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МОВИ: РОЛЬ АДАПТОВАНИХ ТЕКСТІВ ДЛЯ ЧИТАННЯ У
ЗАСВОЄННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ**

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**EXPLOITING LITERATURE IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: GRADED
READERS AS A MEDIUM FOR PROMOTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNING TO EFL LEARNERS**

Master's Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

It is generally known that teaching a foreign language is not an easy task. Throughout the years, countless teaching methods and approaches have been developed, yet none of them can be considered perfect as their effectiveness depends on a number of (internal and external) factors. Moreover, the issue of using literature in the EFL classroom has also been debated for a number of years, as it is considered to be highly beneficial for the language learners. However, there is little evidence that would prove that (1) literature and graded readers are frequently used in foreign language teaching in our region, or (2) that introducing such reading materials is an effective way of teaching English in Transcarpathia, which determines the focus of the present study.

When it comes to teaching a foreign language, or in this case, English, many researchers highlight the relevance of using literature in the foreign language classroom. According to Koutsompou (2015), literature is closely related to language (p. 74). Moreover, as Kaya (2014, p. 41) states, it can help learners to enrich their language knowledge and to improve their language skills. Other scholars, including Day & Bamford (2002), Lazar (1993), Nazara (2019), Daskalovska & Dimova (2012), Waring (2000) and others, wrote about the positive impact of including literature and literary works in the foreign language syllabus.

Another frequently mentioned term that is closely related to the practice of introducing literary works into the EFL classroom is the notion of graded readers. As Albay (2017, p 177) claims graded readers “are particularly designed to enable learners practice reading skills and provide an opportunity to reinforce known vocabulary”. Moreover, according to Shella (2016), the effectiveness of graded readers can be explained by the fact that they have severely restricted (or simplified) vocabulary as well as grammar, thus making it much easier for learners to practice their target language and improve their reading skills.

Thus, **the purpose of this paper** is to investigate the relevance and effectiveness of using literature in language teaching. This issue has been

investigated by a number of scholars, including Armstrong (2015), Bloemert, Paran, Jansen, & van de Grift (2019), Bobkina & Dominguez (2014), Erkaya (2005), Rai (2012), Skog (2019), Tevdovska (2016), Іщук А. А. (2018), Кузнєцова Л.А., & Лотоцька К.Я. (2000) and others.

Therefore, it can be stated that using literature in the foreign language classroom might prove to be very beneficial. There are many studies that show how literature affects the learners' language skills development as well as their overall language proficiency levels. However, these investigations have been primarily conducted abroad. Therefore, it was decided to conduct a research, based on previous investigations, to test whether the practice of including literature in the foreign language classroom is familiar to English teachers in Transcarpathia and if it can be used effectively in the classroom.

Thus, **the object of this study** is the concept of using literature in foreign language teaching, while **the subject of the study** is the introduction of graded readers in the EFL classroom.

This study aims to investigate the use of graded readers in the foreign language classroom from three perspectives. On the one hand, the study aims to assess the attitudes of English teachers in our region towards using literature in the English classroom and their opinions about using graded readers. On the other hand, this study also aims to test whether using literature and graded readers when teaching a foreign language really helps students improve their language skills. Moreover, to assess the attitudes of learners towards this issue.

The **objectives of this study** are the following:

- To help learners to improve their language skills with the help of a graded reader.
- To motivate the learners to read in their target language.
- To test the effectiveness of using graded readers in teaching English as a foreign language.
- To assess English teachers' attitude towards using graded readers in EFL.
- To assess learners' attitudes towards the use of graded readers.

To assess the learners' and teachers' attitudes towards the use of literature and graded readers in the foreign language classroom, the (empirical) methods of questionnaire and quasi-experimental research were chosen.

The **novelty of this thesis** lies in the fact that we have tried to tackle the issue of introducing literature and graded readers into the foreign language classroom in Transcarpathia from three perspectives, thus gaining an insight into teachers' and learners' attitudes concerning this topic, as well as providing a detailed description of the activities and approaches that can help teachers to incorporate literary works into their language classrooms.

The **theoretical value** of this thesis lies in the fact that it presents a detailed overview of the main aspects of using literature and graded readers in the foreign language classroom, while the **practical value** of this study is that it contributes to the field of language teaching with presenting the results of a research that provides some insight into the importance of literature in foreign language teaching.

The thesis consists of three parts. In the first (theoretical) part, the concept of using literature in the EFL classroom is presented. Moreover, this part deals with (1) the notion of extensive reading and its benefits, (2) the advantages and disadvantages of using literature in foreign language teaching, (3) the approaches to teaching language through literature, (4) the criteria of selecting teaching materials, (5) the difference between 'authentic' and 'simplified' literature, (6) and finally the notion of graded readers as well as their benefits. The second (theoretical) part focuses on the perspectives of both teachers and learners when it comes to using literature in the language teaching/learning process. Finally, several previous studies dealing with the issue of literature and graded readers in language instruction are discussed in short. The third (practical) part of the study presents the findings of the investigation conducted by the researcher in the field of language teaching. The study relies on the method of triangulation which ensures the validity of results as it requires the researcher to investigate an issue from several perspectives. Thus, in this study the use of literature and graded readers in the EFL classroom has been approached from three perspectives.

PART 1

Main aspects of using literature in EFL

Teaching a language to other people requires some theoretical and methodological knowledge, as well as different practical approaches in order to make the process of language learning sufficient and enjoyable, though the latter was not always taken into consideration. English, as many other languages, has been taught as a second (L2) and as a foreign language (FL) for decades all around the world. Throughout the years the methods and approaches used in the language classroom have changed several times, and some of these incorporated literature in their curriculum as literature and literary texts were considered very useful when it came to language teaching.

The theoretical part of the study gives an overview of a number of terms and notions connected to the use of literature in the foreign language classroom, such as ‘extensive reading’, ‘simplified/authentic literature’, ‘graded reader’, etc., as well as discusses the main advantages and disadvantages of introducing literary texts into the language classroom.

1.1 Literature and language teaching

Before we discuss the reasons why literature should be used in a language classroom, it would be reasonable to first define what literature is. As Lazar (1993, p. 5) writes: “defining literature is no easy task”. There are countless definitions of this term, however, as the Cambridge dictionary puts it, the term ‘literature’ includes (1) “written artistic works, especially those with a high and lasting artistic value”; (2) “all the information relating to a subject, especially information written by experts” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/literature>).

According to Koutsompou (2015, p. 74), “literature and language are closely related and this is a fact none can deny”. Therefore, the idea that literature could be used in a foreign or second language classroom came as no surprise to many.

Shen (2004) and Kaya (2014) both write about the fact that reading and using literature can enhance the process of language learning as it has the potential to enrich and increase “the learners’ competence in the target language.” (Kaya, 2014, p. 41). Moreover, as Koutsompou (2015, p. 75) states:

“Literature opens a new world to the students. It cultivates the critical abilities of the students. It encompasses every human dilemma, conflict and yearning unraveling the plot of a short story is more than an automatic exercise.”

Moreover, Ahmad, Abdullah, & Ibrahim (2018, p. 126) highlight in their paper that literature is, in fact, “a critical language skill”, and it effects other language skills inside and outside the language classroom.

According to Daskalovska & Dimova (2012, p. 1185), “a valuable contribution of teaching literature is that it serves as a gateway to extensive reading which increases students’ exposure to the target language”.

Koutsompou (2015, p. 75) explains that an interactive language classroom is key in improving the learners’ communicative competence, and using literature helps to make the lessons more interactive. Rodriguez (2017, p. 106) adds that:

“Literature shows students a different and fantastic world full of new experiences, adventures, places, characters, fantasy, knowledge, and universal topics that encourage them in reading. It is also a way to know more about the world we live in, taking into account that writers create testimonies of people’s lives.”

Moreover, Rodriguez (2017, p. 106) also states that the reason literature has been used in the foreign language classroom is that it can prove to be beneficial “in terms of contents and language usage”, not to mention that it is considered to be one

of the best ways of acquiring a vocabulary and (general) knowledge in a foreign language.

Moreover, Nazara (2019, p. 157) adds that in the case of young learners the most important component of the teaching process is none other than vocabulary, and it has a crucial role in enabling foreign language learners to master their target language.

According to Nazara (2019, p. 158), vocabulary is extremely important in the process of language learning as it serves as the main element in the process of communication. Thus, an insufficient vocabulary knowledge will lead to difficulties when learners attempt to communicate in English:

“Therefore, vocabulary acquisition is one of the central components of developing successful communication and literacy skills. Students can use vocabulary as they listen, speak, read and write. Students learn vocabulary directly and indirectly. They can reveal their ideas and comprehend other people's ideas if they have good vocabulary mastery.” (p. 158)

Another reason why teachers should focus on vocabulary, according to Nazara (2019), is the fact that most EFL learners do not have the vocabulary knowledge required which makes it difficult for them to express their own thoughts and ideas, and as a result, they might get frustrated or even lose motivation. Moreover, if they do not understand the key words when doing an exercise or activity, they are often unable to complete the reading or listening comprehension tasks, not to mention writing or speaking, which is even more difficult in such cases. Therefore, “finding ways to enrich their vocabulary is very important” and it usually helps the learners to enjoy such activities more (Nazara, 2019, p. 158).

1.2 Extensive reading

First of all, we should give a definition of extensive reading (ER). According to the Cambridge Papers in ELT series (Extensive Reading in ELT: Why and How?, p. 2)

extensive reading is quite different from the reading done in the (English) classroom, as it possesses certain defining characteristics. One of these is that ER usually involves texts which are much easier as they contain less unknown words thus making it possible for the students to read longer passages/texts as they would during their English lessons. Moreover, it allows the students to choose the books and topics they are interested in, and as a result, the process of reading becomes more enjoyable.

Richard Day and Julian Bamford (2002) argue that ER can actually help the students to start enjoying and loving reading in a foreign language. Moreover, they put forward ten principles for teaching ER. According to them, (1) the material used in ER should not be difficult, (2) and instead of providing the learners with only limited options to choose from, they should be provided by reading materials on a number of topics, (3) and, of course, learners have to be allowed to choose their own reading materials. Moreover, (4) learners should be encouraged to read as much as possible, however, we should also remember, (5) that the purpose of ER is for them to enjoy it and be able to understand the text in general, because (6) “reading is its own reward”. Another principle noted by Day & Bamford (2002) is that (7) ER is characterized by a faster reading speed as it does not aim at translating and understanding every single word in the text. Finally, (8) they state, that ER is individual as it is done outside the classroom, so it is silent, and (9) the teachers only guide their students in/through this process, however, (10) they are the reader role models in the learners’ eyes.

As a response to Day & Bamford’s article, Philip Prowse (2002, pp. 142-144) also enumerated his own principles to teaching extensive reading: (1) Choice; (2) Ease; (3) Texts to engage with and react to; (4) No comprehension questions; (5) Individual silent reading; (6) No dictionaries; (7) Range of genres; (8) Use recordings; (9) No tests; (10) Teacher participation.

Waring & Takahashi (2000) also mention extensive reading, also known as ‘graded reading’, though they believe that it is not the only kind of reading that a foreign language learner has to do in order to improve his/her reading skills. Waring

& Takahashi (2000, pp. 5-6), in fact, believe that learners need both intensive and extensive reading practice. According to them “intensive reading aims to build more language knowledge, rather than practice the skill of reading. Extensive reading by contrast, aims to build reading fluency and reading confidence.” (pp. 4-5).

Waring & Takahashi (2000, pp. 6-7) also give a list of characteristics of extensive reading, some of which are summarized below:

- Learners are required to read a number of simple texts in order to improve their reading skills, as well as their vocabulary and grammar.
- The reading is usually done outside the classroom.
- The reading material is relatively simple: the texts do not contain too many unknown words, because the main aim is to help the learners to improve their reading speed and fluency as well as confidence.
- The reading material is usually individually chosen by the learners themselves, and as a result, each learner might end up with different books/texts.
- Learners are encouraged to focus on their general reading comprehension and fluency as opposed to learning new vocabulary or dealing with grammar.
- The reading materials may be of various topics and genres (such as novels, short stories, poems, etc.).
- Learners constantly come across the most important vocabulary items as well as grammatical materials due to the huge amount of reading materials, which means that there is a lot of repetition involved.

Apart from extensive reading, Bryan (2011), on the other hand, also mentions the notion of ‘narrow reading (NR)’. According to her, these are the two most commonly mentioned methods when it comes to using literature in the process of language teaching. Bryan (2011, p. 114) states:

“These methods have, at their core, a belief that repeated exposure to words used in context will cause the readers to accumulate an ability to recognise and understand those words and be able to recognise appropriate ways to use them in sentences”.

The difference between ER and NR might be summarized as follows:

- ER involves all kinds of reading material, which might differ in terms of topics, authors, genres, etc.
- NR usually involves literary works “linked by author and books linked by theme” (Bryan, 2011, p. 117)

All in all, it is obvious that extensive reading has a positive effect on learners’ language skills and motivation levels. However, the most important benefits of this technique should be discussed in more detail.

1.2.1 The benefits of extensive reading

The most obvious benefit of incorporating ER in the language teaching process is its positive effect on reading fluency and overall language level. Moreover, extensive reading has a huge effect on learners’ motivation levels as it makes them more autonomous (Extensive Reading in ELT: Why and How?, p. 3). Albay (2017, p. 177) states, that “doing large amounts of extensive reading at suitable levels of understanding is a productive tool to increase reading rate, vocabulary, motivation, attitude and general language proficiency.”. Albay (2017, p. 177) also writes that the learners’ language proficiency is often determined by the amount of vocabulary and grammar that the learners have, and ER can help them to attain and improve a number of language skills.

According to Hedgcock & Ferris (2009), ER is not about simply teaching vocabulary or grammar to our learners. Instead, the main aim is to expose the learners to a huge amount of language/texts and encourage them to focus on the meaning rather than the individual vocabulary items or grammatical structures, so that they begin to enjoy reading itself (Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) in: Bryan, 2011, p. 115).

Interestingly enough, ER materials usually involve longer texts, such as novels or collections of stories, though in theory texts of any length could be used (Bryan, 2011, pp. 115-116). However, shorter reading materials, for example

newspaper articles, are more suitable for activities done inside the classroom, as they take up less time.

Although ER is generally viewed as an effective way of learning new vocabulary, it “is not necessarily more effective than methods that involve direct instruction” (Bryan, 2011, p. 116).

“While the extent of the efficacy of Extended Reading may be under some debate, the fact that it is effective, however, is not. The overwhelming majority of the literature on the subject is in favour of ER as a method of language acquisition, and while there is some contention over whether it is applicable to absolute beginners or if the material used should be authentic or consist of carefully controlled, graded readers, all authors are in agreement that the method is useful and should be used to some extent in language learning programmes.” (Bryan, 2011, p. 117)

As it has been stated above, extensive reading usually involves longer texts which are meant to be read outside the English classroom. However, shorter passages and reading materials can often be used in the language classroom.

1.3 Literature in the foreign language classroom

When it comes to teaching a foreign language, teachers tend to use the materials, activities and methods they have tried before while they are quite certain that the end results will be positive.

However, apart from course books and other 'traditional' materials and tools there are plenty of other things one can use in an EFL classroom. For instance, many teachers claim that using literature can turn out to be very useful when teaching or learning a foreign language. Literature might help learners to achieve better results when learning a foreign language. Using literature is a great way of introducing new vocabulary and, at the same time, an excellent opportunity for the students to get familiar with their target culture.

A great number of teachers and scholars believe, that “teaching language through literature is an effective means of cultivating the language competencies of ESL/EFL students as it provides ample opportunities for contextualized learning.” (Ahmad, Abdullah, & Ibrahim, 2018, p. 125). Lazar (1993, pp. 14-15) provides a whole list of reasons for the use of literature in the language classroom:

- it is very motivating;
- it is authentic material;
- it has general educational value;
- it is found in many syllabuses;
- it helps students to understand another culture;
- it is a stimulus for language acquisition;
- it develops students' interpretative abilities;
- students enjoy it and it is fun;
- it is highly valued and has a high status;
- it expands students' language awareness;
- it encourages students to talk about their opinions and feelings.

Furthermore, Lazar (1993, p. 15) states that when reading literature in a foreign language, students will come across complex and even unexpected uses of their target language, which might be much more interesting for them than the reading materials found in their course books.

Unfortunately, learners are quite limited in the use of spoken English in a lot of countries, which means that they get most of their knowledge and information through written English. This is one more reason why literature might become so important in the process of foreign language acquisition “as it provides meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting new language” (Lazar, 1993, p. 17).

Although teachers are probably more interested in the linguistic benefits of incorporating literature in their courses, Lazar (1993, p. 19) points out that:

“[...] literature may also have a wider educational function in the classroom in that it can help to stimulate the imagination of our students, to develop their critical abilities and to increase their emotional awareness.”

It can be said, that using literature in the foreign language classroom is beneficial because it motivates the students to become active participants in the learning process (Daskalovska, & Dimova, 2012, p. 1184).

As Collie & Slater (1987, pp. 5-7) state, there are a number of reasons why teachers should use literature in the language classroom:

- *Valuable authentic material.* The word ‘authentic’ refers to the fact, that literary works are not written specifically for language learners, thus, the language of such reading materials reflects ‘real’ language use. That is, reading literature that was written for native speakers enables the learners to gain a wider knowledge of the different uses of their target language.

- *Cultural enrichment.* Unfortunately, most language learners are not able to spend an extended period of time in a country where English is the native language, therefore, it might be difficult for them to fully understand English culture and traditions. And even though “the ‘world’ of a novel, play, or short story is a created one, yet it offers a full and vivid context in which characters from many social backgrounds can be depicted” (Collie, & Slater, 1987, p. 6).

- *Language enrichment.* Although it can be debated, whether an authentic literary work can provide the learners with useful language and vocabulary, Collie & Slater (1987) believe, that if the teacher chooses wisely, the literary text will prove to be beneficial.

- *Personal involvement.* When learners have to explore a story over a longer period, they become used to the text. This helps them to focus on the storyline itself instead of concentrating on individual structures and words. Moreover, they might become emotionally attached to certain characters and as a result their personal involvement can easily become a motivating factor.

Shen (2004, p. 81), for example, examined whether using simplified literature and texts encourages foreign language learners' creative writing skills. The results of Shen's study showed that learners responded positively to the practice of using literature in EFL.

According to Shen (2004, p. 83), reading and writing are closely related; before writing about a certain topic, learners need to acquire information about it, which is why "reading plays an important role in the writing process by providing learners with schemata to write about".

According to Senem Üstün Kaya (2014, p. 41):

"Many students may acquire to grasp the grammatical and linguistic structures of English; however, they may fail to practice them properly. Literature provides a key to these problems because literary resources not only motivate the students but also exemplify the use of grammatical structures of the target language."

As we have mentioned before, Collie & Slater (1987) enumerate four main reasons for using literature in the foreign language classroom, however, Rai (2012, pp. 71-72) writes that:

"In addition to these four main reasons, universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy and suggestive power and ambiguity are some other factors requiring the use of literature as a powerful resource in the classroom context."

These points enumerated by Rai (2012) were first mentioned by Maley (1989; 2001). Rodriguez (2017, p. 107) further explains the relevance of the above mentioned reasons. According to his explanation:

- the universality aspect suggests that literature can be found in all cultures, and “it expresses people’s customs, problems, experiences, beliefs, and expectations” (p. 107).

- the non-triviality aspect means that literature is not designed or written solely as a teaching material (it is authentic).

- the personal relevance aspect simply shows that the writer’s experiences are involved in the text.

- the variety aspect proves that literature represents a wide range of topics and themes.

- the ambiguity aspect “means that each person can react in different ways and readers have different perceptions according to their background” (p. 107).

Although using literature in the language classroom is usually justified by the fact, that it exposes the learners to a wider range of grammatical materials and structures, Lima (2005, p. 4) points out, that the language of literary works can often be characterized by the “intentional bending and breaking of grammatical rules”, especially if the teacher decides to use authentic literature as opposed to graded or simplified reading materials.

It can be said, that the role of literature in the foreign language classroom has changed a number of times, most researchers agree that literature provides a rich linguistic input, and it stimulates the students to express and share their thoughts and ideas in their target language. Thus, literature can become the source of language learners’ motivation. Moreover, such creative use of language in literary texts “provide lots of aesthetic, intellectual and emotional pleasure” (Haroon, Mohammed, & Khanday, 2019, p. 63).

Pardede (2011, p. 14) argues, that despite the fact that many teachers believe that focusing on linguistic elements in an EFL classroom is enough, teaching trends in recent years have changed and using literature in EFL has become advisable as it provides examples of authentic language use. Biswas & Rahman (2017, p. 179) also agree that the last two decades of the twentieth century can be characterized by a growing interest in the use of literature in the EFL classroom.

However, many teachers still avoid using literature in the EFL classroom, as not every teacher believes in their effectiveness, while others are convinced that incorporating literature might be too difficult (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 248; Floris, 2004, p. 4). Thus, learners are forced to acquire a foreign language mostly by learning grammar and vocabulary which might become quite boring and ineffective in the long run. Furthermore, it usually results in lack of motivation and/or interest from the students' side.

1.3.1 Advantages of using literature in the foreign language classroom

There are numerous advantages of incorporating literature into the foreign language classroom. Floris (2004) says that although teachers and course books tend to use informative texts for teaching foreign languages, literature and literary texts also have numerous distinctive qualities which make them suitable for EFL classrooms:

1. Language enrichment – while such texts are not created for the specific purpose of teaching, they tend to be richer and more varied in vocabulary.

2. Cultural enrichment – literature is perfect for learning about other cultures. It helps students to better understand how other cultures perceive the world.

3. Authentic material – common themes and values, social issues such as death, love, etc. All possible varieties of subject matter.

4. Personal involvement – the themes offered in literary texts are usually relevant to students' own experiences. Therefore, such texts are much more relatable as students might 'connect' ideas, events and experiences found in a text to their own lives.

According to Healy (2010), literature encourages students to learn a new language and at the same time learn to share their thoughts and feelings in that particular language. Healy (2010) also enumerates several (traditional) models for teaching/incorporating literature in a language classroom, such as the cultural model, the language-based approach, the personal growth model or an integrated approach which combines all three.

Claudia Ferradas (2009) similarly enumerates a number of positive effects of using literature in the language classroom. In short, she argues that literature can motivate the learners and it is often very thought-provoking. Shen (2004, p. 84) also writes that, reading can prove to be very motivating, especially when used as a stimulus to help the learners generate their own ideas and thoughts before a writing activity.

