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POUŽITÍ ANGLICKÝCH TEXTŮ VE VÝUCE ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA

Zuzana Janáčková

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Faculty of Education

Department of English

Thesis

ENGLISH TEXTS IN ENGLISH TEACHING

Zuzana Janáčková

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Zadání DP

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

V Plzni 26. 4. 2013

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Zuzana Janáčková

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ABSTRACT

Bc. Janáčková Zuzana, University of West Bohemia, April 2013. *název* . Supervisor: Mgr. Gabriela Klečková, Ph.D.

This thesis deals with written authentic materials and their use in English teaching. It is divided into two main parts. The theoretical part provides essential information about authentic materials in general, their classification and both advantages and disadvantages of their use. The thesis presents a closer look at reading skills and reading strategies followed by a section desribing the criteria for selecting an appropriate written authentic material. The research part deals with the difficulty, ie. readability, of chosen written authentic materials. This chapter consists of three main parts. First of all, the texts were analyzed by an online program for evaluating text readability called the Lexile Analyzer. Then, these texts were analyzed by professional teachers teaching at primary schools. Finally, the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer and those carried out by the teachers were compared. Futhermore, the teachers were also asked to assess the texts in terms of theirs suitablity for English teaching. Their comments are stated. These results and comments are accompanied by teachers´ statements on using authentic materials for English classes and explaining what criteria they take into considerations when choosing them. Finally, the impact on students language performance is discussed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The title of the thesis is called English texts in English teaching. But since there are many types of texts that can be used in teaching L2 or foreign language, the author of the thesis decided to focused on written English authentic materials.

For many years, a huge amount of researches and surveys have been carried out in order to improve both the learning and teaching processes. In other words, researches tried to find out new ways and approaches that would enable students make their L2 or foreign language acquisition better, faster and more interesting. Teachers themselves also called for new methods and approaches that would be suitable for classroom purposes and which would enrich the teaching process. More and more, authentic materials came to the fore. Many researchers in the field of linguistics started to urge a change in the teaching process and recommend use of authentic materials as a source of real language. How the authentic materials may enrich and facilitate the L2 acquisiton and how difficult and challenging the authentic materials are, is the topic of this thesis. The main objective of the thesis is the comparison of analysis generated by the Lexile Analyzer and those carried out by professional teachers in term of text readability.

In the first part of the Theoretical background chapter the thesis deals with a brief introduction into the authentic materials. It is described what the authentic materials are. Definitions and explanations of several well-known and respected researchers and linguists are presented. The next sections concentrates on the classification of authentic materials in general. Further on, the possible advantages and disadvantages of using such materials are presented. Next, the reading skills and reading strategies used and developed when reading are explained. Finally, the chapter focuses on the criteria for selecting an appropriate written authentic material for teaching L2 or a foreign language.

In the next chapter, the online tool for evaluating text readability , ie. The Lexile Analyzer, is presented. It is explained what the Lexile framework for reading is, how it works, if and how the Lexile measure can be connected to grades, and finally the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer are presented and explained.

In the reseach methodology chapter the selected written authentic materials are desribed and the method used for their evaluation is explained. The chapter is followed by the results and commentaries chapter. In this chapter, the outcomes of the research are

presented using tables and graphs for better understanding. The chapter is followed by the implications for English teachers in terms of considerations if and how to choose authentic materials for their classes and what criteria should be taken into consideration. Finally, in the conclusion chapter the main ideas of the entire thesis are reviewed.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The objective of the theoretical chapter is to provide information about the authentic materials. First, it is explained what the authentic materials are. Explanations and definitions of several professionals in the field of linguistics are stated. Then, the classification of authentic materials is presented. This chapter is followed by stating the advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials for English teaching purposes. Further on, the reading skills and reading strategies that may be developed using written authentic materials with regard to possible difficulties in English learging and L2 acquisition are introduced and defined. Next, the criteria for selecting an appropriate written authentic materials are explained. Finally, this chapter mentions some pieces of information on testing reading as well.

Introduction into Authentic Materials

In language teaching, there are many approaches and methods leading to students` second language acquisition. The purpose of those methods and approaches is to prepare students to be able to use a foreign or second language accurately and properly. For this reason many sources of the target language are used. Among the other sources, it is highly recommended to use the authentic materials in order to provide students with the benefits they get from being exposed to the language in such materials (Oura, 2012).

This is the point when the first problem or inconvenience for a teacher may appear. There are many references to authentic materials and their definitions in the ELT literature. Sometimes, those definitions differ from each other in the very basis. For better understanding of the term "authentic material" several definitions and their authors are to be mentioned.

First of all, the author of the thesis decided to mention one of the most common definitions of authentic materials: "Sometimes called "authentic" or "contextualized," real-life materials are those that a student encounters in everyday life but weren't created for educational purposes. They may include newspapers, magazines, Web sites, as well as prescription labels, clothing labels, driving manuals, or utility bills." (Rose, 2007, para. 1).

Alejandro G. Martinez (2002), a publishing consultant and the coordinator of

academic services for Cambridge University Press in the Spanish Speaking America and an author of many articles concerning language teaching, deals with an analysis of authentic materials, their definitions and sources as well as advantages and disadvantages of their use.

Martinez (2002) mentions the point of view of Henry G. Widdowson, an authority in the field of applied linguistics and language teaching. Widdowson points out the difference between the terms «authentic» and «genuine material». He explains that authentic materials are those designed for native speakers of English that have not been changed in any way, whereas the genuine materials are intented for foreign language learners and therefore adapted to meet the current specific needs when used in English language classes. Being aware of the difference, Widdoswon considers the choice of materials used in class: "It has been traditionally supposed that the language presented to learners should be simplified in some way for easy access and acquisition. Nowadays there are recommendations that the language presented should be authentic" (Widdowson 1990:67).

As mentioned before, using authentic materials, if exploited appropriately, may provide students with several important benefits in different fields of study: linguistics (practice of grammatical structures, phonology helping with pronunciation) semantics (extension of the range of vocabulary, practicing of how meaning is inferred from words and concepts), pragmatics (practicing of how meaning is inferred from context) and cultural studies (life and culture in English speaking countries) (Oura, 2012).

Students are exposed to real life situations with real life discourse. Those real life situations are unsolicited, spontaneous, natural and covering a wide spectrum of levels of formality and genres. Such materials can be used several times under different circumstances, each time practicing various aspects of language. Using such materials may positively motivate students in furhter studying. And last but not least, exposing students to real life language can shorten the distance between the learners and the target language used in reality (Oura, 2012).

As usually, there are always two sides to every coin and some disadvantages of using authentic materials exist as well. The teachers must be aware of a cultural gap and cultural differences that may make the comprehension and acquisition process of learning more difficult. Some words, for instance, may not be understood outside a certain

community. Another issue that needs to be taken into consideration is the students` immediate need of certain vocabulary. Those must be included in such material, otherwise such authentic material loses its purpose.

However, even if students do no comprehend every single word or every grammatical structure, they can still benefit from being exposed to this language source.

Classification of Authentic Materials

As mentioned above, using authentic materials is highly recommended in ELT, no matter how old the learners are or what aspect of the target language is to be taught. Such exposure is becoming more and more attractive to language experts, classroom practitioners and learners themselves.

Once again, it has to be repeated that the problem of „authenticity" has been much discussed. For better comprehension, the author decided to state one more definiton of what an authentic material is. Mr. Jeremy (Peter Hedley) Harmer, a teacher, a teacher trainer, and an author of books and articles for both teachers and students of English as a foreign or second language stated a very clear definition. In Harmer`s point of view the "authentic texts (either written or spoken) are those which are designed for native speakers: They are real text designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language in question".

If teachers decide to introduce authentic materials in language teaching, they need to classify them first in order to meet his or her objectives of the lesson. The teachers need to be aware of the different types of such materials since some of them are suitable for the teaching of reading or listening which are receptive skills whereas some of them are more suitable and effective for the teaching of speaking or writing, means the productive skills. And some of them are suitable for teaching and developing grammatical structures or vocabulary. The authentic materials can be classified as follows (as cited in Gebhard, 1996, Lingzhu, J. And Yuanyuan, Z., 2010):

1. Authentic Listening/ Viewing Materials – such as TV commercials, quiz shows, cartoons, movies, professionally audio-taped short stories and songs, documentaries, or sales pitches.

2. Authentic Visual Materials – such as slides, photographs, paintings, wordless street signs, pictures from magazines, postcard pictures, or wordless picture books.

3. Authentic Printed Materials – such as newspaper articles, movie advertisements, astrology columns, sports reports, advice columns, lyrics to songs, restaurant menus, street signs, cereal boxes, tourist information brochures, university catalogs, telephone books, TVguides, comic books, pins with messages, or bus schedules.

4. Realia ("Real world" objects) Used in EFL/ ESL Classrooms – such as coins and currency, folded paper, wall clocks, phones, Halloween masks, dolls, and puppets, to name a few. (Realia are often used to illustrate points very visually or for role-play situations.)

The thesis focuses mainly on written authentic materials used to improve especially reading skills. According to the classification above, those are the printed materials mentioned above.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Authentic Materials

Advantages of using authentic materials

In the stage of planning the lesson the extra time has to be spent if a teacher decides to involve authentic materials. There is no doubt it is well worth it, since the use of authentic materials is a valuable source of language input. A few advantages have already been mentioned above. Now, they are to be presented structuraly and in more details.

The advantages of using such materials can be divided into three main groups: exposing students to real language, stimulating and increasing students motivation and accumulating students` knowledge (Lingzhu, J. And Yuanyuan, Z., 2010).

The most important aspect of choosing those materials is to provide students with a natural language. Authentic materials include a wide variety of text types and language styles, from a very formal style, such as legal documents, to less formal, such as newspaper articles, to colloquial language, such as comic books. Such styles are sometimes very difficult to find in traditional teaching materials. As the thesis focuses on written authentic materials there is one important aspect that needs to be mentioned, a possibility for students to see the differences between spoken and written language, mainly the differences in grammatical and stylictic features. Concerning the grammatical structures, the sentences in written authentic materials are very well-formed with few if any mistakes,

which gives the students a possibility of acquiring language structures in a natural way. Furthermore, appropriate materials can always be found for all levels. Authentic materials can be used for practicing a large variety of skills. In accordance with the students` level and their immediate needs the authentic materials may practice both mini-skills, such as scanning or scimming, and micro-skills.

Another topic the ELT literature deals with is the constant motivation during language teaching. Once the motivation dicreases or is lost the acqustion process become much harder. If possible, topics of students` interests should be included. Such topics may encourage reading for pleasure and makes learning more enjoyable. The topics should be those that create a bridge between the classroom and the world beyond it. And last but not least, using authentic materials can decrease the level of anxiety when students faxe new situations in target language.

Finaly, in accordance with learning for global understading, the topics taught at school should always relate to the real world outside the class. The objective of each subjet should be the accumulation of students` knowledge, their connection between each other and the connection between the school and the real world. Using authentic materials can extend the students` knowledge in different fields of human life, such as culture, politics or fashion. It provides useful information concerning communication and understanding across cultures, it may help to facilitate cultural adaptation or it may help them to true up their world knowledge as a whole. In general, it keeps students informed about what is happing in the world (Lingzhu, J. And Yuanyuan, Z., 2010).

Disadvantages of using authentic materials

Several research studes have been done in order to reveal the possible disadvantages of authentic matierials. There may appear some inconveniences both for students and for teachers.

Concerning the students` point of view, the amount of information included in such materials may cause several problems. First of all the vocabulary may not meet the students` immediate or specific needs. Some of them may get into troubles with unfamiliar words, phrases or idiomatic expressions. Students may get stressed out because of the amount of various grammatical structures they have never seen before.

