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**EXTENSIVE READING IN ENGLISH LEARNING
AND TEACHING**

BACHELOUR PAPER

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Riga
Year 2007

Declaration of Academic Integrity

I hereby declare that this study is my own and does not contain any unacknowledged material from any source.

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Abstract

The paper investigates reading and its significance in teaching English as a foreign language. It compares grammar-translation approach and natural approach to reading. It describes autonomous extensive reading and proves that free voluntary reading initiates a persisting habit of regular reading.

The theoretical part discusses traditional approaches to teaching reading and reading-based exercises, such as reading aloud and grammar-translation method. It analyses drawbacks of traditional teaching methods – making students read without natural purposes and with low motivation as well as teacher's desire to control the reading process. The paper shows that the skill to maintain reading motivation is one of the most important skills of an independent reader. The paper offers suggestions how to improve teaching reading and describes experiments performed on 18 individual students and 26 university students. A library for extensive reading is developed as a practical result of the research. The new-established library is also used to find out the most favourite topics in order to increase students' reading motivation. They are obtained by means of the observation of the borrowed books and compared with the list of the topics (genres) the students regard being the most 'favourite'. The differences in the both lists are analysed.

The proposed method of reading program and the list of the most favourite reading topics (genres) can be used in individual as well as group teaching in order to develop a persistent habit of reading.

Anotācija

Darbā ir pētīta lasīšana un tās nozīme angļu valodas kā svešvalodas mācīšanā. Ir salīdzināta gramatikas-tulkošanas un dabiskā pieeja lasīšanai. Darbs apraksta autonomu ekstensīvo lasīšanu un pierāda, ka neatkarīga labprātīga lasīšana izraisa noturīgu ieradumu regulāri lasīt.

Teorētiskajā daļā ir apskatītas tradicionālās pieejas lasīt mācīšanai un uz lasīšanu balstītiem uzdevumiem, tādiem kā lasīšanai balsī un gramatikas-tulkošanas metodei. Darbā ir analizēti tradicionālo mācīšanas metožu trūkumi – lasīšana ar nedabīgiem mērķiem un zemu motivāciju, kā arī skolotāja vēlēšanās kontrolēt lasīšanas procesu. Darbs parāda, ka prasme uzturēt lasīšanas motivāciju ir viena no vissvarīgākajām patstāvīga lasītāja prasmēm. Darbā ir doti ieteikumi, kā uzlabot lasīt mācīšanu, un ir aprakstīti eksperimenti, kas veikti ar 18 individuālo nodarbību studentiem un 26 universitātes nodarbību studentiem. Šī pētījuma praktiskais rezultāts ir bibliotēkas ekstensīvai lasīšanai izveidošana.

Jaunizveidotā bibliotēka ir izmantota vismīļāko lasāmo tēmu (žanru) noskaidrošanai, ar mērķi paaugstināt studentu motivāciju. Tās ir iegūtas, novērojot paņemtās grāmatas, un tās ir salīdzinātas ar tēmām (žanriem), kuras studenti uzskata par ‘vismīļākajām’. Atšķirības abos sarakstos ir analizētas.

Piedāvātā lasīšanas programmas metode, kā arī vismīļāko tēmu (žanru) saraksts var tikt izmantots gan individuālās, gan grupu nodarbībās ar mērķi attīstīt noturīgu lasīšanas ieradumu.

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Introduction

Topicality of the problem

At the early stages of reading in English as a foreign language, the reading process in traditional teaching is often followed by translation. The students are often asked to read aloud, so they read for the teacher and not for their own purpose. Teachers usually like to monitor their students' comprehension and make sure that they understand the read sentences correctly. Even if the teacher does not control the reading process itself, then the choice of the books, their topics, and complexity are often decided by the teacher. Unfortunately, such control during the lessons does not motivate the students to read. Even more, some important reading skills can remain undeveloped.

If students had been taught using grammar-translation method for one or two years, after some time, some of the students may start to believe they cannot read any texts until they can find a translation for every word of the text. They believe that the purpose of reading is not to enjoy some piece of fiction or retrieve interesting facts from non-fiction literature, but to know the translation of every word. Other students may develop a habit of reading aloud for themselves; because they want to be sure they would be able to "perform" the reading for their teacher correctly. They may believe that they cannot read unless they are sure they can pronounce every word properly.

This approach to reading leads to avoiding texts with challenging vocabulary. The keenness of guessing unknown words is not observed, and one can doubt if the students have such skills at all. Students are reading books of the same difficulty level and are not enthusiastic about starting to read texts of higher complexity in terms of vocabulary than the level they are used to.

The second drawback is that students are afraid to read at home, because they believe, they need a teacher who corrects their translation or pronunciation 'mistakes' all the time while they are reading. When reading a piece of fiction, the progress is very slow and one book of adapted text is read for several months.

This clearly shows the difficulty of defining teacher's and students' roles. It seems reasonable that the teacher is the one who chooses the level of the graded readers books which would most likely suit a particular pupil. The teacher knows in which "level" the student is ranked – beginner, intermediate or advanced. Most of the students being of

intermediate level, the teacher would differentiate the students as belonging to certain sub-levels. The teacher is the one who knows how easy or difficult each book is and what the student can learn when reading it.

On the other hand nothing proves that the teacher really knows these facts. The teacher has evaluated his student only in the process of “obligatory” reading. In fact, the teacher cannot know if the student who usually reads “Easystarts” books of Penguin Graded Readers (200 headwords) would not be able to read an “Elementary” book of 600 headwords in case the student finds the book exciting. Hedge (1991:38) points out:

“Many teachers of English have experienced the situation where a student’s interest in the content of a book enables him to overcome difficulties in the language in a way the teacher would not have thought possible. In fact, a reader’s understanding varies with the extent to which he is involved with the text”

To favour the interests and hobbies of each student by letting them choose to read the books they prefer is possible only in one way – by starting a students’ library. In a classroom where all the books are stored on the “teacher’s shelves” the students would not dare to look for books freely. If there is a “students’ shelf” where everyone is welcome to look for books, the students would feel confident in searching for the type of books they are interested in.

After establishing free access to books, the new teacher’s and student’s roles are postulated as “rules” of a special task with certain time period. According to these rules, pupils read without any assistance from the teacher’s side – they are independent readers. The teacher has the role of an adviser – his/her ideas about the meaning of the texts or his/her preferences are not “better” than the pupil’s ones. If the teacher feels that his/her authority is threatened, and the pupil feels uncomfortable with the new freedom the roles may be adjusted.

When taking into account the individual interests of students and peculiarities in their previous learning experience, one can expect that common drawbacks of the teaching process should be present, especially if the students learn with the same teacher for several years and the teaching methods have not been changed over the whole period. Nuttall (2005:64) points out that the grammar-translation method could be causing unwillingness to read texts containing difficult-to-translate words, as ignoring words, belonging to “throw-away-vocabulary” has not been trained at all.

Therefore, the hypothesis can be - all students need to be trained to read texts with “blank spaces” or to read without using their teacher as “electronic dictionary” during their reading.

The goal of this paper is to investigate the problems related to teaching reading when using the grammar-translation method and suggest how special exercises and natural approach to reading can eliminate the problems.

Goals of the research

This research paper is aimed at studying two main approaches to reading:

- 1) Reading as a bottom-up processing when the linguistic knowledge of the student is exercised. Knowledge of English grammar rules, syntax and morphology and ability to apply them.
- 2) Reading as a top-down processing when the socio-cultural knowledge and the general world knowledge play the main role in the reading process.

Tests to evaluate student’s ability to apply both linguistic knowledge and schematic knowledge are used in this paper. Drawbacks of grammar-translation method and its influence on reading are analysed. Special exercises to improve reading for students who have been taught by grammar-translation method are presented and the results of the training are analysed. A project of a students’ library shelf is described and its influence on students’ reading motivation is analysed. A reading program (of extensive autonomous silent reading), based on the newly established library is described, and its effects on further readers habits is analysed.

The target population consists of 18 individual students (4 minors and 11 adults) and 26 university students (19-21 years old). The distribution of the individual students according to their English knowledge level is 4 beginners, 7 pre-intermediate students and 7 intermediate students. The university participants are 13 pre-intermediate students and 13 intermediate students.

Enabling objectives

To reach the above-mentioned goals the following objectives should be accomplished:

1. To analyse theoretical aspects of reading;

2. To analyse what skills are involved in reading process and how they could be tested;
3. To develop and use a questionnaire;
4. To choose the skills (that might be inhibited when applying the grammar-translation method) for testing. To choose the test exercises and perform the testing of students;
5. To analyse the testing results. To distinguish common features of the skills of the students;
6. To choose and use practical exercises during English lessons and to teach additional theory related to the problem and to develop awareness of reading as a bottom-up and top-down processing;
7. To motivate students to extensive reading by establishing a “student shelve” – a small home-reading library;
8. To encourage independent reading by a role-shift task;
9. To train the habit of silent reading by extensive reading competition;
10. To measure the progress of reading skills and motivation to read.
11. To find out the most favourite reading topics (genres);
12. To draw conclusions.

Hypothesis

Awareness of reading as a bottom-up and top-down processing eliminates the fear of “imperfect reading”, encourages the reader to choose more difficult texts (one level higher on the graded readers) and improves the reader’s word attacking strategies. An extensive reading program of easy contemporary literature trains students to maintain and increase their reading motivation which is one of the most important skills of an independent reader.

Methods of research

This paper uses both theoretical and practical methods of research to prove the hypothesis.

Theoretical methods are overview, comparison and theoretical analysis of the existing ideas in the methodology of teaching English; survey research and analysis.

Practical methods are quasi-experimental research (no control group) and case study. The descriptive statistics (the means, distributions and correlations of quantitative data) is used. The description is used for case studies.

Outline of chapters

The first chapter of this paper gives the main idea on various reading purposes and the roles of the teacher and the student. The second chapter focuses on particular reading skills that are distinguished in reading process and how the grammar-translation method affects them. It also discusses reading as simultaneous top-down and bottom-up processing. The third chapter deals with extensive reading. The fourth chapter describes diagnostic tests. Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 are devoted to practical experiments of teaching children and adults individually. Chapter 9 deals with the same experiments applied to two groups of university students and analyses the most favourite reading topics (genres), obtained by observation. The appendixes contain questionnaires and exercises used in the teaching practice.

1 The theoretical aspects of reading

1.1 Teaching reading in English as a foreign language

When one thinks of teaching reading, two cases would be the most common among Latvian people studying English – some of them would learn reading in English after they have learnt to read in their native language, but some of them would learn reading in English before they have experienced reading in any other language, because they are little children. This paper discusses teaching reading skills mostly to the first group of people.

Adults often call themselves “difficult learners”. They complain of limited ability to memorize, and they often perceive English as an “odd” language with “odd” pronunciation.

Lado (1983:61) gives the following explanation:

“The habits involved in reading and writing the source language tend to be transferred to the target language with resulting interference where the two systems differ and with facilitation where they are parallel. The force of this transfer is much stronger than we realize, and it persists into advanced stages of mastery.”

Lado (1983:61) also points out:

“The fit of the writing system of English is quite irregular...Better fit is found in Finnish, Turkish, Spanish, and others.”

Steve Bett in an article *Introduction to a book on 'Writing Systems of the World'* (<http://victorian.fortunecity.com/vangogh/555/Spell/writing-sys-vy.htm>) describes the possible changes if the English traditional orthography were replaced by a phonemic script:

“...any phonetic system based on the way we currently speak would respell at least 60% of the words in the [English] dictionary. [Nevertheless,] English speaking children could achieve literacy in greater numbers and in half time presently required.”

Although English is not an easy language, many of adult students have some basic knowledge of it and certain experience of studying at university – this asset should not be undervalued. Such learning strategies as memorising techniques, classifying, generalising, analysing, making notes or comments, summarising they have in hand. Most adults would have the experience of reading in a foreign language (either Russian or German) too. When trying to define essential aspects of reading, Nuttall (2005:1) emphasises that “the most important thing is that ...student should understand the reading process”.

At first, we should ask ourselves what we understand with the word “reading”. Is reading the process of just identifying code of certain words? Nuttall (2005:1) emphasises that reading is a process of getting the meaning of the text:

“You read because you wanted to get something from the writing. We will call this the *message*: it might have been facts, but could just as well have been enjoyment, ideas, or feelings (from a family letter, for instance).”

When using grammar-translation method, reading is followed by translation – as if the main part of the message would be obtained by translation. Many teachers use translation at early stages of teaching to make sure their students understand the meaning of every word correctly. At later stages this habit sustains teacher’s control and student’s dependence from the teacher.

Other drawback of grammar-translation method is reading aloud. Doff (1992:23) emphasizes the difference between silent reading (reading for meaning) and reading aloud:

“[Silent reading] is the activity we normally engage in when we read books, newspapers, road signs, etc....It involves looking at sentences and understanding the message they convey....It does not normally involve saying the words we read, not even silently inside our heads.”

“Reading aloud is a completely different activity; its purpose is not just to understand a text but to convey the information to someone else. It is not an activity we engage in very often outside the classroom.”

One of the reasons why teachers prefer reading aloud to silent reading is that the former seems holding group's attention on a certain place in the text. The teacher might believe the reading becomes synchronized and well organized. However, in reality students are better behaved not because they follow the reading, but because they are preparing their own sentence. Lado (1983:65) explains:

“The common practice of having each student in succession read aloud a sentence or two to the class seems inefficient ... When the each-one-read-one practice permits a student to know ahead of time what sentence he will recite, some students concentrate on preparing their own sentence and do not listen to any other sentence. This is obviously unsatisfactory.”

Nevertheless, Lado believes that reading aloud is a very important exercise. He distinguishes eight stages in teaching reading in English (1983:61):

1. *Pre-reading*: identifying the graphemes. 2. *Fit*: associating the graphemes and the language. 3. *Habit*: reading what is spoken. 4. *Reading aloud*: speaking what is written. 5. *Reading for information*: technical, cultural, recreational. 6. *Diversification*: reading different styles of graphemes and of language. 7. *Reading power*: vocabulary building and speed. 8. *Literature*: esthetical experience.

This paper deals mainly with stage 5 from this list – reading for information. The author of this paper believes that diversification and reading power can be regarded as parallel processes that take place during reading for information.

Doff (1992:23) emphasizes the fact that silent reading is easier because it does not require sharing attention between speaking and reading. Reading aloud, he says, is a very complicated process.

To improve this complicated process, audiocassettes can be used. At first, the student listens to the recorded reading of the text, read by a professional actor, and after that the student reads aloud, trying to read as well as the actor. The teacher asks the student to follow the text while listening to the recording, but such teaching strategy has

its drawbacks – the student is forced to read with the speed of the recording, which in many cases can be too slow or too fast. The student has to follow the text linearly; he/she cannot stop reading to think something over or to recall something from his/her memory. He/she cannot look at illustrations at the moment when the vocalized text relates to them.

Nuttall (2005:34) criticizes teachers who do the work for their students:

“The reader’s most basic task is to associate the printed marks on the page with the spoken language he knows. A teacher who reads the text aloud before starting work on it has already done this for the students. ... [This] does not promote the independent skills of silent reading.”

Further the Nuttall (2005:34) admits that such activities devalue the text itself, because, when the meaning is obtained through the intervention of the teacher, the printed text becomes redundant.

The author agrees with this point – such reading activities where the main purpose is accurate pronunciation and translation of every word can be rather regarded as only a reading rehearsal, not reading itself. It not only makes classroom reading a boring process, but also dispirits the students and inhibits the development of their motivation to read.

1.2 Frustrations and motivation to read

Some people never think of the reasons why they read, because reading, especially in their native language, seems just a normal everyday activity. Reading the list of the television programmes, looking for a street in a map, enjoying an exciting detective story – these different motives involve various reading styles. Some graded readers contain tasks or illustrations of various types – some Sherlock Holmes stories (Oxford Bookworms) contain a map of the surroundings where circumstances of a murder can be investigated. Other Sherlock Holmes story (Dominoes series) makes the reader read an advertisement in the form it could look in a newspaper 100 years ago. It also includes a newspaper report (with newspaper format and lexical style) and a notice written by the ‘detective’s hand’ in handwriting. Therefore, the reader can get familiar with rich reading material without being distracted from the main plot of the story. Hedge (2000: 195) emphasizes the importance of providing students with various reading material – “brochures, articles, schedules, poems, short stories, maps and diagrams” – even if it is

difficult to identify any needs to apply them. If the student does not see a certain purpose in reading, for example, London train schedule, then the process itself seems having just a function of a boring exercise.

A teacher, who prefers grammar-translation method, often chooses fiction literature, most probably, classics. Larsen-Freeman (2001:15) points out that in Grammar-translation method “a fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language is to be able to read literature written in it. Literary language is superior to spoken language”. It has certain advantages – the plot of the story is often well known, and can help in top-down processing (e.g. ‘Adventures of Tomas Sawyer’). Sometimes a new screen-version of the piece of fiction inspires students to read the book too (e.g. ‘The Phantom of the Opera’). Sometimes the main character of the book is an important symbol (e.g. Robinson Crusoe – a popular symbol of adventures and survival). On the other hand, choosing classics has disadvantages, because some students might not be interested in fiction literature at all. Nevertheless, the teacher is the one who chooses the book for the pupil, and the student is the one who has to accept it. By reading and translating the student memorizes new words, and the book is the source of them, so it is useful, no matter how boring it is. Unfortunately, such activities do not promote extensive reading.

Hedge (1991:36) reminds:

“Teachers who introduce Readers into the language learning programme sometimes forget that, while their own interest is in developing the child’s knowledge of a foreign or second language and reading skills in that language, the child responds to the content of the book.”

Several authors believe that English classics should not be read until the student has reached an appropriate level of language fluency. Lado (1983:65) points out:

“Serious literature is usable at this stage only insofar as the language lies with the power of the students ... Serious literature should not be simplified in order to make it usable. It should be postponed until the students are ready for it as an esthetic experience itself.”

Krashen (2003 a [online]) justifies this idea:

“Students need not read the classics in these sessions. In fact, in some successful programs students begin with very easy graded readers and we have had great success using adolescent literature ('teen romances") with adult ESL students.”

Preferences of different texts may vary by age. Children do not often have any preferences and they read every book they can get. After reading extensively for longer time, their preferences appear. Adults usually know what kind of reading material they are able to enjoy, because they have long reading experience in their native language. There are also adults who believe that they do not enjoy reading. Others believe that reading in English cannot be enjoyable, because it is too slow. Nuttall (2005:127) emphasises, that slow reading may be a cause of being trapped in a vicious circle (see Fig.1).