Moreover, literature helps learners to improve their language skills, as well as expand their vocabulary, not to mention that it is a great way of developing the learners' cultural awareness (Ferradas, 2009). Erkaya (2005, pp. 7-8) also believes, that literature can be used to talk about the learners' target culture as it allows them to talk about the past as well as the present of a particular culture, about different traditions and customs, etc. Bobkina & Dominguez (2014, p. 251) agree with this statement and write:

“Literary texts—novels, plays, short stories, etc.—favour the understanding of the communication processes in the target language. Though representing an imaginary world, these texts often describe vivid and detailed settings and lead readers to discover the characters' personalities and worlds. This way, students learn to see the world from different points of views and discover different ways of living in different societies.”

However, Erkaya (2005, pp. 7-8) also points out that teaching culture is not as easy as it might seem at first glance, because if the students' culture and the target culture are nothing alike, it might be more difficult for the learners to understand it. Therefore, the teacher should always be familiar with the target culture so that he/she can help the students and guide them in the learning process. When learners become more aware of the target culture, they can be encouraged to compare the two, so that they can find the similarities and discuss the differences between them.

Rai (2012, p. 71), on the other hand states, that apart from developing the learners' four language skills, using literature also helps to improve different

language areas, for example the learners' vocabulary skills, as well as their grammar and pronunciation.

Koutsompou (2015, p. 74) also writes about the positive effects of using literature in the language classroom as it makes the class more “lively and motivating”. Rodriguez (2017, p. 106) mentions that using literature in language teaching can be very advantageous as it might change “the class dynamic” thus contributing to a better teaching environment. Moreover, if the teacher manages to choose a story that the learners will truly enjoy, it might help them to perceive the target language more naturally, and as a result they might be able to “identify the functions of words in the sentences” (Rodriguez, 2017, p. 107).

Finally, in the case of more advanced students, who might already have a good vocabulary knowledge, literary texts might nonetheless prove to be profitable, especially when it comes to speaking activities. Erkaya (2005, pp. 4-5) believes, that with high-intermediate and advanced learners literature can be read and discussed in the classroom, as it would certainly be a great opportunity for the learners to share and discuss their insights and ideas “helping them to speak the language in a more imaginative way”.

Lima (2005) believes that when it comes to developing linguistic competence, literature is not the best tool, nor is it appropriate if we want to present a realistic picture of a particular society to our students. However, she agrees that literature can be used effectively when our aim is to improve the learners' reading abilities. In her article, Lima (2005, p. 5) writes:

“Language study and cultural awareness can be achieved through other sorts of text and discourse, while literature could be used to develop the sort of skills and offer the sort of reading experience ‘informational’ texts cannot provide for.”

Erkaya (2005) also states, that when using literature in language teaching, the teacher has the opportunity to introduce different literary elements as well. She

suggests that with students at the beginner or pre-intermediate levels simple elements should be discussed, for example the characters in a story, as well as the setting or the plot. However, more advanced learners can be encouraged to discuss other, more complex elements, and these would include conflict, climax, etc. (p. 6).

1.3.2 Disadvantages of using literature in the foreign language classroom

However, it should be mentioned that although reading in a foreign language might help students to learn a new language, a number of difficulties will most certainly arise. Some of the difficulties mentioned by Scrivener (2005) are (1) lack of vocabulary needed to understand a particular text, (2) which might result in students constantly using a dictionary, (3) and the process of reading itself might be very slow compared to the time we spend on reading the same text in our native language, (4) not to mention that sometimes learners will understand individual words and still not get the whole meaning.

Saka (2014, p. 279) believes, that sometimes students might refuse to read literature just because they do not have the literary competence necessary to understand the texts or to interpret the message/meaning of it. Shen (2004, p. 82) adds that learners may feel slightly intimidated when asked to write in their target language, moreover “their lack of interest may also stem from inadequate learning material that is unrelated to their life”.

Khatib, Rezaei, & Derakhshan (2011, pp. 203-205) enumerate the most commonly mentioned ‘potholes’ of including literature into the language teaching process, such as syntax, lexis, phonetics and phonology, semantics, selection of materials, literary concepts and notions, and cultural barriers.

As Floris (2004) states, literary texts and literary language itself might become a ‘hindrance’ in an EFL classroom as it might seem ‘incomprehensible’ at times. Furthermore, such texts tend to be quite long and in this case the length of the text can also cause difficulties.

Lima (2005, p. 4) points out, that the language of literary works can often be characterized by the “intentional bending and breaking of grammatical rules”,

especially if the teacher decides to use authentic literature as opposed to graded or simplified reading materials:

“The unrestricted use of lexical items and the very creative use of language characteristic of most literary work might hamper understanding instead of providing practical examples of how language is actually used in everyday transactional interactions.” (p. 4).

Bobkina & Dominguez (2014, p. 251) also agree that literary language is not at all easy to understand, as it often contains extremely complicated vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Shella (2016) mentions another aspect which should be taken into consideration when using literature in a foreign language classroom. Although reading is a very important skill to master in order to understand the language and the target culture better, choosing an appropriate reading material might turn out to be surprisingly hard. Choosing the most motivating and the most interesting reading material must be a priority for language teachers. Moreover, the level of the text itself has to be very close to the students' language level.

However, even if the reading material is appropriate, it may happen, that learners still do not wish to engage in the reading activities or read at all. Lazar (1993, pp. 42-43) provides his readers with a short review of the possible reasons students might not be willing to respond in the foreign language classroom: (1) Cultural peculiarity/characteristic – the learners may not be used to expressing their own opinions freely in front of the teacher. (2) Social factors – in some cases, the learners' social status might prevent them from talking about their thoughts and emotions. (3) Individual sensitivity – the literary materials chosen by the teacher might raise issues/themes to which some of the students are particularly sensitive, and as a result, they might choose to refrain from discussing them. (4) Finally, it may happen that the learners simply feel remote from the themes and issues covered

in the reading materials chosen by their teachers, therefore, teachers should consider the preferences and interests of the students.

Although most teachers and scholars agree that literature is very beneficial when it comes to learning about the students' target culture, Lazar (1993, p. 16) somewhat disagrees. In his book "*Literature and language teaching: A guide for teachers and trainers*" he mentions that at times, literature is not at all truthful in representing a particular culture, because literary texts (novels, short stories, etc.) are in fact "works of fiction", which is why assuming that a piece of literature in the target language is a true reflection of a culture might not be the best idea:

"There is a danger that students will fall into the fallacy of assuming that a novel, for example, represents the totality of a society, when in fact it is a highly atypical account of one particular milieu during a specific historical period." (p. 16)

However, Lazar (1993, p. 17) does not reject the idea of using literature to teach culture completely, though he believes that students should be encouraged to view such descriptions of culture critically.

Bobkina & Dominguez (2014, p. 252) and Lima (2005, p. 4) also agree, that teaching culture and cultural issues through literature in an EFL classroom might cause a number of problems. Erkaya (2005, pp. 7-8) also points out that teaching culture is not as easy as it might seem at first glance, because if the students' culture and the target culture are nothing alike, it might be more difficult for the learners to understand it.

1.3.3 Approaches to teaching literature

As Daskalovska & Dimova (2012, p. 1182) have stated in their article titled "*Why should literature be used in the language classroom?*", language teaching trends have changed in the 1970s; it has been concluded that teaching a foreign language,

which is mostly used for communication, should be done using the communicative approaches.

As Koutsompou (2015, p. 74) said “literature reading is, no doubt, a communicative activity and literary texts are who could nowadays deny such thing, authentic examples of language use”. Nevertheless, Koutsompou (2015, p. 74) also adds that this was not always the common understanding, in fact, “literature was not considered either to have a communicative function or to be authentic example of language use”.

Armstrong (2015, p. 7) writes that using literature in the language classroom became less popular as approaches “such as the Grammar Translation Method became dominant”. While Pardede (2011, p. 15) states, that this method involved translating (literary) texts from foreign languages which is why literature could be used as a source of teaching/translating material, and it was only after the 1960s that literature has become less used. Kaya (2014, p. 41) also writes that after the appearance of the Grammar Translation Method and other approaches following it, literature was not a central part of a foreign language classroom. The Grammar Translation Method used literary texts as examples of how the target language (and the grammatical rules) should be used, and the method focused on learning vocabulary and grammar rather than the text’s literary value or content (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 249).

However, after the Communicative Approach appeared, integrating the four language skills into the classroom became the main aim, and it required more authentic teaching materials (Kaya, 2014, p. 41). Armstrong (2015, p. 7) and Hall (2005, p. 48) agree that using literature in the language classroom gained popularity with the appearance of the communicative language teaching approaches. Hall (2005, p. 121) writes:

“With the coming to dominance of communicative language teaching paradigms in language instruction, reading has often been advocated as an

invaluable source of rich and extended natural or authentic input from which learners can benefit even as they take pleasure in it.”

Although many agree that incorporating literature into the EFL curriculum is a good idea, it is still an often debated question, and, in fact, it has been since the sixties (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014, p. 249).

Another question that might arise if a teacher decides to introduce literature in the EFL classroom is how to do it in the best way possible. According to Bobkina & Dominguez (2014, p. 252) there is no universally accepted way of incorporating literature in language teaching, because each classroom is different, and teachers often have completely different reasons for introducing literary texts in the language classroom. In their opinion “some teachers prioritize grammar and vocabulary while others put the emphasis on the stylistic features”. Furthermore, other factors are also to be considered, starting with linguistic competence, social and cultural background, the learners’ individual needs and of course, the characteristics of the literary text are important as well (p. 252).

While teachers might have different reasons and aims when using literature in the language teaching process, Koutsompou (2015, p. 75) enumerates three main reasons/models, and these are (1) the cultural model, (2) the language model, and (3) the personal growth model. In the first one the importance of literature and its ability to encapsulate culture/cultural wisdom is stressed. This model enables the learners to get better acquainted with a particular country and its history, its political views/system, as well as its society. Moreover, the learners get a better understanding of the traditions and views of that particular nation/country. The second model, called *the language model*, on the other hand, is concerned with the various uses of the language and it aims at conveying these differences. The third, *the personal growth model* is quite different, as its aim is to help the learners to understand the reading material/literature so that they can grow as individual beings, or in other words, it focuses on the learners’ ideas and personalities.

When it comes to the actual use of literature in a language classroom, Gajdusek (1988, p. 233) suggests a four-level classroom technique for dealing with all kinds of literary materials. The four levels mentioned by Gajdusek (1988) are:

- *Pre-reading activities*. These are the types of activities and exercises that provide the learners with background information needed in order to avoid any kinds of misunderstandings and breakdowns. As Gajdusek states “carefully planned pre-reading activities that anticipate cultural and linguistic problems will permit the pleasure of genuine involvement with a literary text” (p. 234)

- *Factual in-class work*. This includes discussing different aspects of a reading material, such as the main characters, the setting, the time period or era in which the story takes place, as well as talking about the plot of the story.

- *Analysis*. When the learners become familiar with the story and get a general understanding of what it is about, they can move on to the analysis stage. This includes talking about the structure of the literary text, as well as the main themes and the style of the text.

- *Extending activities*. Gajdusek describes these as “in-class activities that extend the ideas or situations encountered in the text” (p. 233).

1.3.4 Material selection criteria

Richards (2005) states that the three factors that should be considered when choosing reading materials are the teacher, the student, and contextual variables. While Tomlinson (2011) says there are fifteen basic principles of foreign (and second) language acquisition and all of them should be taken into consideration when selecting any teaching materials. The most important thing is to choose materials which will match the students’ level, needs, interest and motivation. This applies to choosing the best reading materials as well.

In order to make choosing the best reading materials easier, Lazar (1993, p. 56) provides his readers with a checklist of the criteria which should be considered:

Table 1.3.4 Material selection criteria (suggested by Lazar, 1993)

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|--|
| <p>Checklist for choosing literary texts</p> <p>TYPE OF COURSE</p> <p>Level of students</p> <p>Student's reasons for learning English</p> <p>Kind of English required</p> <p>Length/intensity of course</p> <p>TYPE OF STUDENTS</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Intellectual maturity</p> <p>Emotional understanding</p> <p>Interests/Hobbies</p> <p>Cultural background</p> <p>Linguistic proficiency</p> <p>Literary background</p> <p>OTHER TEXT-RELATED FACTORS</p> <p>Availability of texts</p> <p>Length of text</p> <p>Exploitability</p> <p>Fit with syllabus</p> |
|--|

Collie & Slater (1987) also mention, that choosing the most suitable book, short story, etc., is extremely important, and a number of criteria should be taken into consideration, such as the learners' language level, as well as their interests and background. "It is important to choose books, therefore, which are relevant to the life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner" (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 8). In fact, according to them, the simplicity and understandability of a literary work does not guarantee that learners will be willing to read the book, therefore, the enjoyment and relevance of the story is more important.

Pardede (2011, p. 18) writes that although teachers play an important role in choosing and helping the learners to cope with the reading material, the learning process nevertheless has to be learner-centred. Furthermore, when teachers decide to select some kind of literary text which later will be used in the language

classroom, they have to consider the “needs, motivation, interests, cultural background and language level of the students” (Rai, 2012, p. 73). Rai (2012, p. 73) also adds, that: “Reading a literary text is more likely to have a long-term and valuable effect upon the learners’ linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge when it is meaningful and amusing.”.

Saka (2004, p. 279), on the other hand, writes that it is also important to decide which literary genre is the most appropriate for using in a particular EFL classroom. In fact, this can cause some problems for teachers. According to Pardede (2011, p. 17), for instance, the objections and difficulties related to the use of novels, plays and poetry in (foreign) language teaching makes it obvious that short stories are the most suitable literary genre to use in (public) schools. “Since it is short, and aims at giving a ‘single effect’, there is usually one plot, a few characters; there is no detailed description of setting. So, it is easy for the students to follow the story line of the work.” (Pardede, 2011, p. 17).

According to Pardede (2011, p. 19), short stories can help the learners to develop not only their reading and vocabulary skills, as they can be used to teach all four language skills. Moreover, Biswas & Rahman (2017, p. 180) state that by introducing stories in the language classroom and using them as context for different types of activities students are likely to learn grammatical accuracy as well as the four language skills.

Collie & Slater (1987, p. 196) also agree that short stories are often ideal for foreign language teaching, and they list four advantages to prove their point:

- *Length*. As opposed to novels, for example, short stories can be read within a few, and sometimes even one, lesson(s).
- *Ease*. They are quite easily read, and if the need arises, students can even read them on their own, which will probably provide them with a sense of achievement.
- *Great variety*. Because they are so short, it is easy to choose a number of stories on various topics and issues so that students will find at least one story that suits their interests and tastes.

- *Extensive use.* Short stories can be used in several kinds of courses and language classes, and because of their variability, they are suitable for students of different levels and ages.

Kaya (2014, p. 42) gives similar reasons for using short stories in the foreign language classroom. Rai (2012) also supports the widespread view that using short stories in a foreign language classroom is beneficial, however, she also mentions reasons for using novels in the language teaching process. The educational benefits of using novels as listed by Rai (2012, p. 78) are the following:

- develops the advanced level readers' knowledge about different cultures and different groups of people,
- increases students' motivation to read owing to being an authentic material,
- offers real life / real life like settings,
- gives students the opportunity to make use of their creativity,
- improves critical thinking skills,
- paves the way for teaching the target language culture,
- enables students to go beyond what is written and dive into what is meant.

As for the criteria for selecting the most appropriate novels to use in the foreign language classroom, Rai (2012) writes, that teachers should consider the plot, themes and characters of the novel, because if these are not interesting enough, students might not enjoy reading it. Moreover, the "content of the novel should be suitable to students' cognitive and emotional levels." (Rai, 2012, p. 79).

1.4 The difference between 'simplified' and 'authentic' reading materials

Many argue that using literary texts along with real world texts can help the learners to develop and improve their reading skills as literature provides more authentic reading materials as opposed to course books (Ahmad, Abdullah, & Ibrahim, 2018, p. 124). As Mestari & Malabar (2016, p. 125) put it "the authentic materials are used in order to close the language gap between classroom knowledge and real life". Therefore, integrating literature and literary texts in foreign language teaching might be extremely beneficial.

“The term "authentic text" covers language samples drawn from a wide variety of contexts, including TV and radio broadcasts, conversations, discussions and meetings of all kinds, talks, and announcements [as well as] magazines, stories, printed material and instructions, hotel brochures and airport notices, bank instructions, and a wide range of written messages.” (Mestari & Malabar, 2016, p. 126)

On the one hand, literature can become a rich source of learning materials, yet not every teacher decides to introduce it into their language classrooms. Mestari & Malabar (2016) state that sometimes teachers prefer using textbooks or various published materials designed specifically for language learners simply because these are great for teaching grammar, which according to Mestari & Malabar (2016, p. 125) is a very important skill for an English learner as it allows them to communicate (and write) in their target language.

Communicative language teaching, for instance, usually involves authentic teaching/reading materials, which can help the learners to become better acquainted with ‘real’ language as opposed to the specifically designed texts found in course books (Daskalovska & Dimova, 2012, p. 1183). As Daskalovska & Dimova (2012, p. 1184) write: “It is especially important for more advanced learners to be exposed to a wide variety of authentic literary texts accompanied by tasks and questions that resemble real-life approaches to such texts”.

However, using authentic reading materials at lower levels might be too difficult, therefore, teachers sometimes use graded (or simplified) reading materials instead (Lazar, 1993, p. 17). Mestari & Malabar (2016, p. 126) also believe that authentic reading materials might have a number of disadvantages compared to textbooks for instance, though they can also motivate our students to learn their target language as such reading materials contain ‘real language’ (p. 126).

Tevdovska (2016, p. 165) states that simplified reading materials and their importance in ELT has been studied for many years. She also mentions that the simplification of literary texts (or in other words ‘graded readers’) is especially

important when it comes to teaching reading for language learners. Haroon, Mohammed, & Khanday (2019, p. 62) state that simplified or graded readers are extremely important in the process of language teaching therefore should be included in language teaching curricula and even textbooks.

Waring & Takahashi (2000, p. 9), on the other hand write, that the type of reading materials chosen by the teacher should depend on the purpose or the aim that the teacher wants to achieve:

“If the purpose is to improve fluency, confidence and so on, this will not be easily achieved with texts that are too difficult. Therefore, ‘authentic’ texts cannot be useful for fluency practice until the learner can read them fluently. However, these texts may be useful for Intensive Reading (especially for more proficient learners who are able to take advantage of them), but will not suit all learners.”

As the practical part of this study mostly deals with graded readers, the notion is further described below.

1.5 Graded readers

Great sources of suitable reading materials are graded readers. As Scrivener (2005) describes them graded readers are specifically published for language learners. They usually have their grammar and vocabulary ‘graded’ to a particular level. Waring & Takahashi (2000, p. 8), for example, state that graded readers are usually used in order to improve the learners’ reading ability as “they are made easy to read by simplifying the vocabulary and grammar so the learner can easily understand the story.” They then add, that such books are not necessarily written for children and they cannot be called children’s books. Although there are a great number of graded readers written for younger readers, they are generally designed for adult language learners (Waring & Takahashi, 2000, p. 8). Moreover, Albay (2017, p. 177) believes that graded readers are perfect for extensive reading:

“They [graded readers] are particularly designed to enable learners practice reading skills and provide an opportunity to reinforce known vocabulary. Through multiple exposures learners become familiar with grammatical structures and vocabulary. Moreover, learners experience how they function in texts and they are motivated to use the vocabulary and structures they have learnt in their communication.”

Thus, we can say that graded readers are usually designed with the aim of developing a learner’s reading comprehension skills as well as his/her reading fluency. When learners have the opportunity to read a wide variety of texts on a number of topics it helps them “to build reading speed and enhance reading confidence” (Albay, 2017, p. 177).

Waring & Takahashi (2000, p. 9) also mention that some graded readers include different comprehension questions as well as a glossary of words that appear throughout that particular story. Moreover, graded readers are usually divided into different levels based on their difficulty of grammatical structures and the number of vocabulary. This means, that the easier levels will contain „the 400 most frequent and useful words in English” (Waring & Takahashi, 2000, p. 9), while a more difficult level of graded readers might contain two times as many words.

Furthermore, Smith & Krashen (2009, p. 67) add that graded readers are often used in free reading programs, especially in the case of L2 learners, though they are often included in EFL reading programs as well.

1.5.1 The benefits of using graded readers in the foreign language classroom

Shella (2016) writes that the reason why graded readers are so effective is that they have severely restricted vocabulary and grammatical structures that occur several times in the text which makes it easier for the students to remember them. They are great for (1) fluency in reading, (2) learning new vocabulary and grammar, (3)

revising previously learnt vocabulary and grammatical structures, (4) motivation, (5) improving overall language level, etc.

Moreover, Albay (2017, p. 178) believes that graded readers might prove to be great motivators as they allow learners to read “at their reading ability” which also results in improved reading fluency, and learners might even become more confident when it comes to reading in their target language (pp. 177-178).

Waring & Takahashi (2000, p. 9) also write about the positive effects of using graded readers. According to them, such reading materials can be used even with beginners, who can start by reading the easiest levels and slowly make their way towards the more complex, more difficult levels of graded reading materials. Albay (2017, p. 178) agrees with this idea:

“It is important that learners should read at their level of understanding because facing a great deal of unfamiliar words while reading may discourage them. In graded readers new vocabulary and grammatical structures are repeated and recycled for learners so that they become familiar with them. For that reason, as learners read significantly their ability to understand is promoted and they are encouraged to read more.”

Finally, it should be mentioned that there is a huge variety of graded readers to choose from. For instance, Oxford University Press and Macmillan Readers offer graded readers for learners of all levels, including a number of literary genres, such as detective stories, adventure stories, thrillers, etc., as well as simplified versions of a wide variety of English literary works (Waring & Takahashi, 2000, p. 9).

In this part we have discussed the main aspects of using literature and graded readers in the foreign language classroom. As it has been mentioned previously, literature provides an endless number of reading materials that are rich in vocabulary

and target culture. It can be used in second and foreign language teaching, and often plays a central role in designing extensive reading programs for EFL learners.

The issue of introducing (English) literature into the foreign language classroom has been long debated, however, most scholars and teachers agree, that the advantages of using literature in EFL, such as language skills development, cultural as well as language enrichment, etc., outweigh the disadvantages and problems that might arise if a teacher decides to introduce literary works in their language classroom.

The first part of this study also includes a short summary of the numerous methods and approaches to teaching and using literature in language instruction. Furthermore, we have explored the criteria of material selection as well as the difference between 'authentic' and 'simplified' reading materials.

Finally, the notion of graded readers has been discussed. This type of reading materials is often used in extensive reading programs, however, it is also suitable to be included in the EFL classroom.