Concerning the teachers´ point of view, the use of authentic materials in ELT could be very time consuming. Another reason for avoiding such materials may be the teachers` uncertainty about finding appropriate authentic materials that will fit the needs of the lesson (Martinez, 2002, Berardo, 2006).

Reading Skills and Reading Strategies

For the purposes of this thesis the written authentic materials have been chosen. Therefore, a brief describtion of this language skill, ie. reading, must be stated. First of all, this section is to deal with what reading skills are, what approaches and reading strategies towards improvement of those skills are, significant difficulties that may appear in reading skills acquisition and possible solutions to such difficulties or inconvenience. Finaly, this part is to deal with the principles lurking behind teaching reading.

Secondly, the section is to focus on different text types which can be specified along a number of parameters, such as type, form, topic, style, etc.; and the criteria for selecting an appropriate written authentic material (Hughes, 2003).

What is Reading

Reading is one of the receptive skills, together with listening. The most obvious difference between these two receptive skills is to do with the fact that in a reading activity students can control the speed they work at and they have a visual support they are looking at. Reading is a complex process of using several skills simultaneously (Harmer, 2001). These skills help students mainly with reducing uncertainty about meanings a text conveys and reading the written form as meaningful language, secondly it helps students with reading with comprehension and fluency, and finaly with interacting with the message of that particular written material (Harmer, 2001, Berardo, 2006).

In order to reduce confusion for students, the two expressions namely "reading skills" and "reading strategies" have to be explained. An explanation taken from the "The Literacy Dictionary" (Harris & Hodges, 1995) states the difference as follows:
"skill: an acquired ability to perform well; proficiency (p. 235)
strategy: in education, a systematic plan, consciously adapted and monitored, to improve one's performance in learning (p. 244)"

Obviously, teachers want their students to distinguish one from another and to acquire both of them. The objective in ELT is for students to automaticaly apply and use reading skills and secondly to intentionally and effortfully employ the reading strategies.

The comprehension skills are acquired by teaching students to use specific cognitive strategies according to what type of written authentic material they have to face. Another important aspect of acquiring both reading skills and reading strategies is a clear specification of a reading goal, such as finding particular grammatical structure or idendifying specific words or expressions that relate to a particular topic.

A student can be recognized as skilled one or as strategic one. A skilled student uses a wide range of processes to make reading go work smoothly. A strategic student is flexible and adaptable to different circumstances, and is able to choose the right strategy and use it accurately and automaticaly to overcome any temporary obstacles the student might ecounter. In simple words, the student has to identify the problem and fix it (National Capital Language Resource Center, n.d.).

Reading Skills

There are four main types of reading skills used in language teaching. Those are skimming, scanning, extensive reading and intensive reading (Scrivener, 2005; Harmer, 2001, p. 69).

The first two reading skills are aimed to increase reading speed and both are top-down skills – from overview to details. The objective of skimming is to get the gist of the text. Skimming reading skill is related to finding key topics, main ideas, overall theme, basic structure, etc. On the other hand, scanning is focused on details, searching for key words or specific individual pieces of information (Scrivener, 2005; Harmer, 2001).

Extensive reading, used in everyday life, means fluent, faster reading, very often of longer texts. The purpose of this type of reading is to read for pleasure, entertainment and general understanding. In this type of reading the readers do not focus very much on details. On the contrary, the intensive reading involves reading texts very carefully with paying attention to as many details as possible (Scrivener, 2005; Harmer, 2001, p. 69).

Reading Strategies

There are different strategies for developing reading skills. They are all focused on the main objective of reading tasks and activities, i. e. comprehension. According to Brenda Power, a former professor at the University of Maine and an editor at Stenhouse Publisher, and other researchers and practinioners in the field of linguistics, such as Pearson, P. David, L.R. Roehler, J.A. Dole, and G.G. Duffy, there is a core set of seven reading strategies. The strategies are as follows: activating background knowledge making connections between new and known information, drawing interferences, questioning the text, determining importance, creating mental images, repairing understanding when meaning breaks down and synthesizing information (Brenda Power, 2007).

Activating background knowledge. It means to make a connection between something the readers already know and new information from the text. The readers are asking themselves questions such as: "What does it remind me? Have I ever heard about it before? Does it ring the bell?" The readers connect the information derived from the text with pieces of information such as their past experiences, people, other articles, etc. (Brenda Power, 2007).

Drawing interferences. Another important reading strategy is inferring. Not only do readers use their prior knowledge about the topic to connect it to the new information, but to make conclusion and predictions as well. Advanced readers should be capable to identify important information, analyse them, relate them to their prior knowledge and make predictions about what might happen next (Brenda Power, 2007).

Questioning the text. Another useful tool, intended especially for proficient readers, is always asking questions not only while reading a text but before and after reading it as well. The purpose is clear. The readers are focusing on better understanding both of the text and its topic and of the author of the text himself/herself. This may facilitate the readers to interpret the main important pieces of informatin or to make a summary of the text when asked to do so. Advanced readers are also trying to find out what they can learn from the piece of written material on thier own (Brenda Power, 2007).

Determining importance. In order to avoid drowning in the sea of information and words the readers have to be able to plough through and prioritize both of them. Clues such as headings, bold print or pictures may help them to identify the main ideas (Brenda Power, 2007).

Creating mental images. It refes to a spontaneous process in reading. Readers create pictures in their minds, they visualize actions, characters, events or themes. This procerude is called meaning-making process (Brenda Power, 2007).

Repairing understanding when meaning breaks down. Under no circumstance would proficient readers continue with reading if they do not comprehend a sentence or a part of the text. Such readers would stop and use one of the so called "fix-up" strategies to restore their understanding and only after that would they resume. An example of such fix-up tools is rereading. There are several ways to reread the text in order to fix the meaning (Brenda Power, 2007).

Synthesizing information. It is the most sophisticated comprehension strategy. In this procedure readers combine three above mentioned strategies, namely connecting, questioning and inferring. The purpose of this strategy is to make readers to move from comprehending the text to interpreting the ideas to integrating them into their lives and world view (Brenda Power, 2007).

Difficulties when reading in a foreign language

Whenever a student is reading an authentic material in a foreign language, several difficulties may appear. The comprehension problems may be broken down into several minor problems. The first one relates to students range of vocabulary. Students are very usually confronted with a wide range of unfamiliar words and they suffer from lack of vocaluray. Therefore they may have a feeling they need to use dictionary all the time (Scrivener, 2005) .

Next problem is closely connected with the first one mentioned above, the reading is very slow because of using the dictionary very often (Scrivener, 2005).

Another difficulty in reading an authentic material might be the comprehension of the entire text. Students often get to the stage where they understand all the individual words but the meaning of the whole sentence or text does not make sense to them (Scrivener, 2005).

And finaly, as a result of all the difficulties or inconveniences mentioned, students very usually loose the pleasure and interest in what they read and learn (Scrivener, 2005).

The teachers` objective is not only to teach their students how to successfully acquire both reading skills and reading strategies in order to improve and make the acqusition of foreign language faster, but it is also positive motivation so that students do not loose the interest in the subject. For this purpose, possible solutions for these problems were suggested by Scrivener (2005).

Many students assume that unless they understand every single word they will not comprehend the message of an entire text. The approach of clumsy word-by-word learning unables them to improve their understanding of grammar and to extend their range of vocabulary. However, this is not a way of reading in our everyday lives. Therefore, teachers should explain their students that it is not really necessary and essential to understand every word to make the text comprehensible and clear to them. Furthermore, if their current leargning technique is not suitable or useful to them anymore or if they consider the technique to be insufficient, a good approach is to use some different reading techniques (Scrivener, 2005).

And if their strategy is to read slowly in order to catch as many details of the text as possible, then it is recommended to learn how to read faster, to simulate everyday reading. Teachers should raise their awareness and explain that is not awlays essential to comprehend all the word, but still achieve the learning goal, which is, in most cases, to get the main message of the text (Scrivener, 2005).

Criteria for Selecting an Appropriate Written Authentic Material and Sources of Authentic Materials

Sources of Authentic Materials

There is an infinite scope of materials that can be used for the language classroom purposes. The most common ones are newspapers, magazines and literature for teaching reading, and TV programs, movies and songs for teaching listening. One of the most useful sources is the Internet since the information stated there is continuously updated and therefore appropriate, modern and interesting both for students and for teachers. The Internet provides the teachers with huge amounts of many different types of material. Because of an easy access to this particular source of information students are given a possibiity to study and ecounter real language and content also outside the

classroom (Berardo, 2006).

Criteria for Selecting an Appropriate Written Authentic Material

According to Nuttall (1982, p. 25) there are three main criteria for selecting texts to be used for pedagogical purposes, those are suitability of content, expolitability and readability.

Suitability. The suitability of content is usually considered to be the most crucial of them all. The texts chosen for classroom purposes should elicit students´ interest and draw their attention. And, with no doubt, it should be relevant to their needs. Finally, teachers should ask themselves a question wheter the texts represent the type of materials that can be used by students outside the classroom as well (Nuttall, 1982).

Exploitability. On the other hans, exploitability refers to the possible use of the text in order to develop the students´ reading competence. Unless the text can be exploited for teaching purposes it has no use in the course. Teachers must be aware of using no matter what material just because it is in English since it does not mean it can be appropriate and useful for the particular teaching purposes. When exploiting the text, teachers have to consider what skill/strategies can be developed.

Readability. Last, readability describes the combination of lexical and structural difficulty of chosen authentic material. It is necessary to decide wheter the text is not too difficult or, on the contrary, too easy for students. It also refers to the amount of new vocabulary and its relevance to students´ needs. Grammatical patterns present in the text have to be assessed as well. Teachers have to know whether the text is as demanding/complex as needed. Concerning readability, one of the most important tasks for teachers is to assess the right level for their students.

Talking about factors worth taking into consideration when selecting authentic material for teaching purposes, Nuttall adds one more aspect: presentation. By this aspect, he means the presentation of a variety of texts to avoid students to get bored by dealing with the same type of material over and over again. The more attractive the text is the more interested the students are. This can be obtained by using pictures, diagrams, photographs and other additional aids. Such attactive materials appeal to students and, what is very important, they motivate them in further learning.

There are many researchers that deal with the use of authentic materials in English language teaching. Apart from Nuttall, Augustina (2009) is another linguists that deals with implementing authentic materials for teaching reading in English classrooms. She mentions the point of view of Valensi et al (1994), stating that there are the folowing factors which teachers have to take into account when using an authentic material for their courses. Those are interest, the purpose of language learning, cultural appropriateness, the language level and the quality of the materials.

As mentioned previously, authentic materials are not intended for classroom purposes. Therefore teachers have to be extremely cautious to ensure the topic meets needs and interest of a specific group of students. The goal of language learning has to be taken into account as well. Teachers should decide what authentic material to choose depending on different purpose of English learning. If the students need English only for limited purposes such as communicating only within their country, the scope and type of such materials would be totaly different than those for students who want to extend their range of knowledge by studying abroad. Concerning cultural appropriateness, teachers have to evaluate the level of students´ backgroud cultural knowledge since explaining the cultural information used in chosen authentic material may take up a lot of class time, the time that is needed for performing the actual tasks. As the teachers have to face the different language levels of their students, from beginners to advanced learners, they have to choose a text whose message will be comprehensible to their students and which enables them to interact with the text. However, it is recommended to choose a text that is slightly above the students´ present level of knowledge in order to sustain their motivation. If the text level was too low, the students would easily get bored and loose their motivation in learning. On the other hand, if the text was too difficult the students would not learn much from it. Furthermore, the chosen text may include colloquialisms, metaphores, hidden or ambiguous meaning, or idioms. Such materials are highly recommended to be used only with advanced learners not beginners. And final important aspect for Agustina (2009) is the quality of the chosen authentic material. It may sometimes happen that some materials are full of spelling mistakes and errors. This is the reason why teachers should always check the chosen text to ensure the text is grammatically and lexically correct. Furthermore, the overall layout of the text should not be disturbing at all. The structure of the text, the pictures, diagrams, etc. or the colours used should be in balance to harmonize the overall

impression of the text. The only exception of use texts with errors is for teaching editing and revision of written materials. Those can be used to improve and practice the critical analysis and fluency practice, but once again only with advanced learners.