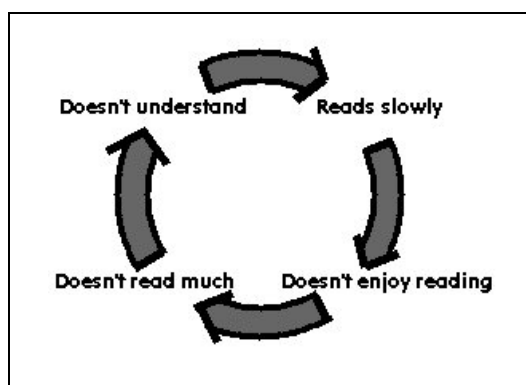


Fig. 1 The vicious circle of the weak reader, Nuttall (2005:127)

She also notes that the vicious circle can be entered at any of the four phases, because “any of the factors will produce any of the others”.

The weakest point for students taught by grammar-translation method is reading slowly. Every word must be pronounced correctly and every sentence must be translated, so this method slows the reading process considerably. Amount of books read in such a way cannot be large, which narrows reading experience.

Extensive reading programme when students can choose books from their shelf can help children to develop their reading preferences and help adults to find the most enjoyable reading material for their own purposes. Nuttall (2005:127) believes that such programme can “help them to get out of this cycle of frustration and enter instead the cycle of growth” (see Fig. 2).

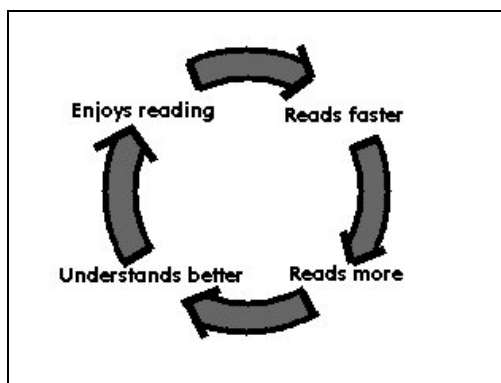


Fig 2 The circle of a good reader,
Nuttall (2005:127)

Nuttall (2005:127) thinks that in the second circle “the most readily attainable is *enjoyment*, closely followed by *quantity*”.

The importance of reading in English as the source of pleasure is emphasized by Krashen (2003a [online]):

The goal of these classes is to introduce students to popular literature, to what is available to them for pleasure reading in the second or foreign language, in the hope of helping students establish a pleasure reading habit in the second language.

Powell (2005 [online]) gives evidence to correlation between enjoyment and amount of reading. Powell (2005 [online]) describes his findings obtained during extensive reading course of English given to Japanese high school students that had been taught by grammar-translation method before the course:

“The total number of books read by the class increased from 153 in the first year to 261 in the second year. ... Before starting the course, only three students thought that reading in English would be enjoyable. Bt the time of the survey, twenty-five stated that sometimes they now read in English purely for pleasure, and six students said they often did.”

In case of grammar-translation method, the speed of reading is very slow, so acceleration of reading process is important. A program of silent reading may give the students an experience of completely different style of reading and new reading habits. The author presumes that by increase of the reading speed, the enjoyment would increase as well. This anticipation is tested by two inquiries in further chapters of this study.

1.3 Selecting Readers

There are several criteria according to which the reading materials should be selected for the class library. The first criterion is the way the books are going to be used – they can be used for class reading (several copies of one book are needed) or individual silent reading (one copy of one book is needed). Hedge (1991:37) regards that in case of class reading the students will have to make a compromise decision, as their preferences and interests will differ and any book, no matter how carefully chosen, will not entertain all the students at the class at the same level. Individual reading, in contrary, allows students to “engage in reading as a private activity, selecting books on the basis of their own interests and preferences and reading at their own pace”. In case of individual reading a varied supply of books will be needed, says Hedge.

Hedge (1991:38) highlights four major criteria according to which each book should be evaluated:

- 1) Are students interested in this book?
- 2) What is students’ background knowledge on its topic?
- 3) Does the language level of the book correspond to that of the students?
- 4) Technical details – illustrations, the size of print, the lay-out of the text, the quality of the paper, the attractiveness of the cover – are they satisfying?

Books that have higher evaluation according to these criteria should be obtained in the first place. It would be advisable to obtain two or three copies of the books, having the highest evaluation. Such supply would provide a possibility of two or three copies of the same book being borrowed at the same time, which would stimulate informal discussions before or after the classes.

Hedge (1991:57) emphasizes the role of pictures in graded readers:

“Pictures have the capacity to convey much of the emotion, characterisation, background etc. that is implicit in the text but which cannot be expressed openly in the controlled language.”

Using illustrations develops a skill to retrieve information from graphical material i.e., photographs, maps, diagrams and drawings.

Hedge (1991:40) also discusses teachers’ desire to develop students’ “love of good literature, their imaginative insights, their capacity for empathy with people, ... [and] moral character.” Hedge regards that students should not be forced to read books

they are not interested in, because in such a situation they “neither develop an abiding interest in the English literary heritage nor learn to read the English language fluently and with pleasure”.

Further Hedge (1991:41) gives teachers a tip on what topics and genres could be loved by students:

“There will probably be a far greater chance of initial success if watered-down versions of Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens are avoided, and if, instead, modern books written in contemporary language are chosen – detective stories, romances, thrillers, [and] factual ‘special interest’ books.”

Another reason why classics should not be chosen as the main reading material is that the students might not have any background knowledge of the society problems in 19th century. They also might feel unhappy when looking at the pictures showing 19th century architecture and clothing – it does not address them. We all know that putting Shakespeare’s plays into 20th century exterior (clothing, manners) helps young readers to understand the message of these masterpieces better.

Teachers also should remember, that some of the bestsellers, like “The Da Vinci Code” by Dan Brown, are read, because these books have very strong motivating strategies. Hayakawa (1964:141) believes that one of such strategies is seeking to engage the reader’s identification:

“There are two kinds of identification which a reader may make with characters in a story. First, he may recognize in the story-character a more or less realistic representation of himself. (For example, the story-character is shown misunderstood by his parents, while the reader, because of the vividness of the narrative, recognizes his own experiences in those of the story-character.) Secondly, the reader may find, by identifying himself with the story-character, the fulfilment of his own desires. (For example, the reader may be poor, not very handsome, and not popular with girls, but he may find symbolic satisfaction in identifying himself with a story-character who is represented as rich, handsome, and madly sought after by hundreds of beautiful women.)”

Popular books have several motivating strategies i.e. if some people are more interested in love stories, but others prefer detective stories, then to tempt all of them read a book, it should deal with both a detective plot line, i.e., trying to find out ‘who

did it?’ as well as romantic plot line where focus is on feelings rather than deductive logics.

Horror is another powerful device that involves a reader. Some readers feel very excited when reading ghost stories. Somehow, they enjoy that feeling – especially children and teenagers. Adventure stories can help people to overcome boredom or monotony of their lives. The events in these stories happen rapidly one after another, and they make the reader’s mind very busy. Reading about other countries and cities make the reader interested in the information in a similar way – if he is tired of the place he lives in and wants to visit some foreign country but does not have enough time or money, he can go there in his thoughts – by reading an interesting book.

Powell (2005 [online]) gives evidence that the group of 17-year old students of a secondary school of Japan showed certain priorities in their reading topics/genres:

“As for the kind of books they most enjoyed, the results were as follows:”

“Romance	13
Mystery/Thriller	12
Adventure	6
Ghost/Horror	5
Non-fiction	2
Detective	1”

Hedge (1991:41) suggests identifying the topics each book deals with. Some readers provide their books with labels, i.e. “human interest”, “crime”. Other books should be labelled by teachers. Then observations on the frequencies of the borrowing should be carried out so that “teachers get to know their students and their interests and preferences”.

2 Reading skills

2.1 Defining reading

Lado (1983:59) states a following definition of reading:

“To read is to grasp language patterns from their written representation. In a second language, reading is usually taught to students who are already literate in the source language.”

Linehan (2003 [online]) emphasizes the level of independency of a successful reader:

“The independent reader is one who can comprehend, analyze, problem solve, and self monitor as they read, without the support of “a more

knowledgeable other”. They are reading texts with an accuracy rate between 95 and 100%. When children are truly reading independently, they are in a level of autonomous functioning, not learning within what is known as “their zone of proximal development”(Vygotsky, 1978). This “zone” is described as “the behaviors beyond a child’s level of autonomous functioning but within reach if assistance is provided.”

Wren (2001 [online]) points out that reading is decoding the text:

“Reading ... can be summed up very concisely. A skilled reader makes use of the grapho-phonemic information provided by the text to decode each word (which is done rapidly and automatically). As the text is decoded, the reader uses semantic and syntactic information to comprehend the decoded text.”

Kramiņa (2000, 91) also emphasizes the importance of decoding:

“The thought is that once learners are able to sound out the letters, they will be able to read the words and then, once they are able to read the words, they will be able to make meaning of the text.”

McShane (2005 [online]) keeps to a definition that is used by *The Partnership for Reading* and *The National Institute for Literacy*:

“[Reading is] a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following:

- the skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print;
- the ability to decode unfamiliar words;
- the ability to read fluently;
- sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension;
- the development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print;
- the ***development and maintenance of a motivation to read***. [Partnership for Reading www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/explore/reading_defined.html]”

Bannatyne (2006 [online]) sees reading as decoding sounds from the printed symbols:

“If we ... *read* a sentence in English, we first *decode* the printed symbols on the page into *sounds (called phonemes)*. The second thing we do is group these phonemes into *sound-words* and we do this trick in the *auditory-vocal* areas of the brain. This is a fact because the English language is a *phonetic* (sound to symbol) language. Thus we ***hear*** in our brains the words we ***read***. After all a book is only the "canned" and polished ***speech*** of the author! The third thing we do is to ***interpret*** the *heard* words individually as well as in sentences in terms of their ***meanings***, which are ideas, concepts and images.”

Hedge (1991:32) regards reading as the process of predicting and guessing:

“It is now generally accepted that reading is not the careful recognition and comprehension of each word on the page in sequence. A good reader uses a minimum of ‘clues’ from the text to reconstruct the writer’s message. It is not difficult for a fluent reader to read a text with missing, misspelt or blurred words. Experiments have shown that sometimes readers are not even aware of these things. Their successful reading depends upon their ability to predict what comes next.”

Kruidenier (2002 [online]) believes reading is getting meaning from the text:

“First of all, reading comprehension involves all of the elements of the reading process,... acting together. As comprehension takes place, words are decoded and associated with their meanings in the reader's memory, and phrases and sentences are processed rapidly or fluently enough so that the meanings derived from one word, phrase, or sentence are not lost before the next is processed.

Second, the writer who composed the text being read put together a whole, hopefully coherent, network of thoughts for the reader. This more or less coherent whole is recreated as needed, piece-by-piece, in the reader's memory without the benefit of live conversation, relying only on what is derived from the text and the reader's own prior knowledge or past experiences, also stored in memory. This complex network of ideas that represents a text in memory is constantly modified as the reading progresses.”

There is no definition for reading that could precisely explain what reading is. Nuttall (2005:2) has often received definitions from English teachers that included following word groups:

- Decode, decipher, identify, etc.
- Articulate, speak, pronounce, etc.
- Understand, respond, meaning, etc.

The first idea of reading as decoding a written message seems logical. It is important to recognise the printed signs with a good speed, but at later stages of reading this is not the most important aspect of reading. Even Russian children are introduced to English alphabet at the age of seven, and after five years they recognise the signs without problems. Residents of Latvia are used to reading shop signs, street names, road directions, and bus stop signs in Latvian and most of the signs in Latvian alphabet and English one are the same. The issue of decoding is not discussed in this paper.

Reading aloud is usually associated with classroom reading activities, so for many teachers the essence of reading seems fluent articulation of the printed text. But many authors (e.g. Nuttall) agree with Doff (1992:23) that “reading aloud is a completely different activity”. Nuttall (2005:2) notes that “for early readers...reading aloud is important: they have to discover how writing is associated with the spoken words they already use”. She also emphasises that this stage does not last long. According to Nuttall (2005:2) the activity of revealing the meaning is the closest to the definition of reading. We can discuss a following example. Let us suppose a tourist has arrived in Sweden and is waiting for a bus in a bus stop. Let us suppose he has not studied Swedish, but he wants to know if the bus that has arrived just a moment ago is the one he should take. The tourist would read the sign of the destination of the bus. While going by it, the tourist would read the names of the bus stops and the names of the places they are passing. The tourist wants to enjoy his holiday and he does not want to get lost. He also has a limited amount of money with him – he wants to spend it carefully. He wants to read place names to be sure he is not going to miss the right bus stop. He does not care of the pronunciation of the names. He wants to *understand* where he is.

Normally, and we often read street names and notices without even being aware of it. If we read things that we know by heart (the name of the street we live on), we rather compare the printed text with our expectations than read it. By reading most people would understand getting information from books, newspapers and magazines. They also would believe that “the text is full of meaning like a jug full of water; the reader’s mind soaks it up like a sponge” Nuttall (2005:5). This idea is presented in Fig 3.

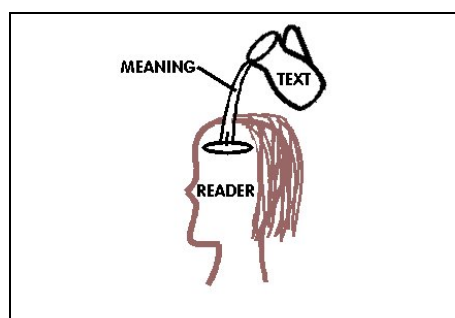


Fig 3 A common view of reading, Nuttall (2005:5)

Thinking about this interpretation of reading, we must remember that very often, when we find the text difficult, we do not feel sure what the text is about. Therefore we cannot get the full message, but only some part of it. In Fig. 3 such process could be displayed as a stream of water running down the reader's face to the ground. The portion of the information "soaked up" by the reader also may not be exactly the same the author intended to be received from his book. Nuttall (2005:4) prefers to see reading as a communication process during which the message is encoded in text and then decoded by a reader. The question mark in the receiver's head symbolizes uncertainty of the message the decoder has received.

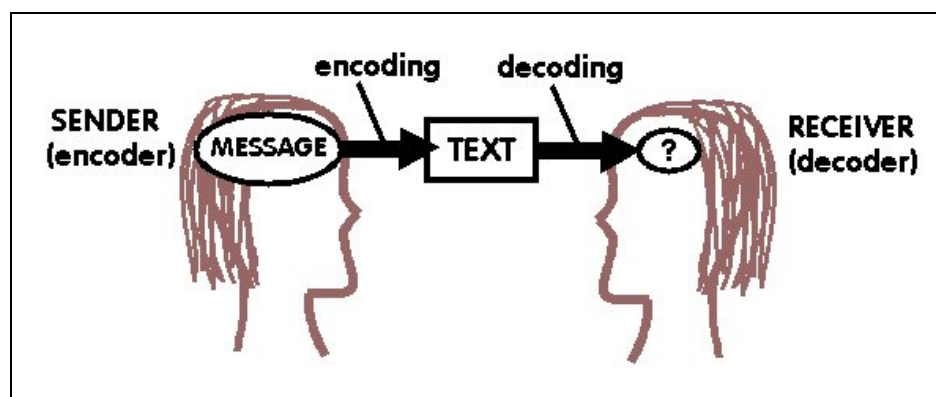


Fig. 4 Reading as communication, Nuttall (2005:5)

Nuttall (2005:6) emphasises that to make communication possible the encoder and the decoder have to share the same alphabet (this is the minimal requirement for the reading process). Moreover, they have to share the same vocabulary and the same knowledge of the field (for example, science). Further we can add shared assumptions (certain knowledge of world and certain moral or political views). Nuttall (2005:6) concludes that as “no two people have identical experiences,...the writer is always likely to leave unsaid that [he] takes for granted, but the reader does not”.

Grammar-translation method creates an illusion that the text contains a perfect message that can be obtained only by means of translation. It also gives a reason to think that without translation the reader would not give any message at all, because as Larsen-Freeman (2001:18) emphasizes, “the meaning of the target language is made clear by translating it into the students’ native language”. This method suggests that every word in target language has an equivalent in student’s native language, and good

students know these equivalents for almost all words. Unknown words, found in text, may be interpreted as something the student should be ashamed of (if the word had appeared in earlier texts and student did not care to memorise its 'equivalent'). On the other hand, unknown words may cause unpleasant feelings because the method requires new words to be memorised and memorising is laborious and boring. The fact that only the teacher decides if the translation or answer to a question is correct produces a judgmental attitude to the reading and learning itself. According to Larsen-Freeman (2001:17) "The teacher is the authority in the classroom. The students ... learn what she knows". Such manifestation of teacher's and student's roles can create an idea that the teacher knows the real true meaning of the texts that she gives her students to read. Therefore, to start an extensive reading program, the teacher has to formulate his new role as a part of the task.

2.2 Teaching reading skills

According to Pearson (2005 [online]) there are three main kinds of reading skills:

- Phonic skills;
- Vocabulary skills;
- Comprehension skills.

Unfortunately he does not discuss them in detail.

Other source (<http://www.readingtarget.com/rybett/manual.htm> 2005) mentions a slightly different set of reading skills:

- Phonics skills;
- Word structure;
- Vocabulary skills;
- Comprehension skills;
- Study skills;

The professionals of this company ("*Reading Target*") deal with teaching reading to small children, and they stress the importance of phonic skills:

"Reading is based on the working knowledge that letters represent sounds and that groups of letters represent the sounds of words. The ability to break down words into sounds is known as Phonemic Awareness in the teaching profession. It has nothing to do with the meaning of words only the sound of words. Phonemic Awareness is more important in learning to read than any other measure of intelligence."

By “word structure skills” they mean ability to apply morphological knowledge in process of reading. Their approach to teaching this skill is making children aware of endings *-s, -es, -ed, -ing, -er, -est*, which are, actually, topics of grammar study. By knowing these endings the reader can understand their grammatical meaning and be better prepared to receive the message of the text.

The “*Reading Target*” professionals teach prefixes *un-, re-, dis-* and suffixes *-ly, -ful, -less, -ness, -er, -th, -y* to the pupils of the second level. They also teach suffixes *-tion, -ward, -ment, -ous, -teen, -ship, -some* and their meaning to the pupils of the third level. Such knowledge helps students to understand principles of word building and how adding prefixes and suffixes to a root of a word can produce other words with modified meanings. Moreover, they teach some compound words to the students of the third level.

For developing vocabulary skills “*Reading Target*” teachers train their students to identify words using picture clues or context clues as well as definitions. Antonyms, synonyms, and homonyms are also studied.

To develop reading comprehension the students are trained to identify the main idea using illustrations and supportive ideas, to sequence pictures, to order events using sentences, to identify the speaker, to solve true/false sentences, to interpret tone and feelings, to understand comparing and contrasting as well as cause and effect and to draw conclusions. They are also thought to recognise figures of speech.