PART 2

Implementing literature into the foreign language classroom

2.1 Teachers' perspective on the use of graded readers

In the previous part of this study, we have covered much of the theory behind using literature and literary texts in the EFL classroom. As it was stated before, introducing literature into the English classroom can turn out to be very beneficial despite the minor difficulties it might cause for the teacher. In fact, it can be said that the majority of teachers nowadays realise that using literature in the language classroom has a positive effect on the learners' language level, yet literature rarely appears in mainstream teaching materials (Lima, 2010). This can be explained by the fact that incorporating literature into the English classroom requires some kind of preparation and background knowledge on the methods and techniques of using literature in language instruction. Moreover, before introducing any literary texts or reading materials to students, the teacher has to define his/her teaching objectives in order to have a clear image of what they want to achieve with that particular piece of literature (Lima, 2010).

On the other hand, language teaching often centres around developing learners' linguistic competence, thus focusing more on grammar and language use in general rather than emphasising the development of communicative skills. Erkaya (2005, p. 1), for example, states that:

“While some instructors may still believe that teaching EFL encompasses focusing on linguistic benefits only, so eventually their students will communicate in the target language, others who have integrated literature in the curricula have realized that literature adds a new dimension to the teaching of EFL. Short stories, for example, help students to learn the four skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing-- more effectively because of the motivational benefit embedded in the stories.”

Lima (2005) somewhat disagrees with Erkaya's statement. She also writes that many teachers introduce literature in the EFL classrooms because they believe that it will inevitably improve learners' language competence, and at the same time, will make them more culturally aware. However, Lima (2005, p. 4) notes that this will not be true in the case of numerous literary texts, as some literary works might have a reverse effect and simply "cause considerable inconvenience to our language students". Therefore, as it was mentioned in the previous part, selecting the most appropriate reading materials for our learners is not an easy task. In fact, selecting a literary work for the EFL classroom might turn out to be so complicated that it will simply put off the teacher altogether (Lima, 2010, p. 110).

Another reason why many teachers avoid using literature in the foreign language classroom, as suggested by Tehan, Yuksel, & Inan (2015), is the linguistic difficulty of the text itself. Moreover, in many cases, there are so many differences between the target culture and the learners' culture that "language teachers may be reluctant to benefit from the works of literature in the language classroom" (Tehan, Yuksel, & Inan, 2015, p. 47).

This is further explained by Torres (2012, p.10), who believes that "there is a high pressure on raising the students' language skills, and ironically, this affects the teaching of literature" negatively. Torres (2012) mentions a number of aspects that might prevent teachers from including literature in the EFL classrooms:

- "A significant number of primary and high school teachers still struggle with their own command of English" (Torres, 2012, p.10).
- Most of the textbooks used in language instruction usually focus on language itself.
- In many cases, teachers plan their lessons without considering what their learners know; instead they focus on what learners should know.
- As it is evident, that including literature will increase the teachers' workload, some of them simply choose to avoid it altogether. Moreover, using literature in a foreign language classroom requires more preparation.

- Finally, learners, and in some cases, even teachers, lack a role model for reading, as alternative entertainment sources (such as television, the Internet, etc.) are much more popular nowadays.

Thus, it can be said that using literature and graded readers might seem overly complicated; therefore, many teachers simply continue using the methods and techniques they are familiar with. As Lima (2010, p. 110) states:

“In many English language learning and teaching contexts the absence of literary texts, such as graded readers, short stories and poems, still seems to be the norm. Where textbooks are used, and depending on the title adopted, sometimes extracts of a novel or a short poem may timidly make their way among a majority of non-fictional texts, such as extracts of newspaper articles, samples of travel brochures, or content from webpages.”

Therefore, it can be stated, that literature and literary texts are often neglected when it comes to teaching English due to the above-mentioned reasons. However, as Torres (2012, p.12) writes, teachers can overcome or even prevent many of these inconveniences if they:

- “display a positive attitude towards a literary work”
- get well acquainted with the literary work they intend to use in their lessons beforehand so that they can introduce it to their learners in simple terms.
- prepare a number of pre-reading activities and tasks which will make the learners more interested and eager to read in their target language.
- acknowledge that there will most certainly be several difficulties and even misreadings/misunderstandings of the stories plot.
- “choose a short story or a novel that is not too much above the students’ normal reading proficiency or that is just fruitful providing opportunities for the learners to express their personal opinions, reactions and feelings” (p. 12).

All in all, it is obvious that introducing literature into the EFL classroom is not an easy task, however, teachers should consider the benefits of literature-based language instruction.

2.2 Learners' perspective on the use of graded readers

The success of implementing graded readers into the foreign language classroom depends on many aspects that teachers have to take into consideration, and one of those major aspects is whether learners will be willing to read in their target language. On the one hand, language learners are often required to read all kinds of texts and extracts included in their course books. However, these reading activities are mostly done inside the language classroom and do not involve longer passages. On the other hand, when we talk about using graded readers for language instructions, it can be said that these types of reading materials are much longer and are often done outside the classroom. According to Smith & Krashen (2009, p. 66) "Graded readers are widely used in English as foreign language programs, but we have little information about whether students find them interesting." As it has been mentioned in the theoretical part of this study, teachers who use graded readers or other simplified reading materials in the process of language teaching often struggle to find books or short stories that will suit the needs of each learner.

Smith & Krashen (2009, p. 69) also write that reading materials used in an EFL classroom may differ greatly, however, for them to have a positive effect on the learners' language acquisition they "must be comprehensible and interesting". This is one of the reasons language learners, at least in most cases, enjoy reading graded readers, as these cover a variety of literary genres and topics.

Cheetham, Harper, Elliott, & Ito (2016, p. 11), for instance, wrote about the positive responses of learners to using graded readers as they are "designed to be both easy and pleasurable to read if the appropriate level is selected". Although graded readers are perfect to be used in extensive reading programmes, teachers should remember that one of the aspects of designing successful reading programs is to listen to the students' preferences or suggestions when choosing a book (or a

graded reader) to read. In some cases, learners are more likely to choose literary works, the title of which sounds familiar to them as opposed to the ones they have never heard of before (Cheetham, Harper, Elliott, & Ito, 2016).

All in all, it can be stated that even a well-planned reading program can turn out to be impossible to complete if the learners are not willing to complete their reading assignments.

2.3 Using graded readers in the foreign language classroom

It is safe to say that a teacher can use many methods and techniques if he/she decides to introduce graded reading materials into the foreign language classroom. As it was mentioned, graded readers are suitable to be used outside the classroom, as part of an extensive reading program; however, they can also be integrated into the language classroom as additional reading materials to the learners' course books, or even as substitutes for some of the readings found in coursebooks. One of the reasons why using graded readers is a good idea is the fact that they can help learners to improve their overall reading skills, as well as their vocabulary. Graded readers are great for exposing students to their target language. They also make English literature more accessible to the learners, and because the text is simplified, even weaker learners can enjoy reading them (Pesce, 2015).

If the teacher does decide to use a graded reader in their foreign language classroom, they will inevitably have to plan out the types of (classroom) activities and tasks that children will be required to complete. Countless activities can be used with graded (simplified) reading materials. Pesce (2015), for instance, enumerates a number of activities that can help learners to understand better what they are reading. She suggests several easy exercises, such as (1) retelling the story or the plot using simple sentences, (2) using all of the illustrations that the graded reader might include, and asking the learners to describe them, (3) choosing one character from the story and then retelling it from their perspective, (4) writing descriptions of either the characters or the places that are mentioned in the book, (5) changing the ending of the story, etc. Prentis (2013) also writes about different ways of using graded

readers and suggests activities in which the learners would have to rely on their creativity. For example, in one of the exercises, she mentions that learners have to prepare 'an interview' with one of the story's characters. This activity requires them to be familiar with the story, and at the same time, they have to rely on their own imagination and creativity.

However, these are just some of the suggestions on how to use graded readers in an EFL classroom to benefit our learners. Other frequently mentioned exercises and activities can be divided into pre-, while and post-reading ones, and will be further explained below.

2.3.1 Pre-reading activities

It can be stated that pre-reading exercises are, in most cases, essential. On the one hand, as Erkaya (2005, p. 8) writes, these types of activities can help avoid major misinterpretations of the whole plot, especially when the target culture is nothing like the learners' own culture. On the other hand, pre-reading activities can sometimes make learners more interested and motivated to read in their target language.

Erkaya (2005, p. 8), for instance, believes that a pre-reading activity can provide the learners with the necessary background information that will help them understand what they are reading about. Koutsompou (2015) also agrees with this idea and provides her readers with a number of activities that can be used before reading, such as (1) guessing/predicting what will happen in the story/book, (2) asking the learners if they are familiar with the author/time period in which the story takes place, etc.

As mentioned by Aysu Şimşek (2020), another idea is to ask the learners to quickly skim through the pages of the book and write down any proper names they find. They can then guess who these characters might be, which one is the main character, etc. (Şimşek, 2020). Piccolo (2017) also adds that as most graded readers nowadays have quite interesting covers, it might be good to let our students 'judge the book by its cover'. Piccolo explains that the teacher can show the book to his/her

students without letting them see the title so that they can speculate and think about possible titles and plots (Piccolo, 2017). Aysu Şimşek (2020) suggests the same idea and adds that in the case of more advanced learners, the teacher can also introduce the notion of literary genres.

2.3.2 Activities while reading

Similarly to one of the pre-reading exercises, Şimşek (2020) suggests that if the graded reader contains at least some illustrations, learners can be asked to describe them and even predict what they think is going to happen next. Piccolo (2017), on the other hand, writes that creating alternative endings to the already read chapters, for instance, might also be done while reading.

Koutsompou (2015) enumerates several activities that learners can do during the process of reading. According to her, these exercises help learners understand the plot fully cope with the more complicated (or simply unfamiliar) vocabulary. Therefore, Koutsompou (2015, p. 77) lists some activities that should be used while reading. For instance, she suggests the following activities that will help learners to understand the plot:

- 1) *Ex. 1. Read the text and provide titles for each thematic unit.*
- 2) *Ex. 2. Form groups of two and write a small summary.*
- 3) *Ex. 3. Listen to the summaries of your classmates. Do you think you or they have missed something? Do you want to add something?*

Apart from these, she mentions a few exercises that are great for understanding the characters of the story, for example, answering different questions about a particular character based on the text, or writing descriptions of some of the characters, etc.

2.3.3 Post-reading activities

When it comes to post-reading activities, some of the most frequently mentioned ones were probably those exercises, in which learners had to either (1) act out some

of the scenes/ dialogues found in the book (2) or write their own version of the story (Şimşek, 2020, Piccolo, 2017).

Piccolo (2017) also writes that reordering activities can be used at this stage. These can vary, for example, the teacher might ask the learners to put a number of chapter titles or even scenes from the plot in the correct order (Piccolo, 2017).

Apart from the more 'creative' activities, Ahmad, Abdullah, & Ibrahim (2018, p. 130) also suggest doing different types of comprehension exercises. One of the examples included in their study was the activity shown below, which was based on Jane Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*:

Activity 2: Comprehension Questions

- 1) *What kinds of emotions did Elizabeth experience as she went through the content of the letter?*
- 2) *What was the part of the letter that she simply refused to accept?*
- 3) *Can you guess why this letter was written?*
- 4) *Predict how Elizabeth would react when she meets Darcy for the first time after having read the letter?*

Lazar (1993, pp. 28-29) proposes many activities that can be done after the learners have finished reading. His activities are targeted at more advanced learners (starting with learners at the intermediate level):

- The teacher selects an abstract from? a novel, etc., that can be used as an example of descriptive writing and removes all of the adjectives or adverbs from the text. The learners then have to fill in the blanks using adjectives/adverbs they are familiar with and think will fit into the text. Finally, they can compare their versions with the original abstract. Another variant of this activity is to ask the learners to rewrite the text using another tense, for example.
- After reading a short story, for instance, the teacher gives three short summaries of the plot which slightly differ from one another. The learners are asked to read all three and choose the one that summarises the short story most accurately.

- After reading a dialogue that is taken from a novel, play, etc., the teacher asks the learners to think about what happens next. They can try to act out their version of the story.

All of the activities mentioned above can be slightly changed and used with learners at lower levels of language proficiency.

2.4 Language skills development through graded readers

Several scholars suggested various exercises and activities focusing on particular language skills (such as speaking, writing, listening, reading), which can be used with graded readers, or short stories in particular. Erkaya (2005) for example, suggests many writing and listening activities, as well as tasks designed to increase the learners' vocabulary or build their speaking confidence. Similar activities were also suggested by Pardede (2011), Ferradas (2009), and Ahmad, Abdullah, & Ibrahim (2018). Some of these are further explained below.

2.4.1 Writing

For writing activities, Erkaya (2005, p.3), for instance, enumerates the following tasks (based on the story "The Wisdom of Solomon"):

- „Write a dialogue between King Solomon and the guard holding the sword after the mother and the son, and the other woman left the palace.
- Paraphrase the first four sentences of the paragraph, "And in this way they argued . . . whose child it was" (fourth paragraph from the bottom).
- Summarise the story in three sentences, including the main character, setting, conflict, climax, and resolution.
- Write one sentence on the theme of the story.
- Write a paragraph on what causes people to lie.
- Write a classification essay on different kinds of lies."

According to her, the first two activities can be used with learners at lower (beginner) levels, while the next two are suitable for (pre-)intermediate levels as well. Finally, the remaining activities can be done with more advanced learners as

they require much more significant personal involvement. Pardede (2011, p. 22) also suggests similar activities as most of them promote the learners' creative (or higher-order) thinking, while some can even encourage the learners to express their own ideas in writing.

Another writing task mentioned by Ferradas (2009, p. 30) is to predict what is going to happen in the story. She suggests the following writing activity:

Imagine what happens next.

You are going to write a paragraph – between 40-60 words. Before you do that, discuss these questions with a partner. They may help you.

- *Where will they land?*
- *What kind of place is it?*
- *Who will they meet?*
- *What do the local inhabitants look like?*
- *What language do the natives speak?*
- *How do they communicate?*
- *Will they be friendly?*

2.4.2 Vocabulary

Erkaya (2005) and Pardede (2011) both suggest a number of vocabulary activities that can be used with graded readers, short stories, or any other literary genres. One of the activities is shown below (Erkaya, 2005, p. 4).

a. Complete the word form chart below. The first word has been done for you. Remember that some words do not have all forms.

| <i>Participle</i> | <i>Adjective</i> | <i>Noun</i> | <i>Verb</i> | <i>Adverb</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| <i>speaking</i> | <i>speakable</i> | <i>speaker</i> | <i>speak</i> | ----- |
| ----- | ----- | ----- | <i>die</i> | ----- |

This particular activity is very beneficial as it helps learners to develop their vocabulary. The number of columns and words is up to the teacher; however, as

Erkaya (2005, p.4) states, the students may simply lose interest in finishing their task if there are too many words. Apart from potentially increasing the learners' vocabulary, this activity is great if the teacher wants to make sure that the learners know how to use their dictionaries properly.

Another frequently mentioned vocabulary exercise could be this one (as suggested by Ahmad, Abdullah, & Ibrahim, 2018):

a) Match words from the extract with the given meaning.

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Eagerly</i> | A) <i>To start again</i> |
| 2. <i>Renewal</i> | B) <i>Doing the opposite</i> |
| 3. <i>Contrariety</i> | C) <i>Resolutely</i> |
| 4. <i>Steadfastly</i> | D) <i>Rudeness</i> |
| 5. <i>Prejudice</i> | E) <i>Showing discrimination</i> |
| 6. <i>Resolved</i> | F) <i>Treated cruelly</i> |
| 7. <i>Penitent</i> | G) <i>With keenness</i> |

This type of matching activity was also proposed by Erkaya (2005) and Pardede (2011) as well. In this exercise, students are asked to match some words/phrases with either their English definitions or in some cases, with their synonyms. The words/phrases in the first column should be taken from the graded reader (or short story, etc.), while the definitions provided in the second column “must match the meaning of the words/phrases in the context of the story to help students to understand how a different word/phrase can be used in the same context” (Erkaya, 2005, p. 4).

Pardede (2011) goes even further, and proposes a third part to this exercise in which learners would have to practice the use of words/phrases they have learned in the previous activity:

3. Choose the word/phrase from column A in the previous activity that best fits each of the following sentences. You may need to add –s to a plural word or to a third person singular of a verb in the present tense, -ed to the past tense of regular verbs, -ing for present participle, etc.

a) She finally _____ after we waited for her for two hours.

- b) Johan was so _____ in his that he did not realize morning had broken.
- c) After finishing this homework, I have quite much _____ time.
- d) Mr Moore looked angry when I entered the meeting room. But he finally excused my _____ after I finished explaining why I was late.

2.4.3 Listening

Listening activities can usually be done with graded readers that include an audio CD, however, nowadays, many graded readers come with audio files that can be downloaded for a certain amount of money.

On the other hand, both Erkaya (2005, p.5) and Malinowska (2015) mention that graded readers can be read out loud. Erkaya (2005, p.5) also adds, that reading aloud can be very beneficial in those cases when the teacher is a native speaker of the target language. According to Pardede (2011, p. 22) “asking students to read a story aloud can develop their speaking as well as listening skills. Moreover, it also leads to improving pronunciation.”.

However, if the graded reader does include audio files/recordings, it is a great idea to use them in the classroom. After the learners listen to an extract, the teacher can ask questions to check how well they understood the audio recording.

On the official website of Macmillan Readers, there is a guide that provides teachers with ideas on using graded readers in language teaching. One of the listening activities suggested by Macmillan Readers (Macmillan, p.12) was the following:

1. Give students a list of three or four titles or summaries of books.
2. Play three or four short extracts from the accompanying audio recordings.
3. Ask students to match the correct title with the corresponding listening extract.

Another activity idea proposed by Macmillan Readers involved (1) dividing the learners into teams, (2) after which they have to listen to short recordings of dialogues from the story, (3) and guess who the speakers were (Macmillan, p. 24).

2.4.4 Speaking

Two often proposed speaking activities, as it was mentioned above, were role-playing and acting out parts of the story. These are quite similar and are perfect for getting the learners “more involved in the story” (Erkaya, 2005, p. 7). As Pardede (2011) explains, in a role-playing activity, the learners have to take on the role of the characters in the story. One such activity was also proposed by Erkaya (2005, p. 7) (based on the short story “The Wisdom of Solomon”):

a. Imagine you are the guard who is told by King Solomon to cut the child in half. If you don't think you can do what the King has asked you to do, tell him how you feel. Make sure you are convincing.

b. Suppose you are the guard who is told by King Solomon to cut the child in half. After cutting the child in half, tell him how you feel about his decision. Make sure you are convincing.

Although Pardede (2011, p. 22) primarily suggests activities that can be used with short stories, these can also be adapted when using graded readers. As ideas for speaking (and to some extent listening) activities, she enumerates the following: “oral reading, dramatisation, improvisation, roleplaying, re-enactment, and discussion”. Other speaking activities suggested by Pardede (2011) include:

- Chain reading: students read the story one after the other. Each student has to read one sentence. According to Pardede (2011), this kind of activity can be used even with elementary students and is great for improving pronunciation as well as (reading) fluency.
- Storytelling: this activity is similar to the previous one; however instead of reading, the learners have to retell the story. Every learner has to continue the story in one sentence.
- Debating: the learners are divided into two groups. Each group has to prepare arguments either for (supporting) or against (opposing) the characters' decisions or deeds in the story.

2.5 Previous studies

Throughout the years, many studies have been conducted concerning the use of literature in the EFL classroom. The issue of including literary works and simplified readers (graded readers) into the foreign language curriculum or simply into the language teaching process has been dealt with from different perspectives. The studies presented below were mainly conducted from either the learners' point of view or the teachers' perspective.

Akbari & Razavi (2015) conducted a study to assess the attitudes of English language teachers towards the use of authentic (reading) materials in Iran. Their research focused on receptive language skills, that is, on listening and reading skills. The main questions of Akbari & Razavi's study were the following (2016, p. 109):

- "What are the teachers' attitudes toward using authentic materials in EFL classes?
- Do the teachers prefer to use authentic materials? Why?
- In which levels would the teachers use authentic materials?
- What are the sources that the teachers would use to obtain authentic materials?
- Do the teachers need training in dealing with authentic materials? If so, what type of training?" (2016).

The study was conducted amongst 57 English teachers with teaching experience ranging between nine and twenty-nine years. The teachers were asked to fill out a questionnaire consisting of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. After analysing the data, Akbari & Razavi found that all teachers acknowledged the positive effect of using authentic materials in the EFL classrooms. The participants believed that authentic materials allow the students to experience the "real English language" (2016, p. 112). Another important finding was that the respondents indicated that they preferred using authentic materials during reading activities as opposed to listening tasks. Moreover, the majority of the teachers stated that most of the authentic materials used by them had been obtained from the Internet and TV.

Raveanová (2012) conducted a research concerning the use of graded readers in adult education.

The main aims of her survey were the following:

1. to investigate whether English language teachers know the term ‘a graded reader’;
2. to investigate English language teachers’ attitudes to using an extensive reading approach in their courses;
3. to investigate to what extent teachers integrate graded readers into lessons;
4. to investigate which methods they use to work with graded readers.

Raveanová’s online questionnaire consisted of 13 questions, half of which inquired data specifically about graded readers and their usage. The results showed that although many teachers were familiar with the term of ‘graded readers’, most of them did not use them in their language classrooms for several reasons, the most common of which was ‘lack of time in the lessons’. Raveanova concluded that many teachers were uncertain about the effectiveness of the extensive reading approach despite the great number of researches written in support of this teaching approach.

Skog’s (2019) survey centred around the use of novels in EFL classrooms in a few Swedish secondary schools. Skog’s findings showed that a lot of the respondents (EFL teachers) used English literary works in their language instruction (especially in grades 7-9). Skog stated that “since the authenticity of for example, novels makes them favourable in some cases and the Graded Readers are a good option when students have limited language knowledge, it is not a simple decision” (p. 19), though the majority of her respondents used both young adult novels and graded readers. According to the responses given to the questionnaires, in most cases, learners are required to read the same book which had been previously chosen by the teacher himself/herself. However, some teachers allow their students to choose from various literary works, which might lead to increased motivation levels. Finally, Skog also proved that one of the most often assigned tasks to the students is ‘group discussion’ which is said to improve the learners’ understanding as well as their personal engagement levels.

Haroon, Mohammed, & Khanday (2019) conducted a study at the PYP Najran University amongst English teachers “about the importance of using Graded

Readers or Simplified Readers (SRs) in motivating students to read extensively outside classroom.” (p. 62). According to this study, although it is generally believed that using literature is a great way of motivating language learners, graded or simplified readers are still neglected by many teachers and language instructors “due to claims of linguistic, social, or belief potholes” (p. 64), and as a result learners are not always encouraged to read extensively, thus, their language skills often remain quite poor.