Testing Reading

In order to be able to choose an appropriate written authentic material not only for teaching but for testing reading skills as well, teachers have to take into consideration not only the criteria mentioned above but also several text features. According to Hughes (2008) the text can be specified with different criteria, those are text type, form, graphic features (Does the text include pictures, graphs, charts etc. and will these graphic elements help my students when they are reading the text?) , topic (Do I considered the text content to be usefull to my student? Does the text suppose my student to have prior knowledge about the topic?), style, intended readership, readibility or difficulty, range of vocabulary (Does the text include the vocabulary that my students are familiar with?) and grammatical structure.

III. THE LEXILE ANALYZER

The Lexile Framework for Reading

As mentioned in the introduction, the thesis deals with analyzing written authentic materials. The readability is the aspect from which the texts are analyzed. For the purpose of the thesis the authentic materials are to be analyzed both by experienced teachers and by a speciliazed computer program called The Lexile. The Lexile Framework for Reading has been developed for more than 20 years of research. The result of this research is a metric tool and scientific approach created by the renowned psychometric team at MetaMetrics®, an educational measurement and research organization, North Caroline, the USA, and is focud on improving education for learners of various fields of study and of all ages.

Nowadays, students are evaluated by different types of grade scores as well as by different types of assessments. These scores are intended to inform the students, the teachers and their parents about the proficiency in different content areas. However, they do not inform the teachers, or the parents, if the chosen reading material is appropriate for the student according to his/her reading ability. The Lexile program and its Lexile framework for reading are the most widely adopted reading tools which enable to measure both the reader´s ability and the text difficulty. It must be stated that the Lexile program is intended for native speakers. The Lexile enables to choose the best reading material based on matching the readers with the texts. It usually happens that students are provided with materials that correspond to their grade level. But their grade level may differ from their reading ability. An example of inappropriateness of providing reading materials only according to the student´s grade level and student´s age has been stated in the Lexile manual. A student in the fourth grade who likes reading science fiction books is given „*fourth-grade science fiction*" book to read. But his/her reading ability may be far too lower or, on the contrary, far too higher that the „average" student of his/her age or his/her reading ability and the text just does not fit the student´s needs. The purspose of selecting an appropriate reading material, as for this thesis an authentic reading material, is to satisfy and challenges the reading ability of each student. But the Lexile measures does not help only educators to select an appropriate written reading material, this tool helps the students as well. The students may use this tool individuallly in order to improve and strenghten

their reading skills by choosing the best book, newpaper article, etc. to fit their exact learning needs as well as to monitor their progress (The Lexile, 2013).

How the Lexile measure works

The Lexile Framework for reading is a metric tool related to the reading and measurement of reading materials. There are two Lexile measures called the Lexile reader measure, which represents the ability of the reader on a Lexile scale, and the Lexite text measure, which deals with the difficulty level of the chosen text on the Lexile scale. The higher the Lexile reader measure is the higher level of reading ability it represents. In order to obtain the Lexile reader measure, the students are usually tested by means of various comprehension tests. The reader´s score on the Lexile reader measure is reported as a number with an "L" afther it, with the letter representing the word Lexile. Both the Lexile reader measure and the Lexile text measure are shown on the same Lexile scale. The Lexile measure number below 200L represents the reading ability of beginning reader abbreviated as BR (Beginning reader), while the number above 1700L represents the reading ability of advanced readers and texts, with the highest number of the scale of 2000L. The lower the Lexile text measure is, the easier it is to comprehend, see Figure 1 below.
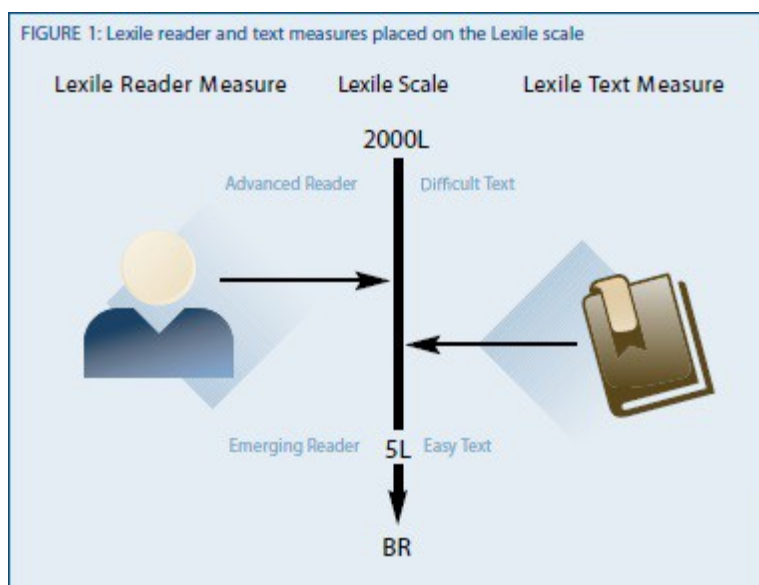

Figure 1: The Lexile reader and text mearues placed on the Lexile scale (The Lexile, 2013)
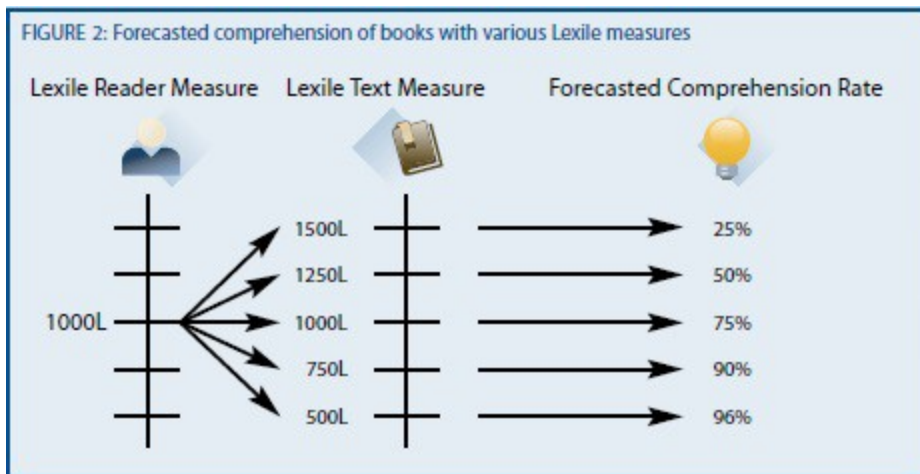
Figure 2: Forecasted comprehension of books with various Lexile measures (The Lexile, 2013)

The Lexile text measure and the Lexile reader measure can be used together in order to find out how well the reader will understand the chosen written material according to his/her reading ability and the text difficulty. The scale shows the so called "targeted" reading which represents the 75-percent comprehension rate, see Figure 2 below. It means that when the reader´s ability as well as the Lexile text measure is 1000L, the reader is likely to comprehend approximately 75 percent of the text. According to the Lexile measure, the students are recommended, if they choose the written materials themselves, to choose the reading materials 50L above to 100L the reader´s Lexile measure. If he/she decided to select the written material above his/her Lexile measure, it could happen that the level of challenge would be too high and the reader would not comprehend enough to construct the meaning of the text himself/herself.

It is necessary to state again that the Lexile measure does not evaluate the content or the quality of the written reading material. The assessment in based on two indicators that determine how difficult or, on the contrary, how easy the text is. Those are word frequency and sentence length. As mentioned in one of the previous sections (Criteria for selecting an appropriate authentic reading material), there are many other factors that influence the selection process of an appropriate text, such as a content of the text, the reader´s age, his/her interests, etc. All of these aspects must be taken into consideration when selecting the most appropriate written reading materials, ie. authentic reading materials as concerning this thesis.

The Lexile measure is recommended to be used as a tool for providing students with additional reading materials apart from the classroom textbooks. The textbooks, as the main sources not only for practicing and improving reading skills, but all the other skills as well, contain text that may not reach the reading ability of all the students in the class and the level of comprehension when reading the same text may differ a lot. Therefore, teachers may use additional reading materials well below the average Lexile measure in the class for weaker students. On the other hand, more experienced and skillful students may be provided with texts well above the average Lexile measure in the class (see Figure 3).
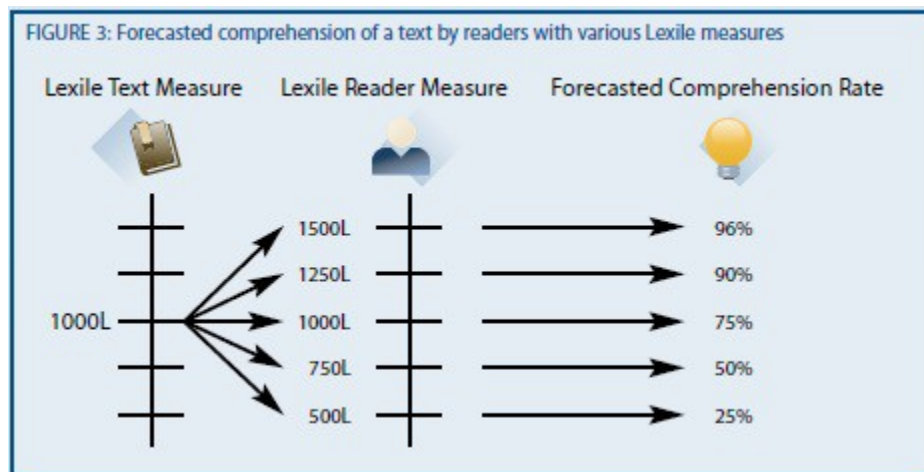
Figure 3: Forecasted comprehension of a text by readers with various Lexile measures (The Lexile, 2013)

As mentioned previously, the Lexile measure hepls teachers to evaluate the difficulty of written reading materials as well as monitoring the students´ progress over time. If a teacher finds out that the reading ability of his/her students does not grow over time, then supplemental reading instructions must be applied (The Lexile, 2013).

The connection between the Lexile and the Grade levels

As stated in the Lexile measure "there is no direct correspondence between a specific Lexile measure and a specific grade level. Within any classroom or grade, there will be a range of readers and a range of reading materials." (2013) Simply, it should not be assumed that all students in a certain grade classroom are reading at the same level.

Therefore the Lexile Framework for Reading has been developed to connect the readers with the most suitable texts, no matter which level the readers are reading at. MetaMetricy has dealt with both the Lexile reader measure and the Lexile text measure and tried to describe the reading ability of average reader/student of all grade levels. Nevertheless, these scales can serve for desctiptive purposes only since there exist no "typical" readers of a given grade level. Furthermore, these scale have been developed for an American school system with its 12 grade levels. The author decided to mention the grades and use them as a guide for the purposes of this thesis. In order to be able to use these grade levels, the author is to explain the American grade-level school system and transfer it into the Czech education system prior to mentioning the relationship between the Lexile and the Grade levels. The grade scale used by the Lexile Analyzer is intended for native speakers.