To improve research and study skills, they are trained to use the table of contents, to skim and to reread for details. They are trained to work with encyclopaedias, dictionaries and glossaries.

Other Internet source (<http://www.time4learning.com/readingpyramid/index.htm> 2005) suggest following skills:

- Phonemic awareness;
- Phonics (for children);
- Comprehension;
- Vocabulary;
- Fluency.

They (“*Time 4 learning*” professionals) give the definition of phonemic awareness as follows (<http://www.time4learning.com/readingpyramid/vocabulary.htm>):

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and identify sounds in spoken words.

Their approach to phonics is similar to that of the teachers from “*Reading Target*”:

“Phonics is the relationship between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language...Phonics is the understanding of how letters combine to make sounds and words. Phonics curriculum usually starts with teaching letters, slowly creating a working knowledge of the alphabet. Children learn the sounds of each letter by associating it with the word that starts with that sound. Phonics skills grow through reading activities, and students learn to distinguish between vowels and consonants and understand letter combinations such as blends and digraphs.”

The teachers from “*Time 4 learning*” believe that reading comprehension skills are the most important ones, because they “increase the pleasure and effectiveness of reading”. The source gives a following definition for reading comprehension skills (<http://www.time4learning.com/readingpyramid/comprehension.htm>):

“Comprehension skills ... [are] the ability to understand and gain meaning from what has been read...Reading comprehension skills separates the "passive" unskilled reader from the "active" readers. Skilled readers don't just read, they interact with the text... Skilled readers, for instance:

- Predict what will happen next in a story using clues presented in text;
- Create questions about the main idea, message, or plot of the text;
- Monitor understanding of the sequence, context, or characters;
- Clarify parts of the text which have confused them;
- Connect the events in the text to prior knowledge or experience.”

They emphasize importance of development of vocabulary by means of word games. At the same time “*Time 4 learning*” professionals remind us that one’s vocabulary is obtained from the family, society and environment he/she lives in. Vocabulary is not only the words students must know to communicate effectively, but also the key to building analytical and critical thinking.

Fluency is defined as the capacity to read text accurately and quickly. The teachers explain:

“Fluency bridges word decoding and comprehension. Comprehension is understanding what has been read. Fluency is a set of skills that allows readers to decode text rapidly while maintaining high comprehension...The idea is that children will recognize at sight the most common words in written

English and that instant reading of these words will allow them to read and understand text more quickly.”

Nuttall (2005:40) emphasizes that skills can be learned without special skill-training, just by reading for meaning: “probably the best way to acquire these [reading skills] is simply to read and read”. Some other authors share similar views, for example, Goodman (1977) says:

“Engage kids in authentic, meaningful encounters with text and the ‘skills’ will take care of themselves: Kids will become ‘skilled’ without teaching ‘skills’.”

The main reason why skills should not be taught separately is “weak evidence of independence” (Pearson, 2005), because reading skills are mutually related. Also, there is no evidence of clear and logical order in which the skills should be trained. Wallace (1992:56) points out that “research has failed to establish any hierarchy of skills through which one progresses to become an increasingly effective reader”. Wallace (1992:59) also says that good learners use several strategies, “drawing on as much of the surrounding text as possible, being prepared to tolerate uncertainty, using a wide range of textual cues in predicting what comes next, and generally being flexible in their responses to texts.” Wallace (1992:56) believes these skills cannot be thought using drills because “they relate only marginally, if at all, to the activity of reading”.

Normally skills can be trained automatically without making the student aware about his/her skills just by reading. Recognizing each skill separately and distinguishing between them as well as skill awareness rising requires abstract thinking and can be very complex. Moreover such exercises can be very boring while reading for meaning can be a very exciting activity. Nuttall (2005:30) emphasises that “treating texts as if they meant something is more effective in motivating students and promoting learning”.

2.3 Testing reading skills

To test the reading skills, tests should be carefully planned and chosen. There are various tests that can be used for testing reading. Alderson (2005:212) emphasises that “the design of exercises or classroom activities does not in principle differ from the design of test items”. But he also points out the differences between teaching and testing: the test must be done without any support (only a dictionary may be used in a predetermined way); it must be limited by time restrictions; test instructions must be

simple and the tasks must be familiar to the student yet chosen from those exercises that had not been done during the learning phase. The tasks must correspond to the student's overall language level. When writing the test, all students often work under aroused stress level because they feel anxiety about their result according to which their abilities and performance would be evaluated and their work would be judged.

Tests usually have certain aims. The aim of a diagnostic test, for example, is to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. Points, gained for the test, must reflect the level of particular skill or skills and not some random factor (their attentiveness at that particular hour, for example). Nevertheless Alderson (2005:216) points out that "it is possible to glean useful diagnostic information from tests that are not fine-tuned or clearly focused". Let us consider the following fragment of a cloze test and answers of one student to it Hill (1980:21):

When people was were Helen's house and saw her table a lot of potatoes and bread, they were always laugh and said, 'Why don't you get fat when you eat such products?'

The teacher, looking at these responses, would notice insufficient ability to apply rules of grammar, including plural and singular, present and past verb forms; 'word order' in English sentence in case of 'two verbs' (including complex object). The expected answers look quite different:

When people visited Helen's house and saw her eating a lot of potatoes and bread, they were always surprised and said, 'Why don't you get fat when you eat such things? (products is also acceptable)

This test can be done in two ways: The first one, the most difficult is the traditional cloze test when the student fills the gaps without any clues about the set of words he must use. Synonyms and words belonging to the same part of speech are acceptable. The second way has a list of words the student has to choose from. If the set of words is a short anecdote (say, 160 words) and only 10 should be chosen for the filling in the gaps, the task is easier to perform. The word 'things' can be guessed only in the case of the second (easier) version of the task.

2.4 Cloze tests in testing and teaching

In the text (Hill, 1980), given below, some words seem not recognizable. The task is to give appropriate lexical meaning to the underlined words.

One naddy evening a lady and a pam girl were getting very wet, because they were walking in the country and they were not wearing duts or carrying sants. The girl did not like being wet, so she did not feel ime. Then they saw a star between two clouds. 'Do you know,' the lady said, 'that star's much bigger than our world.' The pam girl thought about that for a few oakts, and then she turned to the lady and answered, "Well, why doesn't it keep the nad off us then?"

(from *Elementary Anecdotes for Reproduction 2* by L. A. Hill)

Hedge (2000:188) emphasizes that "in recent years the term 'interactive' ...has been used to describe the second language reading process." There are two ways 'interactive' can be interpreted, she says. First, it describes a dynamic relationship with a text as the reader struggles to make sense of it; second, it refers to various kinds of knowledge that a reader employs in moving through the text.

Hedge (2000:189) points out that, when guessing the meaning of the strange words, following knowledge could be applied:

Syntactic knowledge: e.g. 'pam' lies between an article and a noun and is therefore likely to be an adjective.

Morphological knowledge: e.g. 'naddy' seems being derived from 'nad' by adding '-y'. In English suffix '-y' combines with nouns to form adjectives (Sinclair, 1991:188). Similar derivatives are 'snow'-'snowy', 'rain'-'rainy', 'fog'-'foggy', and 'sun'-'sunny'.

General world knowledge: e.g. if 'sants' are carried to prevent people from getting wet, that leads to idea of 'umbrellas'.

Sociocultural knowledge: e.g. for a Chinese 'duts' could mean 'hats' (the ones from straw that are worn to protect from rain) but for a European 'duts' will mean 'coats' or 'raincoats'.

Topic knowledge: e.g. knowledge about weather conditions may suggest that 'nad' means 'rain' and 'naddy' means 'rainy'.

Genre knowledge: e.g. the information given that the text is from a collection of anecdotes might suggest that the story must be funny and 'pam' should carry the meaning of 'small' or 'little' and not 'young', because the last sentence of this anecdote would sound cute only if the girl is little.

According to Hedge (2000:189) syntactic and morphological knowledge can be called systemic knowledge and its usage in reading process is often called bottom-up processing. Nuttall (2005:17) points out that the term bottom-up processing means that

“the reader builds up a meaning from the black marks on the page: recognizing letters and words, working out sentence structure.” Hedge (2000:189) classifies general world knowledge, sociocultural, topic and genre knowledge as schematic knowledge. Its usage can be called top-down processing. Nuttall (2005:16) regards that “in top-down processing, we draw on our own intelligence and experience – the predictions we can make, based on the schemata we have acquired – to understand the text.”

The anecdote about the lady and the small girl allowed us to imitate the reading process when some words are not known Hedge (2000:188). Certainly, the same skills could be trained if one transforms this exercise into a cloze exercise by removing the underlined words. Morphological knowledge cannot be applied to the words that are removed, however it can be used in the remaining part of the text. Syntactic knowledge is exercised even in higher degree because cloze text does not provide the reader with clues that complete text does. The active vocabulary skills are applied in cloze test while in the exercise above only receptive vocabulary is trained. The gaps in the text require the schemata knowledge to understand the meaning of the text from the remaining words. Therefore all the skills must be mobilized to solve a cloze text. The drawback of such exercises is that pressure during the mobilization of all the skills inhibits motivation to read. Applying anecdotes in such texts can compensate negative feelings and therefore funny stories transformed into cloze tests can serve as a good teaching material.

Such tasks can be eased by adding an introductory text that discusses the same theme and contains the same key words the student must guess in the cloze test. If the words do not have to be recalled from the memory but found in the introductory text, the task is much easier. Such cloze test would not exercise active vocabulary skills but rather the receptive vocabulary.

Another approach to such task would be if the teacher divides it into two phases – active and passive. During the active phase the student works with the cloze test without the help of the introductory part. After the student has inserted all words he can remember from his active vocabulary, he can use the introductory text and exercise his receptive vocabulary.

In conclusion we must emphasize, that although, according to Alderson (2005:216), cloze tests give very useful information, because they are not

“fine tuned” and any insufficiency of reading skills most likely would appear in the result of the test, the students’ mistakes must be analysed carefully: “A teacher might check responses to other items to see whether a pattern of responses emerges” Alderson (2005:216).

3 Extensive reading

3.1 Extensive reading and comprehensible input approach

Extensive reading means reading many texts just for student’s own interest. Student himself formulates his priorities and chooses his books. Nuttall (2005:127) emphasizes that “getting students to read extensively is the easiest and most effective way of improving their reading skills”. The role of teachers is only “to ensure that attractive books are available” and “to persuade students ‘get hooked on books’”.

These observation-based ideas are true. Many theoreticians agree with this formulation. They see the explanation of this education phenomenon in acquisition theory. They insist that second language acquisition is similar to the way children develop first-language competence.

Krashen (2003b [online]) regards language acquisition is the only way people learn languages:

“We acquire language when we understand what people tell us and what we read. There is no need for deliberate memorization; rather, firm knowledge of grammatical rules (a feel for correctness) and a large vocabulary gradually emerge as language acquirers get more “comprehensible input,” aural or written language that is understood.”

An English teaching site “Antimoon” explains Krashen’s acquisition model in very comprehensible way (<http://www.antimoon.com/how/input-intro.htm>):

“Most of this process is unconscious: something just appears in your head. You can say it or not, but you don’t know where it came from. This model explains how this is possible:

1. You get *input* — you read and listen to sentences in some language. If you understand these sentences, they are stored in your brain. More specifically, they are stored in the part of your brain responsible for language.
2. When you want to say or write something in that language (when you want to produce *output*), your brain can look for a sentence that you have heard or read before — a sentence that matches the meaning you want to express. Then, it imitates the sentence (produces the same

sentence or a similar one) and you say your "own" sentence in the language. This process is unconscious: the brain does it automatically.”

Vivian Cook as a practitioner applies Krashen’s model and recites it in his teaching manual <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/SLA/Krashen.htm> (see Fig. 5).

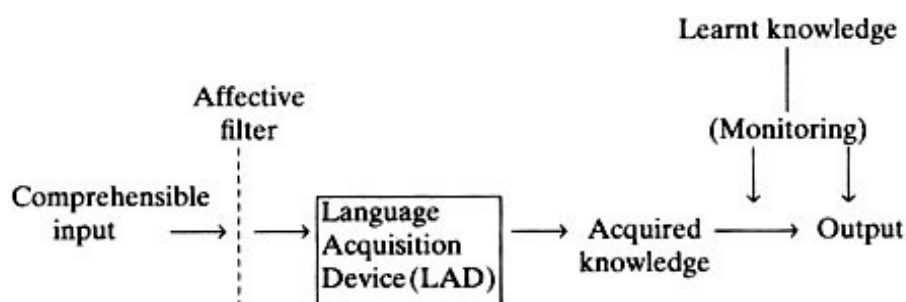


Fig. 5. *The Input Hypothesis Model of L2 learning and production (adapted from Krashen, 1982, pp. 16 and 32; and Gregg, 1984)*

Krashen (2004a [online]) puts the “Affective filter” in this model (see Fig. 5) to show how “a strong affective filter (e.g. high anxiety) will prevent input from reaching those parts of the brain that do language acquisition.”

According to this model to teach the language successfully means to provide the student with extensive input material (text or speech) and exclude situations with high level of anxiety.

The practitioners of English teaching site “Antimoon” explain (<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/SLA/Krashen.htm>) :

“The brain produces sentences based on the sentences it has seen or heard (input). So **the way to improve is to feed your brain with a lot of input** — correct and understandable sentences (written or spoken). Before you can start speaking and writing in a foreign language, your brain must get enough correct sentences in that language.”

Krashen (2003a [online]) believes free voluntary reading (and extensive reading is such an activity) “is an extremely powerful form of comprehensible input, and it is delivered in a low-anxiety environment”. By free voluntary reading Krashen (2004b [online]) means reading programs when “students can read whatever they want

to read (within reason) and there is little or no accountability in the form of book reports or grades”.

There are educators that strongly oppose such ideas. They believe any teaching without accountability cannot be taken seriously, because the students would cheat. When practising sustained silent reading (a regular reading activity taken at class) they would pretend reading by just flipping pages and looking at pictures. Krashen (2004b [online]) provides evidence proving that 90 percent of the students were engaged in reading. The methodology that seems absurd is working. The explanation on why it is so we can find in motivation theory.

Thanasoulas (2002 [online]) regards that the only criterion to measure English teaching effectiveness should be “teacher skills in motivating learners”. He also believes that one of the most important aspects that contribute to the learner’s motivation is his autonomy:

Many educationists ...argue that taking charge of one's learning, that is, becoming an autonomous learner, can prove beneficial to learning. This assumption is premised on humanistic psychology, namely that "the only kind of learning which significantly affects behaviour is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning" (Rogers, 1961: 276).

Thanasoulas (2002 [online]) refers to Good and Brophy (1994:228) pointing out “the simplest way to ensure that people value what they are doing is to maximise their free choice and autonomy”.

Linehan (2003 [online]) also refers to Brophy who states that “there are two keys that motivate learning: perception of the possibility of success and perception that the outcome will be valued”.

Marc Prensky – a professional in game-based learning – believes that fun and learning should be integrated (see Marc Prensky (2002 [online])):

“So fun and learning process creates relaxation and motivation. Relaxation enables learners to take things in more easily; motivation enables them to put forth effort without resentment. Given this, it certainly makes sense that fun and learning should go hand in hand.”

Marc Prensky (2002 [online]) also gives educators an innovative idea of how to create fun. The teachers must ask themselves a question: “What experiences can [I] give [my students] that they have not had or cannot get elsewhere?” He suggests that

one form of fun and adventure could be uncertainty. We all know that monotony, predictable outcomes and answers to problems inhibit inquisitiveness and disengage the audience. Prensky (2002 [online]) points out that Variation, uncertainty and unpredictability arouse inquisitiveness and keeps audience engaged. Prensky (2002 [online]) suggests:

“Begin the lecture by telling people that some of what they are about to hear may not be true...[in such experiments] students spend time actively trying to sort out what is true from what is not and are more engaged with greater retention.”

English teaching educators support the idea of non-threatening class environment as the main requirement for learning motivation (see Hussin (2000 [online])):

“To motivate ... the learning of English as a Second Language, an environment conducive to learning must be created. Factors that help create such an environment include ...a learning situation that has a "low affective filter" (Krashen, 1987) whereby the learners learn to use the language in a non-threatening and fun environment. Otherwise, learners will feel uncomfortable and insecure which will further induce a "psychological barrier" to communication and learning (Littlewood, 1995).”

According to Krashen (2004b) free voluntary reading program requites following conditions:

(1) A great deal of interesting, comprehensible reading material; (2) A time to read; (3) Minimum accountability.

Krashen (2004b) reports on reading programs and experiments that were quite successful although all three conditions were not optimal. He regards that free voluntary reading program is robust. Krashen (2004b) also emphasizes that students are more willing to continue free voluntary reading without perfect conditions than grammar-instruction or skill-training classes.

3.2 Monitoring extensive reading

In traditional teaching, teachers often test their students. Student’s written works, such as grammar exercises, are usually checked by the teacher, so the teacher usually decides if the topic is covered or it should be exercised more thoroughly. In case of extensive reading the books may be read at great speed and even scanned. Some students would read only a few pages of a book and discovering it too boring, return it in order to choose a more exciting one. If the teacher believes that all books are good

and things, once started, should be accomplished, she/he will find it hard to agree with such behaviour. There is a big question of what level of selectiveness the teacher should tolerate. In case of reading competition the goal of the student would be to read a maximal number of pages he/she can in certain time period, e.g. one month. Students will maximize the reading speed not caring for the quality of their reading. But students may increase their reading speed because the books are interesting. There is no way the teacher can evaluate the quality of extensive reading, because as soon as some comprehension questions are asked, we cannot call it reading for student's own interest but rather for study purpose. On the other hand, if the teacher does not show interest in students' extensive reading program, the student may see it as not related to study process. Or the student may think that the teacher does not care for his/her achievements in extensive reading.

Nuttall (2005:142) says: 'I hated having my leisure reading interfered with by teachers' questions (but I liked them to take a friendly interest – very different)'. The first thing that the teacher can do to motivate his students to read thoroughly is to love books. Teachers should not say bad words about a book even if it contains the most terrible horror stories. Nuttall (2005:138) emphasizes that "[the books that are often borrowed] are not always the ones we predict". The second thing is that the teacher should read the books that are lent to students with great interest. Nuttall (2005:229) points out that "students follow the example of people they respect". The third thing is questions that the teacher may ask is for her own interest in the book, not to control the extensive reading. Questions about unfamiliar words or number of the page the student is reading also would not seem too interfering.