The aims of the study, as noted/described by the authors (p. 65), were:

1. To investigate teachers' perception about graded readers in motivating students to read extensively.
2. To figure out teachers' awareness of the term GRs.

The researchers used a closed-ended questionnaire designed for EFL teachers, which was intended to answer the following research questions (p. 65):

- To what extent could SRs or GRs (the ones familiar to learners) motivate learners to do extensive reading?
- Are the teachers at PYP aware of GRs?

According to this study's findings, most of the teachers were aware of the term 'graded reader'. Moreover, most of them encouraged their students to read them to improve their language skills.

Yang (2009): The case study focused specifically on using short stories in language instruction as these are considered good teaching resources. The study was conducted with junior secondary students (aged 12-14); The researcher aimed to investigate whether using short stories in teaching English would result in increased interest levels among the learners. Moreover, the effect of pre-, while- and post-reading activities on language learners' confidence levels was investigated. The study gave answers to the following research questions:

1. Will the students become more interested in English with the use of short stories?
2. Will the students become more confident in using English with the use of different activities in the pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading stages?

The case study used the narrative approach to language teaching, also known as storytelling. The researcher relied on both quantitative (pre- and post-test questionnaires) and qualitative (classroom observation, semi-structured group interviews) data collection methods.

The results showed that although the students did enjoy learning English through the narrative approach, their interest and motivation levels were linked to the choice of stories and the language level of the chosen reading materials. Unless the story included too many unknown words and phrases, the learners generally enjoyed reading it in their English lesson.

Elena Spirovska Tevdovska (2016): The researcher's aim was "to investigate students' attitudes towards the impact of literary texts on language learning and teaching" (p. 165). Thus, in her study, Tevdovska mentions the benefits as well as the drawbacks of introducing literary texts in language teaching. Moreover, the study includes a survey that deals with learner attitudes towards this issue. As opposed to the studies mentioned previously, Tevdovska dealt with undergraduate students who would become EFL teachers, therefore, the students' age varied from 21 to 31 years old.

"The participants were exposed to authentic literary texts (prose, poetry and plays) as a part of English Literature courses. The participants had also an opportunity to use graded readers and simplified texts, as a part of English Skills courses during their undergraduate studies." (Tevdovska, 2016, p. 165)

As the participants were exposed to several literary genres, the survey also analysed their opinions on the most appropriate literary genre to be used in foreign language instruction.

The results showed that students mostly enjoyed reading novels and short stories, whereas poetry was often considered too difficult to understand. Graded and simplified texts, however, were found to be very acceptable. Finally, the results

showed that students found the additional information (such as historical and social aspects, etc.) and different visual materials (for example films) presented by the teacher very useful.

Nazara (2019) conducted her research in order to find out whether learners enjoyed learning vocabulary through the medium of short stories. Nazara designed a questionnaire that consisted of 20 statements which were divided into three parts (demographic information, the students' perception of short stories, open-ended questions). Nazara found that most of her respondents had a positive attitude towards the use of short stories for vocabulary building. Moreover, the majority of the learners enjoyed reading short stories as they found them quite interesting. According to Nazara's findings, "short stories help them (the learners) develop vocabulary more easily because the context of the story provides effective clues to get the meaning of unfamiliar words" (p. 163). Finally, the researcher found that using short stories led to increased activity and motivation levels.

In this part of the study we have dealt with the issue of learners' as well as teachers' attitudes towards the use of literature, and graded readers in particular, in the EFL classroom.

Firstly, teachers' opinions were discussed. It can be said, that although most teachers are aware of the benefits of introducing graded readers to their EFL learners, many of them decide to avoid using it nonetheless. This can be explained by the numerous problems and difficulties that might arise when literature or graded reading materials are exploited in the foreign language classroom.

Secondly, the idea/practice of reading graded readers in the process of language learning was described from learners' perspective. As it was mentioned above, graded readers are quite popular amongst learners due to the fact that most learners find them interesting and captivating. Moreover, the wide variety of graded readers allows learners to choose from a range of topics and literary genres.

Thirdly, the second part of this study gives a detailed description of the activities and tasks that can be used in the EFL classroom when reading a graded

reader. The activities presented in this part were suggested by a number of scholars, including Erkaya (2005), Koutsompou (2015), Pardede (2011), and others.

Finally, a list of previous studies conducted by Akbari & Razavi (2016), Raveanová (2012), Skog (2019), Haroon, Mohammed, & Khanday (2019), Yang (2009), Tevdovska (2016), and Nazara (2019), dealing with the issue of using literature/graded readers in the foreign language classroom was presented.

PART 3

Investigating the use of graded readers in Transcarpathia

3.1 Statement of the problem

English, being an international language, is taught in most, if not all, of the schools and educational institutions in our region. Children learn English as a foreign language throughout their school years. A number of techniques and teaching methods are used to help students learn the language so that they can use it in the future.

When teaching English as a foreign language, it should be noted that in our region (Transcarpathia), English is mostly taught through (oral) language instruction and different activities and tasks used in EFL classrooms. Moreover, the curriculum itself is quite grammar-based. However, apart from acquiring the grammatical material, learners are expected to develop their four language skills, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking, as well as their vocabulary knowledge.

In recent years, many teachers have realised that the methods and techniques used in EFL classrooms are not always as effective as they would hope. This might be explained by the fact that although learning the grammar of a language is quite important as it enables us to use the language properly, it is not enough when it comes to situations in which learners have to use the language outside the classroom. Even though most of the course books used in the English classroom in Transcarpathian schools contain tasks specifically designed for improving the learners' listening and speaking skills, these tend to be quite ineffective while they do not prepare the learners for the real-life situations in which they might need to use English. Moreover, the majority of these exercises is not suitable for teaching cultural differences between the learners' native language and their target language.

According to several scholars (Daskalovska & Dimova (2012), Collie & Slater (1987), Agustín Reyes Torres (2012), Rai (2012), etc.), a possible solution to this problem would be the use of literature (or graded readers) in the EFL classroom.

The supporters of using literary works and/or graded readers for teaching English believe that it helps the learners improve their vocabulary and get a better understanding of their target language culture.

As it has been stated in the theoretical part, learners who acquire English as a foreign language often find it difficult to communicate in their target language. Moreover, many of them lose interest in learning the language due to factors such as lack of motivation, uninteresting learning materials, etc. As a result, when they reach secondary education, they are able to understand the written materials to some extent; however, they fail to improve their speaking, listening, and writing skills.

3.1.1 Methodology

Although there have been many attempts at proving that literature is extremely beneficial when it comes to EFL classrooms, it is still somewhat neglected in English language classrooms. In the previous part, we dealt with the advantages and disadvantages of including literary works in the EFL curriculum, as well as, discussed the reasons why some teachers prefer to avoid using literature in their classrooms even though it might prove to be very useful in the long run. Therefore, we have decided to conduct a research in this area in order to find out:

- (1) whether including literature in the English classroom positively affects language learners' abilities and motivation levels.
- (2) whether English teachers in our region use literature or graded readers to be more precise in the EFL classrooms.
- (3) whether language learners enjoy reading graded readers (based on a case study conducted in a Transcarpathian school).

In order to be able to answer the above questions, several methods of data collection were used. First of all, a small scale case study was conducted in a senior secondary school (the case study involved: using a graded reader in the English classroom throughout a period of six weeks, comparing the results of a pre- and post-reading test, designing exercises and activities used alongside the graded reader and the activities that are included in the reader). Secondly, at the end of the reading

programme, the learners were asked to fill out a questionnaire on their opinions regarding the use of literature and graded readers in the English classroom. Thirdly, a second questionnaire was designed for English teachers in order to assess their attitudes towards including literary works and graded readers in their language classrooms.

Thus, it can be stated that this study relies on the method of triangulation, which allows the researcher (1) to study a certain issue from several perspectives; (2) to collect data using various methods of data collection. This method is used to assure the validity of the research as well as to avoid making hasty conclusions (Sántha, 2010, p. 54).

3.1.2 Planning the study

As it has been mentioned above, graded readers and literature, in general, might help the learners achieve better results when learning a foreign language. It is a great way of learning new vocabulary and at the same time an excellent opportunity for the students to get familiar with their target culture. That is why teachers should include graded literature in the curriculum.

However, in our region, many teachers are not aware of the advantages of using graded readers in their EFL classrooms, and others might not have heard of them or have never actually tried them. Another reason why literature/graded readers are not frequently used in the teaching process is that not every teacher believes in their effectiveness, while others are convinced that incorporating literature might be too difficult. Thus, the learners are forced to acquire a foreign language primarily by learning grammar and vocabulary, which might become quite boring and ineffective in the long run. Furthermore, it usually results in a lack of motivation and interest from the students' side.

3.1.3 Aims of the study

The aims of this study are the following: (1) to assess the attitudes of English teachers in our region towards using literature in the English classroom; (2) to test

whether using literature and graded readers when teaching a foreign language helps the students to improve their language skills.

3.1.4 Objectives of the study

The following study aims to:

- (1) Help learners to improve their language skills with the help of a graded reader.
- (2) Motivate the learners to read in their target language.
- (3) Assess English teachers' attitude towards using graded readers in EFL.
- (4) Test the effectiveness of using graded readers in teaching English as a foreign language.

3.1.5 Hypotheses and research questions

The hypothesis being offered is that using literature or more specifically graded readers (1) helps the learners to improve their reading comprehension skills and to build their vocabulary; (2) make the process of language learning more engaging and more effective; (3) motivates the students to read more in their target language. Moreover, (4) English teachers in Transcarpathia are not aware of the benefits of using graded readers; therefore, (5) the majority of English teachers in our region does not use graded readers in the EFL classrooms.

In this study, we tried to answer the following questions:

- (1) Does including literature/graded readers in the foreign language classroom have a positive effect on learners' language skills?
- (2) Do language learners enjoy reading graded readers?
- (3) Do English teachers (in our region) use graded reading materials in their English lessons?

3.1.6 The significance of the study

It is known that teaching a foreign language is usually quite difficult on its own, not to mention the fact that teachers have to make sure that the methods and techniques they use really help the children to improve their language skills. However, it is best

to remember that sometimes using the same methods/activities/etc. over a long time will not give us the results we would want to achieve. Therefore, it is good to try out new ways of teaching English as a foreign language.

In using literary works and graded readers in the EFL classroom in our region, there is little research to prove that this particular method does work. Although several authors and scholars (Кузнєцова Л.А., Лотоцька К.Я., 2000; Автамонова К.О., 2013; Строкань Н. О., 2018; Гавловська Т.А., 2014; Сокол О.С., 2018; Єременко, Т.Є., Трубіщина, О.М., Лук'янченко, І.О., Юмрукуз, А.А., 2018; Іщук А.А., 2018;) deal with the idea of including English literature and graded readers in the foreign language classroom, they mostly write about the theory behind this language teaching approach. Therefore, this study provides both a theoretical and a practical overview of this topic.

This study can be considered useful to English teachers who might consider introducing English literature or graded readers in their language classrooms as it provides insight into how a particular graded reader can be used in EFL classrooms.

3.1.7 Ethical considerations

In accordance with the ethics approval guidelines, prior to the commencement of the fieldwork in the school, permission was asked from the school's headmaster. The names of the subjects (learners and teachers) are not included in the practical part of the study.

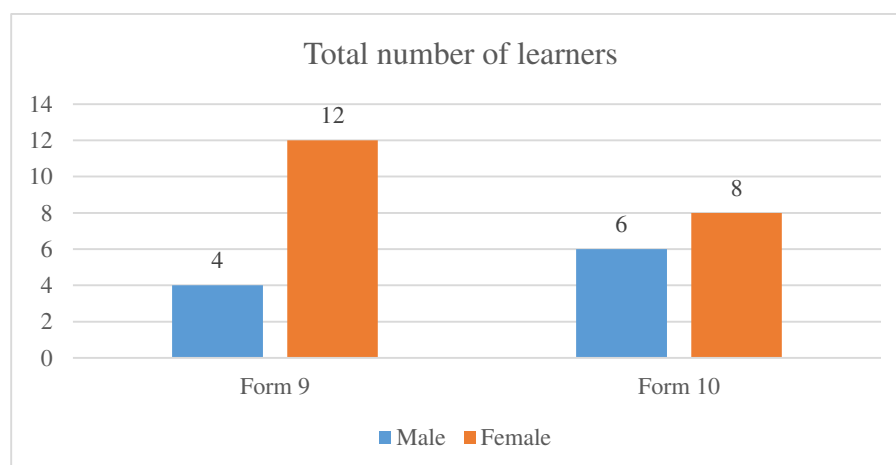
3.2 Participants

The participants of this study can be divided into two groups. The first group comprises the learners of a Transcarpathian senior secondary school where the researcher herself has been teaching English for two years. In this investigation, we have decided to include the ninth and the tenth form for two reasons. First of all, according to Erkaya (2005) and Nazara (2019), although literature and graded reading materials can be introduced into the EFL classroom even at lower levels, as it is a great way of developing the learners' vocabulary, in the case of

(pre)intermediate students, literature can prove to be helpful when it comes to developing other language skills as well, for example, the learners' speaking or writing skills. Taking into consideration the fact, that in our target school two out of four forms used a course book at the pre-intermediate level, we have decided to test the effectiveness of using graded readers in foreign language teaching in these two forms. Moreover, although both forms use a B1-B2 level course book, the number of English lessons per week is very different in both cases. While in the case of form nine there are two English lessons each week, in the case of form ten the number of English lessons per week is five. Thus, using a graded reader in the EFL classroom in these two forms would allow us to compare the final test results in order to see whether there would be a substantial difference between the two cases.

Thus, there were 30 learners in total (14 tenth grade learners and 16 ninth grade learners).

Diagram 3.2 Total number of learners



Because the learners come from different parts of Transcarpathia, their previous learning experiences are entirely different, and as a result, their language levels vary between elementary and intermediate (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). As it was mentioned above, in the tenth grade, the learners study English in an increased number of hours. Therefore, these learners have five English lessons per week, as opposed to the ninth-grade learners who have only two English lessons each week.

During the spring semester, the teacher introduced a graded reader into the English language classroom. The graded reader was used both inside and outside the classroom throughout a period of six weeks (from the 15th of February to the 26th of March). During this time, the learners were required to:

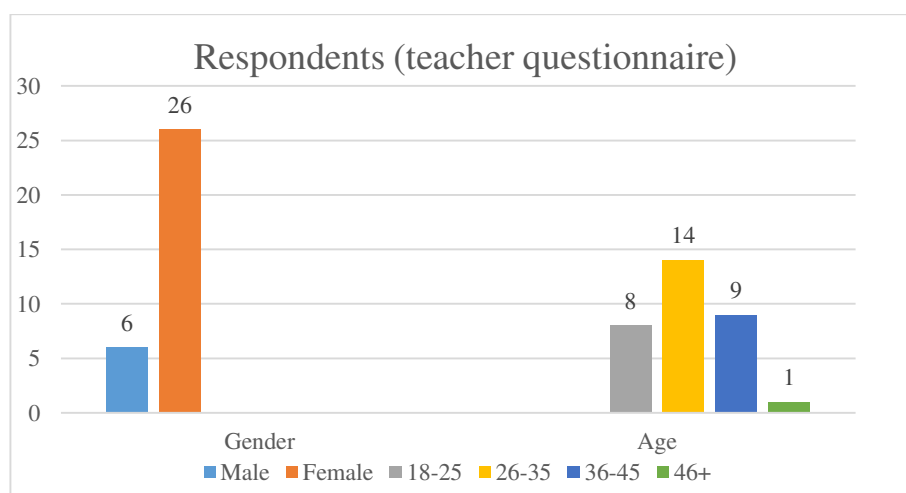
- read several chapters from the graded reader;
- do pre- and post-reading exercises and activities;
- do a pre-reading test before the study;
- do a post-reading test at the end of the study;
- learn the new vocabulary items provided by the graded reader;
- fill out a post-reading questionnaire.

Due to the relatively small number of learners in the school where the study took place, the number of participants was very limited. Moreover, after the first two weeks of the study, the learners were forced to continue their spring term online due to the pandemic.

The second group of participants included Transcarpathian English teachers working in primary or secondary schools, as well as those working in language schools. With this group, a survey was used in order to assess the teachers' attitudes towards using literature and graded readers in the EFL classrooms. The questionnaire collected quantitative data.

There were 32 respondents in total (male – 6, female – 26). The respondents could be divided into four age groups (see the diagram below):

Diagram 3.2 Total number of teachers



3.3 Research instruments

The instruments used in this study were the following: (1) a questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice questions as well as open-ended and closed-ended questions which are aimed at assessing the teachers' attitudes toward using literature in the EFL classroom; (2) a graded reader (*The Sign of Four* retold by Anne Collins) and a number of activities and tasks based on that same literary work; (3) a second questionnaire consisting of fourteen Likert scale statements aimed at assessing the learners' opinions concerning the use of graded readers in the English lessons.

Thus, it can be stated that the researcher used a mixed-methods approach in order to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

3.3.1 Criteria used to select the materials

It can be stated that literature provides a huge variety of texts to choose from when selecting reading materials; however, as a first step, the teacher has to decide which literary genre will suit his/her classroom best. As stated in the theoretical part of this thesis, teachers tend to choose novels for extensive reading, while short stories, plays, and poems are more commonly used during actual classwork, as these are much shorter and therefore easier to incorporate into an EFL lesson.

As this study focuses on using graded readers in the EFL classroom, it was essential to choose a reading material that will suit the learners' English level. According to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), there are six main levels of language proficiency which can be described as follows (Introductory Guide to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for English Language Teachers, 2013, p. 2):

Table 3.3.1 The main levels of language proficiency

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| C2 (Proficient) | The learner uses English fluently and very precisely in almost every context. |
| C1 (Upper-Intermediate) | The learner uses English fluently in widely ranging contexts. |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| B2 (Intermediate) | The learner uses English effectively in a number of contexts (with some fluency). |
| B1 (Pre-Intermediate) | The learner communicates his/her main ideas in contexts that are familiar to him/her. |
| A2 (Elementary) | The learner communicates in English "within a limited range of contexts". |
| A1 (Beginner) | The learner communicates in basic English, relying on the listener. |

As it was mentioned above, the learners who participated in this study do not have the same language proficiency level as it varies between A2 and B2. However, as the coursebook used in the learners' language instruction corresponds to the B1 level (according to the CEFR), the researcher decided to use a graded reader of the same level.

After deciding what level of graded reader would be used in the study, six options were chosen amongst the choices provided by a number of online (Ukrainian) bookstores. Finally, six graded novels were selected by the teacher:

1. Sherlock Holmes (short stories) by Arthur Conan Doyle
2. The Chronicles of Narnia (The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe) by C.S. Lewis
3. Little Women by Louisa May Alcott
4. The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett
5. Anne of Green Gables by Lucy Maud Montgomery
6. Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll

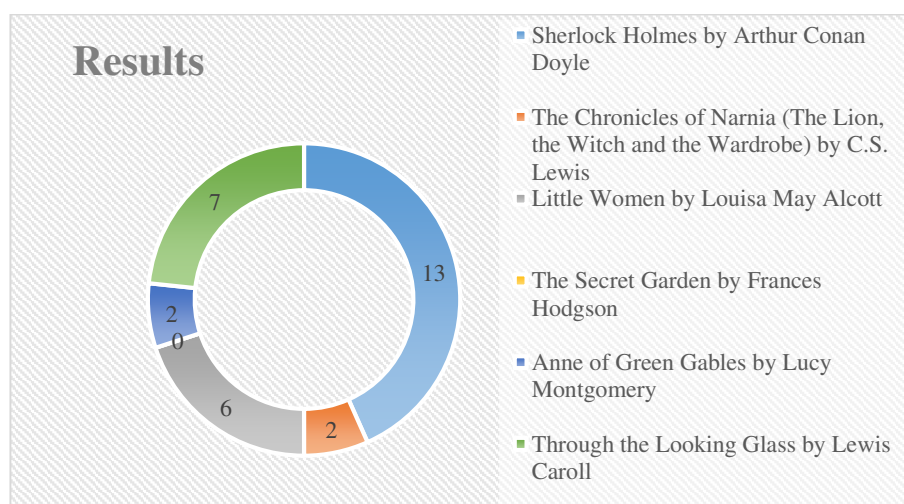
Even though novels are mainly chosen for extensive reading programs as they tend to be quite long, these graded readers were relatively short (between 50-80 pages), and all of them were divided into short chapters, which made it possible to use them both inside and outside the classroom.

After selecting these graded readers, the learners were asked to participate in a short survey in which they had to choose one graded reader they were most interested in. As they were not familiar with some of these literary works, the

teachers gave a short (3-5 sentences) summary of all of the options to help the learners.

As the diagram below shows, the majority of learners (13) voted for the first option (*Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle). The second and the third most voted for options were *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll (7), and *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (6). Two of the seven options, *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Montgomery and *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis, were chosen by the same amount of learners (2). The only book that none of the students voted for was *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson.

Diagram 3.3.1 Selecting the graded reader (learners' responses)



After choosing one of the books, the learners also had to explain why they chose that particular piece of literature. Some of the reasons given by the learners were the following:

1. **Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle:** (1) because it's a nice book, (2) because I've seen it in a movie before, and I think it would be an interesting book, (3) because I like detective stories! They are very cool, gripping. Also, when you are reading it, you are in the process, you are thinking about the plot and story of investigation. In my opinion noir films and detective books are the most wonderful things! (4) because this is an interesting book, (5) it's interesting, (6) because I like this kind of books, (7) because I watched the TV series and it was really interesting. (8) because this book is interesting to me, (9) It's the most interesting one of these books. (10) This book is more

interesting than the other books (10) I think it will be interesting and I have heard about this book from somebody and they said it's good.

2. **Anne of Green Gables by Lucy Montgomery:** (1) I chose it because I read it and I really liked it.

3. **Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll:** (1) I choose this book because in my opinion it's very interesting, (2) I just heard about it somewhere and I think this would be awesome. (3) Because I liked the movie.

4. **Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis:** (1) I choose this book because it is my favourite of the science fiction series. (2) because I'm interested in this book

5. **Little women by Louisa May Alcott:** (1) Because it is a very good book.

As it has been mentioned above, most of the learners chose *Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle. Therefore, the researcher chose *The Sign of Four* (retold by Anne Collins), a Macmillan graded reader appropriate for the learners' language proficiency level (B1-B2). Graded readers of this level published by Macmillan Readers contain approximately 1400-1600 basic words.