The American school system consists of 12 grades. These grades represent the 12 years of regular education, preceded by preschool education consisting of one or two years, and followed by higer, post-secondary education. The regular education is divided into there main level: elementary school, middle school and high school (U.S. Department of State). The table desribing the 12 grades follows.

Grade	School level	Age
1st grade		6 – 7
2nd grade		7 – 8
3rd grade	Elementary school	8 – 9
4th grade		9 – 10
5th grade		10 – 11
6th grade		11 – 12
7th grade	Middle school	12 – 13
8th grade		13 – 14
9th grade		14 – 15
10th grade		15 – 16
11th grade	High school	16 – 17
12th grade		17 – 18

Table 1: Correspondence of U.S. system of education and the Czech system of education (The Lexile 2013)

As may be seen from the above table, the American school system corresponds approximately to the Czech school system and is therefore suitable enough for the purposes of this thesis and the analysis it deals with.

Concerning the Czech system of education and foreign language teaching at primary schools, the requirements for teaching foreign languages stated in RVP are based on the The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, see Appendix 7) which describes the various levels of language proficiency. Education in a foreign language aims to achieve A2 level, further education in foreign language aims to achieve A1 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) (RVP, 2010, p. 21)

Based on the analysis of both the Lexile reader and text measures, the MetaMetrics compiled the following tables of typical Reader measures compared to the grade levels and the typical Text measures compared to the grade levels. The tables were created based on data coming from a national sample of students.

Grade	*Reader Measures, Mid-Year 25th percentile to 75th percentile (IQR)*
1	Up to 300L
2	140L to 500L
3	330L to 700L
4	445L to 810L
5	565L to 910L
6	665L to 1000L
7	735L to 1065L
8	805L to 1100L
9	855L to 1165L
10	905L to 1195L
11 and 12	940L to 1210L

Table 2: The Typical Reader measures (The Lexile, 2013)

The table above shows the Lexile number that represents the IQR (interquartile rate), ie. the middle 50 % of reader and text measures for all 12 grades. The lower number in each grade indicates the 25th percentile and the higher number indicates the 75th percentile of readers or texts. The reason for showing the range of 25 – 75 percent is that, in the research, the measure of 25 % of students was below the lower number as well as 25 % of students´s measure was ranked above the higher number.

Grade	Text Demand Study 2009 25th percentile to 75th percentile (IQR)	2012 CCSS Text Measures*
1	230L to 420L	190L to 530L
2	450L to 570L	420L to 650L
3	600L to 730L	520L to 820L
4	640L to 780L	740L to 940L
5	730L to 850L	830L to 1010L
6	860L to 920L	925L to 1070L
7	880L to 960L	970L to 1120L
8	900L to 1010L	1010L to 1185L
9	960L to 1110L	1050L to 1260L
10	920L to 1120L	1080L to 1335L
11 and 12	1070L to 1220L	1185L to 1385L

Table 3: The Typical Text Measures (The Lexile, 2013)
*COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH, LANGUAGE ARTS, APPENDIX A (ADDITIONAL INFORMATION), NGA AND CCSSO, 2012

In the table above, the first column indicates data of the research study carried out to analyze a set of textbooks intended to specific grades (MetaMetrics, 2009). The second column indicates data on the reading ability that students should achieve by the end of the 12th grade to be ready to continue studying at colleges or starting their future career. The data in the second column were developed based on the development of the Common Core

State Standards for English Language Arts in 2012. [1]

The results of the Lexile text measures analysis

As mentioned previously, the Lexile analyzer do not take into consideration neither the quality of the written material nor its content. Other aspects such as students´ age, their interests and so on must be evaluated by the teacher as well. The student´s motivation must be taken into account as well. The reason is that if a student is interested in one specific topic, he/she is likely to comprehend a text at a higher level than it is predicted by the Lexile. On the other hand, if students do not have background knowledge of a certain topic, the comprehension rate will decrease and will be lower than forecasted by the Lexile. Therefore, the Lexile Framework for Reading may serve as a good starting point for selecting an appropriate written material, but cannot be understood as a final tool in the text-selection process.

The Lexile Framework for Reading provides the text analysis based on the text complexity, ie. word frequency and sentence lenght. The Lexile Analyzer provided results in 4 categories. Those are the Lexile Measure, Mean Sentence Length, Mean Log Word Frequency and Word count. The analysis provided by the Lexile Analyzer is based on breaking the analyzed text down in order to evaluate its characteristics, ie. sentence lenght and word frequency, followed by information on the total number of words in the assigned text. The outcome of this analysis is the readability, ie. the difficulty, of the submitted text. "Longer sentence lengths and words of lower frequency lead to higher Lexile measures; shorter sentence lengths and words of higher frequency lead to lower Lexile measures." (Lennon, Burdick, 2004, p.5) An example of the Lexile Analyzer results is provided after

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[1]

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort that established a single set of clear educational standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts and mathematics that states voluntarily adopt. The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit bearing entry courses in two or four year college programs or enter the workforce. The standards are clear and concise to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of the expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics in school. (Common Core State Standards Initiave, 2012).

explanation of all four categories. The Lexile Analyzer provides the following explanation to each category:

Lexile measure - This value indicates the reading demand of the text in terms of the semantic difficulty and syntactic complexity. The Lexile scale generally ranges from 200L to 1700L, although actual Lexile measures can range from below zero to above 2000L.

Word Count - This value reflects the total number of words in the text that was analyzed. This number does not include headers, numbers, chapter headers, etc., as those types of things are not submitted through the Lexile Analyzer.

Mean Sentence Length - This value is the average length of a sentence in the text, based on the sentences that were analyzed. (Professional version only). The Mean Sentence Length refers to syntactic complexity.

Mean Log Word Frequency - This value is the logarithm of the number of times a word appears in each 5-million words of the MetaMetrics research corpus of 571-million words. The mean log word frequency is the average of all such values for words which appear in the text being analyzed. (Professional version only) It should be noted that word frequency is not the number of times a word appears in a specific passage, but the frequency of the word in the corpus of nearly 600-million words that is employed by the Lexile Analyzer. The Mean Log Word Frequency refers to the semantic difficulty.

Figure 4: Example results generated by the Lexile Analyzer (The Lexile, 2013)

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Evaluation of the chosen written materials

The author decided to choose five different texts to be evaluated both by the Lexile Analyzer and by five teachers.

All the five teachers involved in the resereach teach at primary schools in the Czech Republic. All the five teachers are female. Their age varies from approximately 30 to 42 years. All of them teach only the higher grades of primary schools, ie. from the 6th grade to the 9th grade. All the five teachers teach for at least five years, the most experienced of them teaches for more than 15 years. The teaching specialization of three of them is English – Czech, one of the teachers studied the specialization of Englich – physical education and the last teacher is specialized only in teaching English.

All five texts selected for the purposes of this research were retrieved from the Internet as the biggest source of authentic materials. The main criteria for selection was the the texts´ compliance with the RVP, ie. Framework Educational Programmes, for primary schools. The texts were chosen to fit the thematic range of primary school education of a foreign language. The topics mentioned in RVP are for instance home, family, leisure time activites, holidays, culture, society, etc. (RVP, 2010, p. 28). As the texts were analyzed by teachers of primary schools, the texts were chosen to fit teaching purposes at primary schools and therefore are not longer than one and a half page, since longer passages would be more suitable for more advanced learners.

The thesis deals with comparing the results carried out by the Lexile Analyzer and those carried out by the experienced teachers. The teachers were presented the chosen texts and they were asked to assess them in terms of the following factors: the readability, i.e. text difficulty (taking into consideration the grammatical structures and vocabulary) and the suitability of the content, ie. whether the text suits the teaching and learning purposes (taking into account the appropriateness according to the RVP, ie. Framework Educational Programmes, level of interest, etc.) All these factors have already been described in the section related to the criteria for selecting an appropriate written authentic material, they refer to the criteria stated by Nuttall (1996). The objective of the research is to find out whether the teachers meet the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer in terms of the text difficulty.

The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part concentrates on the readability, ie. the text difficulty. In this part, the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer and those made by the teachers are presented. Then the teachers were asked to evaluate the suitability of the chosen texts. These assessments can be done by the teachers only. The teachers assessments and their comments to each of the texts were compared and commented. The teachers were also asked whether they would use these texts in their classes and explain why, both for yes and no answers. They were also asked to determine for which grade the texts are suitable for the most and give reasons leading to their decisions.

In the second part of the research, the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer and those carried out by the teachers in terms of text difficulty are compared. The research focuses on the similarities or differences of the grades asssigned to each of the five authentic materials. After carrying out their own analysis, the teachers were shown the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer in order to provide them with opportunity to compare the results themselves.

The research was performed by means of interviews with the teachers. All of them were interviewed separately in order to avoid possible mutual influence. The texts were provided to the teachers in advance, a few days prior to the interview, in order to provide them with enough time to read and analyse them. The interviews were based on an interview outline prepared by the author of the thesis. The interview outline is provided at the end of the thesis as appendix (see Appendix 6).

Furthermore, the teachers were asked to state whether they use authentic materials in teaching, and if so, what criteria they take into consideration when choosing appropriate and suitable reading authentic materials. Their comments are presented in a separate section.

Method

Text Analysis – Text Readability

In this section the readibility of each test it to be analysed. The analysis of each text is divided into three parts. First, each text was submitted to be analyzed by the Lexile Analyzer. Then the text was assessed by all five teachers. Finaly the author analyzed the results generated by the Lexile analyzer and those stated by the teachers and compared them. Since the Lexile Analyzer provides an analysis in terms of 4 categories only, the

comparison is accompanied by other teachers´ comments on the difficulty of the texts. For better understanding, each text analysis is accompanied by a table stating the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer. A simplified Lexile text ranges table is used when indicating which grade is each text suitable for.

LEXILE TEXT RANGES TO GUIDE READING FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS	
Grades	CCCS Lexile text range
11 – 12	1185L – 1385L
9 – 10	1050L – 1335L
6 – 8	925L – 1185L
4 – 5	740L – 1010L
2 – 3	420L – 820L
1	190L – 530L

Table 4: Lexile text ranges (The Lexile, 2013)

An analysis, made both by the Lexile Analyzer and the teachers, of each text is followed by a graph providing well-arranged results of the evaluations carried out.

Finally, the author provides implications related to the analysis of written authentic materials for English learning based on the obtained results as well as references for further reading.

V. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

Analysis of text no. 1 - "Christmas in Autralia" (see Appendix 1)

Analysis generated by the Lexile Analyzer

After submitting this text, the Lexile Analyzer presented the following results (see the table 5 below)

According to the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer, the text is forecasted to be suitable for students of 6th to 8th grade. As the Lexile measure nearly reaches the range for the 4th and 5th grade, more motivated and experienced students from the 5th grade might be able to handle this text as well. The sentences consisted in average of 14 words. The generated Mean Log Word Frequency shows that a word appears approximately 3 times in each 5-million words of the MetaMetrics research corpus of 650 million words. When taking into account both the quite short sentence lengths and the low word frequency, with the total number of 283 words, the Lexile Analyzer assessed text to be approximixately in the middle of the Lexile scale of text difficulty.

Lexile Analyzer	
Lexile® Measure	1020L
Mean Sentence Length	14.15
Mean Log Word Frequency	3.30
Word Count	283

Table 5 The lexile analyzer results

Analysis carried out by teachers

After presenting the text to the five teachers, the following results emerged.