3.3 Extensive reading and word attack skills

Every language user has two types of vocabularies – active vocabulary and receptive. According to Nuttall (2005:63) an active vocabulary is words the person knows well enough to use himself, and a receptive vocabulary is words the person recognizes and can respond to, but cannot confidently use. Nuttall (2005:63) points out that "receptive vocabulary becomes available to active use naturally ... by being frequently encountered in context". She also claims that "an extensive reading programme is the single most effective way of improving vocabulary" Nuttall (2005:62).

Some of words are not worth keeping even in our receptive vocabulary e.g. ‘cinchona tree’ (it was mentioned in “Rainforests” – a fact-file book of elementary level), since there are so much more valuable words that need to be learnt as soon as possible because of their high frequency. Nuttall (2005:64) call these words throwaway vocabulary. Grammar-translation method does not allow such relaxed attitude to vocabulary. According to Larsen-Freeman (2001:18) “Vocabulary... [is] emphasized” and the principle is that all words, even unimportant ones, must be translated to get the meaning, so they all should be memorized. If students can do that, they are considered successful language learners. Exercises, showing that the meaning can be obtained even from cloze texts, can persuade students to change their views.

From this we can conclude that extensive reading is such an activity that mostly should be regarded as “out-of-class activity” i.e. students would read during their leisure hours and not during the English class. On the other hand, for the less experienced readers extensive reading with their teacher (who joins the silent reading with the student) would be advisable – the teacher would encourage developing their “throwaway” vocabulary by showing that she/he can read the text without knowing every word.

4 Diagnostic test and questionnaire

4.1 Description of the participants/population

Vocabulary is one of the most important criteria according to which students can be involved in a reading programme. Nuttall (2005:63) agrees with the authors who say that a vocabulary of at least 5000 words is needed to start independent reading, but she points out that it is beyond the reach of most students. She suggests 2000 words as acceptable for “preparation for [independent reading]...using carefully chosen texts”. Nuttall (2005:63) suggests: “if even this is beyond your students, you may have to emphasize language development initially, because you cannot develop reading skills with texts that are loaded with unfamiliar words”.

As the library contains graded reader books, those written in past simple tense could be regarded as “reading books”, while others could be regarded as preparatory books. Hedge (2000:219) criticizes usage of “readers for beginners in which stories are told in the present simple or present continuous [that is] hardly a natural use of these tenses”. Students cannot join extensive reading programme before learning past forms

of irregular verbs, because every irregular verb (including “was” and “had”) can make the process of reading very difficult. According to Nuttall (2005:175) the text of extensive reading programme should not contain more than 3% of unknown words. At early beginner level all texts contain more than 3% of unknown words, because student’s vocabulary is about one hundred words. Many “Fact file” books are written in present simple tense too, because they are telling facts and they do not need to be written in past tenses, but they are full of proper nouns therefore they are too difficult for early beginner students too. So, reading an adapted version of a novel or a story on level 2 (it uses past simple tense) could be regarded as a reading, and not preparation to read. Hedge (2000:219) does not consider work with texts, written in present tenses, reading:

“It is possible to find readers for beginners in which stories are told in the present simple or present continuous, hardly a natural use of these tenses. Another criticism which has been levelled, especially at lower levels of series, is that stories read more like lists than stories, with simple sentences following one another disjointedly, for example: *‘He was very tired. He couldn’t sleep. The hotel was too noisy.’*”

Therefore students who can read stories in past simple can be regarded as ones who are able to accomplish extensive reading tasks.

At the beginning of the teaching session 18 students were chosen to be involved in questionnaire, experimental teaching lessons and closing questionnaire, as well as the final test. The population of students consisted of 4 minors and 14 adults. Children were Rolands (aged 10), Arnis (aged 11), Viktoria (aged 13) and Kristine (aged 15).

The distribution of the adult students according to their age group is shown in Figure 6. We can see that most adults were in age range between 31 and 40.

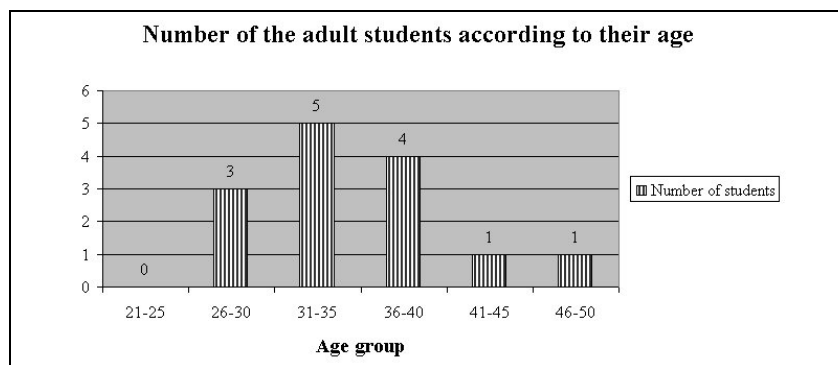


Fig.6 the distribution of the adult students according to their age

The knowledge of past forms and reading experience among the students varied from what one could call “introductory” (the readers of the easiest texts) up to the “intermediate”, but some distinctions could be noticed among students of the same level too. Some of them were very good at using their “top down processing” skills, while others were good at “bottom up processing” too. Anna (26-30, intermediate level), for example, had never studied English grammar although her receptive vocabulary was large enough to read intermediate texts. She had always improved her English knowledge by reading, but she did not know rules of English grammar, and her pronunciation (including verbal recognition of words) was low. Gundars (31-35, intermediate level) had always enjoyed studying English grammar and he knew most of the rules well. He had skills to distinguish between tenses and he had good syntactic knowledge. Therefore, one can predict, that Gundars used bottom up processing skills while Anna had to compensate insufficiency of her grammar knowledge by more intense exercising of her top down processing skills.

The distribution of the students according to their reading experience is shown in Fig. 7.

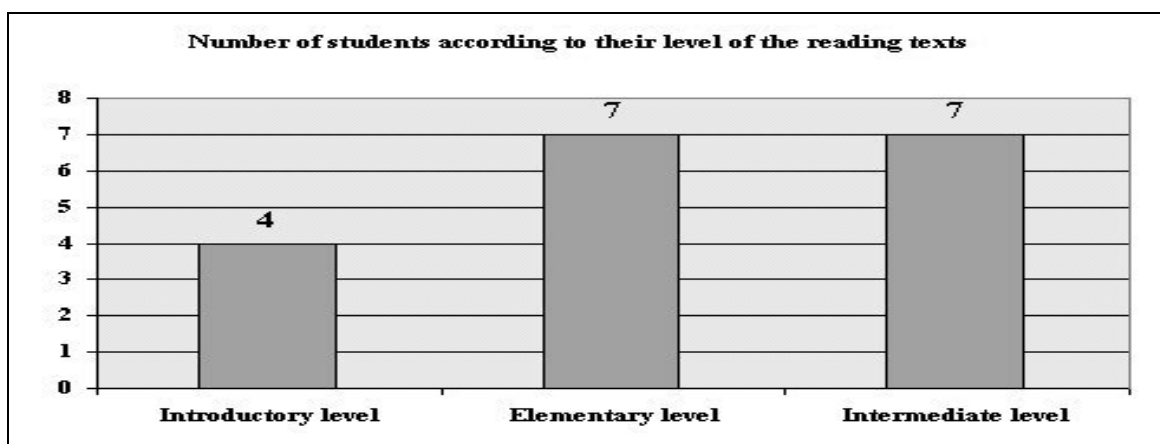


Fig. 7. The distribution of the eighteen students according to the difficulty of the texts they read

The term “introductory level” means that these students have been introduced to reading texts in past tenses several months ago and they still have to learn new past simple forms, because they know only the most frequent ones, e.g. go-went, come-came, give-gave, buy-bought etc. There was a supposition that these students would not manage to take part in reading programme fully. Some of these students had attended a

large number of English lessons with this particular teacher, but some of them had attended very few (see Fig. 8).

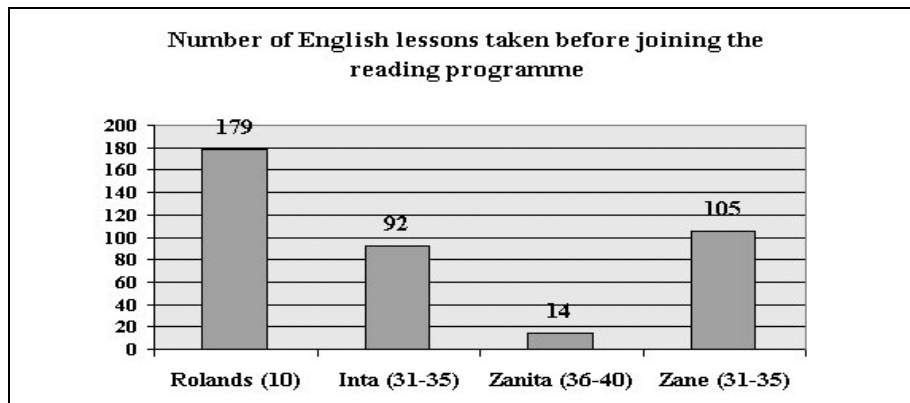


Fig. 8 The study experience of the readers on the introductory level (their age is shown in brackets)

At the beginning of the extensive reading programme, the teacher considered how a possible leave of students would influence the course of the experiment. As the students were taught individually, the withdrawal of one or several students were not considered as upsetting; therefore the four least experienced students were allowed to join the experiments.

The readers of the elementary texts were those students who had sufficient reading experience of reading graded readers on level 2. The number of their English lessons taken before the joining the experiment is depicted in Fig.9.

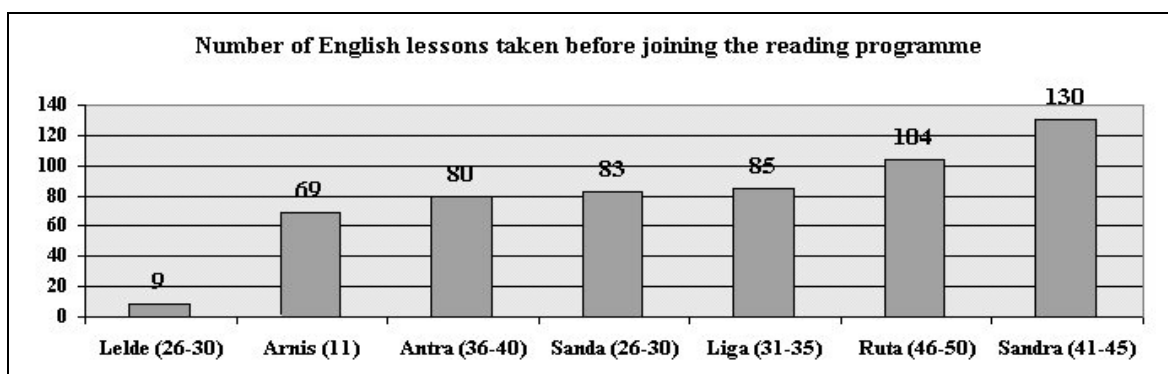


Fig. 9 The study experience of the readers on the elementary level (their age is shown in brackets)

Students who enjoyed reading books of level 3 and level 4 of graded readers were included in intermediate readers. They could read texts with present perfect or past perfect tenses and were accustomed to complex syntactic structures i.e. subordinate

clauses, reported speech and subjunctive mood etc. Most of them had attended very few lessons with this particular English teacher (see Fig. 10).

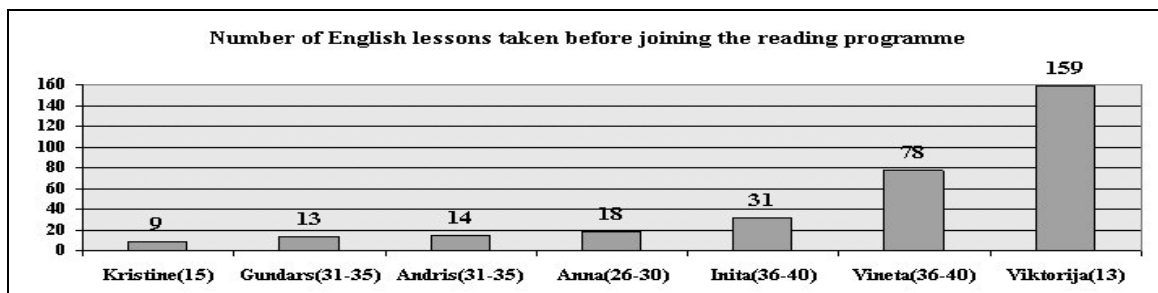


Fig.10 The study experience of the readers on the intermediate level (their age is shown in brackets)

All these students had various backgrounds of English studies. Kristine (15) had a good English teacher at her secondary school and was attending the classes at her school regularly. Viktorija had had three or four different English teachers at school – every year a different teacher and she did not feel happy about her English classes at school. Anna enjoyed reading English fiction, and she was the only one who loved reading books of level 5. All intermediate students, except Anna had good knowledge of English grammar. Inita had low frequency of English lessons – two or three English lessons every month.

4.2 Diagnostic questionnaire

Awareness of certain reading skills was measured by means of diagnostic questionnaire (see appendix 1). These skills were chosen according to Hedge (2000:189), i.e. syntactic skills, morphological skills and schematic knowledge. The questions were focused on word attacking skills:

Have you noticed that, when reading in English, you can guess the meaning of the unknown words from their place in the sentence?

Have you noticed that, when reading in English, you can guess the meaning of the unknown words from their Latin root or from their prefix, suffix or ending?

From eighteen students, only one was aware of applying syntactic knowledge and only two were aware of their morphological knowledge (see Fig. 11). That was estimated as very low level of linguistic awareness of students. The reasons of that could be absence of the knowledge itself, but it could also be poor understanding of what “morphological” and “syntactic” knowledge actually meant. The third reason

could be that there were no lessons dealing with English morphology at all, and knowledge of Latvian morphology was not applicable in the reading of English texts. Two or three lessons had been spent studying English “word order” from “Grammar in Use”, but that could be an insufficient training for knowledge awareness.

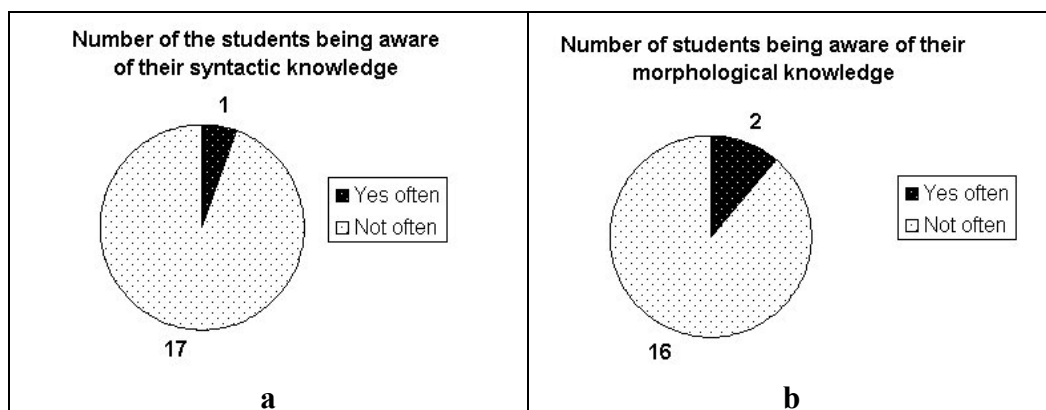


Fig. 11 Awareness of syntactic (a) and morphological (b) knowledge among students

One of the questions of the questionnaire was focused on illustrations and their applicability for guessing the meaning of unknown words:

Have you noticed that, when reading in English, you can guess the meaning of the unknown words from illustrations?

The answers to this question showed more positive answers than the answers to the questions about awareness of the linguistic skills (see Fig. 12).

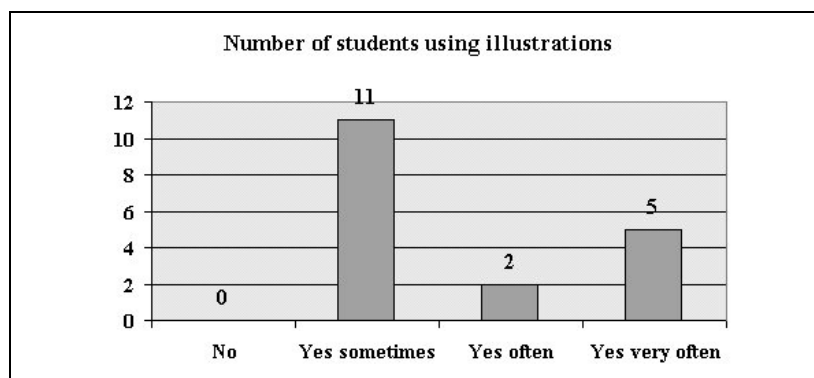


Fig. 12 Number of students being aware of using illustrations to guess unknown words when reading in English

Another similar question given in the questionnaire was:

Have you noticed that, when reading in English, you can guess the meaning of the unknown words from the context?

The answers of the students are depicted in Fig. 13.

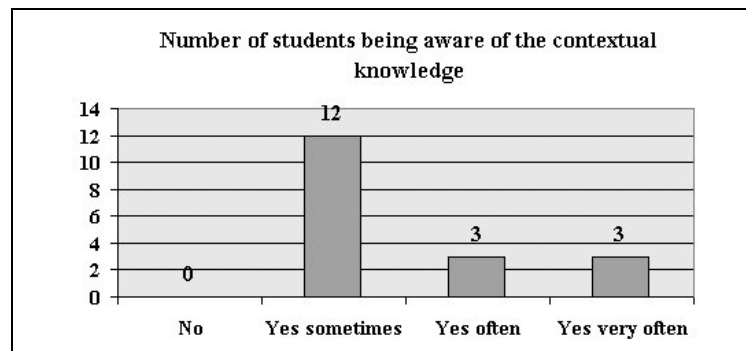


Fig. 13 Number of students being aware of using the knowledge of context to guess unknown words when reading in English

Such result can be explained by ability of students to use the schematic knowledge, which has been obtained by reading in L1, when reading in English.

Another important question was:

Have you noticed that, when reading in English, you feel desire to translate and understand every word?

The answers were expected to have correlation with the number of English lessons studied with this particular teacher. Surprisingly, such correlation was not observed (see Fig.15). Distribution of the answers given by students can be seen in Fig.14.