The graded reader used in this study could be divided into the following parts:

- The story itself. The graded reader was divided into 15 chapters. Each chapter was between 2-5 pages long.
- Points for understanding. There were a number of discussion questions based on each chapter.
- Glossary. This part contained 30 new words and expressions taken from the story. Each glossary item was defined in English. Moreover, an example (a sentence) was given after the definition.
- Exercises. The graded reader included a number of exercises for almost every chapter (True or False, multiple-choice, sentence reordering, gap filling, etc.)

It should also be mentioned that on the official website of Macmillan Readers, there were a number of worksheets and tests available. These could be downloaded as PDF files for free.

3.4 Limitations of the study

The present study has some limitations due to several reasons. First of all, the first part of the study that deals with the implementation of literature (through the means of a graded reader) into a foreign language classroom covers only one Transcarpathian school. This part of the research was limited in time and was carried out in the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year. However, this was due to the fact that the researcher has been teaching English in this school for almost two years and was able to design the syllabus in a way that would allow her to use the graded reader in the EFL classroom for six weeks (this would not have been possible in another school).

Secondly, due to the first reason, the learners' sample population is limited (=30). Moreover, due to a number of reasons, including (1) the restrictions caused by the global pandemic, (2) the difficulties and additional/excessive workload that teachers have to face as a result of online teaching, it was necessary to use online questionnaires which negatively affected the final number of teacher respondents (=32).

3.5 Procedure of the research - Classroom

As mentioned in the first part of this study, Koutsompou (2015. p. 75) writes about three main models of using literature in the EFL classroom, and these are (1) the cultural model, (2) the language model, and (3) the personal growth model. This study did not focus on only one of these models; however, the researcher adapted all three to some extent when using the graded reader in the classroom. Some of the activities focused on the cultural aspect of the story, while others centred around the use of language. Moreover, most of the discussion activities were designed to encourage the learners to express their own ideas and thoughts.

During the six weeks, the learners were required to read several chapters of the graded reader inside and outside the English classroom. Before every reading, they had to do some kind of pre-reading activities. These included (vocabulary) quizzes, discussions, vocabulary building tasks, etc. Some of the pre-reading

activities were taken from the graded reader itself, while other activities and tasks were designed by the teacher. It should be noted that although the activities used in both classrooms were identical, the number of English lessons per week differed greatly (9th form - 2 English lessons per week, 10th form – 5 English lessons per week). This meant that learners attending the ninth grade were required to do more reading activities outside the classroom; however, the researcher tried to plan the lessons and activities in a way that would allow the two forms to read the same amount of chapters during the six weeks.

Before introducing the graded reader into the English language classroom, the learners were given some background information about the author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, as well as the time period and the city of London as well. During this introductory lesson, the learners had to watch a short video about the life of Arthur Conan Doyle and another video about London and how it connected to Sherlock Holmes's character.

Apart from this, before reading the first chapter, the learners were also asked to draw a word map (word cloud) and write down as many words as they could connect to the topic of ‘crimes and detectives’.

Before reading any of the chapters, the learners had to do different pre-reading activities (See Appendices 4 and 5). Some of these tasks were taken from the graded reader, while others were designed by the teacher. The tasks were based on the ones suggested by Erkaya (2005), Koutsompou (2015), Lazar (1993), and Pardede (2011). All of the activities used in the English language classroom during the six weeks’ period are included in the appendices (See Appendix 1).

Apart from pre-reading activities, learners were also asked to complete the post-reading exercises that followed each chapter. Half of these exercises were done inside the classroom after reading a particular chapter, however, the other activities and tasks had to be done at home individually. These were also either taken from the graded reader or designed by the teacher (See Appendix 6).

Moreover, on the official website of Macmillan readers ([link](#)) there were a number of worksheets and additional tests that could be downloaded for free. Some of these tasks were also adapted by the teacher and used in the English classroom.

3.6 Procedure of the research – Questionnaires

There were two questionnaires used in this study. The first one was designed for teachers, while the second questionnaire was designed for learners.

The teacher questionnaire was based on two previous studies conducted by Skog (2019) and Raveanová (2012). Some of the questions were taken from the questionnaires designed by these two researchers; however, some of the questions were adapted so that they would be relevant to this study. The questionnaire was distributed online due to the Covid19 pandemic (See Appendix 2).

All in all, the teacher questionnaire consisted of 17 questions. Questions 1-4 collected data about the respondents' gender, age, teaching experience in years and workplace. Questions 5-9 analysed the teachers' attitude towards reading and literature in general. Questions 10-17 dealt mostly with graded readers and the teachers' views on introducing literature into the English language classroom.

There were three types of questions in the questionnaire:

- multiple-choice questions
- one open-ended question
- questions where the respondents could choose more than one option

The questionnaire was distributed in English for two reasons. First of all, all of the respondents were English teachers. Secondly, although the questionnaire was mainly distributed amongst English teachers who work in schools where the language of instruction is Hungarian, some of the English teachers did not speak the Hungarian language. Moreover, some of the respondents teach only in (private) language schools, which meant that there was no guarantee that they would have been able to fill out a Hungarian questionnaire.

The second questionnaire was designed for the learners who had been reading the graded reader (*The Sign of Four*) for six weeks. The learner questionnaire was

based on three previous studies conducted by Pathan (2012), Cheetham, Harper, Elliott, & Ito (2016), and Tevdovska (2016). These three questionnaires were also adapted so that they could be used with the learners. They were translated into the learners' native language, Hungarian (See Appendix 3).

This questionnaire consisted of 14 statements concerning the use of literature in the EFL classroom from a learner's perspective. There was one open-ended statement where the learners had to finish a sentence with 3-5 words. All of the other statements had to be rated according to the Likert scale, where '1' stands for 'strongly disagree', and '5' stands for 'strongly agree'.

3.7 Findings

The findings of this study will be presented in three parts. Firstly, the results of the pre- and post-reading activities done by the learners participating in this study will be discussed. Secondly, the learner questionnaires will be analysed. Thirdly, the findings of the teacher questionnaires will be presented.

3.7.1 Pre- and post-reading results

As it has been mentioned above, the learners from both forms had to do several reading activities throughout the six weeks. Before the teacher introduced the graded reader into the foreign language classroom, the learners were required to do a first and a second pre-reading task. There was a three weeks' period between the two tests, which were completely identical. The pre-reading tasks were taken from the learners' workbooks. As to the post-reading tests, the text itself was taken from the graded reader, while the tasks were designed by the teacher. As in the case with the pre-reading tests, the second post-reading was done three weeks after the first one. Below are two tables showing the marks that the learners got for each of the four tests.

Table 3.7.1 The results of the pre- and post-reading tests in form 9

| Form 9 | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pre-reading 1 (Workbook) | Pre-reading 2 (Workbook) | Post-reading 1 (Graded reader) | Post-reading 2 (Graded reader) |
| 9 | 8 | 12 | 12 |
| 6 | 9 | 11 | 11 |
| 11 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 9 | 10 | 9 | 9 |
| 9 | 9 | 12 | 8 |
| 9 | 8 | 12 | 10 |
| 10 | 9 | 11 | 10 |
| 7 | 10 | 11 | 11 |
| 10 | 3 | 10 | 10 |
| 10 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| 10 | 7 | 11 | 10 |
| 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 |
| 10 | 8 | 12 | 11 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 11 |
| 5 | 8 | 11 | 7 |
| 9 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 8,8 | 7,6 | 9,9 | 9 |

Table 3.7.1 The results of the pre- and post-reading tests in form 10

| Form 10 | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pre-reading 1 (Workbook) | Pre-reading 2 (Workbook) | Post-reading 1 (Graded reader) | Post-reading 2 (Graded reader) |
| 10 | 9 | 7 | 3 |
| 11 | 11 | 11 | 10 |
| 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| 11 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| 10 | 9 | 6 | 6 |
| 11 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| 11 | 10 | 11 | 11 |
| 11 | 10 | 6 | 3 |
| 9 | 7 | 5 | 4 |
| 11 | 11 | 11 | 5 |
| 12 | 10 | 11 | 7 |
| 11 | 9 | 11 | 10 |
| 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| 10,5 | 9,5 | 9 | 7,4 |

As the two tables show, the results were quite different in both forms. While in the case of form 9 there was an improvement when it comes to using a graded reader in language instruction, in the second case, these were quite the opposite, as learners in form 10 received better grades for the pre-reading tests. It should also be mentioned that in both cases, the first pre/post-reading tests were more successful than the ones written three weeks after finishing a certain topic, which proves that learners tend to forget part of the material/vocabulary they have already learnt.

Table 3.7.1 The difference between the pre- and post-reading tests

| Form 9 | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Pre-reading 1 (average) | Pre-reading 2 (average) | Post-reading 1 (average) | Post-reading 2 (average) |
| 8,8 | 7,6 | 9,9 | 9 |
| Difference: | 1,2 | Difference: | 0,9 |
| Form 10 | | | |
| Pre-reading 1 (average) | Pre-reading 2 (average) | Post-reading 1 (average) | Post-reading 2 (average) |
| 10,5 | 9,5 | 9 | 7,4 |
| Difference: | 1 | Difference: | 1,6 |

As the table above shows, the use of graded readers had different effects on the two forms. Interestingly enough, even though form 9 learners were required to do much more reading outside the classroom on their own, they did achieve better results in the post-reading tests. However, it should also be noted that due to a number of restrictions brought on by the pandemic, the learners were forced to study online for almost a month, which made it more challenging to use the graded reader successfully.

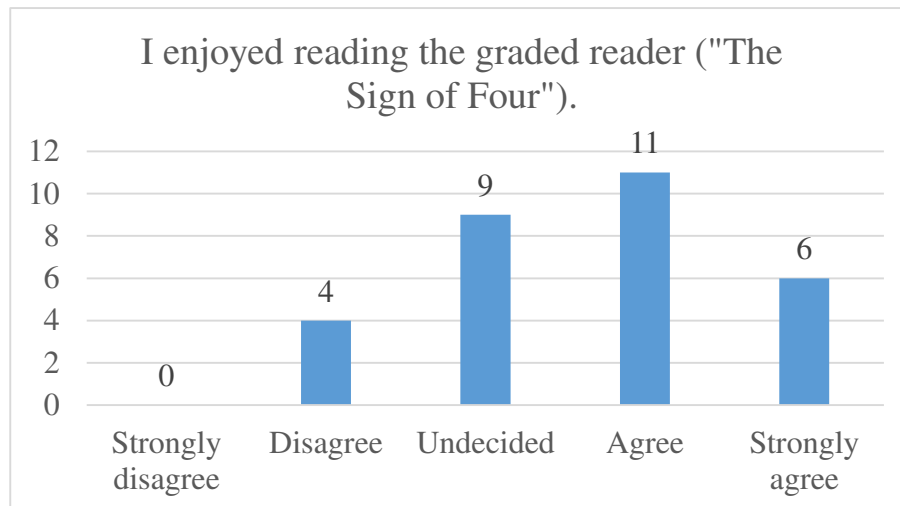
3.7.2 Learner questionnaire

The purpose of the learner questionnaire was to investigate whether learners enjoyed reading the graded reader. The responses to each statement given by the learners will be further described below.

Statement 1: I enjoyed reading the graded reader (“The Sign of Four”).

As the diagram below shows, more than half of the learners agreed (11) or strongly agreed (6) with the first statement. While none of the learners chose the ‘strongly disagree’ option, 4 of them disagreed with the statement. Moreover, 9 out of 30 learners remained undecided.

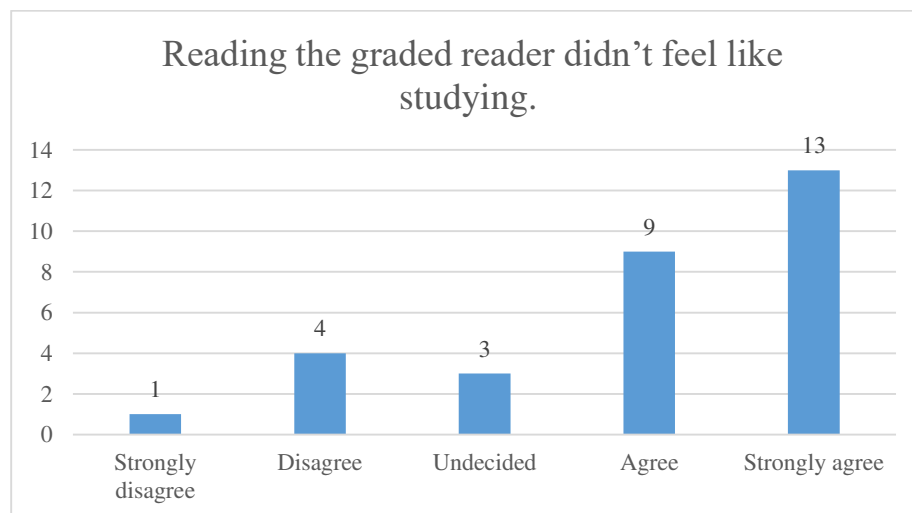
Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 1)



Statement 2: Reading the graded reader didn't feel like studying.

The second statement mainly received positive answers. More than half of the learners chose the fourth and the fifth options. In total, 22 out of 30 respondents agreed (9) or strongly agreed (13) with this statement, while 3 remained undecided. Additionally, four learners disagreed with the second statement, and 1 learner strongly disagreed.

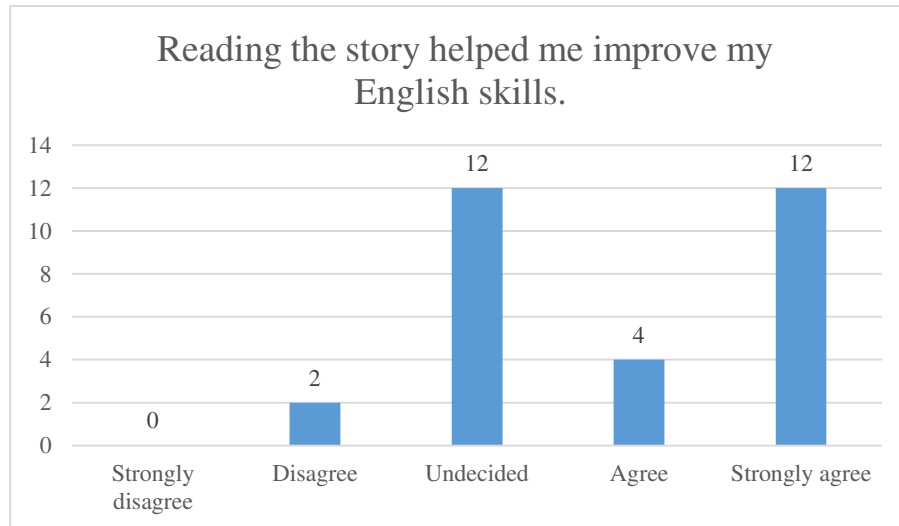
Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 2)



Statement 3: Reading the story helped me improve my English skills.

The answers to the third statement were quite mixed. The majority of the learners either strongly agreed (12) with this statement or remained undecided (12). 4 out of the remaining 6 respondents agreed with the third statement, and 2 of them disagreed.

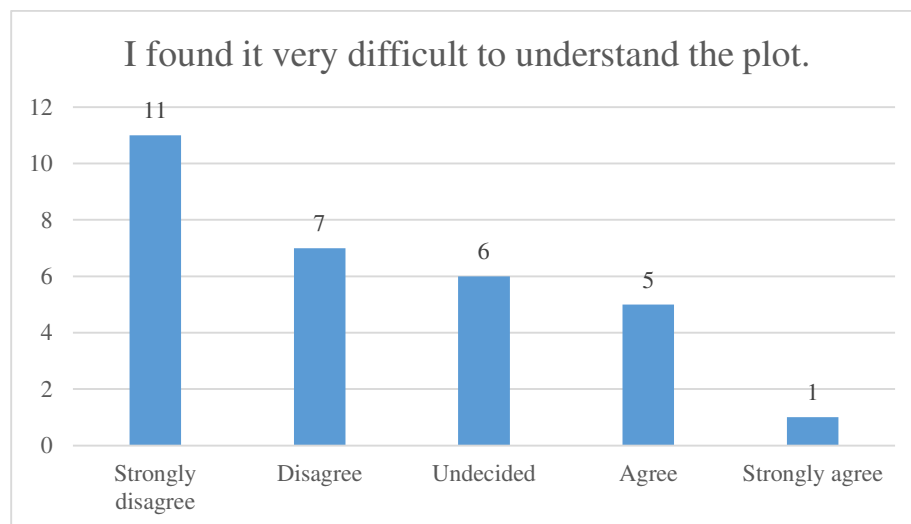
Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 3)



Statement 4: I found it very difficult to understand the plot.

As the diagram shows, the majority of the learners either strongly disagreed (11) or disagreed (7) with the fourth statement. This means that more than half of the learners (18) had little difficulty in understanding the story. However, some of the respondents remained undecided (6), while 5 out of the 6 remaining agreed with this statement. Only 1 out of 30 learners chose the 'strongly agree' option.

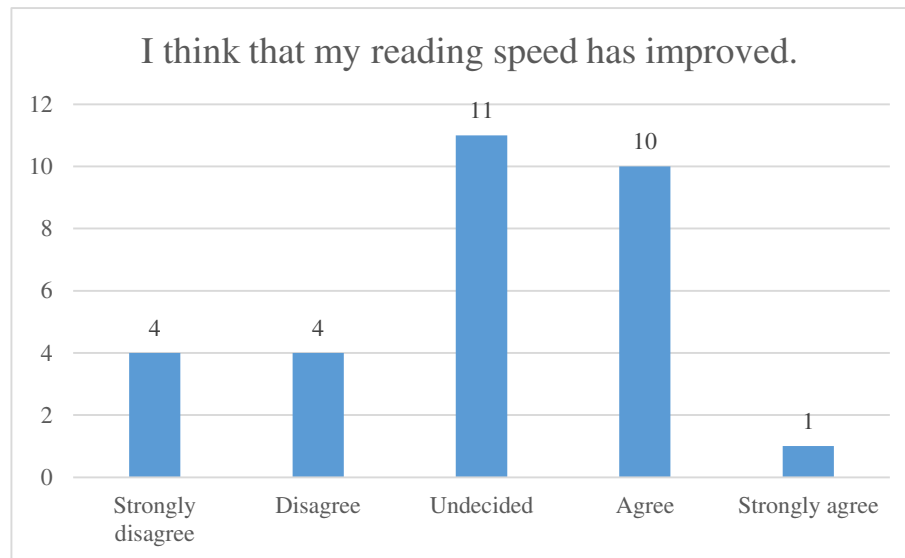
Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 4)



Statement 5: I think that my reading speed has improved.

The two options that most of the learners chose were the third ('undecided' - 11) and the fourth ('agree' - 10). Options 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' received the same amount of responses (4), and only one learner strongly agreed with the fifth statement.

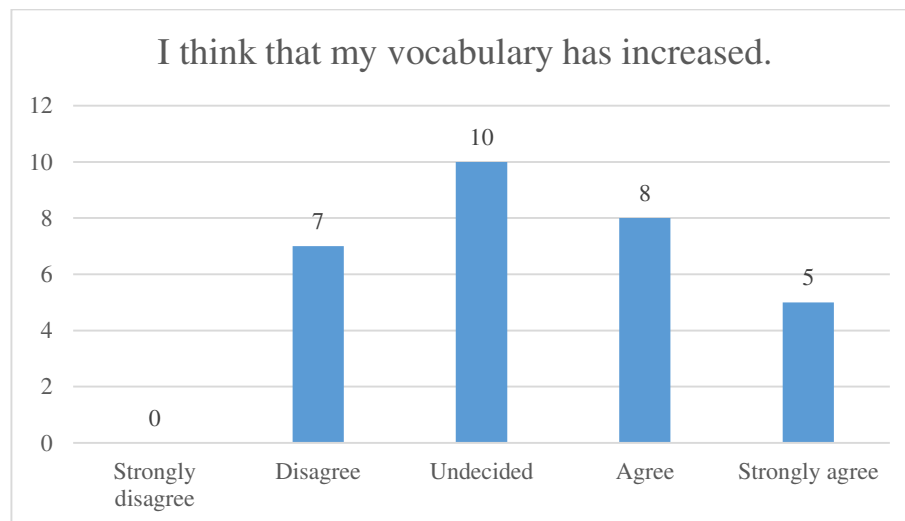
Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 5)



Statement 6: I think my vocabulary has increased.

One-third of the learners (10) remained undecided. Moreover, 13 respondents either agreed (8) or strongly agreed (5) with this statement. The remaining 7 respondents chose the second option ('disagree'). However, none of the learners chose the first option ('strongly disagree').

Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 6)

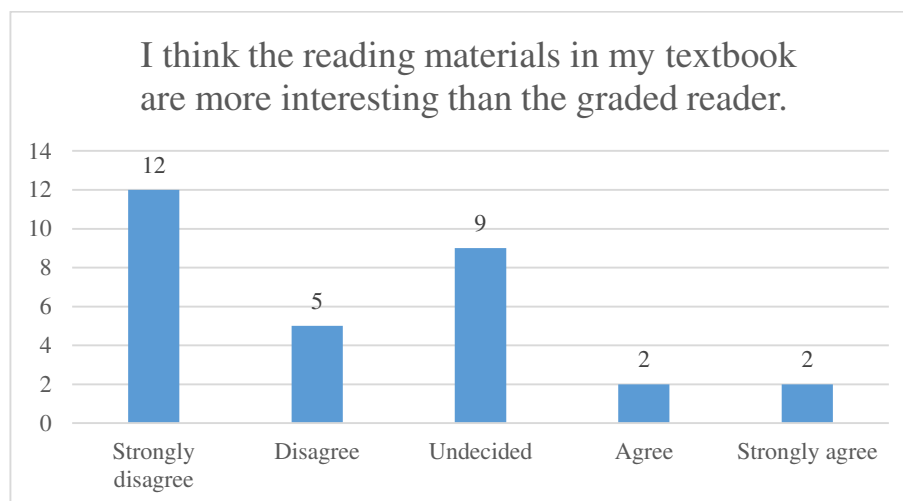


Statement 7: I think the reading materials in my textbook are more interesting than the graded reader.

As it can be seen in the diagram below, more than half of the learners (17) disagreed with this statement ('strongly disagree' – 12, 'disagree' – 5). Almost a third of the respondents (9) could not decide whether they agreed with the statement

and remained undecided. Finally, options ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ received the same amount of answers (2).