Grade. Three out of the five teachers decided this text to be the most appropriate for the 9th grade. The text might be suitable for the 8th grade as well, according to two out the five teachers, for students have prior knowledge of vocabulary. However, students in the 8th grade are not yet familiar with the presented advanced grammar, ie. passive voice, if clause sentences. According to the teachers´ points of view, the text is totaly inappropriate

for the 7th grade and lower grades because students are not familiar neither with the grammar nor with the vocabuary. Moreover, the text is considered to be quite long and to contain too complex sentences for the 8th grade and lower grades.

Two out of the five teachers decided the text to be the most appropriate for the 8th grade. At several primary schools, students of the 8th grade are already familiar with more advanced grammar, in this case the passive voice which is used several times in this passage. They also perceive this text to be challenging for the 8th grade students. Furthermore, the Christmas topic is considered to be a general topic often discussed by students not only in English classes and thus should be easier to comprehend than other topics.

Readability. Concerning the readability, three out of the five teachers stated that the text includes difficult and challenging vocabulary, such as "whereas, summer heat, flaming, unusual, punctuated, mid", etc. The text introduces several topics (weather, good, traditions) and therefore the range of vocabulary is very diverse. The teachers stated that if the text included only one topic, it would be much easier to comprehend. Due to the large diversification of vocabulary and short paragraphs each related to a differect topic, students may aslo accounter problems when trying to elicit meaning of the unknown words from the context. This obstacle decreases the level of comprehension. On the other hand, the text conveys a well-known topic which is closed to students lives, Christmas. Taking linguistics into account, the teachers evaluated the grammar as difficult since passive voice and if clauses are used several times in the passage. On the other hand, the present simple tense appears in the text a lot which makes the text easier to comprehend since students are already familiar with this grammatical structure.

Two out of the five teachers stated that although the text deals with various topics in one passage and the range of vocabulary is quite large, appropriate pre-reading activities may enable students to deal with unknown words successfully and thus facilitate reading, increase the level of comprehension and overcome possible difficulties.

Suitability. Concerning the suitability, all the five teachers agreed that the text seems to be useful for teaching facts (ie. information on various topics such as culture, traditions, geography, etc.) and thus for developing and enlarging students general knowledge. Four out of the five teachers would prefer using the text in conversation classes for practising pronunciation and extending the range of vocabulary rather than in

ordinary English classes for practising grammar. One teacher would rather use the text in ordinary English classes for practising grammatical structures.

Use in English classes. Three out of the five teachers would not use this text for classroom purposes. There were several reasons leading to this decision. First of all, students are not likely to comprehend the text because of a wide range of vocabulary and the text and sentence lengths. Secondly, the text was evaluated as not being interesting for students and containg too much detailed information and thus not drawing their attention. According to the teachers, the text is boring which may decrease students motivation to a large extent. One of the teachers evaluated the text as very suitable for classroom purposes and would use the text during conversation lessons with the 9th grade students to improve their speaking skills and to teach them how to express their opinions and thoughts. One of the teachers was not sure about the use of the text for English classes. This teacher regarded the text suitable since students are comfortable with this well known topic. But, on the contrary, the teacher had doubts about the suitability in terms of linguistics, ie. grammar, and semantics, ie. difficult vocabulary presented in the passage.

Text readability - suitability for grades

Text no. 1 "Christmas in Australia"
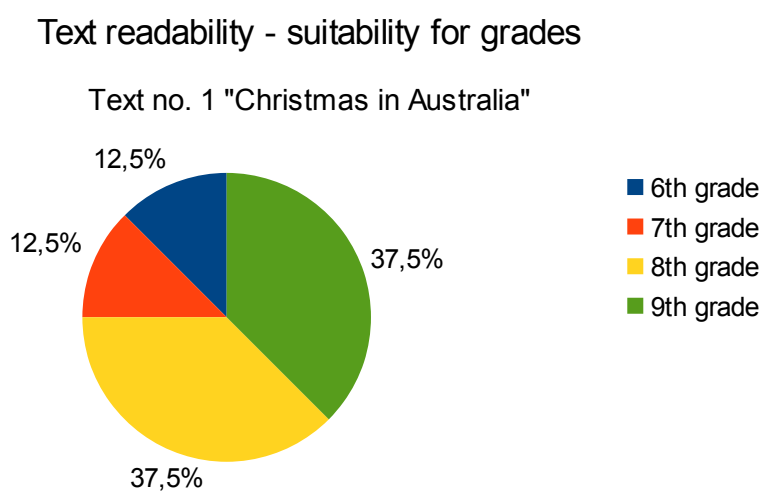
Analysis of text no. 2 - "Living with Australia weather" (see Appendix 2)

Analysis generated by the Lexile Analyzer

After submitting this text, the Lexile Analyzer presented the following results (see the table 6 below)

According to the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer, the test is forecasted to be suitable for students of 9th to 10th grade. The Lexile Measure of 1210L appears in the middle of the 9th to 10th grade range. As shown in the table below, the sentences are much longer and more complex than those in the previous text consisting in average of 19 words. The generated Mean Log Word Frequency shows that a word appears approximately 3 times in each 5-million words of the MetaMetrics research corpus of 650 million words. When taking into account both quite long sentence lengths and low word frequency, with the total number of 281 words, the text was evaluated to be slightly above the middle of the Lexile scale of text difficulty.

Lexile Analyzer	
Lexile® Measure	1210L
Mean Sentence Length	18.73
Mean Log Word Frequency	3.34
Word Count	281

Table 6 The lexile analyzer results

Analysis carried out by teachers

After presenting the text to the five teachers, the following results emerged.

Grade and Readability. All the five teachers decided this text to be the most appropriate for the 9th grade of the primary school. Several reasons were stated. First of all, students of lower grades do not have the background knowledge about the topic being read. The teachers explained, that according to ŠVP (Framework Educational Programmes of individual schools) of their schools, students learn geography of the Czech Republic in the 6th grade and geography of other countries, including Australia as an English speaking country, are taught in the 8th or 9th grade. Secondly, the reasons concern the knowledge of L2, such as vocabulary or grammar. They determined several words which may cause difficulties in understanding for students, such as "inhabited, consequence, unpredictable, sustainability, restriction, cattle, etc. There is a possibility of eliciting some of the words from context. One of the teachers pointed out an example: the text is describing certain animals, ie. sheep for example, that belong to the sub-class of "cattle". Therefore, students

might be able to figure out the meaning of this particular word. Students are also given an opportunity to identify the meaning of other words, e.g. drought, via picture accompanying the text. Regarding grammatical structures, mainly two tenses are used in the passage, those are the present simple tense and present perfect tense. Students of 9th grade should all be already comfortable with this grammar.

Suitability. Only one out of the five teachers evaluated the text to be suitable for learning purposes and English classes. This teacher considered the text to be suitable enough for practising both several grammatical structures (comparison of adjectives; present perfect vs. past simple – explaining and practising the rules) and eliciting meaning of words from the context and thus practising and improving speaking skills. Another advantage of using this material stated by this teacher were the cross-curricular relations. The text also enables to teach geography, or natural science (talking about a difficult life in different parts of the world, standard of living in the countries affected by various kind of weather conditions, impact on environment, thinking about possible wasting of natural resources – asssumed as an excellent source in terms of educational purposes, ie. teaching environmental behaviour) through English. Four out of the five teachers assessed the text as too professional, too long and containg a lot of useless details, ie. useless for students every day communication in English and for extending general knowledge.

Use in English classes. When asked whether they would use this text in their English classes, only one teacher assumed the text to be suitable for classroom purposes, as mentioned previosly, mainly for practising grammatical structures and, furthermore, for teaching other subjects through a foreign language. Four out of the five teachers agreed on the text difficulty and its unsuitability for English classes.

Text readability - suitability for grades

Text no. 2 - "Living with Australia weather"

14,0%

86,0%

■ 9th
grad
e
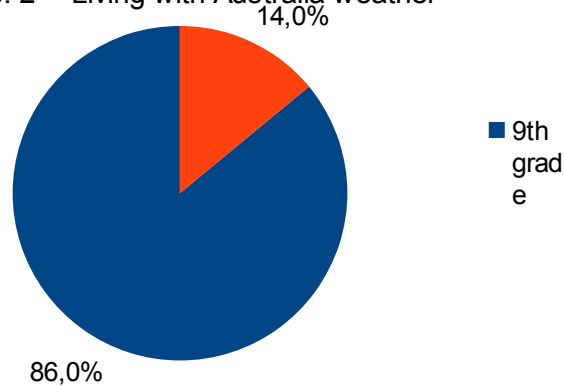
Analysis of text no. 3 - "What´s the Point of School Uniforms?" (see Appendix 3)

Analysis generated by the Lexile Analyzer

After submitting this text, the Lexile Analyzer presented the following results (see the table 7 below)

According to the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer, the test is forecasted to be suitable for students of 9th to 10th grade, the same grades as for the previous article. Once again, the sentences are quite long and complex and the text consists of 517 words in total. The generated Mean Log Word Frequency shows that a word appears approximately 3.5 times in each 5-million words of the MetaMetrics research corpus of 650 million words. When taking into account both quite long sentence lengths and low word frequency the Lexile Analyzer assessed the text to be slightly above the middle of the Lexile scale of text difficulty.

Lexile Analyzer	
Lexile® Measure	1210L
Mean Sentence Length	19.88
Mean Log Word Frequency	3.45
Word Count	517

Table 7 The lexile analyzer results

Analysis carried out by teachers

After presenting the text to the five teachers, the following results emerged.

Grade. All the five teachers decided this text to be the most appropriate for the 9th grade of the primary school, although two out of the five teachers would also assign the text to the 8th grade as a challenging reading source. The reasons for using this text in the 8th grade were the background knowledge of the topic and familiar vocabulary, thought several difficult words appeared in the passage as well, such as "whilst, encountering, contribute, midset, compelling," etc." Furthermore, the text contains a heading and several sub-headings which enables students to identify not only meaning of the words and expressions but also the context of the entire paragraphs.

Readability. As already mentioned, all the five teachers evaluated the text as easy enough to be comprehended by students, since they should all be familiar with most of the presented vocabulary. In addition, the topic is seemed to be very close to their every day lives, even though uniforms are not worn at schools in the Czech Republic. Regarding grammar, all five teachers agreed on occurence of basic grammatical structures, taking into account that various more difficult structures appeared in the passage as well (such as "could be seen") but those structures occur only occasionally.

Suitability. Comparing all five texts, this article has been considered to be the most suitable for teaching purposes by all the five teachers. All of them agreed on the appropriateness of the text in terms of its content and presented vocabulary. Concerning its possible use during English classes, all the five teachers, once again, agreed on applying the text during conversation lessons. The text is assumed to enable students discuss advantages and disadvantages/ pros and cons of a well-known and familiar topic. They may develop their speaking skills in terms of introducing their opinions, inviting other people´s opinions, agreeing, disagreeing, arguing and acknowledging what someone has said. Three out of the five teachers (those who would use the material mainly with the 9th grade students) would also use the text to practise and improve students writing skills. They would ask them to write down their opinion on this topic (they would ask their students to infer consequences, ie. to state the possible impact of wearing uniforms in the Czech Republic) and on the similar ones as well. Moreover, both the background information on the system of education of English speaking countries (The Great Britain in this case) and new, obtained knowledge can be utilized outside the classroom. As for the

conversation classes, three out of the five teachers would use the text mainly with the 9th grade students, not only for the reasons stated above, but also due to students maturity, ie. students of lower grades might not already have their own opinion on the presented topic and therefore it would be much more difficult to express their points of veiw. As stated by one of the teachers, they do not have "tools how to express themselves". These three teachers consider the text to be suitable for

Use in English classes. All five teachers would use this written authentic material in their English classes, although for different reasons stated above. All of them agreed on the text level of difficulty and its suitability for English teaching in conversation classes in order to teach social skills in natural way.