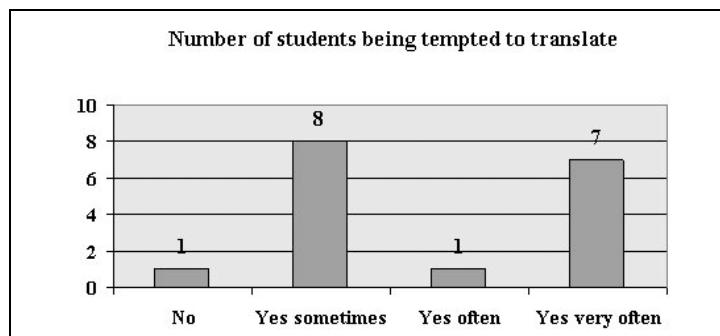


Fig. 14 Number of students being aware of temptation to translate when reading in English

Only one student of intermediate level answered that he was not tempted to translate, and he had studied with the teacher only 13 lessons that might give an idea that grammar-translation method was the reason why other students answered “yes”.

The students emphasising that they feel desire to translate “very often” are analysed by a graph in Fig. 15. One may suppose that these results would show the impact of grammar-translation method on these students. This supposition is

disapproved – the average number of lessons taught by grammar-translation method by this teacher is lower (40 – the blue line) for “passionate translators” than for the whole population altogether (70 lessons – the red line).

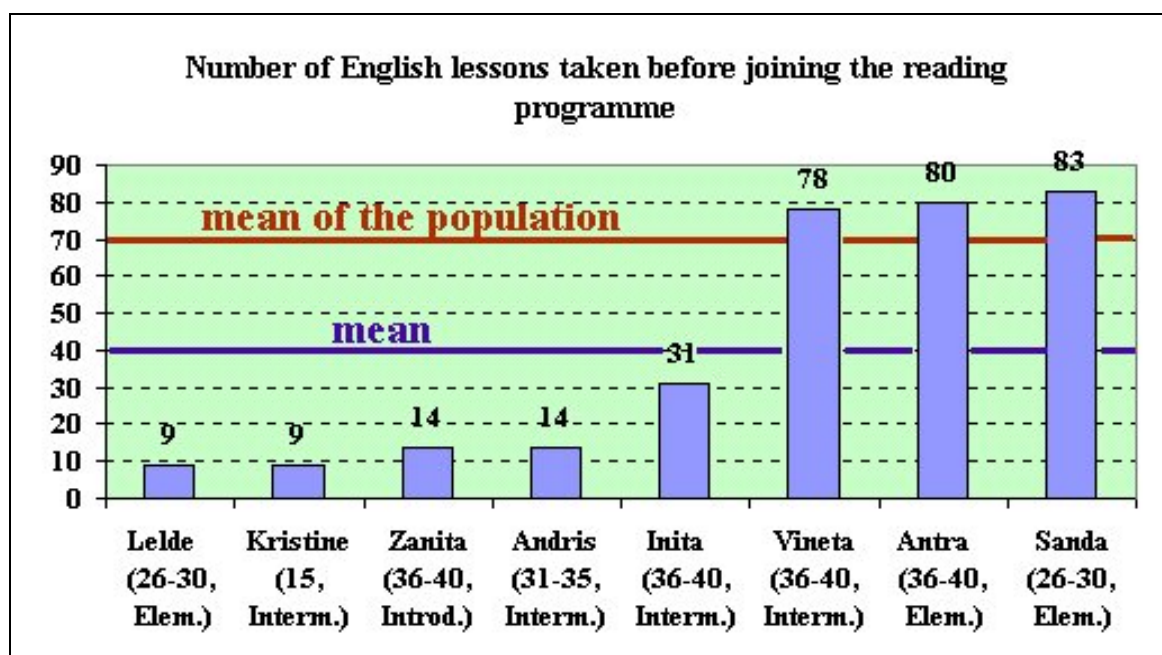


Fig 15 Number of the English lessons taken by students who often are tempted to translate (their age and level is shown in brackets). The average number of the English lessons taken by these students is 40 (the blue line), while the main of the whole population is 70 (the red line)

The conclusion is – translation is a common activity of an English lesson and it is used by many teachers to teach English. Student’s desire to explain an unknown word by means of translation is a natural solution for such a problem and does not depend on the teaching method.

Awareness of reading skills was not the only thing measured by this questionnaire. Questions 1-12 dealt with the reading habits of these students. Most answers showed that the students preferred usage of their L1 in mobile phones, in “Windows” application software programs and in the Internet. They also read newspapers, magazines and books rather in their native language than in English.

Question 20 was focused on student’s wishes. Asked about desire to raise their reading motivation, all 18 students answered positively either by saying “yes” or “partly” (Fig 16, a). On the contrary, when asked about importance of free book access (out of charge), only those under financial difficulties were positive (Fig 16, b).

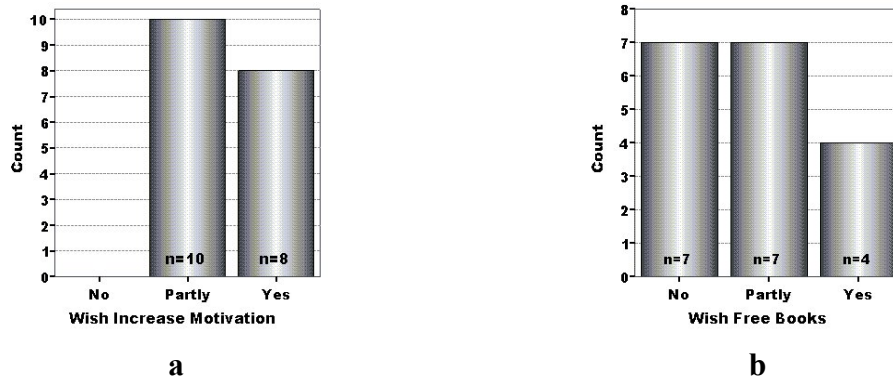


Fig 16 The charts showing the number of students giving different answers to the questions 20.5 and 20.6, included in the questionnaire (see the questionnaire blank form in the annex)

Other aspect that explains such result is that some children and adults were asked to read some books at their school, university or workplace, but they did not manage the task in time or they could not enjoy it because of their low speed. Therefore many students saw a necessity to improve their reading speed (17 of them said “yes” and one said “partly”) so that it would be the same as in their L1 (Fig. 17 chart a). One of the questions allowed showing extremely negative attitude to reading in English by answering “yes” to the following question:

“I wish I had never to read anything in English in all my life.”

Almost all the students answered to this question by clear “no” except for one who said “partly” (Fig. 17 chart b).

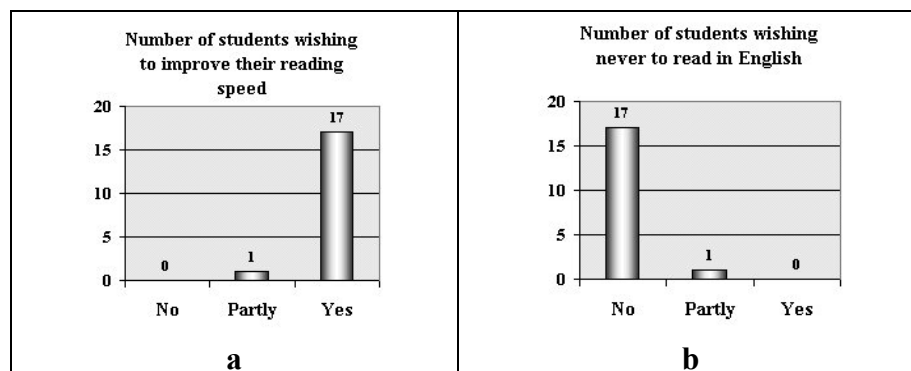


Fig. 17 Number of students giving different answers to the questions 20.1 (chart a) and 20.2 (chart b)

4.3 The diagnostic test and its evaluation

The diagnostic test at the beginning consisted of two anecdotes (about 150 words each). The first anecdote had some close text with blank spaces where words from the

anecdote had to be inserted. The second anecdote had series of pictures that had to be matched with sentences to check the comprehension. Both texts had comprehension questions that students had to answer orally using correct sentence structure. One of the texts had to be read aloud after listening to a recording, so that students' pronunciation mistakes could be diagnosed. The teacher fixed the pronunciation mistakes and commentaries about student's behaviour (e.g. usage of the dictionary) in a protocol (a paper that described the process of the test).

After testing first nine students, very good results (no mistakes at all) were observed in the task where pictures had to be matched with sentences, so the second text was excluded from the diagnostic test. Students were asked to read only one anecdote aloud (to count their pronunciation mistakes) after listening to its recording (see the anecdotes in the appendix). Then they had to answer the questions (also recorded) using correct sentence structures. Comprehension of the questions was evaluated separately. The last task of the diagnostic test was cloze test. Students had to fill the blank spaces with the words from the anecdote (see the tasks in the appendix).

All texts were new to the students, yet they were similar to those anecdotes they had read before (see appendix2, appendix3 and appendix4). The tasks were similar, too. They were allowed to use a dictionary to find out two words (either from the text or from the cloze text). All the anecdotes were chosen from the level that was appropriate for each student (see the texts in appendix). Every student who did not have any mistakes got 100% score for a task. If a student mispronounced a word it was usually counted as minus 10% to the score of pronunciation. If a proper word was not pronounced correctly or the mistake was repeated the student got minus 5% to the score of pronunciation.

Students of intermediate level were asked to listen and read aloud following story:

An old porter had been working for the railway for a very long time. He was standing in one of the big railway stations in London one morning, waiting for travellers to ask him to help them with their luggage, when he saw a small man running towards the trains, carrying a bag.

The porter watched the man for a few seconds, and then the man saw the porter. At once he ran up to him and said, 'Can I catch the 10.35 train to Newcastle-on-Tyne, porter?' He was breathing very fast, and he sounded worried.

The old porter looked at him for a moment and then said politely, 'Well, sir, I'd like to help you, but I can't answer your question, because I don't know how fast you

can run along rails. You see,' he explained, 'the 10.35 train to Newcastle-on-Tyne left five minutes ago.'

Kristine (15) read the story, and the teacher put down her pronunciation mistakes – the word “railway” was always pronounced ['raɪlweɪ], she also did not know how to pronounce the word “politely”. As an intermediate student she got only 75% for her pronunciation (every mistake of pronunciation gave –10% and a repeated mistake –5%).

Next Kristine listened to questions and answered them:

1. What was the old porter's job that morning?
2. What was the small man trying to do?
3. Why was he breathing very fast?
4. Why was he worried?
5. Was the porter serious, or was he having a joke with the small man?

As there were 5 questions, answering them all correctly gave 100% in comprehension and 100% in grammar for this particular task. A wrong answer was evaluated by 0%, so if a student could not understand one of the questions, but could answer 4 questions correctly, he would get 80 % for the comprehension. If the student could understand all questions, he received 100% for comprehension. An answer containing one small grammatical mistake could give only 10% for grammatical structure of the answer. If there were two small or one very serious mistake, the student would receive 0% for the grammatical structure of the answer.

She answered the first question correctly – she got 20% of the score for grammar and 20% for comprehension. In the second answer she missed “was” from the past continuous tense – she got only 10% of the score for grammar, but 20% for comprehension. When answering the 3rd question, she repeated the previous answer that could be regarded as correct, so she received only 10% for grammar because of the repetition of the mistake. Yet she received 20% for the comprehension of the question. In the 4th answer she omitted “was” and got only 10% for grammar; still she got 20% for comprehension. Her answer on the 5th question was “he was serious” and it was a comprehension mistake (0% for comprehension), although the grammar structure of her answer was correct (20 % for grammar). So, Kristine got 70% of maximal score for her grammar structures and 80% for comprehension on this task.

She, as well as other students of intermediate level, was asked to fill the following cloze test. Below are shown her answers and the corrections made by the teacher.

Write this story. Put one word in each empty space (do not use 'said'). You will find all the correct words in the story.

A road crossed the electric ~~train~~ railway line near a station, and ~~there~~ travellers were allowed to cross there when no trains were coming.

One day a porter who worked at the station saw a small, old woman behaving very strangely. She was running up to the railway line, stopping, going back, running forward, and stopping again. The porter watched her for a moment and then said politely, 'Can I help you, madam?'

The woman was breathing very fast, but she answered, 'Oh, thank you!' I'm afraid that the electricity may kill me if I step on these ~~rail~~ rails !' Her voice sounded really worried.

The porter smiled and explained patiently, 'Madam, unless you put one foot on a rail and another on that wire above your head, the electricity can't hurt you.'

Kristine got 10% for each correct answer and 5% for 'rail', because the word was guessed although its form was wrong. Altogether she got 75% for this task.

4.4 Peculiarities in results of the diagnostic test

One of the main peculiarities of the results was that students of introductory level got on average only 81.25% for pronunciation while the mean of the whole population was 90% (see Fig 18).

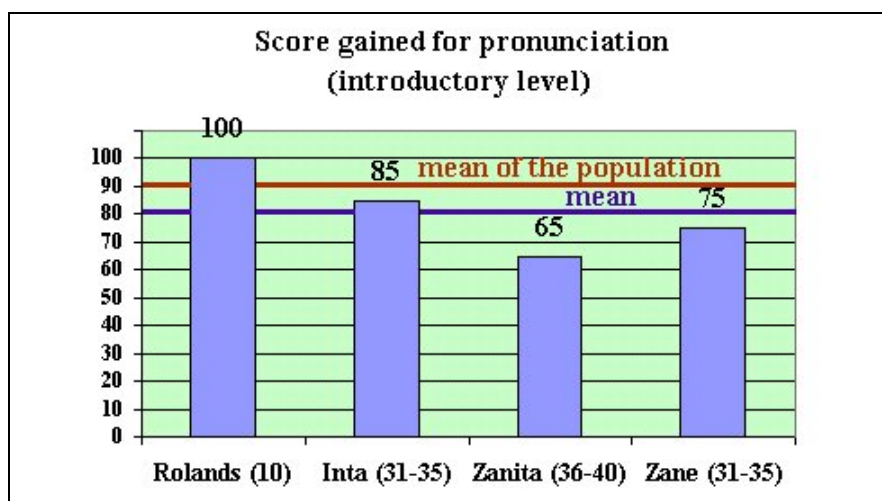


Fig 18 Score for pronunciation of the students of introductory level. (Their age is shown in brackets). The average score of these students is 81.25 % (the blue line) while the mean of the whole population is 90% (the red line)

Two intermediate students Kristine (15) and Anna (26-30) scored as low as the beginner students. They got for pronunciation 75% and 70% accordingly. It can be explained by having very few lessons with this particular teacher. Kristine had had only nine lessons and Anna had had eighteen lessons before joining the programme. They had studied in group before and had not studied with teachers individually.

Average score gained for different skills is shown in Fig. 19.

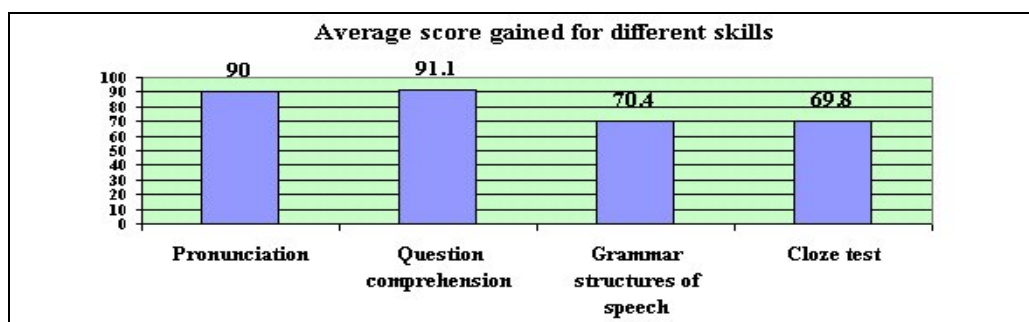


Fig. 19 Average score of the whole population, gained in different skills

The aim of the test was not to test speaking skills and the score of the “grammar structures of the speech”; it rather appeared as a parallel product in process of evaluation of students’ answers.

It is important to analyse in detail the low average score (69.8) in the cloze test. When looking on the distribution of the students according to their score (Fig. 20), we see that the result is so bad not because few students got low result but because most of them did quite poorly (if compared to the other tasks).

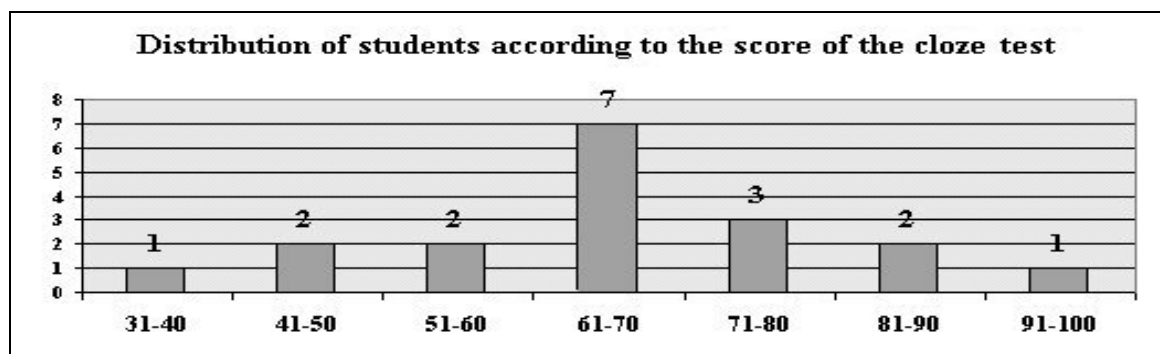


Fig 20. Distribution of the students according to the score of the cloze test

Most students got 61-70 % and that means they cannot insert three words correctly even if these words are included in the anecdote.

Some of the mistakes showed insufficiency of grammar knowledge.

The first sentence for intermediate students was the following:

A road crossed the electric railway line near a station, and travellers were allowed to cross there when no trains were coming.

Three from seven intermediate students wrote 'there' instead of 'travellers'. One student wrote 'it'. Some of the students had difficulty with plural and singular nouns. One of sentences had to be:

I'm afraid that the electricity may kill me if I step on these rails !

Three students put singular nouns after "these" (i.e. "rail", "line" and "railway"). Three students used indirect object after the word "said". The sentence had to look like this:

The porter watched her for a moment and then said politely, 'Can I help you, madam?'

Three students put "her" instead of "politely". One student put "seconds" instead of "moment". One student put "few seconds" instead of "moment", but that was against the rules of the task.

It is obvious that some theoretical and practical training can improve students' result of cloze tests. Such training would improve their word-attacking skills too.

5 Selection of the exercises of the reading awareness training program

As the grammar-translation method uses L1 as the language of the instruction and the theory had to be explained by simple sentences, the first exercises for the training program were chosen from the book "Grammar is easy" by Ann Pikver (see appendix5). The grammar rules of the word order were analysed on simple sentences:

Teikuma priekšmets	Izteicējs	Papildinātājs	Apstākļi
Steve	opened	the door	quietly.
<i>Stīvens</i>	<i>atvēra</i>	<i>durvis</i>	<i>klusī.</i>

The place in sentence of indirect object and direct object was also studied:

	Kam?	Ko?
Fred showed	me	Your letter
<i>Freds parādīja</i>	<i>man</i>	<i>tavu vēstuli</i>

In the same way were studied adverbial modifiers of place, time and frequency.