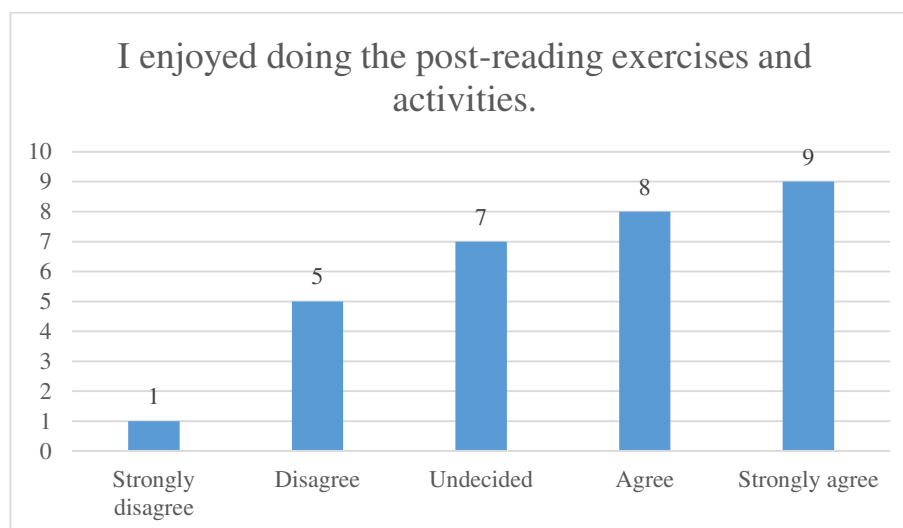
Diagram 3.7.2 Learners’ responses (Statement 7)



Statement 8: I enjoyed doing the post-reading exercises and activities.

Although some of the learners disagreed with this statement (‘strongly disagree’ – 1, ‘disagree’ – 5), the majority of them gave a positive answer. In fact, more than half of the respondents either agreed (8) or strongly agreed (9) with the statement. However, some of the learners could not decide and chose the third option (‘undecided’ – 7).

Diagram 3.7.2 Learners’ responses (Statement 8)



Statement 9: The best part of reading the graded reader was _____ .

As opposed to the other statements that had to be rated according to the Likert scale, the ninth one was an open-ended question. Learners were asked to finish the

statement with a few words that they thought would fit the best. Most of the answers given by the learners were very positive:

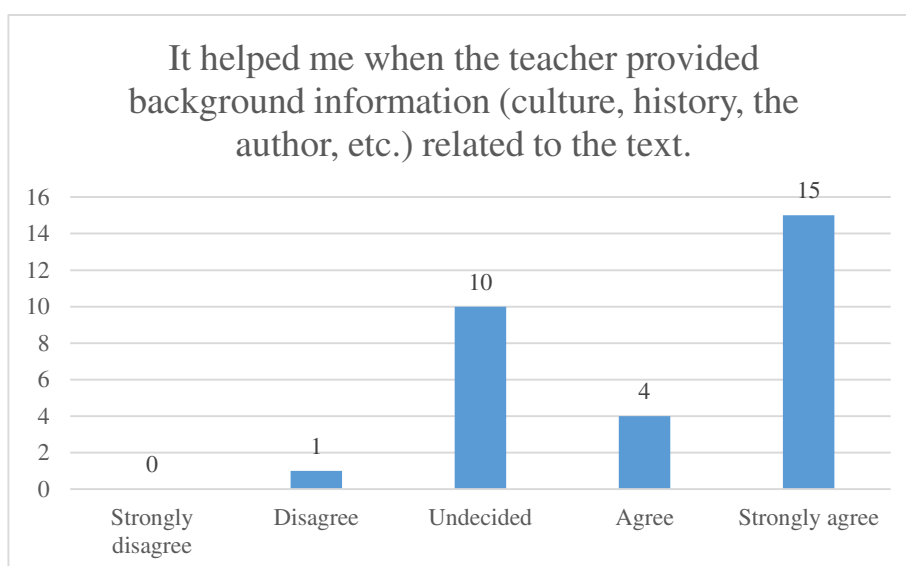
- that it was interesting (5).
- that I understood the plot/story (7).
- that I have learnt a lot of new things (1).
- that it didn't require too much time (1).
- when we talked about the plot (1).
- that the text was simple and easy to understand (1).

Moreover, some of the learners wrote that they enjoyed the whole process (6). However, there were a few negative answers as well. 3 out of 30 learners stated that the best part of reading the graded reader was when they finished reading, and the remaining 2 learners did not write anything.

Statement 10: It helped me when the teacher provided background information (culture, history, the author, etc.) related to the text.

As the diagram below shows, more than half of the learners either agreed (4) or strongly agreed (15) with this statement. Although none of the learners chose the first option ('strongly disagree'), 1 learner disagreed with the tenth statement, and the remaining 10 were undecided.

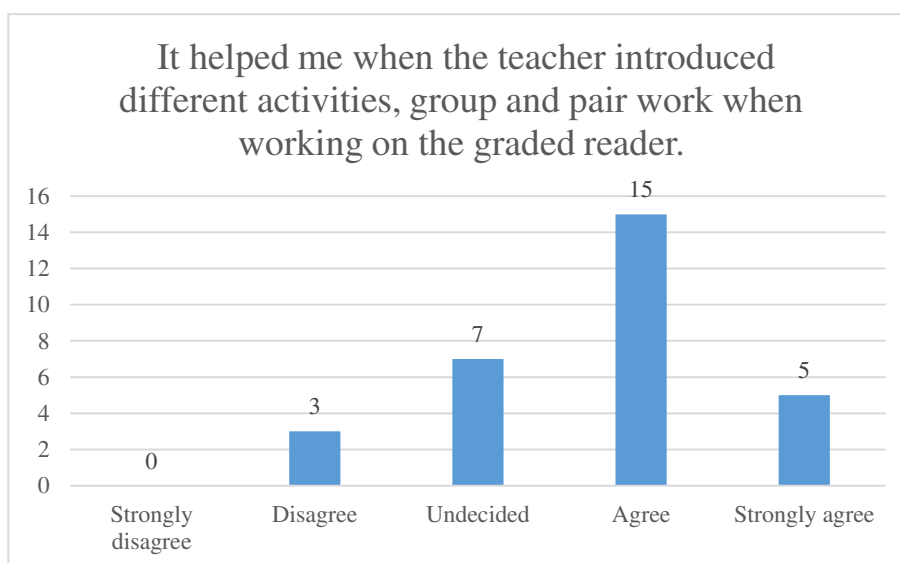
Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 10)



Statement 11: It helped me when the teacher introduced different activities, group and pair work when working on the graded reader.

It can be stated, that half of the learners (15) agreed that the activities and group/pair work tasks helped them to work with the graded reader. Moreover, additional 5 learners strongly agreed with the statement. However, some learners remained undecided (7). Although none of the respondents chose the 'strongly disagree' option, a few learners (3) chose the second one and disagreed with the eleventh statement.

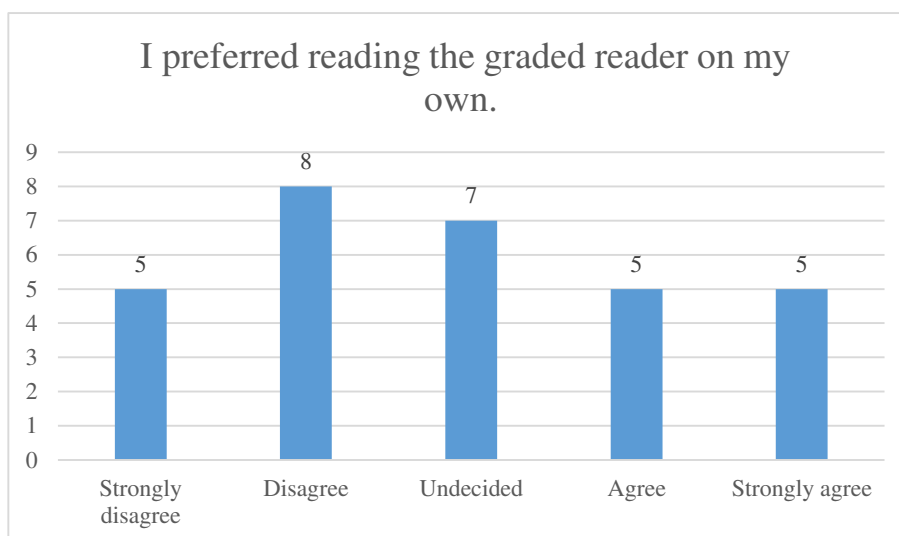
Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 11)



Statement 12: I preferred reading the graded reader on my own.

As it is shown in the diagram, the learners' opinions about this statement differed greatly. All in all, 5 out of 30 learners strongly disagreed with the statement, while additional 8 learners disagreed. On the other hand, 10 out of 30 learners either agreed (5) or strongly agreed (5) with this statement. Moreover, some of the respondents remained undecided (7).

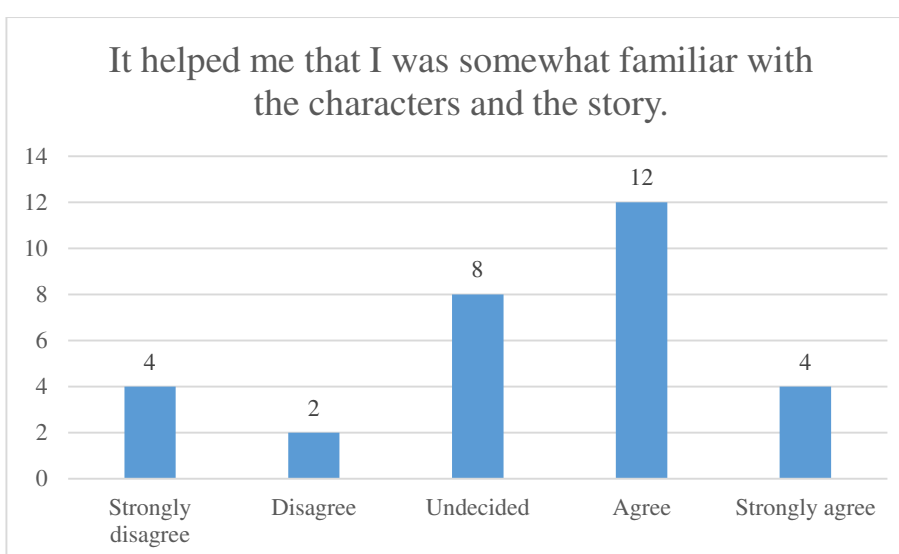
Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 12)



Statement 13: It helped me that I was somewhat familiar with the characters and the story.

As 'The Sign of Four' is one of the most popular stories about the character of Sherlock Holmes, it was quite possible that some of the learners would be familiar with it. As it can be seen in the diagram, more than half of the learners agreed (12) or strongly agreed (4) with this statement. On the other hand, some of the respondents did not agree with the statement and chose the first two options ('strongly disagree' – 4, 'disagree' – 2). Moreover, 8 out of 30 learners remained undecided.

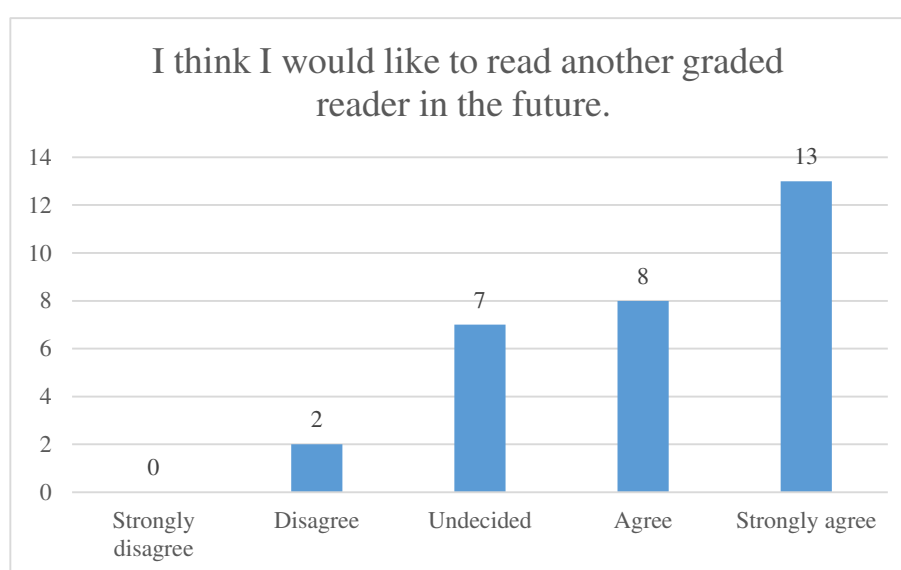
Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 13)



Statement 14: I think I would like to read another graded reader in the future.

The last statement could reflect the learners' overall opinions about graded readers. The most positive answers to this statement could mean that learners did enjoy reading the graded reader as more than half of them would like to read another graded reader in the future ('agree' – 8, 'strongly agree' – 13). Although some of the respondents were unsure and remained undecided (7), only 2 out of 30 learners disagreed with this statement. Moreover, none of the learners chose the first option ('strongly disagree').

Diagram 3.7.2 Learners' responses (Statement 14)



As the diagrams show, the learners' responses were mainly positive, even though the results of the post-reading tests were somewhat disappointing, especially in the case of form 10.

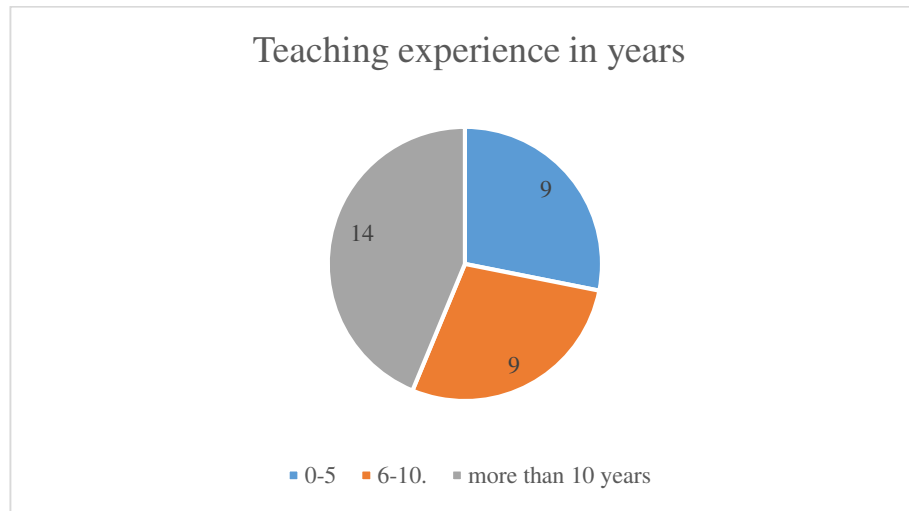
3.7.3 Teacher questionnaire

The aim of the teacher questionnaire was to assess the attitudes of English teachers in Transcarpathia towards the use of literature and graded readers in the EFL classroom.

As mentioned above, the majority of respondents were female English teachers (26), however, there were a few male teachers as well (6). Almost half of the respondents (14) have been teaching English as a foreign language for more than ten years. Moreover, there were 9 teachers with a teaching experience between 6-10

years, and another 9 who have been teaching for a maximum of five years (between 0-5).

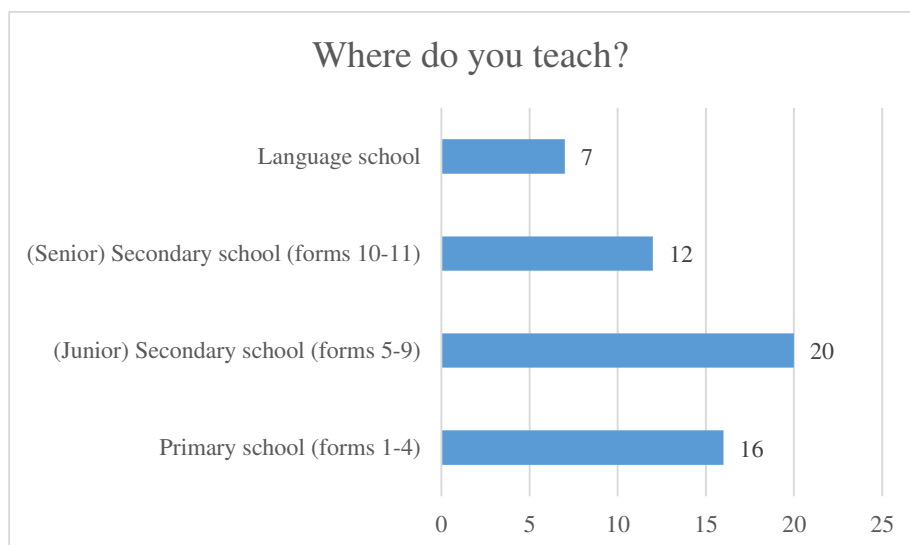
Diagram 3.7.3 The respondents' teaching experience in years



Question: Where do you teach?

The diagram below shows that there were four options the respondents could choose. It was assumed that some of the respondents taught different age groups; therefore, they could choose more than one options when answering this question. Only 7 respondents chose option 4 ('language school'), while the third option (Secondary school, forms 10-11) was chosen by 12 people. Options 1 (Primary school, forms 1-4) and 2 (Secondary school, forms 5-9) were the most frequently chosen. Thus, there were 16 teachers working in primary schools, and another 20 who taught in forms 5-9.

Diagram 3.7.3 The respondents' place of work



Question: In your opinion, what percentage of students read of their own will?

The respondents had to select one of the three options given. These were (1) 30% or less, (2) 31% - 60%, (3) more than 61%. Not surprisingly, the majority of teachers (22) agreed with the first option. The rest of the 32 respondents chose option number two (10). However, none of them thought that more than 61% of learners read of their own will.

Question: Do you recommend your students to read extensively?

As this was a general (yes/no) question, there were only two possible answers. However, all 32 respondents gave the same answer. Thus, it can be stated, that each respondent recommends his/her learners to do extensive reading.

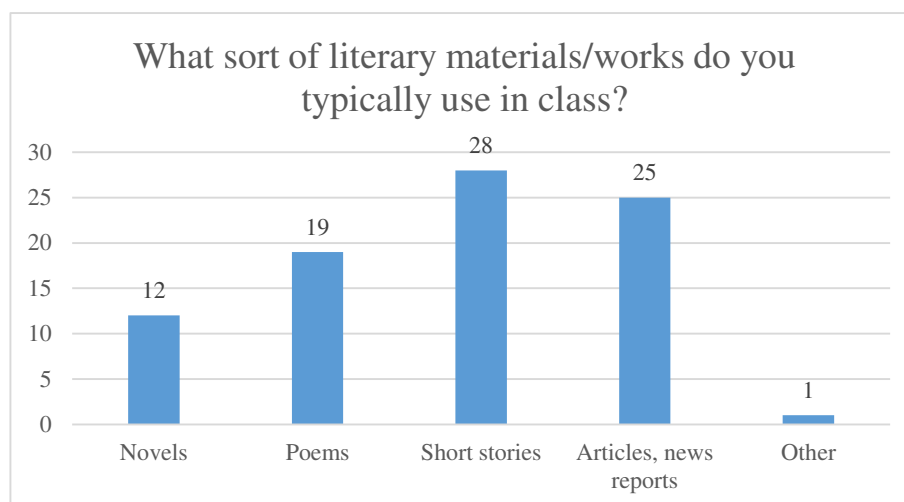
Question: Have you ever used literature in the English classroom?

Similar to the one above, this was also a general (yes/no) question. Almost every teacher gave a positive answer to this question (31). However, one person said that he/she had never used literature in their English classroom.

Question: What sort of literary materials/works do you typically use in class?

There were four main options given that the respondents could choose; moreover, there was an additional option where the teachers could give their own answer. As shown in the diagram, the two options that most teachers chose were 'short stories' (28) and 'articles, news reports' (25). The third most popular option was 'poems' chosen by 19 respondents, followed by 'novels' chosen by 12 out of 32 teachers. One respondent added, that they also used songs and chants in the EFL classroom.

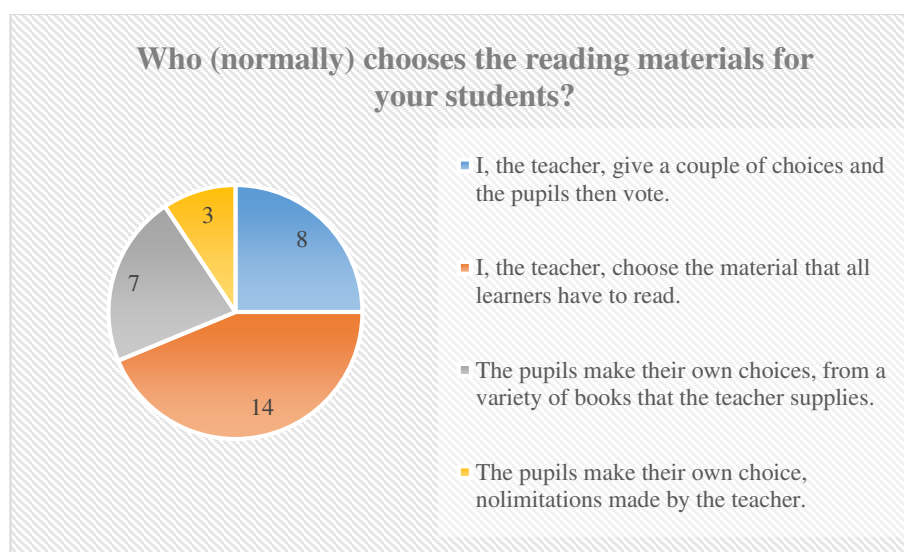
Diagram 3.7.3 The literary materials used by the respondents



Question: Who (normally) chooses the reading materials for your students?

As the diagram below shows, almost half of the respondents (14) chose the second option. The second and the third most popular options were the first (8) and the third one (7). The remaining 3 respondents chose the last option.

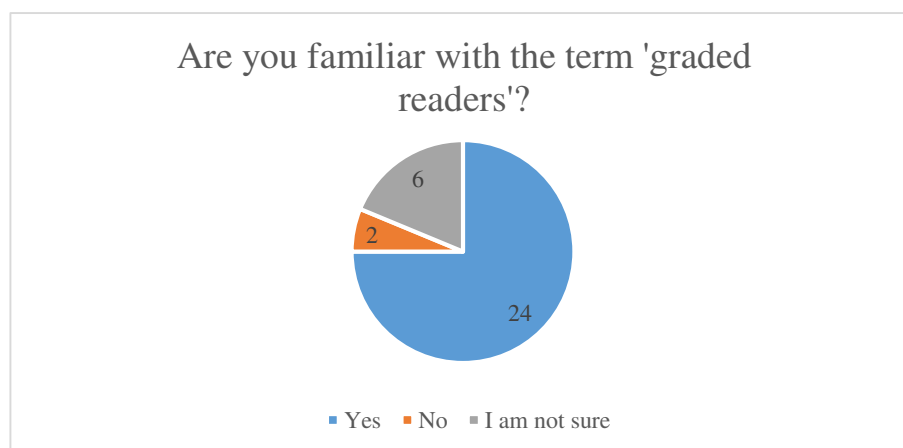
Diagram 3.7.3 Material selection for reading activities



Question: Are you familiar with the term 'graded reader'?

