Summary of the Theoretical part

The Theoretical part of the thesis focuses on reading skills and its content is reflected in the Practical part. Reading is an important part of language skills, and it is crucial for foreign language learning. It is an important skill, especially for students who want to pursue higher levels of education and it can become a leisure activity. The benefits of reading are immense, and reading can help students in the development of other language skills and skills that are not language-specific.

Reading is a part of receptive skills, which have been by some authors regarded as passive, even though they are part of communication. The development of receptive skills is crucial for students and there are different ways to learn them. Though there are some problems during teaching reading, learners can overcome them with the help of a teacher.

Reading is an activity that can be done in several ways. Four of these ways of reading are scanning, skimming, extensive reading, and intensive reading. All of these ways are important, and students should know how to use them. Since reading is best learnt by reading, teachers should advocate for reading in students and should give them a space to read, especially during reading classes.

There are several aids that teachers can use when they are teaching reading. Digital sources can become an amazing asset for teachers and since there are plenty of sources online, teachers can decide which are useful and suitable for their students. The so-called "readers" can be used in the classroom as well as for students' reading in their free time.

The theory of textbooks highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of textbook use and why textbooks are important for education. A textbook is a beneficial resource for students and teachers and both groups benefit from the use of textbooks. Nevertheless, textbooks need to be carefully chosen and should be used selectively.

In conclusion, the theory of reading skills and how it affects learning is very important for the Practical part of this thesis. The factors that influence reading should be considered by teachers and students should be encouraged to read.

The Practical part

Introduction to the Practical part

The Theoretical part focused on reading as a skill and an activity, different methods that are used during teaching reading and different challenges that foreign language learners can face during learning reading as a crucial skill. It also highlighted different aids that can be used during teaching reading as well as resources available online. The theoretical base was necessary for the Practical part of this thesis.

The practical part of this thesis will consist of six chapters of research and a discussion of the results of this case study. The sixth chapter of this thesis is dedicated to the description of the methodology. The seventh chapter focuses on the aims of this case study and hypotheses that were considered during the research and are discussed in this thesis. The eighth chapter describes the six different schools and teachers who teach at these schools who were interviewed. These interviews then provide this study with different approaches to teaching reading in English in various types of schools as well as with a range of experiences. The ninth chapter compares the approaches of teachers to teaching reading and the aids they are using during teaching and comments on different theories that are confronted with the reality of reading in elementary school. The tenth chapter describes the textbooks that teachers are using during teaching reading and analyses the reading sections of these textbooks. In the last chapter of this thesis, the hypotheses that were made at the beginning of this research are confronted with the results of the research.

6. Methodology

This chapter analyses the methodology the practical part of this thesis is based upon. It mainly concerns the interviews that this case study uses in the qualitative research and the way the interviews were conducted, as well as the reasoning behind the case study. Furthermore, it outlines the themes that were discussed in the interviews and introduces the teachers that were interviewed.

Dörnyei (2007, p. 127) claims that "an interview study with an initial sample size of 6-10 might work well." During this case study, six teachers, each from a different school, were interviewed. These interviews were conducted in a span of three weeks during April.

According to Dörnyei (2007), 'semi-structured interviews' are advantageous as during this type of research, researchers have a set of pre-prepared questions, but they have the freedom to deviate from said set of questions. (Dörnyei, 2007)

Interviews that were conducted were conducted as semi-structured interviews, and as the questions were connected, some questions were omitted in case the teacher answered negatively to the previous question, as it lost meaning to ask subsequent questions. These interviews also sometimes resulted in a talk based on my research and though the talk is not included in the transcribed interviews in the appendices, it sometimes provided me with additional information that is reflected in the practical part of this thesis.

According to Measor (1985), the validity of this type of research can be challenged, however, as it relies on the validity of the interviewee's answers, this would mean that potential opponents of the qualitative research would be doubting respondents and not the interviewers and their findings.

Questions in these interviews were based on the theoretical part of this study and its findings in it. Questions that regarded quarantine and its' influence on students' relationship with reading were based on recent events and my interest. Most of these interviews were conducted in person with one exception, where one of the interviews transpired through a Zoom meeting, where we both spoke directly to each other with our cameras on. Two of the respondents were also on their parental leave, however,

their experience was quite beneficial for this study, although they could not comment on changes that transpired during quarantine due to the pandemic situation.

Topics that were debated in these interviews will be discussed and the full list of questions can be found in appendices as well as transcriptions of the interviews. Some of these interviews were recorded with the approval of the teachers. Teachers who did not agree with the recording permitted me to make notes on their answers and these answers are either cited or paraphrased in the transcript. During a number of these interviews, some of the questions were not answered, thus they are not present in transcripts of the interviews. This, as well as teachers' responses, resulted in the varying length of transcripts.

The fact that all of the respondents of my research are women is not intentional, male teachers simply did not answer my attempts for contact. Although, in all of the schools where these interviews were conducted, the vast majority of English language teachers are women.

A part of this thesis will be dedicated to the analysis of textbooks that teachers who were interviewed use during their lessons. With one exception, the teachers use textbooks as a source of texts and exercises that are intended to help students learn reading.

7. Aims and Hypotheses

This chapter describes the aims of this study as well as hypotheses that were made before the research began.

7.1. Aims of this case study

The main aim of this study and the research that has been made was to explore the ways that reading is taught at various elementary schools in the Czech Republic. Most of the schools that this research was realized in are in the Olomouc region.

During the realization of this study, the aim was to discuss with the teachers that were interviewed the different factors that influence the teaching of reading, for example, the teaching aids that are being used alongside textbooks.

Another aim of this study was to understand from the teachers' perspective the relationship the students have with reading in general and reading in English specifically as reading in a foreign language for study and for pleasure. The purpose of this study is to approach the reading skill from the educators' perspective and their experiences.

7.2. Hypotheses

Based on the research that was made during the theoretical part of this thesis as well as my experience as a student, who was shaped by various claims of teachers whom I encountered during my studies, the following hypotheses were made:

- As technology evolves and students have different means of entertainment, the popularity of reading lowers and students read less than their predecessors.
- Students enjoy reading paper versions of books rather than electronic versions.
- The quarantine positively influenced students' approach to reading.
- Some of the theories of teaching reading are not suitable for standard education in public schools.
- Textbooks in elementary schools are dated.
- Textbooks are used as a primary source of texts during the teaching of reading skills.

8. Respondents and schools

The research is based on six different perspectives of teachers, who teach at six different schools that vary in size as well as the number of students. Two of the interviewees are currently on parental leave, however, their perspectives were also extremely valuable.

The order of respondents does not reflect any indicator of quality nor any personal bias. The structure of this chapter is based on the date when the interviews happened in descending order.

8.1. The first interview
School 1

This is a private school with an alternative type of curriculum where teaching is conducted during three semesters and the school complex consists of kindergarten, elementary school and grammar school. This school has a very lenient School Education Programme, that adheres to Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education. Their curriculum is based mainly on stages of students' education rather than firm milestones such as completed units in textbooks.