Some simple exercises were practiced orally (57A, 57B, 57C). Exercise 57A was (see all sentences of this exercise in appendix):

Ted gave the rose to me -> *Ted gave me the rose.*

Another exercise (57B) went:

We play tennis (every morning/ in the park) -> *We play tennis in the park every morning*

The next exercise (57C) was following:

I have seen him (never) -> *I have never seen him.*

The last three exercises were done in written form. In exercise 57D students had to build up sentences from separated phrases:

Doesn't have/ in the bank/ Larry/ any money -> *Larry doesn't have any money in the bank.*

Exercise 57E was similar, only sentences had to be built not from phrases but from separate words, so it was more difficult:

Easy/ he/ an/ wants/ have/ to/ life -> *He wants an easy life.*

Exercise 57F had longer sentences:

Usually/ home/ about/ husband/ at/ gets/ her/ five -> *Her husband usually gets home at about five.*

In morphology the main ideas were studied from "English Grammar" by Buks and Rusmane: the students had a short overview of most common noun-forming, adjective-forming, verb-forming and adverb-forming suffixes as well as the most popular prefixes. They also had an overview of all the parts of speech in English.

Students were given two practical tasks in morphology from "Word Formation" (see appendix6). The first task was to find out the meaning of the prefix *anti-* and this task was chosen because of the similarity of spelling and pronunciation of the prefix in English and in Latvian. The task was following:

anti- can be used with two different meanings. Write 'A' in the space provided if it means that one thing opposes another. Write 'B' if it means that one thing prevents another from happening.

1 *Following the appalling behaviour of the English football fans in Italy many people were anti-English*

.....
2 *Anti-seasickness tablets should be taken two hours before starting a journey*
.....

The students read the entry about the prefix *anti-* from the book (Word Formation: 12) before starting the work on the task.

The second task was with more common prefixes – the students had to form negatives using two lists:

A large number of prefixes are used to form words with negative meanings. Some of the most common ones are listed below.

dis- il- im- in- ir- non- un-

Now look at the words listed below. Write down their negative forms next to the appropriate prefix. The first one has been done for you.

Legal, security, agreement, logical, smoker, relevant, loyal, mature, capable ...

dis-.....

il- ...illegal.....

The students read the entries about the prefixes dis- il- im- in- ir- non- un- before working on this task.

All these exercises were given because of low awareness of such kind of knowledge (see Fig. 9). Then students got an exercise that was supposed to develop relaxed attitude towards vocabulary and unknown words and to disprove the assumption of the grammar-translation method that vocabulary and translation of each word is very important. The task from Hedge (2000: 188) was following:

Read the text and tell the meaning of the underlined words.

My Father's Watch

In our village, there were only six good clocks. The biggest clock was in the church stram where everybody could see it. My father owned one of the others. It stood in our kitchen. He wound it every night before he went to bed.

Once a year, the clockmarret came from Winchester. He came on his horse. He cleaned the clock in the church stram first. Then he cleaned ours, and he set its hands to the correct time.

My mother always gave him something to drink, and they talked together. He told her about his life in Winchester. This was our nearest town. It was very old. Some people say that English kings once lived there, in a jurrip. That was a long time ago; but parts of the jurrip still remain.

My father was a barlim and he was a busy man. When the clock had been cleaned, he always left the room. 'Women can taddle their time with stories,' he said 'but men have work to do.' And he went back to his barl.

But my father's greatest fastam was not the clock. It was a watch. It was fixed to a wol so that you could wear it on your prad.

My father kept it in a locked dimp in his desk. He only brought it out on special days. Then he fixed the wol round his prad and he wore the watch for a few hours. After that, he locked it in its dimp again.

After the task students read the explanation of all skills Hedge (2000: 188) they had used in this task.

After that students were given three cloze tests for training (see appendix7). They had to fill the blank spaces – at first, without reading the anecdote containing the necessary words. When students did not have any ideas what other words they could put, they were allowed to read the anecdote and to find the words that were needed for the cloze test.

6 Reading awareness training results

At the end of this training, the students were asked to do the progress test by reading an anecdote silently and then filling the gaps in a cloze test (see appendix8). The test was like the cloze exercise in the diagnostic test. The texts for the progress test were chosen from books that the students had not read before. Only 11 students from the 18 that were involved in the experiment at the beginning went to the final test. All introductory students except Rolands (10) found the experiment too difficult for them. Inta (31-35) remained in it after she was offered classes free of charge. Yet she was not delighted about her performance during morphological and cloze exercises.

The results of the diagnostic test and the progress test and their means are shown in Fig. 21.

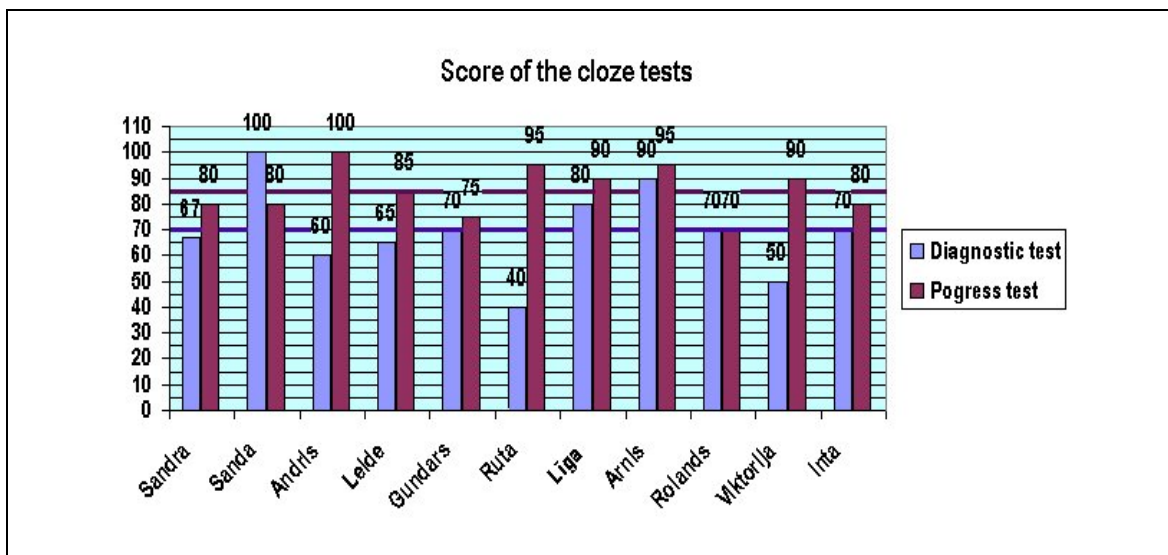


Fig. 21 Score in the diagnostic and progress tests and their means

We can see that almost all students improved their result by the training. Rolands got the same score for both diagnostic test and progress test. He is only 10 years old and cannot understand abstract and complicated rules. Yet he enjoyed “Father’s Watch” exercise very much. Ruta seems having improved tremendously. When studying morphological exercises she confessed that she had never thought of such things – she did not know that prefixes and suffixes could have meanings and that they were so many in English. Sanda had very positive attitude to the cloze tests at the beginning of the experiment, but at the end of it she felt fed up. She was asked to practice silent reading without translation and she was the one who opposed the most strongly to these changes – she said that she practiced reading aloud at home too. She also said that she always translated each sentence one by one. It is possible that silent reading as a method lowered her language knowledge and influenced her performance at the progress test.

The means show that overall score has risen for 15 points, e.g. 15% of total.

7 Closing questionnaire

The students that took full training program with all the exercises and the test were asked to answer a questionnaire about six improvements that could be expected from the training (see appendix 9). The most negative answers were given about their habit to translate – only two of them agreed that they were less tempted to translate (see Fig. 22 – improvement 2). The most positive evaluation received improvement 1 - “easier to guess unknown words” – no one gave a negative answer and from the positive answers 6 students said “yes” and 5 students said “yes a little”.

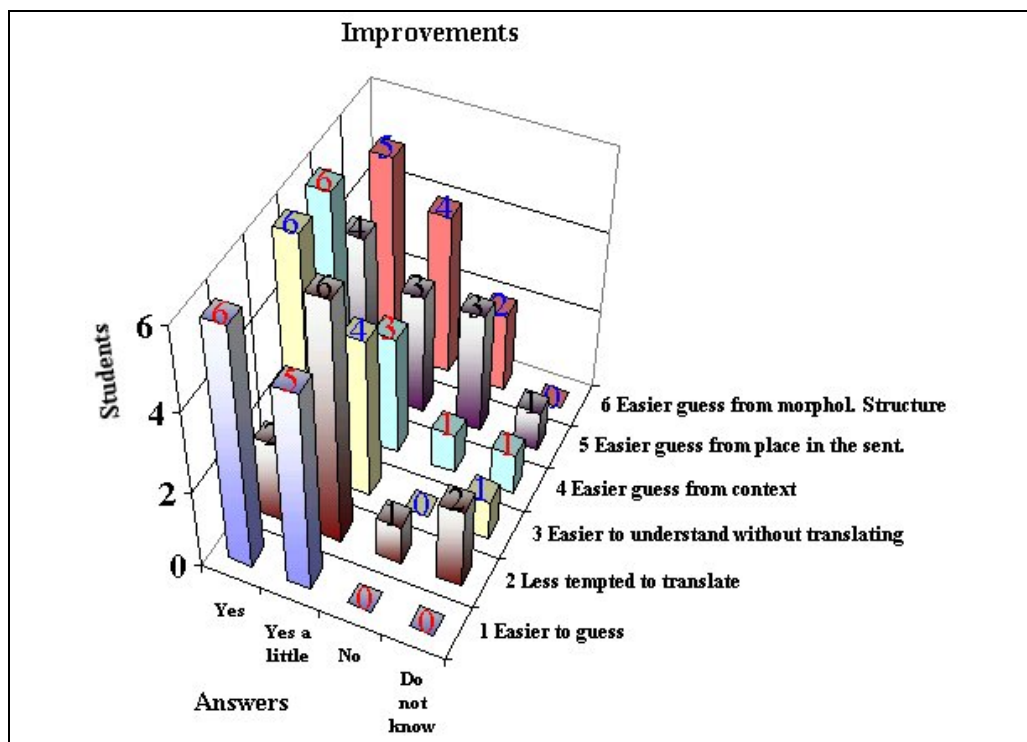


Fig 22. Six improvements of the reading process and its awareness due the exercises – opinion of the 11 students who went through all the experiment

Most students agreed that they were able to understand text without translating better than before (6 answered “yes”, 4 – “yes a little”) but one said that he did not know. Most of the students also believed that they had improved their ability to guess new words from the context (6 answered yes, 3 – yes a little). One did not think that he improved this skill and one did not know. The highest number of negative answers was given to Improvement 5 – three students did not think that they improved their skill to guess the unknown words from their place in the sentence. Only four students believed that they had improved this skill and answered “yes” (see Fig. 22). Most students believed having had improved their morphological awareness – 5 students affirmed improvement in guessing unknown words from morphological structure by saying “yes” and other 4 students by saying “yes a little”. 2 students did not feel any improvement in this skill. The conclusion is – the top-down processing skills are easier to be improved as bottom-down processing ones (such as morphological and syntactic skills).

8 Motivation developing extensive reading training

8.1 Organizing a students' bookshelf

Usually teachers believe they know what they students need to read, but students, although they accept this, rather prefer selecting the books by themselves (see Fig. 23). To clarify this question it was included in the post-experiment questionnaire, and all 11 students emphasised that they liked choosing books themselves – they all answered “yes”. When asked if the teacher knows what books they should read, they all answered “partly” except for one student who said “yes”. It was Arnis (11) who studies in the Humanitarian Gymnasium of Riga.

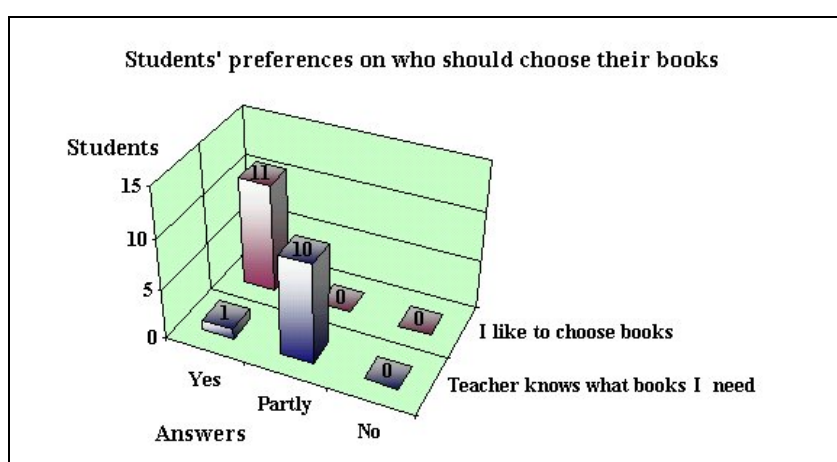


Fig 23 Student's preferences on who should choose their books – the closing questionnaire

One of the reasons why books were not put on the student's shelf earlier was that most of them were packed in audio-packs, containing the book and one or two cassettes. Such method of storing seemed good, because the cassettes were always together with appropriate books, and they were never missing or lost. On the other hand they were rather kept as a part of a large collection – they were seldom used. Audio-packs stood on the highest shelf, so that only the teacher could reach them. The packs were not handy – their opening, taking out the book and putting it back often took several minutes.

To create a good student's bookshelf, the teacher opened all the audio-packs and put their books on a separate shelf. Now they were available for students and the shelf was so low that even children could reach it (see the list of the books in appendix10).

It did not seem logical to order books alphabetically (as it is done in public libraries), because the most important quality of the book is its difficulty level. As almost all of them were from graded readers, the level of the book was marked by its publisher. Different series of books may have different difficulty standards. To avoid confusion, 1st level books published by “Express Publishing” were placed together with those of the second level, because their complexity was much higher than the one of the “Oxford Bookworms” books or “Penguin Readers” books. At the same time 2nd level books of “Macmillan Readers” were put together with the 1st level books of “Oxford Bookworms” and “Penguin Readers”. The paradigm of the two latter publishers were considered as an etalon for all other books i.e. the 1st level books have verbs in past simple, but they are rather few. The 1st level of “Macmillan Readers” are very short stories in present tenses, but the 2nd level of “Express Publishing” contain a large number of headwords and set expressions.

Another issue was what to do with books that were ordered in several copies. Should all the copies of the same book be placed on the student’s bookshelf? Nuttall (2005:131) emphasizes that books must be varied: “There must be a wide choice suiting the various needs of the readers in terms of content, language and intellectual maturity”. So it was decided that copies of the same book would be kept on the teacher’s shelf except for one that will be on the students’ bookshelf.

The title list of the books that were included in the students’ shelf is given in the appendix.

8.2 Extensive reading competition

After the students’ shelf was established, an extensive reading competition was organised. Students were told that they could borrow the books they liked, read them, and the amount of the pages they would have read would be considered as their achievement. The student, who reads the most pages, would receive the first prize – a pen with a small electric light bulb inside it. Children were most eager to win this competition, and their interest to reading increased strongly.

Adult students also agreed to participate in the competition, but they did not feel enthusiastic. Nevertheless, adult students were very positive about the students’ shelf and the opportunity to choose books.

Altogether, 16 students volunteered for the competition. The average number of pages, read per day, increased from 2.1 pages to 3.9 pages per day (see Fig 24). The boost was particularly high for children.

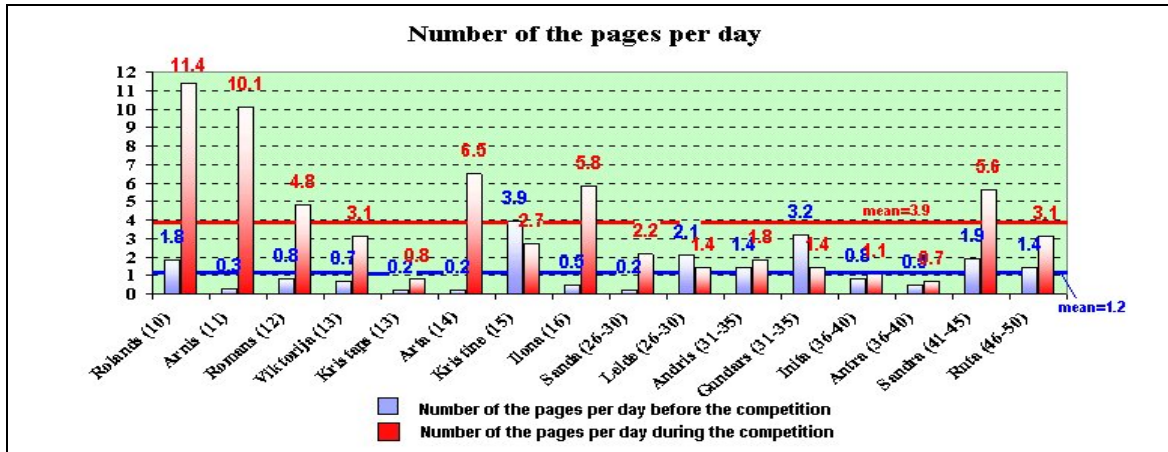


Fig 24 Number of the pages per day, read by the students– before the extensive reading competition and during it – and the mean values

The teacher did not use any monitoring to control the comprehension of the text, because extensive reading had to be independent, silent reading. The teacher supported her students by asking if they had finished this or that book, if not – on which page they were; if they had any unknown words and if they found the book interesting. If the student did not like the book, the teacher suggested returning it and taking a more interesting one. The pages of an unfinished book would be counted too. The teacher did not control students’ reading style – even if it seemed too careless, because the point was – a person cannot help reading a story attentively if it is interesting. And the students were not forced to read boring stories – there were plenty of books to choose from (see the list of the books in the appendix).

The extensive reading competition started on December 10 and ended on January 29 – it lasted for 50 days. The teacher gathered all the information about students’ results within one day by phoning the students and asking if they had finished all the books they had borrowed.