Text readability - suitability for grades

Text no. 3 "What´s the Point of School Uniforms?"

11,0%

22,0%

67,0%

7th grade

8th grade
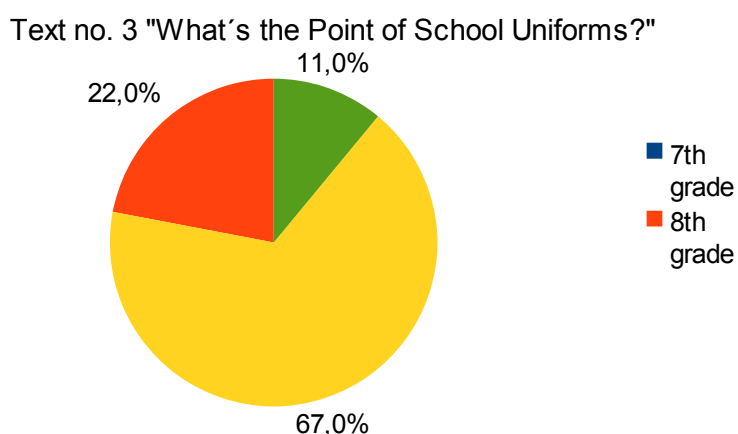
Analysis of text no. 4 - "How to choose the right hotel" (see Appendix 4)

Analysis generated by the Lexile Analyzer

After submitting this text, the Lexile Analyzer presented the following results (see the table 8 below)

According to the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer, the test is forecasted to be suitable for students of the 9th to 10th grade. For the Lexile Measure of 1290L reaches

nearly the upper level of the range, the text is suitable for the 10th grade rather than the 9th grade. The text might be used for the higher grade as well, as a sourse of a less demanding reading material provided in order to motivate the students. As shown in the table below, the sentences are long and quite complex consisting in average of 22 words. The generated Mean Log Word Frequency shows that a word appears approximately 3.5 times in each 5-million words of the MetaMetrics research corpus of 650 million words. Although the text consists of only 368 words, taking into account both long sentence lengths and low word frequency, the Lexile Analyzer assessed text to be above quite challenging in the middle of the Lexile scale of text difficulty.

Lexile Analyzer	
Lexile® Measure	1290L
Mean Sentence Length	21.65
Mean Log Word Frequency	3.41
Word Count	368

Table 8 The lexile analyzer results

Analysis carried out by teachers

After presenting the text to the five teachers, the following results emerged.
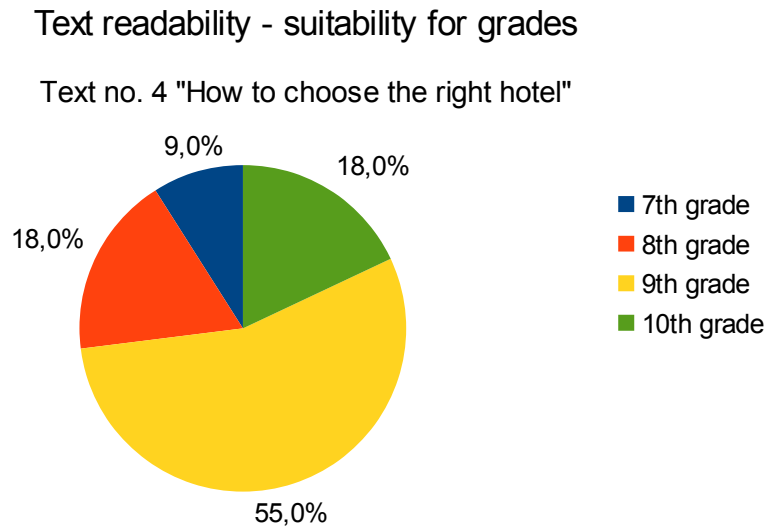
Grade and Readability. Three out of the five teachers decided this text to be the most appropriate for the 9th grade as the grammatical structures presented in this authentic material are considered difficult. Two out of the five teachers decided to apply the text for the 8th grade as well, since students should already be fimilar with the presented grammar, ie. if clauses and future tense. One of these two teacher would surprisingly use the text for the 7th grade students as well as a perfect tool for practising the future tense. Alhough this teacher percieved the text quite difficult for the 7th grade students, nevertheless is might be a source of motivation for more advanced and more motivated students. The teachers then concentrated on vocabulary. The presented vocabulary was considered very difficult by all five teachers. They stated several examples, such as "spotlessly, foremost, convention, incredibly, concierge, etc." The last example word was evaluated as easier one only if students L3 is French. The text is also not suitable for eliciting meaning of unknown

words, as the students no do possess the background knowledge of such topics.

Suitability. Concerning the suitability of this text, first of all, it must be mentioned that all the five teachers assessed the text as absolutely inappropriate for the classroom pusposes, no matter in which grade of the primary school the text would be used. The main reason leading to this decision is the ignorance of the topic. When going on holiday, the parents are the ones who choose the accomodation, not their children. If children were asked to select the accomodation they would choose it according to totaly different criteria. Furthermore, the text mentions hotel facilites such as conference rooms etc., thus topics that are completely out their scope of knowledge and previous experience. Therefore the text was evaluated as uninteresting at all, or even boring, by all the five teachers.

Further, the text was also considered inappropriate in terms of reading strategies, the text is very demanding and the students would not even realize which strategy they should apply.

Use in Enlish classes. Due to the reasons stated above, none of the teachers would use this authentic material for the classroom purposes, though the grammatical structures that appeared in the text are suitable for their practising.

Text readability - suitability for grades

Text no. 4 "How to choose the right hotel"

- 7th grade
- 8th grade
- 9th grade
- 10th grade

9,0% · 18,0% · 18,0% · 55,0%

Analysis of text no. 5 - "New rules for the Royal Family" (see Appendix 5)

Analysis generated by the Lexile Analyzer

After submitting this text, the Lexile Analyzer presented the following results (see the table 9 below)

According to the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer, the test is forecasted to be suitable for students of the 10th to 11th grade. The Lexile Measure of 1370L reaches nearly the upper level of the range, i.e. the highest range stated by the CCCS (Core State Standard for English) as a Lexile measure required to continue the study at a college or to start one´s career. The text might be used for the lower grade as well, as a sourse of a less demanding and motivating reading material. As shown in the table below, the sentences are very long and very complex consisting in average of 28 words. The generated Mean Log Word Frequency shows that a word appears approximately 3.6 times in each 5-million words of the MetaMetrics research corpus of 650 million words. Even though the text has the lowest number of words, taking into account both long sentence lengths and low word frequency, the Lexile Analyzer assessed text to be the most difficult one according to the Lexile scale of text difficulty. The Lexile Measure occurs in nearly three fourth of the Lexile scale.

Lexile Analyzer	
Lexile® Measure	1370L
Mean Sentence Length	27.80
Mean Log Word Frequency	3.67
Word Count	139

Table 9 The lexile analyzer results

Analysis carried out by teachers

After presenting the text to the five teachers, the following results emerged.

Grade and Readability. Three out of the five teachers decided this text to be the most appropriate for the 9th grade of the primary school. Another two teachers would use the text mainly with the 8th grade students, moreover, one of these two teachers would also

apply the text in the 7th grade taking into consideration that much longer and demanding pre-reading activites would be necessary. All the five teachers evaluated the vocabulary as not very difficult, in other words, complying with students current knowledge. Students may also identify the meaning of some unknown words since they have background knowledge of the topic, ie. the Great Britain and the Royal family. Even though the individual words themselves are not difficult, the sentences are considered to be much more challenging for students. Furthermore, the grammatical stuctures presented in the text were assessed as very difficult and advanced. The teachers stated several examples, such as "chance of being, were made, has to spoken, etc.".

Suitability. This authentic material was also evaluated as suitable for classroom purposes by all the five students. The main reason was the prior knowledge of the topic. Furthermore, the teachers mentioned important and interesting piece of information. Due to globalization and huge possibility of travelling abroad, many students also have personal experiences because they have already visited the UK either when participating in trips to English speaking countries organized by schools or when travelling with their parents, or both. It follows that this authentic material is useful both for learning purposes and for utilizing the information outside the school. As for the learning purposes, the text may be used for teaching not only English but other subjects as well. The subjects that may be tought via CLIL method are geography or history.

Use in English classes. Finally, the teachers were asked whether they would use this written authentic material for English teaching. Only one teacher would include this text in conversation classes. Although the text is interesting and would probably draw students attention, none of the teachers would use the text in their classes for teaching or practising linguistics, ie. grammar, semantics, ie. meaning of words, phrases, etc. or syntax, ie. grammatical function. This text was considered as too difficult and complicated requiring careful and demanding preparation and pre-reading activites.

Text readability - suitability for grades

Text no. 5 "New rules for the Royal Family"
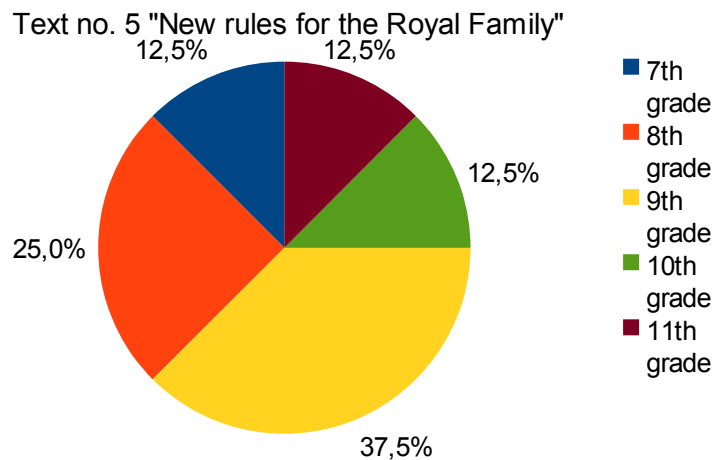
Commentary

As mentioned in the theoretical background, texts, written authentic material analyzed in this thesis, may be assessed according to different criteria. The criteria chosen for the purposes of this thesis are suitability, exploitability and readability (Nuttall, 1996). The objective of the thesis was to compare the text readability by means of online analyzer. ie. modern technology on one side, and professional teachers, ie. human factor on the other side. It was expected that the results would vary to a great extent mainly due to human factor, ie. very subjective perception of text difficulty. This expectation was confirmed in the research. The human factor incluenced the results extensively.

Grade

In terms of this reseach, grades and texts readability are closely related since the appropriateness for individual grades is given by the text readability. The reseach revealed that the texts being analyzed are the most suitable mainly for the 9th grade of the primary schools from the teachers´ points of view, while the Lexile Analyzer assigned most of the texts at the boundary between the primary school and the secondary school, ie. the 9th and the 10th grade (refers to U.S. system of educations).

Readability

The texts were analyzed from different points of view. The Lexile Analyzer generates the texts readability on the basis of 4 criteria (the sentence length and the word frequency which than generates the Lexile Measure, and the total number of words). The teachers were asked to evaluate the texts, if possible, on the basis of the same criteria to enable the comparison of results. Nevertheless, the human factor influenced the results to a great extent. Though the teachers took into account the criteria of the Lexile Analyzer, they also included the criteria of suitablity and exploitability which, when put together, led to differents outcomes.