This school has overall approximately three hundred students, in the elementary school, it is approximately one hundred and sixty students, where one class has a maximum of eighteen students. English classes are further divided based on students' performance, which means that some groups are smaller than others, based on students' abilities and needs. Furthermore, at this school, teachers do not use a grading system throughout the school year, they use formative assessments.

Teacher 1

Teacher 1 is currently on parental leave. During the English classes, she usually did not use any textbooks, she only used a conversational textbook with her students for speaking sections of her classes. Her teaching qualifications are in English language and Music, however, at School 1 she taught the English language and the French language. At this school, teacher 1 has been teaching for 2 years. She has been teaching for five years overall, however, most of her teaching practice has been realized as a tutor at language schools.

According to this teacher, students liked reading, especially reading in pairs or groups. Teacher 1 stated that during her career, she always puts emphasis on working with texts, not necessarily textbooks, as she did not use them at all for the teaching of reading skills during her work at School 1.

8.2. The second interview
School 2

This school is a regional city school with approximately seven hundred students. It has a standard School Education Programme, that adheres to Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education. The English section of this School Educational Programme is modified to the syllabus of textbooks that this school uses for each grade, and it has two versions, the first is a basic version for all students and the second version is for students with higher language skills. These two variants are decided in the first years of primary school, where students complete a test, which then places them in a group based on their linguistic abilities.

Teacher 2

Teacher 2 is currently teaching four groups, where there are approximately fifteen students in each group. Her teaching qualifications are in the English language and the Czech language. At this school, teacher B has been teaching for four years, however, generally, she has twenty years of practice.

According to Teacher 2, there are vast discrepancies between students who have better language learning abilities and students who fall behind during their studies, and these differences are noticeable during the learning process, as activities, including reading exercises, have to be appropriated for students, which their School Educational Programme reflects by the existence of two versions of sections dedicated to English.

8.3. The third interview
School 3

This school is a small rural school with composite classes, which means that all the students are divided into two groups. The first group consists of the students of the first and second year of elementary school and the second group of the students of the third, the fourth and the fifth year of elementary school. There are only twenty

students in the school and only two teachers. It has a standard School Education Programme, that adheres to the Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education. The English section is focused on skills rather than units in the coursebook.

Teacher 3

Teacher 3 has teaching qualifications in the Czech language and Natural History; however, she is teaching most of the subjects in this school, including the English language. This teacher has five years of practice. She has been teaching at this school for three years. In her previous teaching position, she was also teaching English.

She teaches mainly the second group of students, and, in her class, there are thirteen students ranging from third to the fifth year of elementary school. This means that her position as a teacher is made more difficult, as she needs to focus on each subgroup based on their grade, whilst making sure that all of her students understand the topic they are individually supposed to deal with.

8.4. The fourth interview
School 4

This school is a city school with approximately six hundred and fifty students. It has a standard School Education Programme, that adheres to Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education. The English section of this School Education Programme is particularly detailed with not only references to textbooks that this school uses for each grade but also references to other subjects, where is in this School Education Programme explained where and how the parallels occur and when the students already encountered the subject of study.

Teacher 4

Teacher 4 has twenty-five years of practice. Currently, she is teaching seven groups, but the number of students in her groups varies from fifteen to twenty-seven students. Her teaching qualifications are in the English language and the German language. Teacher 4 is currently head of the English teaching department at this school.

According to Teacher 4, the interest in reading did not change throughout the years, however, she saw a big difference in students after the quarantine. She claimed that some of the students completely lost motivation during the quarantine. According

to her, the more introverted students lack the social skills they could have gotten during the two years when they were switching from online schooling to in-person education. On the other hand, she claimed that some students were less distracted during the online lessons.

8.5. The fifth interview
School 5

School 5 is a city school with approximately three hundred students. It has a standard School Education Programme, that adheres to Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education. The English section of the School Education Programme is divided into three parts, the first of them is aimed at first and second grade, the second is aimed at third, fourth and fifth grade and the last part is aimed at sixth to ninth grades in elementary school. In general, the School Education Programme is appropriated to the textbooks that are used in each grade.

Teacher 5

This teacher is currently on parental leave, although she is still tutoring some students. She has been teaching for five years. Her teaching qualification is in the English language and the Czech language. She was teaching up to eight groups, where each group had from fifteen to twenty-five students. In addition to teaching at this elementary school, this teacher has been teaching at different language schools.

According to Teacher 5, students in her school generally did not like reading even in the Czech language, thus reading lessons were complicated to organize. She claimed that her students mostly read online.

8.6. The sixth interview
School 6

This school is a village school with approximately one hundred and fifty students. School 6 is a catchment school, with students not only from the village but also from three other surrounding villages, where there is either no school at all or in the village is only a rural school with composite classes that are meant for the first five grades of elementary education. This school has a standard School Education Programme, that adheres to Framework Education Programme for Elementary

Education. The English section of this School Educational Programme is appropriated to textbooks that this school uses for each grade.

Teacher 6

Teacher 6 is teaching groups of approximately twenty to twenty-four students, in general approximately eighty students. Her teaching qualifications are in History and Social Studies. Besides these subjects, she also teaches English language and German language. This teacher has twenty-four years of practice.

Teacher 6 claims that materials such as books and magazines make students more excited about learning and reading in general than just textbooks. However, working with textbooks is important for students as they can learn individually at home as well as in groups at school.

9. The analysis of the interviews

This chapter analyses the similarities and differences in the experiences of six teachers who were interviewed for this case study. The analysis will consider topics such as teachers' experience with students during reading lessons, their experiences with textbooks and the current situation of textbooks in their schools. Furthermore, in this chapter, there is a confrontation between the theoretical background of reading that is demonstrated in the theoretical part of this thesis with authentic teaching practices that occur in different schools.

Teachers who were interviewed have at least five years of teaching experience, thus their outlook on teaching English as a foreign language is extremely valuable. Through their experience of working with elementary school-aged students, they have a perspective on students' relationship with reading in the classroom as well as they notice their possible interest in reading in their spare time, especially in cases, when they lend students books.

9.1. Popularity of reading

The first part of this analysis aims at the theme of the popularity of reading amongst students. The vast majority of teachers stated that in their classes, students enjoy reading. They reportedly specifically prefer reading in pairs and groups, according to Teacher 1 (see Appendix 2), the number of students that were included in reading directly affected the enthusiasm of students, that if more students read the text, the more students enjoyed reading. However, this meant that the text needed to resemble a screenplay rather than a piece of text that was fragmented into smaller pieces that would allow all the students to engage in the reading of the text.

Furthermore, teachers claimed that they either did not notice a change in the popularity of reading or as Teacher 6 (see Appendix 7) said, students, enjoy reading more, as teachers have better materials and more sources available for use during their classes. According to teachers, students prefer paper versions of books rather than electronic versions, the only teacher who disagreed with this claim stated that they probably prefer electronic versions, although they rarely focus on the text for longer periods of time. (see Appendix 6)

According to teachers who were teaching during and after the quarantine, students' attitudes to reading did not change, or they did not notice any difference. As

Teacher 4 (see Appendix 5) stated, "The students who liked reading before, read still." However, this teacher saw a shift in students' attitude to learning, as the two years of mostly online schooling negatively affected students' social skills and further highlighted a difference between introverted and extroverted students.