In this question the respondents had to select one of three given options ('yes', 'no', 'I am not sure'). While the majority of respondents (24) were familiar with this term, 2 of them did not know what graded readers were. The remaining 6 were unsure, as the diagram shows.

Diagram 3.7.3 Teachers' familiarity with graded readers



Moreover, the teachers were asked to define what graded readers were. Some of the respondents wrote that these were ‘simple readers’ or ‘books/readings that are easy to understand for the learners’. Many of them also mentioned that graded readers were ‘shortened from the original books/novel’ and they had ‘simplified grammar’ which made them suitable ‘for different forms/levels’. Other responses included:

- “It is a reading material given in different levels of language knowledge. It provides materials from the lowest to the highest level of English language knowledge.”
- “A book or a series of books of increasing levels of difficulty, which is used to teach how to read or learn a foreign language.”
- “They are authentic materials which are used in case of English learning. If you ask me, I would define them as helping aids for teaching because they suit the learners’ language level. Their language is simple and easy to understand. Therefore, they provide a great opportunity for both teachers and language learners because by using and learning from them, the students will get to know the English language and culture better.”

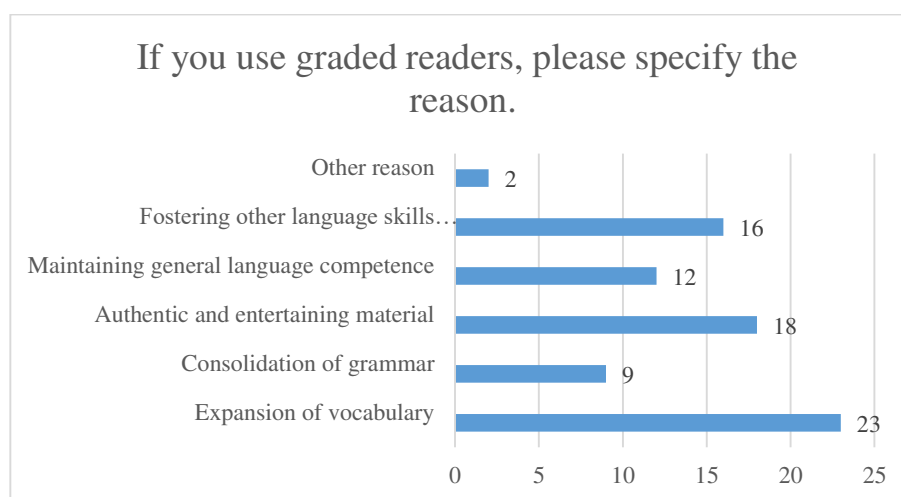
Question: Do you use graded readers in your teaching?

Although the majority of teachers were familiar with the term ‘graded readers’, the responses to this question show that not all of them use such reading materials in their English lessons. Only 23 out of 32 respondents use graded readers in the EFL classroom, while the rest of them (9) does not.

Question: If you use graded readers, please specify the reason.

When answering this question, the respondents could choose more than one options. 4 out of 32 respondents did not answer this question. Thus, the first option ('expansion of vocabulary') was chosen by 23 out of 28 teachers. The second and third most popular options were 'authentic and entertaining material' (18) and 'fostering other language skills' (16). 'Maintaining general language competence' and 'consolidation of grammar' were also chosen by some of the teachers (12, 9). Moreover, one respondent added their own reason: "*I also use them to introduce my classes to the British culture.*"

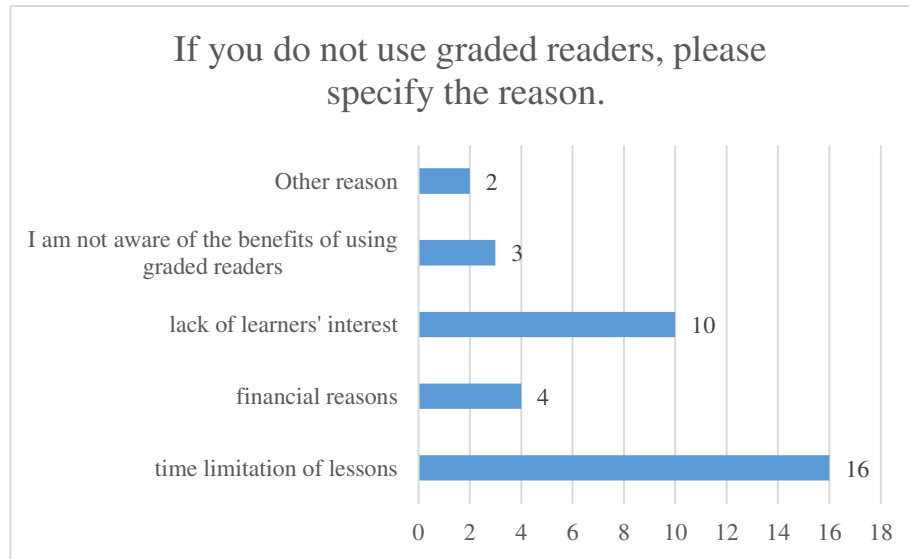
Diagram 3.7.3 Reasons for using graded readers



Question: If you do not use graded readers, please specify the reason.

Although the majority of respondents stated that they used graded readers in the EFL classroom, some of them did answer this question as well. As the diagram below shows, half of the respondents chose 'time limitation of lessons' as their main reason for not including graded readers in the English lessons. The second option was chosen by a total of 10 teachers was 'lack of learners' interest'. On the other hand, 'financial reasons' (4) and 'I am not aware of the benefits of using graded readers' (3) were far less popular. Additionally, 2 respondents gave other reasons for not using graded readers, although these were almost identical, as both of them stated that even though they did not use graded readers all the time, they do try to include them when it is possible.

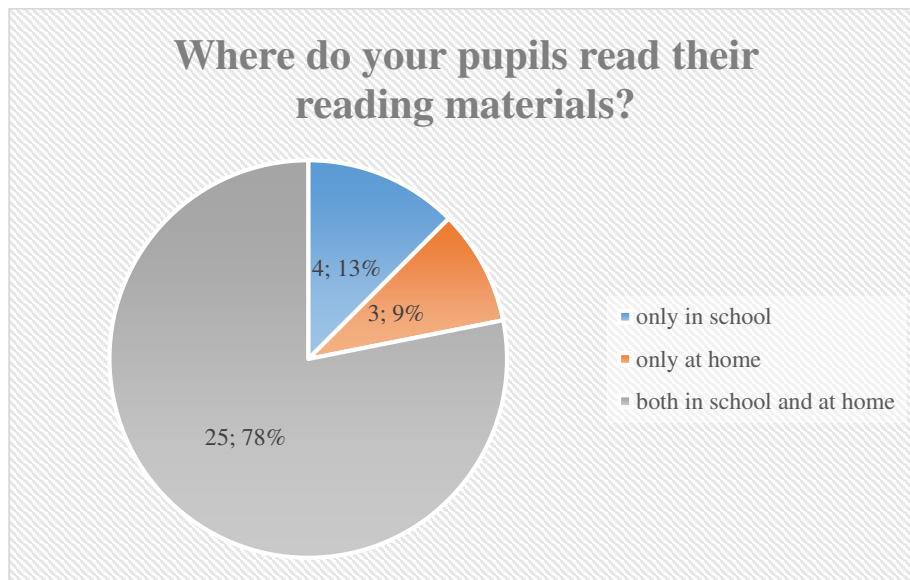
Diagram 3.7.3 Reasons for avoiding graded readers



Question: Where do your pupils read their reading materials?

The respondents had to choose one of the three options, which were the following ‘only in school’, ‘only at home’, ‘both in school and at home’. As the diagram below shows, more than half of the respondents chose the third option (25). 4 out of 32 teachers stated that their learners read only in school, while the rest chose option number 2 (3).

Diagram 3.7.3 The learners’ reading environments



Question: Do you work with follow up activities (pre-, while-, post-reading activities) accompanying each graded reader?

The respondents were allowed to choose more than one options when answering this question. First of all, 6 out of 32 respondents stated that they did not

work with graded readers. However, some of those who use such reading materials in their teaching practice chose option one 'I often use them' (14). Options 'I sometimes use them' and 'I prefer conversation about a book' were chosen by the same amount of respondents (8). Moreover, there were 2 respondents who left an additional comment:

- "Learners read at home, and they have a 'reading diary'. Every couple of months, they have to talk about what they've read."
- "I often use them due to the fact that pupils truly love these activities and they are really hyped to learn while carrying out such tasks."

Question: Do you agree with the following statements?

The table below shows the answers that the 32 respondents gave to the last question. The teachers were asked to rate the following statements according to the Likert scale, where '1' stands for 'strongly disagree', and '5' stands for 'strongly agree'.

Table 3.7.3 The respondents' opinions about using literature and graded readers in the EFL classroom

| Statement | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-----------|-------|----------------|
| Students usually learn a lot when reading (graded readers) in a foreign language classroom. | - | - | 4 | 17 | 11 |
| The content and the message of the book is extremely important. | 2 | 1 | 1 | 22 | 6 |
| Giving out written instructions before doing any reading exercises is crucial. | 2 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 6 |
| When learners read graded readers they are more likely to develop their reading confidence and fluency. | 1 | - | 5 | 16 | 10 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|----|----|----|----|
| A great number of unfamiliar words may discourage the learners from reading. | 1 | 6 | 3 | 15 | 7 |
| Graded readers help the learners to improve their language skills. | 2 | - | 2 | 12 | 16 |
| If the selected reading material is not interesting enough, learners will learn nothing. | 3 | 10 | 11 | 7 | 1 |
| The level of the text should be close to the students' language level. | 2 | 1 | 8 | 12 | 9 |
| Learners enjoy reading graded readers because they do not have to rely on dictionaries to understand them. | - | 2 | 7 | 21 | 2 |
| Reading (and literature) helps the students to experience realistic and authentic language. | 2 | - | 4 | 17 | 9 |
| Reading also helps the learners to understand other cultures. | 2 | - | 2 | 15 | 13 |

3.8 Discussion and interpretation of the results

3.8.1 The effects of using graded readers in the EFL classroom

One of the questions of this study was the following: Does including literature/graded readers in the foreign language classroom have a positive effect on learners' language skills? According to the results of the pre- and post-reading tests, it can be stated that using literature and graded readers might have a positive effect on the learners' language skills, however, this effect might not be substantial or satisfactory in every case.

As the results showed, in form 9 there was a minor improvement when comparing the pre- and post-reading tests results. It suggests, that if the learners were to continue reading graded readers in the future, their language skills would improve

even further. However, this would require them to stay motivated and willing to read large amounts of (literary/simplified) texts.

On the other hand, when comparing the pre- and post-reading tests of form 10, the results were quite the opposite, as learners studying in tenth grade received much better marks before reading the graded reader. This is quite surprising, as these learners have 5 English lesson per week (while learners in form 9 have only 2), which means that they had more time and opportunity to read and discuss the graded reader inside the classroom.

All in all, it can be stated that using graded readers might have a positive effect on learners' language skills; however, in order to be able to prove the effectiveness of this teaching approach, a longer and more thorough investigation would be required. Therefore, it might be a good idea to develop an extensive reading program and encourage students to read as much as possible outside the classroom.

3.8.2 Learners' attitudes

The second question in this study was the following: Do language learners enjoy reading graded readers? In order to answer this question, the researcher designed a questionnaire for learners in which they were asked to rate each statement according to the Likert scale ('1' – strongly disagree, '5' – strongly agree). As it has been mentioned, the learners had to fill out the questionnaire after reading the graded reader for a period of six weeks.

As the results presented above showed, the learners responded quite positively to the use of graded readers in the English classroom. Most of them were willing to read the book both inside and outside the classroom. The learners, in general, did not find reading the graded reader too difficult, and the majority of them agreed that even though they had to do much reading, it did not feel like studying to them. Moreover, very few learners had major difficulties in understanding the plot of the story, or the text in general, which might explain why most of them enjoyed reading the graded reader more than the text found in their course books.

Although learners did enjoy reading, not all of them could say that using the graded reader helped them to improve their language proficiency level. However, most of them did believe that their reading comprehension skills and reading speed have improved. Moreover, some of them stated that their vocabulary has also improved.

Another important finding was that even though the learners had to do a number of exercises and activities before, while, and after reading each chapter, they did enjoy them. This might be because some of these activities helped them get a better understanding of the story itself, as well as gave them opportunity to express their own ideas and thoughts regarding the plot and the characters. These results are similar to Nazara's (2019) findings, as she also stated that her participants enjoyed reading in their target language, and their motivation and activity levels also improved. Moreover, the fact that some learners were already familiar with Sherlock Holmes's character, as well as some of the Sherlock stories, made it easier for them to fully understand the plot.

3.8.3 Teachers' attitudes

The third question of this study was the following: Do English teachers (in our region) use graded reading materials in their English lessons? As the results showed, the majority of teachers were aware that extensive reading done in the learners' target language is very beneficial. Moreover, all of the respondents stated that they recommended their learners to read as much as possible in English. Furthermore, most of these respondents use some form of literature in their foreign language classrooms. However, it should also be noted that most teachers resort to using shorter reading materials, such as short stories, articles, poems, etc. This might be explained by the fact, that reading such texts requires little time, and can often be done inside the language classroom. Moreover, it can be said that the majority of the respondents prefer choosing the reading materials themselves, or in some cases, they allow their learners to choose from a variety of selected materials, and only a few of the teachers allow the learners to read whatever they want.

When it comes to graded readers, most of the teachers were familiar with such reading materials, though not all of them use these readers in language instruction. Though there are many reasons a teacher might choose not to include graded readers in the foreign language classroom, it seems that one of the main reasons for doing so in Transcarpathia is time limitation, which is quite common. These responses were in line with the results of Raveanová's (2019) research, as well as with the findings of Haroon, Mohammed, & Khanday (2019). However, those teachers who use graded readers are well aware of the benefits these reading materials have on the learners' language skills and overall language proficiency.

It can also be stated that the majority of teachers agreed with the common statements concerning the use of literature and graded readers in the EFL classroom. Most of them were aware of the fact that while reading such books, learners tend to learn a lot and that the content of these books is also a major contributing factor to the success of such reading activities. The majority of the teachers also agreed that graded readers could help their learners to develop reading confidence, though it is important to choose the most appropriate level of graded readers for the learners, while an overly complicated text with lots of unknown words might simply discourage learners. Finally, almost all respondents agreed that using literature is an excellent way of teaching our learners culture and cultural values.

In this, practical part we have presented the findings of the research conducted by the author of this study. First of all, we have stated the problem and gave some background information about the EFL teaching practice in our region. Secondly, we have described the methods used in this research. Moreover, we have presented the aims, objectives, hypotheses and research questions on which this study was based. This part also contained information about the participants as well as the data collection instruments.

Furthermore, the third, practical part of this study presented the results of the pre- and post-reading tests completed by the learners, as well as the learners'/teachers' responses to the questionnaires designed by the researcher.

After analysing the collected data, we can state that both the learners' and the teachers' attitudes towards using graded readers in EFL instruction were generally positive. However, we have also found that using a graded reader in an English classroom will not necessarily lead to immediate success as it depends on a number of intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

CONCLUSION

This study focused on the idea of exploiting literary works, and more importantly, graded readers in the foreign language classroom. While the first and the second parts discussed this issue from a theoretical perspective, the third part presented the research conducted by the author of this paper.

Firstly, in the third part of this paper, the following hypotheses were offered: using literature or more specifically graded readers (1) helps the learners to improve their reading comprehension skills and to build their vocabulary; (2) makes the process of language learning more engaging and more effective; (3) motivates the students to read more in their target language. Moreover, (4) English teachers in Transcarpathia are not aware of the benefits of using graded readers; therefore, (5) the majority of English teachers in our region does not use graded readers in the EFL classrooms.

After analysing the (learner/teacher) questionnaires we concluded, that including literature in the foreign language classroom can (potentially) have a positive effect on the learners' language skills, however, the results might be completely different in each case.

On the one hand, literature does help learners to enrich their vocabulary, as well as allows them to learn more about their target culture. Moreover, the process of language teaching/learning becomes more interesting and enjoyable, as the learners' responses show.

On the other hand, this type of teaching approach will not be equally effective in every classroom, as its success rate depends on a number of factors, including the learners' interest and willingness to read large amounts of texts, as well as the type of materials selected by the teacher/learners, etc.

Although using graded readers in the EFL classroom might not prove to be effective in a short period of time, the learners' responses prove that they do enjoy the process itself. Therefore, designing an extensive reading program based on

graded readers will positively affect the learners' language skills development, and in the long run, will potentially improve their language proficiency levels.

As for the teacher questionnaires, the findings showed that most English teachers in our region are familiar with the term 'graded reader'. Moreover, more than half of them use them in their EFL classrooms. It can be stated, although the teachers are aware of the positive effects of including graded readers in the language teaching process, certain factors, such as lack of time and learners' interest, often discourage them from doing so.

All in all, we can say that this study and its findings contribute to the pedagogical field of foreign language teaching, as the theoretical parts provide a detailed overview of the main aspects of exploiting literature in EFL settings. Moreover, the practical part of this study addresses a number of important questions and provides an example of how literature and a graded reader can be used in an actual EFL classroom in our region, as previous studies dealing with this topic/question mainly were conducted abroad.

Although this study managed to provide an insight into this approach, a more detailed and longer study would provide more precise results that would be extremely valuable for foreign language teaching.

Finally, the study's findings provide some pedagogical implications. On the one hand, the issues discussed in the two theoretical parts summarize the most important aspects of using literature and graded readers in the process of foreign language teaching/learning, which might help those teachers who are unfamiliar with this topic to get a general idea of how literature can be used in an EFL classroom. On the other hand, the findings and results described in the third, practical part of this thesis might motivate some teachers to include literature and graded readers in their foreign language classroom in the future.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Загальновідомо, що викладання іноземної мови не є простим завданням. Протягом багатьох років було розроблено незліченну кількість методів вивчення іноземних мов, проте жоден з них не можна вважати досконалим, оскільки їх ефективність залежить від ряду (внутрішніх та зовнішніх) факторів. Більше того, хоча англійська мова є рідною/другою мовою у багатьох країнах, в Україні вона є іноземною.

Коли мова йде про викладання іноземної мови, або в даному випадку англійської, багато дослідників підкреслюють актуальність використання літератури на уроках іноземної мови. На думку Кутсомпу (2015), література тісно пов'язана з мовою (с. 74). Більше того, як зазначає Кая (2014, с. 41), література здатна допомогти учням збагатити свої мовні знання та вдосконалити свої мовні навички.

Одним часто згадуваним терміном, є поняття градуйованих читачів. Згідно з Shella (2016), ефективність градуйованих читачів можна пояснити тим, що вони мають обмежений словниковий запас, а також граматику, що значно полегшує учням практикувати свою цільову мову та вдосконалювати свої навички читання.

Таким чином, метою даної роботи було дослідити ефективність використання художньої літератури у викладанні іноземної мови. Цю проблему досліджували низка вчених, зокрема Армстронг (2015), Бломерт, Паран, Янсен та ван де Гріфт (2019), Бобкіна та Домінгуес (2014), Еркая (2005), Рай (2012), Ског (2019), Тевдовська (2016), Кузнєцова Л.А., Лотоцька К.Я., 2000; Автамонова К.О., (2013), Строкань Н. О., (2018), Гавловська Т.А., (2014), Сокол О.С., (2018), Єременко, Т.Є., Трубіцина, О.М., Лук'янченко, І.О., Юмрукуз, А.А., (2018), Іщук А.А., (2018), та інші.

Однак ці дослідження в основному проводились закордоном. Тому було вирішено провести дослідження на основі попередніх розслідувань, щоб перевірити, чи є практика використання художньої літератури на уроках

іноземних мов знайомою вчителям англійської мови на Закарпатті та чи може вона ефективно застосовуватися на уроках.

Таким чином, об'єктом цього дослідження є використання художньої літератури в навчанні іноземних мов, тоді як предметом дослідження є використання градуйованих читачів на уроках іноземної мови.

Нашою метою було дослідити використання градуйованих читачів у викладанні іноземної мови з двох точок зору. З одного боку, дослідження має на меті оцінити ставлення викладачів англійської мови на Закарпатті до використання художньої літератури на уроках англійської мови та їхні думки щодо використання градуйованих читачів. З іншого боку, це дослідження також має на меті перевірити, чи використання градуйованих читачів при викладанні іноземної мови насправді допомагає учням вдосконалити свої мовні навички, а також оцінити ставлення учнів до цього питання.

Теоретична цінність цієї дипломної роботи полягає в тому, що вона представляє детальний огляд основних аспектів використання художньої літератури та градуйованих читачів на уроках іноземних мов, тоді як практичне значення цього дослідження полягає в тому, що в ньому представлені результати дослідження, яке є важливим у галузі викладання іноземних мов.

Дипломна робота складається з трьох частин. У першій (теоретичній) частині представлена концепція використання художньої літератури на уроках іноземної мови. Окрім цього, йдеться про (1) поняття позакласного читання та його переваг, (2) переваги та недоліки використання художньої літератури при викладанні іноземних мов, (3) методи викладання мови за допомогою художньої літератури, (4) критерії вибору навчальних матеріалів, (5) різницю між "автентичною" та "спрощеною" літературою, (6) та про поняття градуйованих читачів, а також їх переваги. Друга (теоретична) частина зосереджена на поглядах як викладачів, так і тих, хто навчається, коли мова йде про використання літератури в процесі викладання / навчання мови. Також, коротко обговорюється декілька попередніх досліджень, щодо питання

художньої літератури та градуйованих читачів при викладанні мови. Третя (практична) частина представляє результати дослідження, проведеного дослідником у галузі викладання мови.

Проаналізувавши анкети (учнів / викладачів), ми дійшли висновку, що використання художньої літератури на уроках іноземні мови може (потенційно) мати позитивний вплив на мовні навички учнів, однак результати можуть відрізнятися у всіх випадках.

З одного боку, література допомагає учням збагатити свій словниковий запас, а також дає змогу дізнатись більше про цільову культуру. Більше того, процес викладання / навчання мови стає більш цікавим та приємним.

З іншого боку, такий метод викладання не буде однаково ефективним у кожному класі, оскільки рівень його успішності залежить від ряду факторів, включаючи інтерес та готовність учнів читати великі обсяги текстів, тощо.