Suitability

In terms of this research, the suitability of selected authentic materials is tightly connected with their possible use in English teaching. Mainly two texts were assessed as very suitable since they are interesting and may draw students attention, these are texts no. 3 and 5 ("What is the point of school uniforms?" and "New rules for the royal family"). As explained by the teachers, these texts may activate students background knowledge and previous experiences. Futhermore, the information obtained from these materials may extend students general knowledge. They can also be used to teach other subject via English (CLIL method).

Use in English classes

The thesis revealed interesting information. Although the texts selected for the purposes of this thesis were not as interesting for the teachers as they may seem, all five teachers stated they try to use the authentic materials in their English classes in order to enable students connection with the real world and prepare them for everyday communication outside the classroom. Simply, they want them to be ready to communication not only about classroom topics.

Concerning the five texts being analyzed in this research, four out of five texts were considered to be useful for classroom pusposes, though because of different reasons. Only one text ("How to choose the right hotel") was evaluated as totally inappropriate both for teaching and learning purposes. A graph illustrating the possible use of each text by inteviewed teachers follows. As mentioned above, the suitability is closely connected with

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its possible for teaching purposes. Therefore, the graph shows not only the above mentioned possible use by interviewed teachers but the suitability of these texts as well.

Suitability of selected texts

Possible use by interviewed teachers in ESL classes
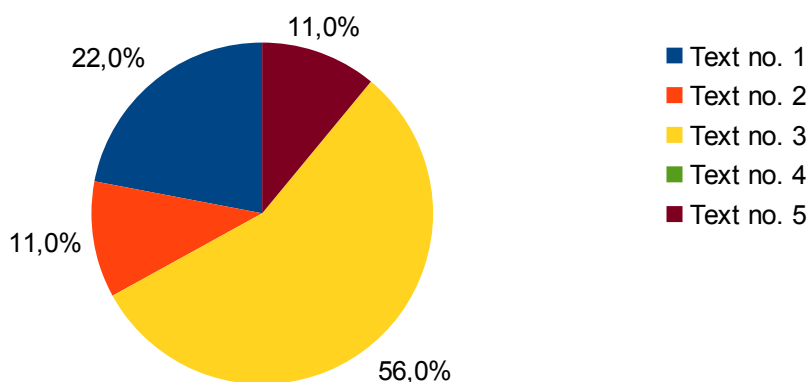
Comparison of results

In this section the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer and the analysis carried out by the five teachers are to be compared. As mentioned previously, the main objective of the research was to find out whether the teachers would be able to analyze the texts in terms of their readability and whether they would meet the same results as the Lexile Analyzer. The research revealed the following information.

When taking into consideration all the five texts and all the five teachers, the teachers evaluated the texts as equally difficult as the Lexile Analyzer in 60%.

When having a closer look at the individual texts, the reseach revealed that the analyses of the text no. 1 correspond to the Lexile Analyzer results in only 40%. The Lexile Analyzer assigned the text to the 6th - 8th grade. Only two teachers evaluated the text the same as they would use the text with the 8th grade students. Three out of the five teachers would use the text mainly with the 9th grade students.

Concerning the texts no. 2 and 3, the analyses carried out by the five teachers were totally equal to the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer. To repeat the results of the text no. 2, the Lexile Analyzer assigned the text to students of the 9th and the 10th grade,

while the teachers would apply the text to the 9th grade only. To repeat the results of the text no. 3, the Lexile Analyzer assigned the text to students of the 9th and the 10th grade, while all the five teachers would apply the text to the 9th grade. Two of them would try to use the text with the 8th grade students as well.

Regarding text no. 4, the teachers´ results meet the Lexile Analyzer results in 60% as three out of the five teachers would use the text with the 9th grade students while the Lexile Analyzer added the suitability for the 10th grade as well. Two out of the five teachers percieved the text as less demanding and decided to apply the authentic material to the 8th grade.

The last authentic material being analyzed showed the highest level of contradiction. The analysis of the Lexile Analyzer and those perfomed by the teachers did not meet at all. This text was evaluated by the Lexile Analyzer as the most difficult one of them all appropriate for students of the 10th - 11th grade. The teachers, on the contrary, assessed the text as less challenging and would use the text with the 9th grade student (three out of the five teachers) and the 8th grade students (two out of the five teachers).

	The Lexile	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Percentage of concordance
Text no. 1	6th - 8th grade	8th grade	9th grade	9th grade	9th grade	8th grade	40 %
Text no. 2	9th - 10th grade	9th grade	9th grade	9th grade	9th grade	9th grade	100 %
Text no. 3	9th - 10th grade	9th grade (possibly 8th grade)	9th grade	9th grade	9th grade (possibly 8th grade)	9th grade	100 %
Text no. 4	9th - 10th grade	8th grade	9th grade	9th grade	9th grade	8th grade	60 %
Text no. 5	10th - 11th grade	8th grade	9th grade	9th grade	9th grade	8th grade	0 %

Table 10 Summary of results. The texts readability

Key:

yellow: the percentage of concordance; green: total concordance; red: level or readability underestimated by the teachers

Summary

To sum up the results of the research in terms of texts readability, the level of readability of the text no. 1 was either equal (met only in 40%) or overestimated by the teachers. The level of readability of the text no. 2 was totally equal to the results of the Lexile Analyzer. The analyses results of the following text (no. 3) represent almost the same values as for the previous text, ie. the level of readability is almost the same. The level of readabillity of the text no. 4 was underestimated by the teachers. The analyses results of the text no. 5 did not meet at all, as the text´s level of readability was highly underestimated by the teachers by 1 to 3 grades.

Using authentic materials for English teaching

The teacher participated in the research were asked whether they choose the authentic materials for teaching purposes, and if so, they were asked to state the criteria taking into account when selecting the most appropiate authentic materials.

All five teachers stated that they occasionally or regularly use various types of authentic materials for teaching purposes. First of all, they explained which type of them they use the most. As mentioned in the theoretical background chapter, Gebhard (1996) presents 4 categories of authentic materials, those are listening/viewing, visual, printed and realia. It was revealed that the listening/viewing authentic materials predomite. Teachers do appreciate the benefits and positive influence of such materials. The teachers stated several reasons for using authentic materials in English classes. Authentic material are considered as highly motivating sources of L2. Teachers noticed that the level of students´ active participation in the class increases with the higher amount of different types of materials, including the authentic ones. Furthermore, the authentic materials create better relationship between the learnes and the target language since students are exposed to the real life situations they may encounters outside the classroom. Furthermore, the Internet and other

online searches such as YouTube makes authentic materials more and more accessible not only for teachers but for students as well.

Nowadays, the ability to communicate accurately and fluently is percieved as the primary objective of foreign language learning, as cited by Afflerbach, Pearson, Paris (2008) "What was once "speaking skill" is today more commonly referred to as "communicative competence." Reading has become "negotiating with the text," "reading for meaning," or "holistic reading." Along with new labels or new associations come changed ideas about what FL students should learn and how."

The printed authentic materials were stated as the second most utilized type of authentic materials. When being interviewed, the teachers highlighted the advantages of such materials. They explained that their students like using materials that can be "touched". Many students are visual learning types, they need their materials printed in order to write notes, underline unknown or key words, etc. According to the survey, the other two types, ie. visual and realia ("real world" objects) are used only occasionally.

Regarding the criteria that are taken into account in the selection process, the suitability and readability were the most common ones (see criteria presented by Nuttall, 1996). Other criteria that were evaluated as highly important, and which relate to the above mentioned criteria, are interest (whether the material would draw students attention), language level (whether the text meets the required level of students current knowledge) and purpose of language learning (the teachers mainly concentrates on occurence of particular grammatical structures and vocabulary used in context).

Summary

In the following section, the reseach results are to be summarized. The research revealed that authentic materials are useful when being properly chosen. The teacher who were involved in the research agreed that incorporating authentic materials can enrich the entire teaching process.

The analysis shows the contradiction of results when human factor in taken into account. The research revealed that the level of readability of selected authentic materials was met in 60% (when comparing the analyses carried out by the teachers and the analysis performed by the Lexile Analyzer), though the level of texts´ readability was

underestimated to a certain extent in four out of the five texts (compared to the Lexile Analyzer results). The text no. 2 represents the only exception.

As the human factor always influences the teaching process, the Lexile Analyzer serves only as a guide for teachers when selecting written authentic materials for English classes. Furthermore, teachers can recommend the Lexile framework for reading to their students to provide them with opportunity to learn themselves outside the classroom since the Lexile is mainly intended for matching a reader with an appropriate text according to his/her Lexile measure.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, the implications resulted from the research are to be presented. First, the implications related to the results of the analyses are explained. Further, the implications for English teachers in terms of using authentic material in English classes are discussed.

Implications related to the research results

As it can be seen from the results, the teachers participating in the research were able to identify the level of readability of selected authentic materials in 60% in average (compared to the results of the Lexile Analyzer). The Lexile Analyzer has proved to be very useful tool for teachers when selecting an appropriate written authentic material to meet their students language level. The Lexile Analyzer was considered as an additional tool and a guide in the material selection process since the human factor alwasys influences the perception of the readability to a certain extent. As the Lexile Analyzer assesses the texts on the basis of 4 categories only, teachers themselves have to make the final decision on which material is the most appropriate one with regard to other factors such as students´ interests, current knowledge, students age, etc. If all the factors are connected togehter, ie. the factors taken into account by the Lexile Analyzer and those taken into consideration by teachers, together with teachers professsional experiences, then the selection process may become much more effective.

Implication for English teachers

The implications for English instructors in terms of using authentic materials in English classes must be stated as well. As stated by Su (n.d.) teachers are recommended to consider students´ motivation for learning foreign languages. The exposure to authentic materials, ie. real life situations and materials intended for native speakers, may increase students motivation to a great extent. It was also confirmed that students like to work with different types of materials. Teachers should also take this fact into consideration in order to avoid students get bored during learning process. As a huge variety of authentic materials exists, teacher should be aware of their proper selection to meet teaching purposes. Moreover, with new available technologies and new sources of not only

authentic materials, the teaching materials became more easily accesible both for teachers and students. When choosing authentic materials, not only the above mentioned factors are taken into consideration. The research proved that teachers focus on the occurence of the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The more skill the material includes the more valuable the material is considered to be.

Limitations of the research

It is obvious, that the research carried out has its limitations. These limitations have to be taken into consideration. The thesis deals with comparison of analyses of text readability. As the Lexile Analyzer is an American tool for evaluating text difficulty and is intended for native speakers, the obtained results should serve as a guide only. Anothe limitation that has to be mentioned is the scope of chosen written authentic materials. It is clear that tese five texts cannot represnt the entire range of written authentic materials. Therefore, if differents texts were selected, the results of the research might differ as well. Briefly, various written authentic materials can always bring various results.

Futhermore, the U.S system of education differs from the Czech systém of education. In other words, the content of learning (ie. not only English learning) is different to a certain extent and therefore students knowledge at different grades are not equal. Finally, the thesis counts with the same level of learners´ profficiency in order to enable the analyses to be even carried out. This concerns not only the differents between the two systém of education and the content of learning at different grades, but the level of students´ knowledge not only in terms of a foreign language but in terms of general knowledge, etc. as well, differs even when comparing the grades in the Czech Republic.

Further research

The thesis may be further elaborated. The learners can be involved in the research as well. As the Lexile Analyzer is mainly intended to match readers with appropirate written materials to improve their profficiency, students could take one of the several exams presented by the Lexile framework for reading (The Lexile, 2013) and the possible concordance with the texts used for the purposes of this thesis could be analyzed. If the readers Lexile measures did not correnpond to the selected texts, the analysis of causes

could be discussed and appropriate written materials could be chosen.