9.2. Lesson planning and textbooks

The next part of this analysis focuses on the way reading is taught during lessons and on the use of textbooks within their lessons. Teachers reported that they usually focus on reading as a part of a lesson. Teacher 1 (see Appendix 2) stated that she was limited by the length of her lessons, as ninety minutes would be a too long period of a time to use only for reading, however, other teachers, whose lessons are of the standard forty-five-minute length also reported that their lessons could be too long to for reading only. Only Teacher 2 has lessons that are dedicated to reading, however, she also stated that these lessons are rare (see Appendix 3).

The majority of teachers use textbooks during their lessons that include reading as an activity. Teacher 1 (see Appendix 2) stated that her school does not use specific textbooks for English language learning, however, the only textbook she used during her lessons is called Let's talk which is a book designed for advanced students of English and provides students with various themes of conversations and thus is not used for reading. The other teachers use Project and Chit Chat. These textbooks will be analysed in the next chapter.

Teachers who use textbooks in their reading lessons usually claimed that their textbooks are exchanged approximately every ten years. However, unless they were currently exchanged, for example in Teacher 5's school where they were exchanged because of her request (see Appendix 6), they are often used for quite a long time (see Chapter 10). Nevertheless, the majority of teachers stated that they are mostly satisfied with the textbooks that they use in their classes. As Teacher 2 (see Appendix 3) stated, "you cannot create a textbook that would satisfy everybody."

According to the teachers, one of the things that could be changed in the textbooks is the choice of texts. For example, more interactive texts would be more enjoyable for readers. Some of the texts were also seen as too artificial. Teacher 3 also claimed that textbooks do not have enough comprehensive texts that would be thematic for example for holidays such as Easter. On the other hand, Teacher 5 claimed that she

would appreciate shorter texts and more exercises that would help students develop better reading comprehension.

One of the advantages that were pointed out in using textbooks during classes, was the practicality of textbooks, as students always have the text with them, and it is not as easy to lose as losing a copy of a text. Teachers also saw an advantage in the structure that is provided by textbooks. In this structure are exercises that are suited for each section of language that students are learning. In the case of reading, there are exercises made specifically for the text that is also provided by the textbook. On the other hand, one of the disadvantages of textbooks is the fact that working with a textbook can become the only activity in the class. As Teacher 4 (see Appendix 5) claims, teachers can start relying too much on the textbook and the lessons can become boring.

All of the teachers stated that they use additional sources in their classes. They use mostly online sources and some use magazines that are aimed at foreign language learners. Nevertheless, all of the teachers supplement the textbooks with other sources that fill the gaps they see in textbooks and sometimes they use other sources to make a lesson more interesting.

Teachers who taught during the quarantine period reported that during the online teaching they had to adapt the lessons as reading online through video conferences was not comfortable for students and difficult for teachers as the quality of sound was not good and students were sometimes unintelligible. The unfortunate circumstances lead to the use of reading as a homework activity, where students read the text as homework and then during online classes, with the presence and guidance of a teacher, completed exercises that tested their knowledge of the text. Teacher 2 (see Appendix 3) suggested that during the first phase of quarantine the reading was done as a voluntary activity, however, as the period of online schooling prolonged, they had to change their attitude toward teaching in general, thus reading was done as homework not only using textbooks but also using online sources where the teacher started making new exercise based on texts that were available online.

9.3. Reading theories versus classroom practice

In this part of this chapter, the reading theories that teachers can influence should be addressed. None of the teachers that were interviewed used a reading journal

as a tool in their English classes. As Teacher 2 (see Appendix 3) pointed out during the interview, she also teaches the Czech language that students rarely use the reading journal that they create in their Czech language classes. Teacher 1 (see Appendix 2) stated that they create a portfolio of books that students read in school, however, this portfolio is not used as a reading journal but as a tool that is used during their maturita exams at the end of their studies at School 1.

On the other hand, all of the teachers reported that their students read aloud in their classes. As Teacher 3 (see Appendix 4) stated, especially younger students usually read aloud. Silent reading does occur in all of the teachers' classes, but usually as a tool that they use to save time or as Teacher 1 (see Appendix 2) suggested as a homework exercise. Teacher 2 (see Appendix 3) during the interview stated that she uses silent reading during her classes, however not very often, as she noticed that students during reading do not pay attention to the text.

Davis (see Chapter 3.2.1.) advocates for a space in a timetable dedicated to reading, however, none of the teachers saw a justifiable reason for a forty-five-minute class dedicated only to reading. Teacher 2 (see Appendix 3) stated that she could see a reason for Czech language reading but English reading would be too challenging for students who have problems with reading in the classroom. According to Teacher 4 (see Appendix 5), these reading sessions would be suitable only for advanced students.

Except for Teacher 6, teachers were acquainted with "readers". Teacher 1 (see Appendix 2) claimed that during her classes, she used "readers" that the school had in a classroom library. Teacher 2 (see Appendix 3) stated she used "readers" with her students during online schooling. Other teachers do not use "readers" in English lessons for various reasons, such as a limited number of readers or different levels of reading capabilities in students. However, the teachers who are familiar with "readers", encourage students to read them and claimed that students who read them enjoyed reading these books.

Majority of the schools that the teachers who were interviewed at do have a school library. The only school that does not have a library is School 6, however, the village has a library that is available for students. In the schools that do have a library, there are no "readers" available in it, however, they are accessible either in language classrooms or the students can borrow them from language teachers.

10. Analyses of textbooks

This chapter analyses three brands of textbooks that are used by the teachers who were interviewed for this thesis and whose answers were analysed in the previous chapter. Although there were six interviews executed, one of the teachers does not use textbooks for reading at all, and four of the teachers use the same set of textbooks. Textbooks that will be analysed in this chapter are *Chit Chat* and *Project*. In this chapter, each set of textbooks will be briefly introduced, and the analysis will focus on the reading sections of these textbooks.

10.1. Chit Chat

The first set of textbooks that will be analysed is *Chit Chat*. This set contains two issues of these textbooks that are designated for beginner levels of English language learning. These textbooks were published in 2002 by Oxford University Press and their approval clause was renewed in 2019, which means that they are approved at least to the year 2025.

The designs of these textbooks are very similar. The first page introduces names of units that start with two "starter units" and then twelve units that are assembled into four groups. After each cluster of three units is a review unit that is used as a revision point of three previous units. At the end of these textbooks are placed "extra topics" in which there are topics that are not debated in the units of these textbooks. These topics are not essential for students; however, they are useful as exercises that provide students with additional vocabulary. The last page in these textbooks describes the syllabus and is divided into two sections, the main structure, which describes the units in more detail, and vocabulary, which points out new vocabulary that is used in each unit.