To evaluate the results, the students were divided into two subgroups – children and teenagers were the first group and adults were the second one. The winners certificates were printed on a coloured paper – on golden paper were printed certificates

for those who were the first in their group, on silver paper were printed certificates for those who were the second in they group and on bronze paper were printed certificates for those who were the third in their group. The Children group had two first place winners as both Rolands (10) and Arinis (11) showed very good results. The list of the winners and the number of the pages they had read was following:

<i>1st place</i>	<i>Rolands (10)</i>	<i>552 pages (level 2 and level 3 texts)</i>
<i>1st place</i>	<i>Arnis (11)</i>	<i>505 pages (level 2 and level 3 texts)</i>
<i>2nd place</i>	<i>Arta (14)</i>	<i>292 pages (level 2 and level 3 texts)</i>
<i>3rd place</i>	<i>Romans (12)</i>	<i>242 pages (level 2 texts)</i>

Adults showed following results:

<i>1st place</i>	<i>Sandra (41-45)</i>	<i>252 pages (level 2 and level 3 texts)</i>
<i>2nd place</i>	<i>Ruta (46-50)</i>	<i>138 pages (level 2 and level 3 texts)</i>
<i>3rd place</i>	<i>Lelde (26-30)</i>	<i>64 pages (level 2 texts)</i>

All four children got one pen with a small electric light bulb each. They received Christmas presents with sweets too – because the competition had taken place during their Christmas holiday.

The adults received only Christmas packets as awards.

The reading habits of those, involved in the extensive reading competition were observed. Some of the students wished to turn back to reading and translation method – Ruta (46-50) believed that she did not understand or misinterpreted too many words. The teacher suggested her to borrow easier and shorter books, and then she could read at home independently. Sanda (26-30) felt also fed up with all the experiments, and she wanted to turn back to translating texts word-by-word. She believed that she could not achieve any progress without reading aloud and translating.

Other students were more optimistic. Sandra (41-45) discovered silent reading as more suitable for her as reading aloud. She started writing down unknown words on separate word-lists and stopped writing the translation of the words in books – probably, to promote her word-attacking skills (when rereading the text she would have to guess). She also started reading faster – she read 8 pages per day averagely (see Fig. 25). Rolands (10), Arnis (11), Kristaps (13) and Inita (36-40) also improved their reading speed. Silent reading had become their habit and they did not feel any need to translate the text word-by-word as they used to neither they felt any need to read aloud.

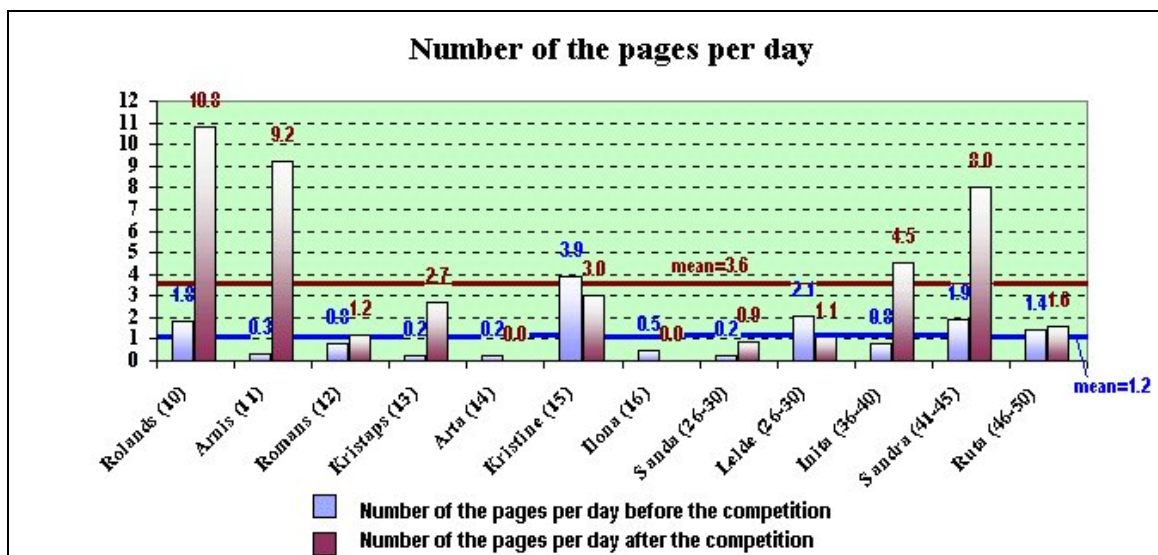


Fig. 25 Number of the pages per day, read by the students– before the extensive reading competition and after it – and the mean values

The data in Fig 25 were collected about the students that continued taking English classes. Viktoria, Andris Gundars and Antra could not continue attending classes for private reasons.

Looking at the chart in Fig. 24 we can draw a conclusion that extensive reading competition can boost student’s interest in reading significantly only if he/she has a personal inner motive or a serious purpose that is related to reading in English. Children at early teenage years form their personality and in some cases it includes enormous eagerness to read. To become independent teenagers want to acquire certain world knowledge so that they do not have to ask for an advice their parents or teachers. They also want to be a part of the world adult people share, and it includes literature. Other children and adults simply enjoy reading and it is a part of their lives. Some students have urgent jobs in this particular season, and they cannot enjoy their reading fully. To learn students’ opinions on the competition, they were asked to fill a questionnaire (see the appendix).

Asked if they would take part in a similar competition next year, all of them answered “yes” except for two students who answered “I do not know”. Asked if the reading competition was exciting, all of them answered “yes” except two students who said “Probably”. Asked what they gained from the reading competition, most of them mentioned learning about knew characters of literature (9 answered “yes”), learning

new words (9 answered “yes”), enhancing their knowledge (7 answered “yes”) and 5 students learnt to read quickly and quietly.

The main conclusion both from students’ answers and their reading results is that such competition could be organized every year to promote pupils’ reading skills and to boost their motivation to read.

8.3 A longitudinal observation of the effects – case studies

The extensive reading has remained as autonomy arousing activity since the described experiment. Sixteen months after finishing this training program the following improvements have been observed:

The first place winner, Rolands, usually reads two books a week. He reads anything he is interested in, and the level of the books he borrows varies from level 2 to level 6. He reads more than he read during the extensive reading competition, because his linguistic knowledge has increased immensely. He has had very little grammar instruction because he still writes very slowly. He has not learnt to write with his right hand and neither has he received any instructions from his teachers on how to improve his writing speed when writing with his left hand. The grammar instruction and exercises he practised lately were mainly focused on present simple tense and its forms (affirmative, negative, questions). Nevertheless, he produced past continuous constructions in his speech when telling stories and he could do grammar exercises dealing with gerunds/infinitive. He has never learnt these grammar topics in grammar instruction and the conclusion is that he has acquired them by extensive reading. The extensive reading competition, possibly, was not the main reason of his interest in reading. He liked reading before the extensive reading program. He asked his teacher for a book to read, but the teacher postponed the reading activities until finishing the English course book which was drill-oriented. Later he had to practice grammar-translation method that lowered the reading speed and did not allow him to experience fun. The conclusion is – choosing a new role and new approach to teaching-learning process can produce unexpectedly different results from those we are accustomed to accept as unchangeable studying output.

The winner Arnis also continues participating in extensive reading activities, only his interest in reading is not so marked as Roland’s. Arnis borrows one book per two weeks. He has a good linguistic knowledge, but he believes it comes from playing

English-teaching computer games. As other students, he is never told how many books he should borrow and how soon they should be returned. The teacher supports his reading by asking casual questions about the books he chooses for reading. Only if the book he has borrowed has not been returned longer than six weeks, the teacher inquires if he preferred returning the book without reading it and borrowing a more interesting one.

The winner Sandra also participates in extensive reading activities. She has become an independent reader. At the beginning of the extensive reading program she did not feel that she could read independently – she proffered practicing silent reading during her English class so that she could ask for translation of some unknown words or explanation of some grammar constructions. Sandra improved during the extensive reading program and gained confidence. She actively thought of how to improve her work with vocabulary and she developed a new approach (writing the unknown words in a note-book, using her dictionary) that was not dependant on the teacher's prompts and explanations. She also felt that she could rather rely of her own ideas than the teacher's suggestions. The amount of the books she reads is slightly lager than that before the extensive reading competition. Nevertheless, she has moved upwards from reading mainly Level 2 (plus a few books of level 3) to reading mainly level 3 (plus a few books of level 4). Her linguistic knowledge has not improved significantly – mainly, because she does not use English outside of class.

9 Repetition of the experiments with the university students

All the exercises, questionnaires and tests were performed with 26 university students of Riga Technical University. The teacher started working for the university few weeks before starting the experiment and the two groups of the first year students of the computer department were not satisfied with frequent changes of teachers. The students were convinced that they were going to receive grammar instruction lessons and that the grammar topics would be the same they have already studied.

At the beginning of the semester, before starting the experiment some revising of irregular forms had to be done, as the students did not know them very well. After that 7 weeks were spent on the extensive reading competition. The level of the English knowledge differed, and that can be seen in the distribution of the diagnostic close

test (see Fig 26). The points differed even though the students were divided into two categories – half of them were marked as pre-intermediate students and other half were intermediate. The teacher did not know the students well, so this division could be not very precise. Students were motivated mostly extrinsically – they were interested in grades and punishments, not in the learning.

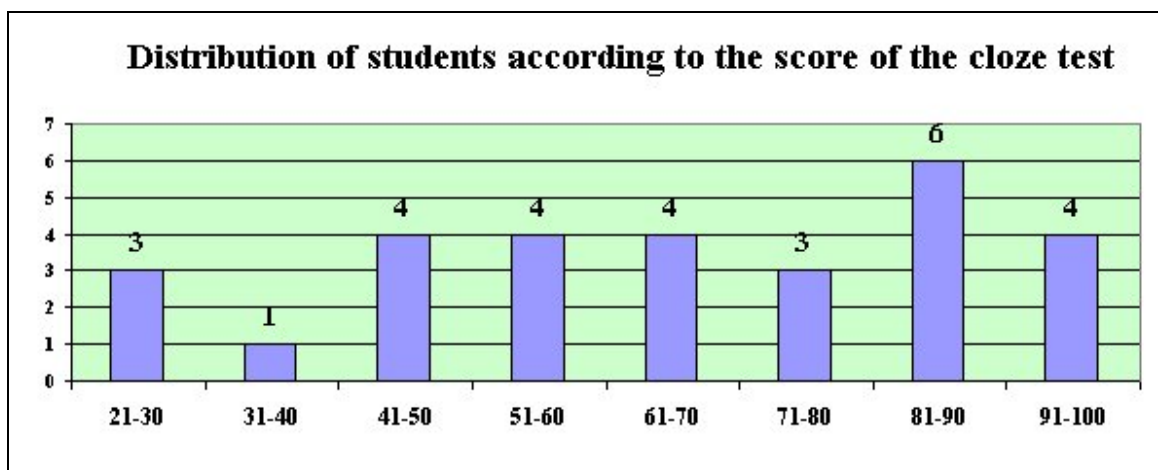


Fig 26 The distribution of the students according to the score of the cloze test

As the extensive reading program was a part of the studying at university and the university gives “tested” to students that have accomplished all the exercises and home work, there was a required reading minimum that had to be read – one book per week. The teacher carried books from the home library to the university, providing about 60 new books each time. The students borrowed from one up to six or seven books each lesson. Other students gave some books back, and they were available for borrowing. Some of the students chose not to participate in the extensive reading program. They commented on themselves “I am not participating”. The teacher did not object to their attitude. The students were used to studying for grades, so after reading a book each student was supposed to give a short summary/opinion on what he had read. The students’ answers could be in Latvian, Russian or English – there were no restrictions, and all of the students chose their native language for discussions. The audience took part by listening and commenting, asking questions. The extensive reading project was called a “competition” – to emphasize that it is going to last for a certain period and it has a certain purpose – to read more pages. The teacher informed the students that the

first three places would receive certificates and some prizes. The results – the number of pages read was not displayed, so the competition looked like a game of cards – many students pretended not borrow books, but they came back later when their peers were not watching them – and then they borrowed several. The students also were trying to find out what would be the prizes, but the teacher refused to tell them. The uncertainty made the project more attractive and even the passive students were interested in the outcome of the competition.

The first group of the students had a very unequal distribution of the amount of average pages read per day (see Fig 27).

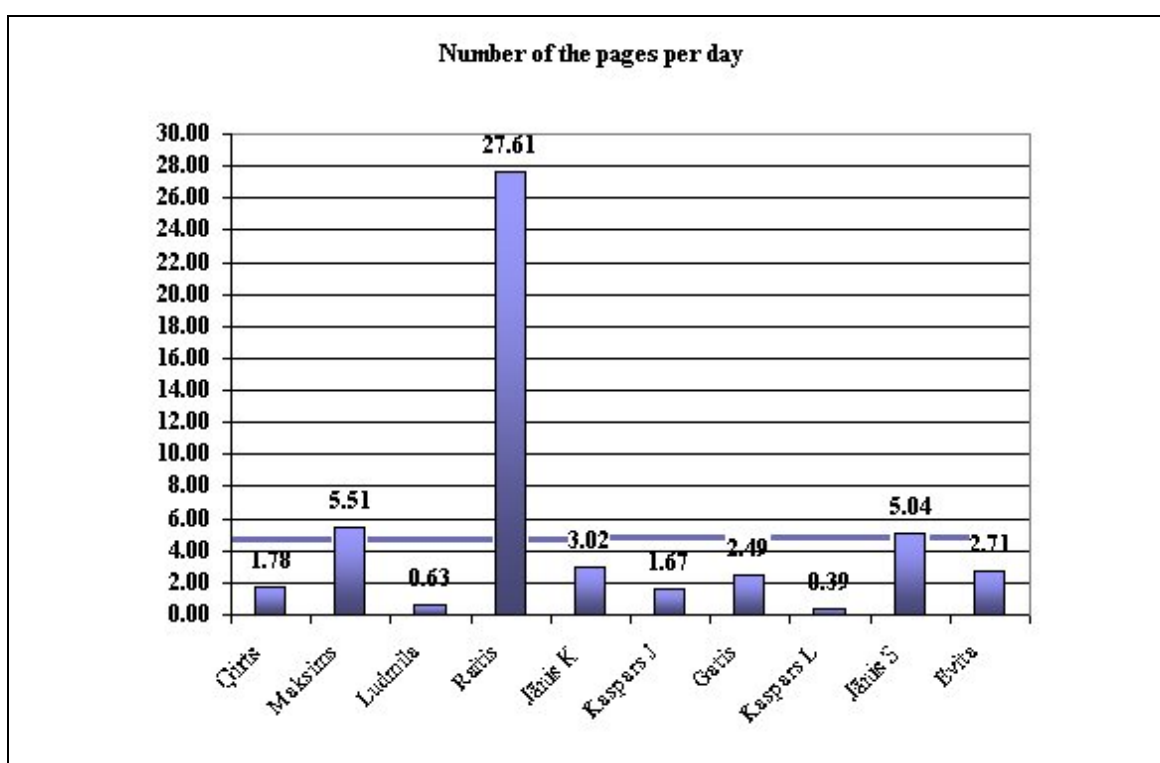


Fig 27 The number of the pages read per day – students of the first group (the line shows the mean 4.6 pages per day)

The leader of the competition was also very active in all the exercises before the extensive reading program – he liked being popular with other people. He discussed the books with humour, telling jokes and trying to get everyone’s attention. He also tried to be funny and make everyone smile.

Theory says that competitions with one marked leader are not successful as other participants feel unmotivated by the high performance of the leader. Nevertheless, the rest of the students still continued borrowing large amounts of books each class. Unfortunately, some of them did not have time to read them. Time is one of the three important aspects in the extensive reading program. With shortage of time the extensive reading program cannot meet all three criteria (see Krashen (2004b [online])).

The number of the pages read per day for the second group was quite even (see Fig 28).

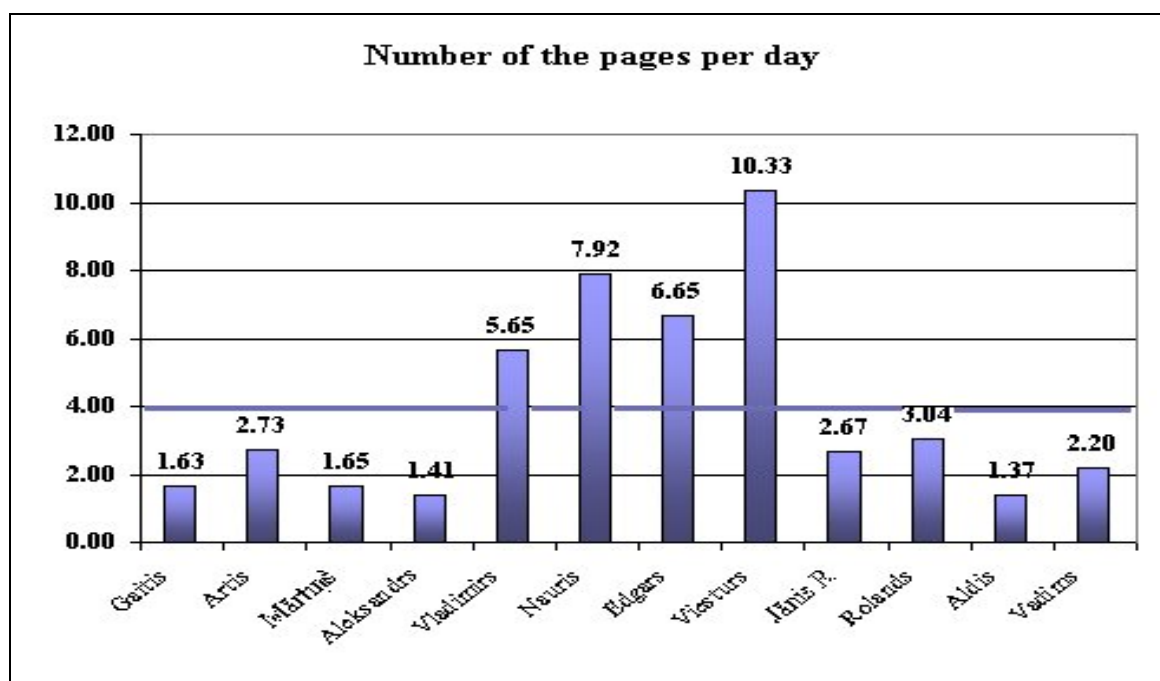


Fig 28 The number of the pages read per day – students of the second group (the line shows the mean 3.9 pages per day)

The atmosphere of the extensive reading competition was quite intriguing. The students of both groups experienced surprise – the unusualness of the project, the novelty of the approach was enjoyable. The students liked observing books and they knew what type of books they preferred. One lesson was more focussed on fact files, and one student who loved fiction literature refused such type of books. He borrowed some of those that other students had given back from the other group.

The training of the close tests and grammar exercises gave small improvements in the students' performance. This can be explained by very little time that the teacher

could devote to each student. The time amount when teaching private students individually was 7 to 14 hours per person. The time amount when teaching in group was only 20 minutes per person. Students were reporting on books individually, regardless the group teaching method. In addition, the private students did not have to give any reports on the books, because their studying was a voluntary, free of grades activity. Therefore the insufficiency of time has influenced the results of the teaching (see Fig 29).