Що стосується анкет для вчителів, результати показали, що більшість викладачів англійської мови в нашому регіоні знайомі з терміном „градуйований читач”. Більше того, більше половини з них використовують їх під час своїх уроків. Та варто зазначити, що хоч вчителі і усвідомлюють позитивні наслідки використання градуйованих читачів у процесі викладання мови, через певні фактори, такі як брак часу та інтерес учнів, вони користуються такими матеріалами не часто.

Загалом, можна сказати, що це дослідження та його результати сприяють педагогічній галузі викладання іноземних мов, оскільки теоретичні частини дають детальний огляд основних аспектів використання літератури на уроках англійської мови. Більше того, практична частина цього дослідження стосується низки важливих питань і наводить приклад того, як художню літературу та градуйовані читачі можуть сприяти вивченню мови у нашому регіоні.

APPENDIX 1

Activity 1

Fill in the missing words.

| Adjective | Noun | Verb | Adverb |
|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | | excitedly |
| | | advertise | |
| | painting | | |
| | | | lovely |
| interesting | | | |
| | stranger | | |
| | | deceive | |
| careful | | | |

Activity 2

Match the phrase/word with its meaning:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 - to rub one's hands together | A - to say that you would like to see or speak to someone. |
| 2 - to lean forward | B - to pass or give something to someone directly. |
| 3 - to be happy about SMTH | C - a door, gate, etc. by which you can enter a building or place. |
| 4 - to ask for SB | D - To be in keen or greedy anticipation (of something). |
| 5 - ornament | E - decoration that is added to increase the beauty of something. |
| 6 - to advertise | F - To be glad that something happened. |
| 7 - to be in charge of SB/SMTH | G - having control of or responsibility for (something) |
| 8 - to hand SMTH to SB | H - To bend or incline toward a position in front of something or oneself. |
| 9 - entrance | I - to make something known generally or in public, especially in order to sell it |

Activity 3

Complete the text with the words below.

- Leaving, returned, received, army, again, advertised, address, relatives, success, manager.

My father was a captain in the _____. When I was very young, he was sent to India. My mother was dead and I had no other _____ in England. So, while my father was away, I was sent to school. When I was seventeen, I _____ a letter from my father. He said that he was _____ India and coming back to England. He gave me the _____ of a hotel in London. He asked me to meet him there. I was very happy and excited about seeing my dear father _____. I went to London and arrived at the hotel. I asked for Captain Morstan, my father. But I was told by the hotel _____ that my father was not there. He had gone out the night before and not _____. I waited all day and all night, but my father didn't come back to the hotel. Finally, I went to the police. They _____ for Captain Morstan in all the newspapers, but without _____. I never saw my dear father again.

Activity 4

Answer the following questions after reading the extract.

Why was Doctor Watson angry with Thaddeus Sholto?

Thaddeus Sholto and his brother, Bartholomew, knew that their father was afraid of something.

Who do their father think was following him?

Why did their father become very ill?

When Captain Morstan and Major Sholto were in India they found a great treasure.

- What was the name of this treasure?

- Why did Captain Morstan and Major Sholto argue?

- How did the argument end?

- What did Major Sholto ask his sons to do?

Thaddeus and his brother, Bartholomew found a note on the bed beside their father's body. What words were written on the note?

Activity 5

Task 1

The Death of Bartholomew Sholto

Complete the gaps. Use each word once.

died murder been hours stiff ear killed picked thorn treasure showed
read pain could sticking face poisoned piece ~~dead~~ table

Bartholomew Sholto was (1) *dead*. He was sitting in a chair by a (2) _____. His body was (3) _____ and cold. I (4) _____ see that he had (5) _____ dead for many (6) _____. The dead man's body was twisted with (7) _____. There was a horrible smile on his (8) _____. There was a (9) _____ of paper on the body. Holmes (10) _____ it up and read it.

He (11) _____ it to me. In the light of the lamp, I (12) _____ with horror – The Sign of Four. 'What does it mean?' I asked.

'It means (13) _____,' Holmes replied. He pointed to Bartholomew Sholto's (14) _____. 'Look.'

I looked. I saw something (15) _____ in the dead man's skin near his ear.

'It looks like a (16) _____,' I said.

'It is a thorn,' said Holmes. 'You can take it out, but be careful. It is (17) _____.'

'So this is how Bartholomew Sholto (18) _____,' I said. 'What a terrible death. But who (19) _____ him? And why?'

We had forgotten about Thaddeus Sholto. He was still standing in the doorway. Suddenly he gave a cry. 'The (20) _____ has gone!' he cried. 'They have stolen the treasure.'

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Exploiting Literature in the EFL Classroom: Graded Readers

The aim of this survey is to assess your attitude towards using graded readers and literature in the EFL classroom. The questionnaire is anonymous and the collected data will be used for my diploma thesis.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

1 Gender

- a) Male
- b) Female

2 Age

- a) 18 – 25
- b) 26 – 35
- c) 36 – 45
- d) 46+

3 What is your teaching experience in years?

- a) 0 – 5
- b) 6 – 10
- c) more than 10 years

4 Where do you teach?

- a) Primary school (forms 1-4)
- b) (Junior) Secondary school (forms 5-9)
- c) (Senior) Secondary school (forms 10-11)
- d) Language school

5 In your opinion, what percentage of students read of their own will?

- a) Less than 30%
- b) 31%-60%
- c) More than 60%

6 Do you recommend your students to read extensively?

- a) Yes
- b) No

7 Have you ever used literature in the English classroom?

- a) Yes
- b) No

8 What sort of literary materials/works do you typically use in class? (you may mark more than one box)

- a) novels
- b) poems
- c) short stories
- d) articles, news reports, etc.
- e) other

9 Who (normally) chooses the reading materials for your students?

- a) I, the teacher, give a couple of choices and the pupils then vote
- b) I, the teacher, choose the material that all learners have to read
- c) The pupils make their own choices, from a variety of books that the teacher supplies
- d) The pupils make their own choice, no limitations made by the teacher

10 Are you familiar with the term 'graded readers'?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I am not sure

11 How would you define it/the term 'graded reader'?

12 Do you use graded readers in your teaching?

- a) Yes
- b) No

13 If you use graded readers, please specify the reason:

- a) expansion of vocabulary
- b) consolidation of grammar
- c) authentic and entertaining material

- d) maintaining general language competence
- e) fostering other language skills (speaking, writing, listening)
- f) other reason (please specify)

14 If you do not use graded readers, please specify the reason:

- a) time limitation of lessons
- b) financial reasons
- c) lack of learners' interest
- d) I am not aware of the benefits of using graded readers
- e) other reason (please specify)

14 Where do your pupils read their reading materials?

- a) Only in school
- b) only at home
- c) both in school and at home

15 Do you work with follow up activities (pre-, while-, post reading activities) accompanying each graded reader?

- a) I often use them.
- b) I sometimes use them.
- c) I prefer conversation about a book.
- d) I do not work with graded readers.
- e) Other way (please specify)

16 Do you agree with the following statements?

(1 - strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 - undecided, 4 - agree, 5 - strongly agree)

| Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Students usually learn a lot when reading (graded readers) in a foreign language classroom. | | | | | |
| The content and the message of the book is extremely important. | | | | | |
| Giving out written instructions before doing any reading exercises is crucial. | | | | | |
| When learners read graded readers they are more likely to develop their reading confidence and fluency. | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| A great number of unfamiliar words may discourage the learners from reading. | | | | | |
| Graded readers help the learners to improve their language skills. | | | | | |
| The level of the text should be close to the students' language level. | | | | | |
| Learners enjoy reading graded readers because they do not have to rely on dictionaries to understand them. | | | | | |
| Reading (and literature) helps the students to experience realistic and authentic language. | | | | | |
| Reading also helps the learners to understand other cultures. | | | | | |

APPENDIX 3

Kedves tanuló!

Az alábbi kérdőív segítségével azt szeretném kideríteni, hogy az elmúlt hetek során használt könnyített olvasmány milyen hatással volt rád és az angoltudásodra.

Kérlek mindenhol jelöld be a rád legjobban illő választ az egytől ötig terjedő skálán (ahol az 1 = egyáltalán nem igaz rám, az 5 = nagyon igaz rám).

| 1. Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Szívesen olvastam „A négyek jele” című könnyített olvasmányt. | | | | | |
| Olvasás közben nem éreztem azt, hogy nehezemre esik a tanulás. | | | | | |
| A történet olvasása segített nekem fejleszteni az angol nyelvtudásomat. | | | | | |
| Nehezemre esett megérteni a történet cselekményét. | | | | | |
| Véleményem szerint javult az olvasási sebességem. | | | | | |
| Véleményem szerint bővült az angol szókincsem. | | | | | |
| Szerintem a tankönyvben található olvasmányok sokkal érdekesebbek, mint ez a könnyített olvasmány. | | | | | |
| Szívesen végeztem el az olvasás utáni feladatokat. | | | | | |
| A könnyített történet elolvasásának legjobb része az volt, hogy | | | | | |
| Sokat segített nekem az, amikor a tanár a szöveghez kapcsolódó háttérinformációkat (kultúra, történelem, a szerző stb.) is elmondta. | | | | | |
| Sokat segített nekem az, amikor a tanár különböző tevékenységeket, csoportos és páros | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| munkákat vezetett be, amikor a osztályozott olvasón dolgoztam | | | | | |
| Legszívesebben egyedül olvastam volna a besorolt olvasót. | | | | | |
| Segített abban, hogy némileg ismertem a szereplőket és a történetet. | | | | | |
| Azt hiszem, a jövőben szeretnék még egy osztályozott olvasót olvasni. | | | | | |

Statements in English:

1. I enjoyed reading the graded reader („The Sign of Four”).
2. Reading the graded reader didn't feel like studying.
3. Reading the story helped me improve my English skills.
4. I found it very difficult to understand the plot.
5. I think that my reading speed has improved.
6. I think that my vocabulary has increased.
7. I think the reading materials in my textbook are more interesting than the graded reader.
8. I enjoyed doing the post-reading exercises and activities.
9. The best part of reading the graded reader was
10. It helped me when the teacher provided background information (culture, history, the author, etc.) related to the text.
11. It helped me when the teacher introduced different activities, group and pair work when working on the graded reader,
12. I preferred reading the graded reader on my own.
13. It helped me that I was somewhat familiar with the characters and the story.
14. I think I would like to read another graded reader in the future.

APPENDIX 4

Pre-reading test – Form 9

Britain's favourite meal – Fish and Chips

The Portuguese gave us fried fish. The Belgians invented chips. Then 150 years ago, the British put them together to create fish and chips.

Today Britain has 10,500 fish and chips shops, which earn over £650 million a year. This multi-million pound industry grew from small beginnings.

How it all began

150 years ago, on the streets of the East End of London, a 13-year-old boy called Joseph Malin had the bright idea of combining fried fish with chips.

Joseph's family were poor, so they began frying chips in a downstairs room of their house to increase the family income. Nearby was a fried fish shop, and Joseph put some fried fish with his chips and walked the streets. He sold the fish and chips from a tray, which hung round his neck. It was a great success. Joseph opened a shop – the first fish and chips shop.

Fish and chips became a favourite with many people. They were tasty, cheap, and quick. Charles Dickens, the famous Victorian novelist, wrote about 'fried fish warehouses' in his book *Oliver Twist*.

The dispute

However, there is a dispute about how the dish began. In the north of England many people don't believe Joseph Malin's story. They say a man called John Lees began selling fish and chips in a market in Mossley, Lancashire in 1863. Today there is a plaque there in his honour.

Whatever the truth, the dish became extremely popular. By 1910 there were more than 25,000 shops across the country and over 35,000 by the 1920's. In 1931 Harry Ramsden from Yorkshire opened a fish and chip 'palace' modelled on the Ritz Hotel in London. It is still the biggest fish and chip shop in the world.

Fish and chips today

Nowadays other kinds of fast food such as burgers, kebabs, and pizzas all outsell fish and chips. However, in Paris, France, *le fish and chips* is becoming the *chic* new meal. It often appears on menus in fashionable restaurants. 'People love them, for lunch or supper,' says chef Olivier Dupart.

1 Read the introduction and the paragraph How it all began. Are the sentences true or false? Correct the false sentences.

There are 650 fish and chip shops in Britain.

Joseph Malin's family fried fish in their home to sell.

The family lived near a fried fish shop.

Poor people loved fish and chips because they were delicious and cheap.

Oliver Twist wrote about fried fish.

2 Read the rest of the article. Answer the questions.

Why do people not believe Joseph Malin's story in the north of England?

Why is there a plaque in Mossley market?

How many fish and chip shops were there in 1910?

How many more shops were there by the 1920s?

What outsells fish and chips today?

Where are they now fashionable?

3 Complete the sentences.

_____ was the first person to sell fish and chips in London.

_____ wrote about fried fish.

_____ sold fish and chips in a market in 1863.

_____ opened the biggest fish and chip shop in the world in 1931.

_____ serves fish and chips in his restaurant in Paris.

APPENDIX 5

Pre-reading test – Form 10

The refugee from Afghanistan

Ten years ago, a boy called Mohammad Razai arrived in England with nothing but a few clothes. Today he is studying medicine at Cambridge University.

Aged just 15, Mohammad set out from his home country of Afghanistan with his cousin. His mother told him to leave his own country when life became very dangerous for the family. 'I was very sad,' he said. 'I didn't know if I would see my mother again.' They got on a plane but had no idea where they were going. Finally, they got to England.

When they arrived Mohammad was very surprised. 'People were so kind to us. We lived with a foster family. The mother made us feel very welcome. I didn't understand how another human being could help a complete stranger.'

He went to an English school, where he met a maths teacher. The teacher lent him a computer and persuaded him to take an IT exam. 'All the other teachers thought it was too soon, but I passed.'

How did he learn so fast? 'I knew I had to succeed, and to succeed I had to work hard.' He passed more exams and went to University College London, where he studied biology. But his dream was to study medicine at Cambridge.

He finally got a place. 'I still can't believe that I am actually studying at Cambridge,' says Mohammad. He hopes that his mother will get a visa and see him graduate later this year.

He became a British citizen two years ago. He says, 'I love this country. I feel part of British society. I will get married and stay here now. I really want to do something useful. I want to show people that asylum seekers are human beings with feelings, ambitions, and dreams, just like everyone else. People don't leave their own country without good reason. Leaving home, family, and friends and going to the other side of the world is not easy.'

Mohammad's dream now is to become a paediatrician. He is going to work for the International Red Cross and would like to help children. 'If people have the chance to improve their lives, they will do it with all their heart and soul,' he says. 'They just need the opportunity.'

1 Read the article about Mohammad Razai quickly. Complete the sentences with words from the text.

When Mohammad arrived in England, he had _____ .

He's studying _____ now.

He left Afghanistan because life was _____ for his family.

He worked _____ and _____ a lot of exams.

He studies biology at _____ .

Mohammad is now a British _____ .

He wants to be a _____ .

He's going to work for the _____ .

2 Read the article again. Circle the correct answer.

Mohammad travelled to England with his _____ .

mother cousin

He left Afghanistan when he was a _____ .

small boy teenager

He _____ where he was going when he left.

knew didn't know

People in England were very _____ to him.

cruel kind

_____ encouraged him to take an exam.

His foster family A maths teacher

He hopes _____ his mother soon.

to see to visit

Mohammad is going to _____ the UK after he graduates.

leave stay in

He wants people to understand _____ to leave your own country.

how hard it is how easy it is

What does *get* mean in these sentences? Write a word from the box.

| | | | |
|---------|-------------|--------|------|
| receive | arrive | become | earn |
| leave | arrive home | | |

What did you *get* for your birthday?

get = _____

What time does your train *get in*?

get in = _____

I can't run as fast as I could when I was 20. I'm *getting* old!

get = _____

I *get* £2,000 a month.

get = _____

You need to *get off* the bus at the Town Hall.

get off = _____

What time did you *get in* last night? I didn't hear you.

get in = _____

APPENDIX 6

Post-reading test

The Tiny Footprints

'Go to the police station, Mr Sholto,' said Holmes. 'Ask the police to come quickly. Doctor Watson and I will wait here.'

Thaddeus Sholto turned away. We heard him going downstairs.

'Now, Watson,' said Holmes. 'We have some work to do before the police arrive. We must find out how the murderer got into the room. The door was locked. But what about the window?'

He carried the lamp to the window and examined the window sill carefully.

'Look,' he said. 'Someone has come in by the window. Here is the print of a foot on the window sill. And here is a round mark. And look on the floor – here is another footprint and another mark. And again by the table. See, here, Watson.'

I looked at the marks. Some were footprints, but some were in the shape of small circles.

'Those are not footprints,' I said.

'No,' replied Holmes. 'They are the marks made by someone with a wooden leg.'

'Someone with a wooden leg?' I said. 'Holmes! Thaddeus Sholto told us that his father was afraid of a man with a wooden leg.'

'Yes,' said Holmes. 'But the wodden-legged man was not alone. Someone else had been here too. Look outside.' We both went to the window and looked down. 'We are very high up,' said Holmes. 'A man with a wooden leg would not be able to climb here by himself. Two people came into this room. We will call them Number One and Number Two. Number Two is the wodden-legged man. But who is Number One? And how did he get in?'

I looked round the room. I thought quickly. Then suddenly I knew the answer.

In the ceiling of the room was a hole. Thaddeus Sholto had told us that his brother had made this hole. The Agra Treasure had been hidden in the secret room above. The two Sholto brothers had lowered the treasure chest through this hole the night before.

A set of steps was standing beneath the hole. On the floor by the set of steps was a rope.

'Number One must have looked through the hole in the ceiling,' I said. 'He saw Bartholomew Sholto sitting on the chair below him. He killed Sholto with a poisoned thorn. Then he must have taken the rope, opened the window and thrown the end of the rope down into the garden. His friend, Number Two, the wooden-legged man, must have been waiting below. Number Two climbed up the rope with the help of Number One. The murderers then lowered the treasure chest to the ground with the rope. Number Two climbed down the rope. Number One got out of the room through the hole in the ceiling.'

'Excellent, Watson,' said Holmes. 'We shall now go up and have a look at the secret room. Perhaps we can find out more information about Number One.'

We climbed the steps and found ourselves in a small dark room without any windows. There was thick dust on the floor. It was here that the treasure had been hidden for so many years.

'Look,' said Holmes. 'There is a small door in the roof. That is how Number One got in.'

Then Holmes shone the lamp down at the floor. By the light of the lamp, I saw that the floor was covered with many footprints. They showed very clearly in the thick dust. They were the prints of bare feet.

But they were not the footprints of an ordinary man. They were extremely small. Suddenly, a horrible thought came into my mind.

'Holmes!' I whispered. 'A child has done this terrible thing.'

Holmes did not answer. He was still studying the tiny footprints. Finally he spoke. 'No,' he said slowly. 'I don't think it was a child. Look at this footprint. Look at the marks of the toes. They are very wide apart. It is not a child's footprint. It is a man's. They are the prints of a tiny man.'

'Do you mean a dwarf?' I asked in surprise.

'I will show you,' replied Holmes. 'Let's go into the room again. Let's examine once more the poisoned thorn which killed Bartholomew Sholto.'

In the room below, I picked up the thorn. I held it carefully between my fingers. I felt afraid. It was long and sharp.

'Now then,' said Holmes. 'What do you think about this thorn? Is it an English thorn?'

'No,' I said. 'It certainly is not.'

'You see,' said Holmes, 'already we begin to know many things about murderer Number One.'

'He is a very small man – in other words, a pygmy – from some foreign land. He is very strong and can climb great heights easily. He is also extremely dangerous. He kills people by shooting them with poisoned thorns.'

Task 1 – Multiple Choice

Tick the best answer (4 points).

1. How did Holmes and Watson get into the room where Bartholomew Sholto had been murdered?
 - a) Thaddeus Sholto let them in.
 - b) The housekeeper opened the door.
 - c) They broke the door down.
 - d) They climbed through the window.
2. How did murderer 'Number One' get into the room?
 - a) He had a key.
 - b) He climbed through the hole in the ceiling.
 - c) He came down the chimney.
 - d) He came up through the floor.
3. What strange marks did Holmes see on the floor of the secret rooms?
 - a) The number 4 written in blood.
 - b) The footprints of a dog.
 - c) The imprint of large boots.
 - d) Some very small footprints.
4. What did Holmes conclude from these marks?
 - a) That one of the murderers was a pygmy.
 - b) That one murderer had big feet.
 - c) That a child had climbed into the room.
 - d) That the murderer had used a monkey.

Task 2 – Gap fill

Fill in the gaps with the missing information (7 points).

Holmes knew that a man with a wooden leg had been in the room when he saw (1) _____ .

Watson thought that the wooden-legged man had got into the room through the (2) _____ .

The footprints they saw in the thick dust were very strange because they were (3) _____ .

Murderer 'Number One' is a (4) _____ . He is (5) _____ and (6) _____ , and he can (7) _____ .

Task 3 – Matching

Match the words in bold with their definitions (9 points).

- 1) Sherlock Holmes did not care if his **clients** were rich or poor.
 - 2) They waited **impatiently** outside the Theatre.
 - 3) They **advertised** for Captain Morstan in all the newspapers.
 - 4) We got into a **cab** and were soon on our way to the Lyceum Theatre.
 - 5) We entered the room and were immediately **astonished**.
 - 6) The Agra Treasure never brought him happiness – only fear and **guilt**.
 - 7) A **thorn** was sticking in his skin near his ear.
 - 8) Watson had to be careful as it was **poisoned**.
 - 9) Suddenly he **cried out**.
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- a) called to public attention.
 - b) a person using the services of another professional person or company.
 - c) greatly surprised or impressed; amazed.
 - d) a stiff, sharp-pointed woody projection on the stem or other part of a plant.
 - e) a car with a driver whom you pay to take you where you want to go.
 - f) in a way that shows irritation or annoyance.
 - g) to make a loud sound because of pain, fear, surprise, etc.
 - h) the fact of having committed a specified or implied offence or crime.
 - i) soaked in a substance that causes injury, illness, or death, especially by chemical means.

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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
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NYILATKOZAT

Alulírott, Motrinec Evelin angol szakos hallgató, kijelentem, hogy a dolgozatomat a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskolán, a Filológia tanszéken készítettem, angol nyelv és irodalom tanári diploma megszerzése végett.

Kijelentem, hogy a dolgozatot más szakon korábban nem védtem meg, saját munkám eredménye, és csak a hivatkozott forrásokat (szakirodalom, eszközök, stb.) használtam fel.

Tudomásul veszem, hogy dolgozatomat a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola könyvtárának Kézirattárában helyezik el