Reading in the first textbook is simple and useful for beginners. Reading is quite frequently linked to listening and most of the instructions connected to reading include listening. Most of the reading, notably at the beginning of this textbook, is in the comic section that is at the end of every unit. However, the comic section does not exercise reading as much as listening, which is assigned to each comic.

Most of the instructions are very simple and students can understand the task clearly, as most of the instructions simply describe what are the students supposed to do, such as "Read and say" (p. 24) or "Listen, read and act" (p. 40). The only

instruction that is not clear and hopefully is explained in the Teachers' book is in Unit 6. The instruction "Read, find and match" (p. 29) is not quite comprehensible and students who would be given this exercise as homework might not understand what they are looking for in this exercise.

Reading instructions in the second textbook is similar and mostly identical to the first textbook. Reading is furthermore linked to listening and students often listen and read at the same time. The comic section is at the end of each unit, and it is linked to listening. However, the texts are more challenging and are more complex and there is noticeable progress from the first textbook.

10.2.   Project

Most of the teachers that were interviewed used *Project Fourth edition*. This is the set of five issues of textbooks, and they are aimed at a range of Common European Framework of Reference levels. These textbooks range from A1 level to B1 level. These textbooks were published in 2014 by Oxford University Press and these textbooks were approved in 2019, and they are approved at least to the year 2025. The reading sections in this textbook have a very similar layout. At least one of the reading exercises is a reading comprehension exercise, while the second one is more focused on a story. The fifth textbook in the series includes extensive reading exercises, which are always the third reading exercises in the Unit.

The designs of these textbooks are similar. All of the textbooks have six Units, which are described in the table of contents at the beginning of the textbook. The table of contents is divided into five sections, the first section outlines the Unit and the second describes the grammar that is explained in the Unit. The third section is named Communication and skills and each segment of this section is further described while highlighting the skill that is developed in the unit. The last section is called Culture, Across the Curriculum, Project and this section is further divided into parts that are called after each title, plus the Song segment, which emphasizes the fact that each Unit has a song at the end. However, there is a revision page that is placed ahead of the Project and Song part of the last section.

Textbooks are also linked to workbooks of the Project series with the mention of grammar summary and wordlist that are both located in the workbooks.

Throughout the textbooks, some instructions include reading, however, during this description of reading instruction the main focus will be on reading exercises that are highlighted in the table of contents in the section Communication and Skills as exercises that are targeted at reading.

10.2.1. Project 1

At the end of the first textbook next to the table of contents that is common to every Project textbook, there are four more sections. The first one is called Land on a word, which is a game with words. The second one, named Phonetic symbols, shows a phonetic alphabet chart and may help students with correct pronunciation as well as it can help teachers highlight the differences between vowels in the English language as opposed to the Czech language. The third section is called Pronunciation, and, in this section, there are exercises for each Unit that can help with the development of correct pronunciation. The last section of this textbook is named Vocabulary and Reading and contains additional exercises for each unit, although reading exercises are placed from unit four onwards. Additional reading at the end of this textbook is not compulsory, however, all of the texts are longer and have a clear narrative. They are simple and nice stories for children. These stories can be read not only as an additional exercise but also as a short stories read for pleasure.

Even though there are directions throughout the textbook that include reading, usually combined with another skill, reading as a segment that is under the Communication and Skill section of the table of contents begins in Unit 3. Although the connection with other skills is clear in the reading sections too. The first exercise that is explicitly focused on reading is focused on reading comprehension and school timetable and there are four pictures with short commentary that are connected to the exercise. In Unit 4 both exercises that are aimed at the development of reading comprehension are also connected with listening.

In Unit 5, the first exercise is again aimed at reading comprehension and connected with listening, which describes a house, and in the second exercise, students are supposed to label rooms of a flat. This exercise has a longer and denser body of text. The first exercise that is aimed at reading in Unit 6 has a form of a comic. It is aimed at reading comprehension and connected with listening, although this exercise

does not require listening. The second reading exercise in Unit 6 is connected mainly with speaking and listening is used as a confirmation of correct answers.

10.2.2. Project 2

In this textbook, the introduction is not one of the Units, precedes them and functions as a revision of the first textbook. At the end of the table of contents of Project 2, there are two additional sections dedicated to pronunciation and reading. These sections are not compulsory and the Reading section, as in the first Project is filled with texts that have a clear narrative, which can be read as a short story, or a fairy tale.

In Unit 1, reading is linked with writing, where students first read about birthday celebrations in other countries and then they are supposed to write about the way they celebrate their birthday. The first exercise in Unit 2 that is aimed at reading is combined with speaking and students first read a story about meerkats and then talk about their favourite animals. In the second exercise, reading is linked with listening and it is aimed at reading comprehension and students have to answer questions that are connected to the text.

In Unit 3, during the first exercise students combine grammar with reading and are supposed to complete the text with the correct form of the verb 'to be'. The second exercise is aimed at reading comprehension and listening. The exercise that is aimed at reading in Unit 4 is aimed at reading comprehension and is linked to the previous exercise where students learn vocabulary about food.

In Unit 5 the first exercise is aimed at reading comprehension and listening, where students correct sentences and answer questions about the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In the second exercise, while reading, students are supposed to number continents from the largest to the smallest. In Unit 6, the only exercise about reading comprehension is linked with listening and students number pictures in the correct order that corresponds with the story.

10.2.3. Project 3

In this textbook, the introduction is again not one of the Units and functions as a revision. At the end of the table of contents, there are again additional sections for pronunciation and reading and reading is again longer and has a clear narrative with stories such as *"Theseus and the Minotaur"* (p. 83) or *"Cutty Sark"* (p. 85).

The first exercise that is aimed at reading is in Unit 1 a reading comprehension exercise connected with listening, where students decide based on a text, whether statements are true or false. The second exercise in Unit 1 aimed at reading, although connected with listening, does not require listening, as the whole text is in the textbook. The theme of the exercise is family and family trees. In Unit 2, the first exercise is aimed at reading comprehension where students first complete sentences with information that is in the text and students have to decide if statements are true or false. The second reading exercise in Unit 2 regards the future and students in it are supposed to answer questions given in the text where they have to try to predict their future with questions such as "Will we have these things in the future?" (p. 24) with four items we use nowadays.

In Unit 3, the first reading exercise is connected with a listening exercise and students have to write the correct time to the text and then match pictures to the countries on a map. The second reading exercise is focused on reading comprehension and is connected to listening, however, listening is not needed, as the questions that students have to answer can be answered only with the information provided in the text. The third reading exercise in Unit 3 is linked to speaking and in this text, students are solving a murder case and in pairs have to make theories about the case. The first exercise in Unit 4 is aimed at reading, specifically reading comprehension and students answer questions based on the text and then match things to places (pp. 44-45). The second exercise in Unit 4 aimed at reading is connected to listening and students are first asked to describe pictures connected to the story and then put them in order according to the story they read and listen to, then they have to answer questions that are based on the story.