It might be also reasonable to let teachers select the written authentic themselves and analyze these text afterwards. Finally, it would be also interesting to study the use of the selected autentic materials in English teaching from the pedagogical point of view.

VII. CONCLUSION

As explained in the theoretical background chapter, there exist many types of authentic materials from which teachers can choose the most suitable ones. As modern technologies come into fore, media such as the Internet are used more and more in foreign language teaching. The points of view towards using authentic materials in English classes vary. Possible advantages as well as disadvantages were presented. The research revealed that when such materials are selected properly taking into account as many factors as possible, their use may enrich the teaching process and the level of students motivation. The exposure to "real" life situations and materials was considered the most important factor leading to use of such materials in English classes.

The thesis introduced a very useful tool for evaluating the readability of a certain text, the Lexile Analyzer. Though the Lexile Analyzer is intended for English native speakers, the program can be used by teachers as a guide in selection process of written materials. The Lexile Analyzer provides analysis of text readibility excluding the human factor, thus the final decision must always be performed by teachers.

The research revealed that the texts being analyzed were, in most cases, underestimated by the teachers in terms of the text readability. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, different texts will also provide different results. On the other hand, although the readability of some of the texts was underestimated, such texts may be considered challenging and therefore motivating for more advanced learners.

The Lexile Analyzer presented in this thesis provides teachers with a great opportunity to enrich the teaching process as well as students with a great opportunity to extend the scope of knowledge and make the learning proces faster and more interesting by choosing an appropriate text.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Text no. 1

Christmas in Australia

Christmas in Australia is often very hot. Whereas the northern hemisphere is in the middle of winter, Australians are baking in summer heat. It is not unusual to have Christmas Day well into the mid 30 degrees Celsius, or near 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

A traditional meal includes a turkey dinner, with ham, and pork. A flaming Christmas plum pudding is added for dessert. In the Australian gold rushes, Christmas puddings often contained a gold nugget. Today a small favor is baked inside. Whoever finds this knows s/he will enjoy good luck. Another treat is Mince Pies.

Some Australians and particularly tourists often have their Christmas dinner at midday on a local beach, Bondi Beach in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs attracts thousands of people on Christmas Day. Other families enjoy their day by having a picnic. If they are at home, the day is punctuated by swimming in a pool, playing Cricket out the backyard, and other outdoor activities.

The warm weather allows Australians to enjoy a tradition which commenced in 1937. **Carols by Candlelight** is held every year on Christmas Eve, where tens of thousands of people gather in the city of Melbourne to sing their favorite Christmas songs. The evening is lit by as many candles singing under a clean cut night sky. The sky with its Southern Cross stars is like a mirror. Sydney and the other capital cities also enjoy Carols in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Australians surround themselves with **Christmas Bush**, a native plant which has little red flowered leaves.

Christmas shopping is often done in shorts and t-shirts. At many beaches Santa Claus arrives on a surfboard, or even on a surf lifesaving boat.

Retrieved from: http://www.santas.net/australianchristmas.htm

Living with Australian weather

Drought

Australia is the driest inhabited continent. As a consequence, water is a very precious resource to Australians. As well as having an unpredictable and varied rainfall pattern, Australia often experiences serious droughts.

A drought is an unusually long period of time when there is not enough water for people to use in the way they normally would. There have been many serious droughts in Australia in the last 200 years. The 1895-1903 drought lasted eight years and caused the death of half of Australia's sheep and forty per cent of its cattle. The 1963-68 drought caused a forty per cent reduction in wheat crops across Australia. In central Australia that same drought actually lasted eight years, from 1958 to 1967.

Generally speaking, for every ten years in Australia there are three years during which water supply is good, and three years during which water supply is bad. Drought affects farming practices and can pose long-term threats to the environment. Droughts affect the sustainability of agriculture, threaten the life cycles of plants and animals, increase the chance that toxic algae outbreaks will happen, and also increase the chance of dust-storms and bushfires.

In times of drought, water restrictions are put in place. These restrictions place limits on the amount of water that people can use. In farming areas, restrictions limit the amount of water farmers can use to water their crops or give to their stock to drink, as well as how much water they can use for their own personal needs. In urban areas, restrictions limit the way that people use water for showering and baths, for watering their gardens, and even for washing their cars.

Retrieved from: http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-weather-and-the-seasons

What´s the Point of School Uniforms?

Here in the UK almost every child is expected to wear a school uniform. It's just the way we do things. But what's the point of school uniform?

Do uniforms create a good school ethos?

Having students all wear the same uniform or a uniform colour may develop a 'team' feel reminding everyone from a particular school that they're all part of the same community and are one big team . However, some might argue that taken too far this school ethos can be a bad thing. It's fine whilst students are on their own school grounds but once they're beyond the school gates and encountering students from other schools it's possible that school uniforms reinforce the "us and them" feelings between students from different schools, and students and could contribute to inter-school bullying.

Do uniforms improve results?

When kids put on their school uniform, does it put them in the learning mindset?)We've all seen the lack of focus that arises on non-uniform days!) I'm not aware of any compelling research which shows a link between uniforms and results but perhaps someone can enlighten me?

Do school uniforms narrow the gap?

Expecting everyone to wear the same clothes could act as a social leveller with students wearing the same uniform no matter what their family background or income. Although some school uniforms are highly prescriptive and very expensive, many school uniforms are very good value for money. And because students wear the same clothes every day a uniform easily hides the fact that some students' families cannot afford to spend hundreds of pounds on a huge wardrobe of clothes. Arguably, if students could choose their own clothes better off students could show off their designer labels etc. There are probably other ways around this issue though – would banning clothes with designer motifs work?

Are uniforms practical?

Theoretically a school uniform should be practical in design and ensure that students are well clothed for their different lessons and there are no health and safety risks during lessons such as D&T but in reality school uniforms are often quite impractical. Collars,

ties and blazers expected by many schools are uncomfortable – and ties can even prove unsafe. I'm sure we've all heard of at least one teacher who knew a teacher who taught a pupil who set their tie on fire in chemistry or got it caught in a lathe in D&T. Not much chance of that happening is students chose their own clothes! School uniforms are not necessarily well designed at all and may leave children too hot in summer, too cold in winter and generally less comfortable than if they wore their own clothes to school.

Do uniforms help prepare students for future careers?

Many professions require adults to wear a uniform, or a suit (which is really just a grown up uniform / dress code isn't it!) so wearing a uniform to school could be seen as a good preparation for the working world. Like adults who wear a uniform, students can ditch their uniform as soon as they are 'off duty'.

Retrieved from: http://www.creativeeducation.co.uk/blog/index.php/2011/02/school-uniforms/

Appendix 4: Text no. 4

How to Choose the Right Hotel

If you are planning an upcoming vacation or business trip, it's a good idea to put some thought into your hotel selection before making any final reservations. Remember that hotels serve as your home away from home when you're traveling, and selecting the right hotel will make any trip much more enjoyable. You'll want to stay in a place that is comfortable, clean, safe, and where the staff is friendly and helpful. When you're in an unfamiliar place, a hotel concierge can make a world of difference in helping to navigate the area and suggesting fun activities.

First and foremost, it's important to choose hotels that wll be conveniently located for your itinerary. If you'll be traveling for business, you'll want to be close to the convention center or offices where your meetings will take place. If you're planning a conference, you should research which otels have the best meeting and event facilities.

It's much easier to coordinate conferences if all of the participants can stay in the hotel where the events are taking place. Most hotels will offer discounts to corporate clients who are sponsoring an event in their function rooms. If you are traveling for pleasure, make sure that the hotels you consider are centrally located and close to the most popular attractions in the area.

Unless you'll be renting a car, it's a good idea to stay at hotels which are within walking distance of shops and restaurants. That way you'll save money on cab fare and have much more flexibility at mealtimes.

The cost of booking a hotel room is becoming more and more expensive, but luckily, the level of service at most national and boutique hotels is increasing as well. For the amount of money you'll be spending on your accommodations, you deserve a hotel room that is warm and inviting, comfortable to live in and spotlessly clean.

The staff should be welcoming and accommodating. Prior to booking any hotels, you may want to do a quick internet search to find comments posted by other travelers who have stayed at those places. Many people find that traveler recommendations are incredibly useful in helping them decide between hotels.

Retrieved from: http://www.superpages.com/supertips/choose-the-right-hotel.html

New rules for the Royal Family

Queen Elizabeth II has to spoken to Gordon Brown about changing the rules about who can be King or Queen of England. At the moment the rules say that a member of the Royal Family can´t become King or Queen of England if they marry a Catholic. It is also difficult for women because men have more chance of being King of England, even if they are much younger than their female relatives.

The King or Queen of England is also the head of the Church of England, because of laws that were made over 300 years ago, when Protestants wanted to protect the Royal Family from the Roman Catholic church. In any other organisation in the UK it is illegal to stop somebody doing their job because of their sex or religion.

Retrieved from: http://www.studyenglishnews.com/study-easy-english-news-articles-elem-new-monarchy-rules.html

Appendix 6 Interview outline

Part A

Analysis of the five written authentic materials:

1. assign the text to a certain grade of a primary school (or possibly a secondary school) according to the text:

      a) readability (taking into account: grammar; vocabulary; sentence, paragrahps and text length; and other factors stated by the teachers themselves)

      b) suitability (taking into account: the interst, students age, level of profficiency, background knowledge, possible use outside the classroom, purpose of teaching, and other factors stated by the teachers themselves)

2. decide whether to use each of the selected authentic materials in the teachers´ English classes and explanation of reasons (both for yes and no answers)

Part B

Discussion on using authentic materials in English classes in general:

1. whether the teachers use authentic materials in their English classes and explanation of reasons (both for yes and no answers)

2. if so, which criteria they take into consideration in selection process and explanation of reasons

3. if so, what types of authentic materials the teachers use and explanation of reasons

4. possible benefits of using authentic materials in English classes

Part C

At the end of the interview, the teachers will be presented the results generated by the Lexile Analyzer to enable them to make the comparison of the obtained results themselves. A short discussion follows.

Note: Teachers´ statements mentioned during this discussion will not be included in the thesis since these results are not relevant, teachers might be influenced by the Lexile Analyzer results and thus might reconsider their evaluations.

Appendix 7 Common Reference Levels

Global scale

Profic ient User	**C2**	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Indep enden t User	**B2**	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

Basic User	**A2**	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

SHRNUTÍ

Diplomová práce se zabývá autentickými materiály při výuce anglického jazyka. Práce je rozdělena do dvou hlavních částí. Teoretická část poskytuje důležité informace o autentických materiálech v obecné rovině, jejich klasifikaci a výhody a nevýhody jejich použití. Práce také přináší bližší pohled na "reading skills" a "reading strategies", tato část je následována částí popisující kritéria pro výběr vhodného písemného autentického materiálu. Praktická část se zabývá náročností vybraných písemných autentických materiálů. Tato kapitola se skládá ze tří hlavních částí. Zaprvé byly texty analyzovány online programem zvaným "The Lexile Analyzer". Poté byly tyto texty zanalyzovány zkušenými učiteli vyučujícími na základních školách. Na závěr byly porovnány výsledky zpracované online analyzátorem a výsledky zpracované učiteli. Dále byli učitelé požádáni, aby zanalyzovali texty také z pohledu jejich vhodnosti ve výuce anglického jazyka. Jejich komentáře jsou uvedeny. Tyto výsledky a komentáře jsou doplněny o vyjádření učitelů týkající se používání autentických materiálů ve výuce anglického jazyka. Byli také požádáni, aby uvedli kritéria, které berou v úvahu při výběru těcho materiálů. Na závěr je obecně rozebrán dopad na jazykové dovednosti studentů.