The first exercise in Unit 5 which is aimed at reading, combines reading comprehension and listening. In this exercise, two people describe their ambitions of becoming an actress and a Formula One driver and students are supposed to complete a chart that is related to the text. In the second exercise in Unit 5, students read and listen to a text which informs the students about a mountain climber and then they have to answer questions, complete sentences and find information in the text. In Unit 6, during the reading of the first reading exercise, students have to choose correct words and add them to the text and then listen to the full text with correct answers. In the

second exercise that is focused on reading, they first have to describe pictures and then read the text and put the sections of the story in the correct order.

10.2.4. Project 4

Introduction in Project 4 is not part of the Units and functions mainly as a revision of previous textbooks, however, in this textbook, reading is part of the Introduction part. At the end of the table of contents, there are again additional sections for pronunciation and reading. Reading in this last section has longer stories with a clear and complex narrative, stories that are designated for older readers than the previous textbooks where stories could have been read by younger students. Some of these stories are adapted from classic literature, such as "*The Necklace*" (p. 83) which is adapted from a short story of the same name written by Guy de Maupassant.

In the Introduction section of the textbook, in the reading comprehension exercise, the reader answers questions based on the text and then matches people to activities. In Unit 1, the first reading exercise is aimed at reading comprehension, students answer questions based on the text and then label items in the picture (p. 8). In the second exercise, students put sentences in correct order to retell the story based on the text and then they pick the right answers to a question. The first exercise aimed at reading in Unit 2 focuses on reading comprehension and the story is about stunt doubles. In the exercise, students have to answer questions and find information in the text. The second reading exercise is about reality show contestants and in the text, students should find answers to questions.

The first reading exercise in Unit 3 is about health and it is focused on reading comprehension students have to look for answers in the text and decide which pieces of advice are in the text are the most important. The second reading exercise is aimed at healthy eating. During this exercise, students have to read a text and find the right answers and then describe their diet for a typical day. The first exercise which is aimed at reading in Unit 4 is focused on reading comprehension and students read and listen to a story about "*Sir Bedivere and Excalibur*" (p. 44). In the exercise, students match names to descriptions, answer questions about the text, and put sentences that reiterate the story in the correct order. During the second reading exercise in Unit 4, students read a quiz and answer questions and then compare answers with a partner. The quiz is focused on students' imagination and their personalities. (p. 48)

In Unit 5, the first reading comprehension exercise is about climate change and students have to decide, which word is not used in the text and answer a question that is based on the text. The second reading exercise is focused on environmental preservation and in the exercise, students have to find people and places in the text and correct statements. The first exercise in Unit 6 is a reading comprehension exercise about friendship, in which, based on the text, students put the pictures in the correct order. The second exercise is about the generation gap and in this reading exercise students answer questions based on the text and then match sentences to gaps in the text.

10.2.5. Project 5

As in the previous issue of the textbook, the Introduction is not part of the Units, functions as a revision and reading is a part of the Introduction. At the end of the table of contents, there are again additional sections for pronunciation and reading. Reading has once again longer stories with complex narratives. Some of the stories are adapted either from classic or modern literature such as *"Sally's phone"* (p. 82) which is adapted extract from Sally's phone by Christine Lindop. In the Introduction, the reading exercise is focused on reading comprehension, and students answer questions based on the text. Three exercises are aimed at reading in every Unit.

In Unit 1, the first exercise is a reading comprehension exercise where students read a comic, answer questions based on the text and put the events in order. During the second reading exercise, students answer questions based on pictures and the text about bullying. The third exercise focuses on extensive reading and students read and listen to a story about wishes, answer questions and complete sentences based on the text. The first exercise in Unit 2, focuses on reading comprehension and students look for correct answers based on the text. The second reading exercise is about dreams and students decide if the statements are true or false. The third exercise is focused on extensive reading of the abbreviated version of A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens. The exercises linked to the text ask students to answer questions based on the text and match names to the descriptions.

In Unit 3, the first reading exercise is focused on reading comprehension and students complete a chart and answer questions based on the text. The second reading exercise is an article about a supervolcano and exercises that are linked to the article

are an exercise, where students decide if the statements are true or false and an exercise, during which students have to find information in the text. The third exercise is again focused on extensive reading, and students read an article about a skydiver there are exercises where students are asked to put events in the correct order, find numbers in the story and answer questions based on the story. The first reading exercise in Unit 4, the exercise is aimed at reading comprehension and students work in pairs and fill in a questionnaire about their use of media. The second reading exercise is aimed at the reading of advertisements about jobs and students have to match descriptions to the jobs. The third exercise is an extensive reading exercise, where students read an extract from a play and students answer questions and complete sentences with correct terms.

The first reading exercise in Unit 5 is aimed at reading comprehension and students have to put events in the correct order and match halves of the sentences. In the second reading exercise, students read about unusual hotels, complete a chart with information and answer questions based on the text. The third exercise is an extensive reading exercise during which the students' complete sentences, answer questions and match words to their meanings. In Unit 6, the first exercise is a reading comprehension exercise where students complete the summary of the story. The second reading exercise is an article about Rosa Parks where students put events in the correct order in the exercise, find expressions in the text, and answer questions about the text. The last exercise is an extensive reading exercise, where students read a text about *Romeo and Juliet*, answer questions, put events in the correct order and match words and phrases to their meaning.

11. Results of the study

At this point of the thesis, hypotheses that have been made before the research should be addressed. The first hypothesis that was considered was not confirmed as the majority of teachers claimed in their statements that the popularity of reading did not change during their careers and that students continue to enjoy reading despite the many possibilities of entertainment they can choose from. The second hypothesis was confirmed, as out of six teachers only one claimed that she believes that students prefer electronic versions of books. The third hypothesis was not confirmed as none of the teachers saw any difference in students' approach to reading.

The fourth hypothesis was confirmed because reading is rarely a sole topic of a lesson as the teachers confirmed that they usually teach reading as a part of a lesson. Despite the validity of Nuttall's definition (see Chapter 2), teachers do not focus on the appropriate speed of reading, nor if the students read sufficiently silently, as they usually use silent reading as an acceleration of the lesson, not as a targeted skill. Furthermore, although most schools have a library, they exceptionally have "readers" in them, and "readers" are rarely used during their teaching (see Chapter 4.2.) and none of them encourages students to use reading journals as a learning device (see Chapter 3.2.1.).

The fifth hypothesis was neither confirmed nor disproved because though all of the textbooks have been approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Project set of textbooks have been published eight years ago and Chit Chat set of textbooks has been published twenty years ago. This does not mean that these textbooks are inherently bad because they were published a relatively long time ago, however, reading, especially reading about cultural topics, can rapidly become outdated. Topics such as famous people, movies, or media, thus have to be subsidized by the teacher, as students soon may not recognize people who were popular eight years ago and textbooks cannot be exchanged often enough.

The sixth hypothesis was confirmed because teachers who teach at elementary schools that have a standard curriculum all confirmed that they use textbooks and the majority of them use them during teaching reading.

Conclusion

Reading is an essential skill, which is a major part of the curriculum in teaching English. This diploma thesis dealt with the topic of reading and the way reading is taught in six Czech schools.

The practical part extensively dealt with two sets of textbooks that are being used in these schools as a teaching device, which helps teachers with teaching reading in their classes. The results of the practical part, as the previous chapter shows, answer the hypotheses that were made based on the research that was made during the theoretical part of this thesis. The aims of this study were accomplished, and the research answered the questions that were made at the beginning of this thesis. Although technology progresses, students still choose reading as a spare time activity. Students enjoy the immersion in stories, non-fiction or fiction, that helps them use and develop their imagination. Students are in constant contact with written language and at higher levels of education, reading is an essential part of studying.

Although some of the theories that were highlighted in the theoretical part of this thesis are not used in elementary school teaching, they may be an interesting addition to the curriculum, such as a reading session, which one of the teachers saw as a possibility for advanced students.

The textbooks that are used by the teachers who agreed to participate in my research, were older, however, all of them are approved and used as a primary source of text for students. This is not the teachers' fault, nor are they blamed for the age of the textbooks, it is a fact and teachers in addition usually use other sources if they see a deficiency in the textbooks. The older textbooks are used for less experienced learners and themes in them are not needed to be corrected as often, as these textbooks teach elementary vocabulary that teachers build upon in later grades. However, the cultural topics in the textbooks that are relatively new are already often lacking, as the media content is ever-changing, and textbooks cannot be updated often enough to keep up with the culture.

This thesis is based on interviews with teachers and the analysis of reading sections of textbooks. This research can be built upon, and further research can be made either by interviewing more teachers which would certainly bring up new

experiences to the research or by further analysis of more textbooks which would show different approaches to creating a textbook.

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Appendix 6: Transcript of interview with Teacher 5

Appendix 7: Transcript of interview with Teacher 6

Appendix 1: The list of questions the teachers were asked during the interview

Questions:

How many years have you been teaching?

How many students do you have in class/study group on average?

Do your students enjoy reading in classes?

Have you noticed a change in the popularity of reading among your students throughout your career? (How did it change?)

Do students in your opinion prefer paper or electronic versions of books?

Have you ever had a lesson dedicated only to reading? (Or is reading usually just a part of a lesson?)

Do you work with textbooks during reading classes?

What textbooks are you currently using in your classes?

How old are your current textbooks?

How often are your textbooks exchanged?

Are you satisfied with the reading section of your textbooks?

Is there anything you would change? What would you change?

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using textbooks during reading classes?

Do you use other reading sources for students during classes? (Magazines, online sources, …?)

Do your students read aloud during classes?

On the other hand, do they have a space for silent reading during classes?

Do you work with electronic sources during reading classes?

Has the quarantine changed the attitude to reading for your students?

How have you practised reading during online learning?

In your opinion, is there a place in the timetable for a reading session for students?

Do you have a school library?

Are you familiar with "readers" (simplified versions of classic literature)?

Are "readers" available in your school's library?

Do or did you ever use "readers" in your classroom?

If so, with what success? (Do/Did students enjoy using "readers" in classes?)

Do you encourage students to use "readers" in their free time?

Are students creating a reading journal for English classes?

Appendix 2: Transcript of interview with Teacher 1

Interview 1

How many years have you been teaching?

I have been teaching since 2013 in different language schools. Different age groups, different students, different classes. In this school, I was for two years.

How many students did you have in class/study group on average?

Generally, in one class, there were eighteen students, but in language classes, it was divided into groups according to their level. We had, for example, classes six and seven and the classes were divided into four groups according to their levels. So there were thirty-six students in four groups and they differed. I had for example eight students, sic, top tex, and I had students for example two, or three, it really depends. Sometimes there were students really advanced so there are two or three of them, or that are really, really weak so they needed so teachers could focus on working with them, so it was interesting to prepare for these lessons. Sometimes demanding.

Did your students enjoy reading in classes?

Generally, they enjoyed it, but I think the more students the more they enjoyed it. Sometimes when I had only two or three students it wasn't as amusing or as enjoyable as in larger groups. But it really depends. Usually, all of them wanted to read. When I told them we are going to read, all of them wanted to read. It was something they looked forward to.

Have you noticed a change in the popularity of reading among your students throughout your career? (How did it change?)

I do not think my career is long enough for me to judge this.

Do students in your opinion prefer paper or electronic versions of books?

I used paper books when I was at school. I think it does not really matter. We worked with the tablets, but we did not read from them. But we used them for different activities, so I think they are used to using these gadgets, and I think it does not really matter. I think it is important to show them that paper books exist, sometimes I

brought paper dictionaries to show them they exist, but I do not know, I prefer the paper books because we had them in the school library. But generally, I think it does not matter.

Have you ever had a lesson dedicated only to reading? (Or is reading usually just a part of a lesson?)

It depends. I think if you choose a good text, you can do any kind of lesson with the reading. You can do whatever if you choose a good piece of text, so I don't remember if I did this, but I can imagine I can do that. I had lessons of ninety minutes and I had kids, so to do only reading would be really demanding, and I'm afraid they wouldn't be able to concentrate for ninety minutes only reading. The key was to prepare different activities, usually, I prepared four activities for twenty minutes. And ten minutes we had for revision and sometimes we didn't have time for that, so the key was to make an activity, where they could move, write. I couldn't do this, but I think that if I had the lesson only for forty-five minutes and I had older students, for example, students from grammar school, it would be worth preparing a lesson like this.

Do you work with textbooks during reading classes?

No. At this school we did not use one textbook, we had different textbooks and according to the topic, according to the grammar, I chose activities and sometimes I took a piece of text and we read it, but normally, no.

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using textbooks during reading classes?

Generally, I think it's much easier with the textbook. It depends, I did it in a language school and if you have a textbook, you do still the same. You have a plan; you know what to do. You prepare just how to explain the exercise, or you prepare the results for the exercise, but if you don't have the textbook, you have to pick the different materials. It's more interesting, but it's very time demanding, one lesson I prepared for two to three hours easily, it took plenty of time, but when I was in language school and I had a textbook, it took really ten to fifteen minutes to prepare one lesson, because we had listening and reading and it was really easy because they had all the materials in front of them. When you use the textbook, it is much easier.

But it might get boring sometimes. Sometimes I didn't like the text, sometimes I found them inappropriate according to the level. The grammar was okay, but the text was too difficult or too easy. It depends, especially if you're beginning it's better to use the textbook because it's easier and the preparation is much quicker.

Do you use other reading sources for students during classes? (Magazines, online sources, …?)

We had different kinds of materials.

Do your students read aloud during classes?

Yes.

On the other hand, do they have a space for silent reading during classes?

When I wanted to save time, yes. Or especially for the older students, sometimes I gave them to text and they read it in silence and then we talked about that. I liked to give students silent reading as homework, and then we talked about that, but we did it in school anyway. When I wanted to save time, it is better.

Do you work with electronic sources during reading classes?

Yes.

In your opinion, is there a place in the timetable for a reading session for students?

I do not think there is a place, especially with the management of our timetable.

Do you have a school library?

Yes, we do.

Are you familiar with "readers"?

Yes

Are "readers" available in your school's library?

We have a separate library in the classroom that students won in a competition.

Do students enjoy using "readers" in classes?

Yes, that is what I used with students very often.

Do you encourage students to use "readers" in their free time?

Yes, they sometimes read without being told. Some of them enjoyed the reading, some did not.

Did your students create a reading journal for English classes?

No, not as we are used to. They did a kind of portfolio full of different types of writing for the maturita exam. These they had and sometimes we worked with the book and they had to write a short essay. So this portfolio they kept for maturita from the first year. But not as a reading journal where they would write characters or the plot. But they could do that.

Appendix 3: Transcript of interview with Teacher 2

Interview 2

How many years have you been teaching?

I have been teaching for twenty years, it is my fourth year at this school.

How many students do you have in class/study group on average?

On average, there are fifteen students in my class group.

Do your students enjoy reading in classes?

They do, especially if they are reading in groups.

Have you noticed a change in the popularity of reading among your students throughout your career? (How did it change?)

I think it is about the same, it did not change.

Do students in your opinion prefer paper or electronic versions of books?

I believe that students prefer paper versions of books. Those who read, read paper versions, those who do not, read on the internet.

Have you ever had a lesson dedicated only to reading? (Or is reading usually just a part of a lesson?)

Yes, but only rarely do I use the whole lesson for reading.

Do you work with textbooks during reading classes?

I do.

What textbooks are you currently using in your classes?

We are using Project, fourth edition 2-5.

How old are your current textbooks?

They are from 2013, they were just exchanged.

How often are your textbooks exchanged?

Usually approximately every ten years.

Are you satisfied with the reading section of your textbooks?

Yes, but not with all of the texts, but you cannot create a textbook that would satisfy everybody.

Is there anything you would change? What would you change?

I would change some texts, for example, role-play texts are great, and pupils rather read with other people, reading dialogues and in groups.

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using textbooks during reading classes?

The main advantage is that all of the students have the text available, and we can go back to the text. When the students have copies of texts, they often lose them.

Do you use other reading sources for students during classes? (Magazines, online sources, …?)

Usually not for reading. Sometimes yes, but only for a few students, for example when they are done with an exercise early. But usually not.

Do your students read aloud during classes?

Yes, they do.

On the other hand, do they have a space for silent reading during classes?

Yes, but only exceptionally. Students often do not pay attention to the text. It just does not pay off.

Do you work with electronic sources during reading classes?

No.

Has the quarantine changed the attitude to reading for your students?

I do not know.

How have you practised reading during online learning?

In the first year, reading was usually voluntary, and it worked only with some of the students, as some of them just did not read. In the second year, I gave students texts,

they read alone and then answered some questions. That year I used online texts, and we worked with text more than before. But usually, they were handed shorter texts.

In your opinion, is there a place in the timetable for a reading session for students?

I do not know, but I doubt it. Maybe for Czech reading, but for English probably not. It would be really hard for students who do not read.

Do you have a school library?

Yes, we do. But it is quite small.

Are you familiar with "readers" (simplified versions of classic literature)?

Yes, I am.

Are "readers" available in your school's library?

They are not in the library, however, they are in the language teachers' office.

Do or did you ever use "readers" in your classroom?

Yes, during the online lessons.

If so, with what success? (Do/Did students enjoy using "readers" in classes?)

I think the students liked it.

Do you encourage students to use "readers" in their free time?

Yes, especially the bilingual books.

Are students creating a reading journal for English classes?

Not in English, but in Czech they do.

Appendix 4: Transcript of interview with Teacher 3

Interview 3

How many years have you been teaching?

I have five years of practice overall but at this school, this is my third year of teaching.

How many students do you have in class/study group on average?

Thirteen students, they are taught simultaneously even though they are in different grades.

Do your students enjoy reading in classes?

Altogether yes, they especially like reading in the Czech language. We usually do not read from books but from shorter texts with topics that are related to the lesson.

Have you noticed a change in the popularity of reading among your students throughout your career? (How did it change?)

I do not see any difference, but I am probably not in this career long enough to judge that.

Do you work with textbooks during reading classes?

Minimally, usually not.

What textbooks are you currently using in your classes?

Chit Chat and Project. Chit Chat for the third and the fourth year, Project for the fifth year.

How old are your current textbooks?

Some of them were recently exchanged, and last year were updated textbooks for the fifth grade. Some of the textbooks are fourteen years old but some of the textbooks are newer editions of these textbooks.

How often are your textbooks exchanged?

I do not know, I am not been long enough here to know that, but the fifth grade recently had their textbooks exchanged. I usually do not use textbooks. Because of

the arrangement of the class, I do not have the time to work with each grade with their textbooks. However, they often speak, write, read and do listening exercises.

Are you satisfied with the reading section of your textbooks?

Not really.

Is there anything you would change? In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using textbooks during reading classes?

I really miss longer, more comprehensive texts. For example, for seasons or holidays. In the textbooks, there are not many thematic texts for reading comprehension practice.

Do you use other reading sources for students during classes? (Magazines, online sources, …?)

I use online sources, and older magazines I have. I use some web sources where there are shorter texts in English. These texts have different levels of difficulty.

Do your students read aloud during classes? On the other hand, do they have a space for silent reading during classes?

Yes, mostly yes. Younger students usually read aloud. Older students sometimes have independent activities, where they have to read a text silently and then either translate it or have some exercise for reading comprehension added to the text.

Has the quarantine changed the attitude to reading for your students?

 I don't think so.

How have you practised reading during online learning?

Usually, students read the text by themselves and then together we completed exercises based on the text.

In your opinion, is there a place in the timetable for a reading session for students?

No, especially because I work with young students.

Do you have a school library?

We have a small class library.

Are you familiar with "readers"?

Yes, I am.

Are "readers" available in your school's library?

No.

Did you ever use "readers" in your classroom?

No, I did not.

Are students creating a reading journal for English classes?

No.

Appendix 5: Transcript of interview with Teacher 4

Interview 4

How many years have you been teaching?

I have been teaching for about twenty-five years.

How many students do you have in class/study group on average?

It varies, from fifteen to twenty-seven.

Do your students enjoy reading in classes?

Yes, I think they do.

Have you noticed a change in the popularity of reading among your students throughout your career? (How did it change?)

I do not think it changed much. Students, who like to read, read, and those, who do not, do not read anything.

Do students, in your opinion, prefer paper or electronic versions of books?

I think that if students read, they read mostly paper versions of books.

Have you ever had a lesson dedicated only to reading? (Or is reading usually just a part of a lesson?)

It is usually a part of a lesson.

Do you work with textbooks during reading classes?

Yes, we do.

What textbooks are you currently using in your classes?

We use Project.

How old are your current textbooks?

They are approximately six years old, we have some older editions, it depends on the grade.

How often are your textbooks exchanged?

About every ten years.

Are you satisfied with the reading section of your textbooks?

Mostly yes.

Is there anything you would change? What would you change?

There are some texts that are quite low in quality. Also, some of the reading sections are too simple for students and some comic sections take up a lot of space without much merit. Some of the texts are too artificial.

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using textbooks during reading classes?

I think that some teachers rely too much on textbooks but they are a good asset with all of the exercises together that can be supplemented with other exercises.

Do you use other reading sources for students during classes? (Magazines, online sources, …?)

Yes, next to electronic textbooks that are available with paper versions, I use other online sources.

Do your students read aloud during classes?

Yes, they do.

On the other hand, do they have a space for silent reading during classes?

Yes.

Has the quarantine changed the attitude to reading for your students?

I do not think so. The students who liked reading before, still read. But I think it changed students' attitude to learning altogether. Some of them enjoyed online schooling, but some of them really missed those two years and it affected them negatively.

How have you practised reading during online learning?

Mostly reading as an individual activity and then exercises related to the text.

In your opinion, is there a place in the timetable for a reading session for students?

No, I do not think there is and if there was the time it would be dedicated to more advanced students.

Do you have a school library?

Yes, we have a small school library.

Are you familiar with "readers"?

Yes, I am.

Are "readers" available in your school's library?

No, but the teachers have them available for students who want to read them.

Do or did you ever use "readers" in your classroom?

No, I did not.

Do you encourage students to use "readers" in their free time?

I have them available for students, but it depends on their interest, I do not force them to read Readers.

Are students creating a reading journal for English classes?

No.

Appendix 6: Transcript of interview with Teacher 5

Interview 5

How many years have you been teaching?

I have been teaching for five years.

How many students do you have in class/study group on average?

Approximately fifteen students, but it differed. In some groups, there were more students, in some groups less.

Do your students enjoy reading in classes?

No, I do not think so.

Have you noticed a change in the popularity of reading among your students throughout your career? (How did it change?)

I did not.

Do students in your opinion prefer paper or electronic versions of books?

Probably electronic versions, but students rarely focus for longer periods of time.

Have you ever had a lesson dedicated only to reading? (Or is reading usually just a part of a lesson?)

No.

Do you work with textbooks during reading classes?

Yes.

What textbooks are you currently using in your classes?

I was using the fourth edition of Project.

How old are your current textbooks?

These textbooks were exchanged in 2018 or 2019.

How often are your textbooks exchanged?

They were exchanged when I came to the school, but before that, the teachers used textbooks that were published in 1998.

Are you satisfied with the reading section of your textbooks?

Yes, I am.

Is there anything you would change? What would you change?

I think there should be more exercises and less text in the reading section.

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using textbooks during reading classes?

As an advantage, I think that textbooks are used as a support for teachers, an asset they can use. However, some teachers can start using textbooks as a crutch. As another disadvantage, I would see the excess of some exercises.

Do your students read aloud during classes?

Yes, they do.

On the other hand, do they have a space for silent reading during classes?

Yes.

Do you work with electronic sources during reading classes?

No, I do not use them.

Do you have a school library?

Yes, there is a school library at the school.

Are you familiar with "readers" (simplified versions of classic literature)?

Yes.

Are "readers" available in your school's library?

No, they are not.

Are students creating a reading journal for English classes?

No.

Appendix 7: Transcript of interview with Teacher 6

Interview 6

How many years have you been teaching?

I have been teaching for twenty-four years.

How many students do you have in class/study group on average?

In each group, there are twenty to twenty-four students.

Do your students enjoy reading in classes?

I hope yes.

Have you noticed a change in the popularity of reading among your students throughout your career? (How did it change?)

Yes, I have. Students like reading more, especially in school, as we use better materials for extensive reading nowadays.

Do students in your opinion prefer paper or electronic versions of books?

In my opinion, paper books.

Have you ever had a lesson dedicated only to reading? (Or is reading usually just a part of a lesson?)

Reading is normally a part of my lessons.

Do you work with textbooks during reading classes?

Yes, I do.

What textbooks are you currently using in your classes?

Project.

How old are your current textbooks?

About five to ten years.

How often are your textbooks exchanged?

They are exchanged every ten years.

Are you satisfied with the reading section of your textbooks?

Yes, I am.

Is there anything you would change? What would you change?

I would not change anything.

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of using textbooks during reading classes?

I do not know.

Do you use other reading sources for students during classes? (Magazines, online sources, …?)

Yes, we do. Magazines, Help for English, fairytales and so on.

Do your students read aloud during classes?

Yes, they do.

On the other hand, do they have a space for silent reading during classes?

Yes, they do.

Do you work with electronic sources during reading classes?

Yes, we do.

Has the quarantine changed the attitude to reading for your students?

Maybe, I do not know.

How have you practised reading during online learning?

We used to read articles from our textbooks every lesson.

In your opinion, is there a place in the timetable for a reading session for students?

No, there isn´t.

Do you have a school library?

No, we don´t.

Are you familiar with "readers"?

No, I am not.

Are students creating a reading journal for English classes?

No.

Resumé

Diplomová práce je zaměřená na učení čtení ve výuce anglického jazyka a na vliv učebnic, které učitelé používají i k učení čtení. Teoretická část této práce se zaměřuje na čtení jako dovednost, výuku této dovednosti a pomůcky, které se k výuce čtení mohou používat. V praktické části se tato diplomová práce zaměřuje na analýzu šesti rozhovorů s učiteli, které byly provedeny v rámci výzkumu, a na popis výuky čtení v učebnicích, které tito učitelé používají ve výuce čtení. Tato práce se také zaměřuje na porovnání teorií o výuce čtení s praxí učitelů na různých základních školách v České republice.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Bc. Marie Žváčková
Katedra nebo ústav:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Josef Nevařil, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2022
Název práce:	Učení čtení v učebnicích anglického jazyka
Název v angličtině:	Reading in English language textbooks
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce se zabývá výukou čtení v hodinách anglického jazyka. Teoretická část práce se zabývá teorií výuky čtení a použití učebnic ve výuce anglického jazyka. Praktická část porovnává teorii s praxí učitelů a popisuje učebnice, které tito učitelé používají. Popis těchto učebnic se zaměřuje na cvičení, které jsou zaměřeny na rozvoj dovednosti čtení.
Klíčová slova:	anglický jazyk, čtení, rozvoj dovednosti čtení, učení, učebnice anglického jazyka, výuka čtení, výukové materiály
Anotace v angličtině:	This diploma thesis deals with teaching reading in English language lessons. The theoretical part of this thesis deals with the theory of teaching reading and using textbooks in English language lessons. The practical part of this thesis compares the theoretical background with the practice of teachers and describes textbooks that these teachers use during their English lessons. The description of these textbooks is focused on exercises that are aimed at the development of reading skills.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	English language, reading, development of reading skills, teaching, English language textbooks, teaching reading, teaching materials
Přílohy vázané v práci:	20 s.
Rozsah práce:	85 s.; 110 368 znaků (vlastní rozsah práce)
Jazyk práce:	Anglický jazyk