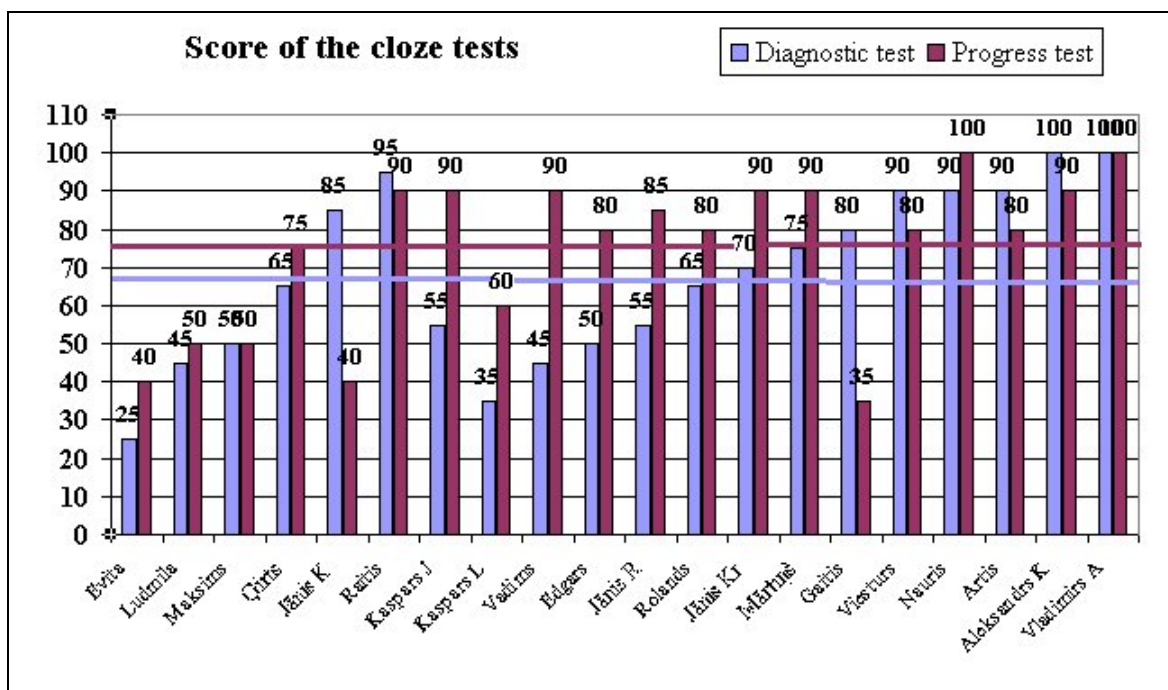


Fig 29 The score of the cloze tests – diagnostic test and progress test – and the means (68.3 in the diagnostic test and 74.8 in the progress test) of the results

The results show severe differences between the poorest result and the best result. Some drastic jumps can be observed even within performance of one person. Such jumps can arouse suspicion that some students could have been receiving support from their peers.

The observation of the most frequently borrowed topics was performed during the extensive reading program. The results can be seen in Table 1. Most students prefer adventure stories or detective stories (see table 1). At the same time politics and history are of those topics that are borrowed very seldom. We must take into account that there are very few books on history and politics anyway – the graded readers avoid such

topics because of the low interest of the readers. Some very interesting differences can be absorbed if the students are asked about their reading preferences. They usually deny their interest in detective stories, and the research in Japan affirms that (see Powell (2005 [online])).

List of subjects by % of books, borrowed

Table 1

Rank	This topic makes % of all books, borrowed	Subject
1	26.5	Adventure
2	22.3	Crime and mystery
3	22.3	Relationship
4	18.1	Friendship
5	12	Fantasy and horror
6	11.4	Classics
7	10.8	Romance (Love)
8	10.8	Achievement
9	9.6	History
10	9.6	Film script
11	9.6	Culture
12	9	Mystery
13	9	Travel
14	8.4	Family life
15	7.8	Teenager prob.
16	6.6	Biography
17	3.6	Science Fiction
18	3.6	Sport
19	3.6	Nature
20	3	Animals
21	2.4	Science
22	2.4	Myths, legends
23	1.8	Politics
24	1.8	Business
25	1.8	Humour
26	1.2	Thriller
27	1.2	Discovery and invention
28	0.6	Historical fiction

The people of Latvia neglect being interested in crime, too. When asked what they believed about their priorities, the students gave answers that did not coincide with their real preferences (see Table 2).

List of subjects by ‘popularity’ rate

Table 2

Rank	‘Popularity’ rate	Subject
1	2.54	Humour
2	2.04	Adventure
3	1.83	Travel
4	1.79	Relationship
5	1.75	Animals
6	1.63	Friendship
7	1.63	Achievement, success
8	1.54	Family life
9	1.42	Romance (Love)
10	1.42	Discovery, invention
11	1.4	Classics
12	1.29	Culture
13	1.25	History
14	1.25	Biography
15	1.21	Historical fiction
16	1.21	Nature
17	1.17	Crime and mystery
18	1.17	Sport
19	1.17	Science
20	1.13	Business
21	1.08	Thriller
22	1.04	Film script
23	1.04	Myths, legends
24	1	Fantasy and horror
25	0.96	Teenager prob.
26	0.88	Science Fiction
27	0.83	Mystery
28	0.38	Politics

We can see that *animals* is the fifth most ‘popular’ topic (see Table 2) yet it is only the 20th most frequently borrowed topic (see Table 1). At the same time, *crime* is only in the 17th place according to ‘popularity’, but it is in the 2nd place according of the frequency of borrowing.

It is possible, that *animals* as a ‘good’ topic and *crime* as a ‘bad’ topic must have influenced the questionnaire answers, and/or that the readers are not aware of their real motives of choosing a book. One might say that the action of choosing a book is emotional and irrational rather than based on logical thinking and decision-making. Seeing how important, complicated and individual are the preferences of the students,

the conclusion is that the teacher, no matter how wise and sensitive he/she could be, should not choose books for the student's reading activities.

The data obtained from the questionnaires with university students and private students were not significantly different. As questionnaires provide only limited number or answers, a brain-storm discussion was held after finishing the extensive reading program. Asked if the students wanted to study by grammar instruction and skills developing method next semester, they all answered that extensive reading program was more enjoyable. They believed they had been studying too long using traditional methods, and the results of the learning were not satisfying. They also believed devoting too little time to English studies, and they believed the insufficiency of time was a serious problem for them. The reason for such situation was the high studying standards at university in comparison with those at the secondary school.

Conclusions

This research gave a very positive impact on the study process that used one and the same teaching approach for years. The grammar-translation approach, based on reading aloud and translation slowed the teaching process immensely. It also gave an assumption that the text can be understood only by means of translation. All grammar rules and exercises were always translated even when it was not the task.

The experiment totally changed the whole teaching mode.

By reading "My Fathers Watch" the students understood that the meaning of the words could be derived from the surrounding text. They developed more relaxed attitude to their vocabulary after this discovery. To some of the students, the morphological exercises gave a discovery-like experience too. Some of the students who preferred reading books of one certain level started borrowing books of the next level. About 50 percent of the individual students felt clear improvement of their word attacking skills (see Fig. 22) and 25 percent of students felt some improvement. Their views were proved by the results of the progress test that showed 15 percent improvement in word guessing on average (see Fig.21). The results changed from 69.3 percent of correctly guessed words to 85.5 percent. When asked to read silently, some

students forgot the new mode repeatedly but after several weeks they got used to it. The students' shelf and extensive reading competition changed reading habits of several students completely. For other students that did not happen because such changes can take place only in proper time – the student must be on appropriate language level (with sufficient vocabulary) and he must not be mobilizing his energy to some outer time-consuming projects. Most of the students demonstrated their ability to maintain their own reading motivation when given access to easy contemporary literature. The skill of maintaining reading motivation was measured with the average amount of pages read per day. When the free access to easy contemporary literature was not provided and when the reading process was controlled by the teacher, the average amount of pages read per day was significantly lower (see Fig. 24) – only 0.8 pages per day compared to 3.9 pages during the competition. The competition and the awards cannot be regarded as the main motivator, as the high amount of pages read per day remained (3.6 pages per day) after the deadline of the competition, when rewards were not given (see Fig 25). The longitudinal observation (one year and four months) of three individual students showed the extensive reading as reading motivation-developing activity when no extrinsic motivators (grades, prizes, certificates) were provided by the teacher. According to Nuttall (2005:2) the activity of revealing the meaning is the closest to the definition of reading. Reading cannot be regarded as a simple decoding process if the students are adults and quite experienced readers in their native language. Therefore the maintenance of the reading motivation should be counted as one of the most important reading skills (see McShane (2005 [online])).

The reading awareness exercises gave insignificant improvement of their word attacking skills of university students. The amount of correctly guessed words rose from 68.3 percent to 74.8 percent after the training (See Fig. 29). It could be explained by the amount of time the teacher can devote to each student – only 20 minutes per 7 weeks. At the same time the individual students received from 7 to 14 hours of teacher's attention within 7 weeks. Nevertheless the university students demonstrated skill to maintain their reading motivation when they were given a free access to easy contemporary literature, because the average amount of the pages read per day was approximately the same as that of the individual students (4.62 pages for the first group and 3.94 for the second group).

The analysis of the most borrowed topics proved that the books offered to the students should be enjoyable, easy and full of adventures. The ranking shows that adventure stories are the most often borrowed books (26.5 percent of all the books borrowed contain some adventures – see table 1). It also shows that crime and detective stories are the second most borrowed genre (22.3 percent of all the books borrowed contain crime). The questionnaires, in contrary, show that students neglect their interest in detective stories or are not aware of it (see Powell (2005 [online]) and Table 2). Therefore it is clear that such questionnaires would not provide with reliable information although theoreticians (Hedge (1991:41)) suggest it.

The materials and the approach developed in this research can be applied to train students to maintain their reading motivation and improve their word attacking skills.

Theses

1. Reading aloud cannot be considered reading, because it is a completely different process than silent reading and it is used only in classroom.
2. Slow reading is the cause of dislike to reading and the cause of reading rarely.
3. Reading can be seen as the interaction of top-down and bottom-up processing.
4. Extensive reading is the easiest and most effective way of improving students' reading skills, because it increases the reading speed.
5. Extensive reading trains the maintenance of reading motivation that is one of the most important reading skills of an independent reader
6. Learning about top-down and bottom-up processing improves students' awareness about reading processes and word attacking strategies. It also helps students to understand the text they read without translation and improves their word guessing skills.
7. Awareness of reading as a bottom-up and top-down processing eliminates the fear of "imperfect reading" and encourages the students to read independently from the teacher – e.g. at home, silently etc. But tendency to choose more difficult texts (one level up) is not observed with all students, but only with some.
8. The exercises give 15% improvement of the performance in the chosen aspect of reading.
9. When reading in a foreign language, the top-down processing skills are easier to be improved as bottom-down processing ones (such as morphological and syntactic skills).
10. Student's desire to explain an unknown word by means of translation is a natural solution for such a problem and does not depend on the teaching method.
11. Students prefer choosing books themselves although they respect their teacher's opinion.
12. Extensive reading competition and students' bookshelf enlarges the number of the pages the student reads per day 3 times, averagely.
13. Extensive reading competition can boost student's interest in reading significantly only if he/she has a personal inner motive or a serious purpose that

is related to reading in English. The number of the pages the student reads per day usually increases but the proportion of that cannot be predicted.

14. Extensive reading competition can promote pupils' reading skills and boosts their motivation to read. The extensive reading should last for several months to produce a significant improvement.

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Appendix 1 – Diagnostic questionnaire

1. Kādu valodu jūs esiet izvēlēties iestādīt savam mobilajam telefonam:

1. Angļu valodu
2. Citu valodu
3. Man nav mobilā telefona

2. Kādā valodā jūs parasti lietojiet Windows programmas:

1. Vienmēr angļu valodā
2. Dažreiz angļu valodā, dažreiz citā valodā
3. Vienmēr citā valodā
4. Nelietoju Windows programmas

3. Kādā valodā jūs saņemat e-pastu savā datorā:

1. Vienmēr angļu valodā
2. Dažreiz angļu valodā, dažreiz citā valodā
3. Vienmēr citā valodā
4. Nelietoju e-pastu

4. Kādā valodā jūs parasti lietojiet internetu:

1. Vienmēr angļu valodā
2. Dažreiz angļu valodā, dažreiz citā valodā
3. Vienmēr citā valodā
4. Nelietoju internetu

5. Kādā valodā jūs lasiet darba piedāvājumu sludinājumus:

1. Vienmēr angļu valodā
2. Dažreiz angļu valodā, dažreiz citā valodā
3. Vienmēr citā valodā
4. Nelasu sludinājumus

6. Kādā valodā jūs parasti lasāt avīzes un žurnālus:

1. Vienmēr angļu valodā
2. Dažreiz angļu valodā, dažreiz citā valodā
3. Citā valodā
4. Nelasu avīzes un žurnālus

7. Kādā valodā jūs parasti lasāt daiļliteratūru:

1. Vienmēr angļu valodā
2. Dažreiz angļu valodā, dažreiz citā valodā
3. Citā valodā
4. Nelasu daiļliteratūru

8. Cik stundas nedēļā jūs lasāt daiļliteratūru: _____

No tām angļu valodā: _____

9. Cik stundas nedēļā jūs lasāt cita veida literatūru (mācību grāmatas, populārzinātniskus rakstus, pavārgrāmatas, instrukcijas, tehnisko literatūru, žurnālus un avīzes):

No tām angļu valodā: _____

10. Kopumā, nedēļā es izlasu sekojošu lapaspusšu skaitu angļu valodā: _____

11. Lasīšana ir :

mans vaļasprieks tad, ja man ir brīvs laiks.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
nepieciešamība izglītības iegūšanai vai kvalifikācijas celšanai.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
nepieciešamība, lai izdzīvotu Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
veltīga laika nosīšana..... Jā / daļēji / nepavisam

12. Lasīšana angļu valodā ir:

Kā smags darbs, jo vēl pietiekami labi nezinu šo valodu.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
Man ir vajadzīgs paplašināt savu vārdu krājumu, lai lasītu labāk.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
Lēna mocīšanās. Man ir jālasa vairāk, lai iemācītos lasīt ātrāk..... Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
Man ir vajadzīgs apgūt gramatiku, lai varētu lasīt labāk..... Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
Noderīga lieta, jo es lasu pietiekoši labi, lai tas dotu gandarījumuJā / daļēji / nepavisam
Aizraujoša nodarbošanās, jo es lasu raiti..... Jā / daļēji / nepavisam

13. Vai esat pamanījis, ka, lasot angļu valodā, ir grūti uzminēt nepazīstamu vārdu nozīmi?

1. Nē, nekad
2. Jā, dažreiz
3. Jā, tas notiek regulāri
4. Jā, ļoti bieži

14. Vai esat pamanījis, ka, lasot angļu valodā, rodas vēlme iztulkot un saprast katru vārdu?

1. Nē, nekad
2. Jā, dažreiz
3. Jā, tas notiek regulāri
4. Jā, ļoti bieži

15. Vai esat pamanījis, ka, lasot angļu valodā, Jūs spējat saprast izlasīto pat tad, ja lielu skaitu vārdu nesaprotat vai nevarat iztulkot?

1. Nē, nekad
2. Jā, dažreiz
3. Jā, tas notiek regulāri
4. Jā, ļoti bieži

16. Vai esat pamanījis, ka, lasot angļu valodā, nesaprotamos vārdus var uzminēt no ilustrācijām?

1. Nē, nekad
2. Jā, dažreiz
3. Jā, tas notiek regulāri
4. Jā, ļoti bieži

17. Vai esat pamanījis, ka, lasot angļu valodā, nesaprotamos vārdus var uzminēt no konteksta?

1. Nē, nekad
2. Jā, dažreiz
3. Jā, tas notiek regulāri
4. Jā, ļoti bieži

18. Vai esat pamanījis, ka, lasot angļu valodā, nesaprotamos vārdus var uzminēt no to vietas teikumā?

1. Nē, nekad
2. Jā, dažreiz
3. Jā, tas notiek regulāri
4. Jā, ļoti bieži

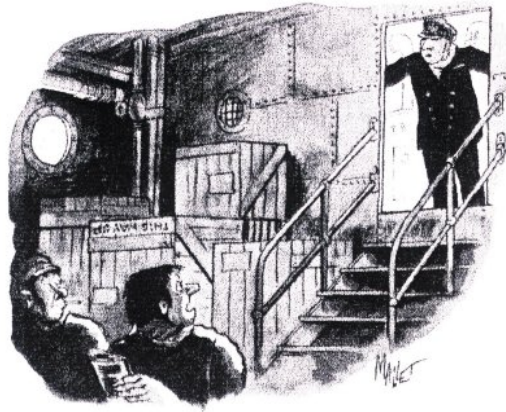
19. Vai esat pamanījis, ka, lasot angļu valodā, nesaprotamos vārdus var uzminēt no to latīniskā izcelsmes saknes vai no to priedēkļa, piedēkļa vai galotnes?

1. Nē, nekad
2. Jā, dažreiz
3. Jā, tas notiek regulāri
4. Jā, ļoti bieži

20. Es vēlētos:

Kaut es varētu lasīt angļu valodā tik pat raiti kā dzimtajā.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
Kaut man nekad nekas angļiski nebūtu jālasa.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
Kaut man būtu vairāk laika lasīšanai.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
Kaut man būtu labākas dotības apgūt valodas.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
Kaut man būtu spēcīgāka motivācija lasīt.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
Kaut man būtu pieejamas grāmatas angļu valodā bez maksas.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam
Kaut man būtu mājās internets kur es varētu lasīt angļu valodā.....Jā / daļēji / nepavisam

Appendix 2 – Diagnostic test– introductory level



Dick Leonard was the captain of a small ship, the ‘London Flower’ Sometimes it took engines from one port to another, sometimes it took furniture, and sometimes it took other things. But sometimes there was no work for it, and the ship was empty. Then Captain Leonard was not happy, because he loved being busy, and he loved going from one port to another all the time.

But the other men on the ship were lazy. They did not like work much. They liked sitting and doing nothing.

One day Captain Leonard did not see two of them for a long time. He looked for them. He opened a door and shouted down some stairs, ‘Who's there?’

‘William. Captain,’ was the answer,

‘What ate you doing there, William?’ The captain asked.

‘Nothing, Captain,’ William answered.

‘Is Tom there?’ the captain shouted then.

‘Yes. he is,’ was the answer,

‘What’s he doing’ the captain asked.

‘He’s helping me. Captain.’ William answered.

Answer these questions

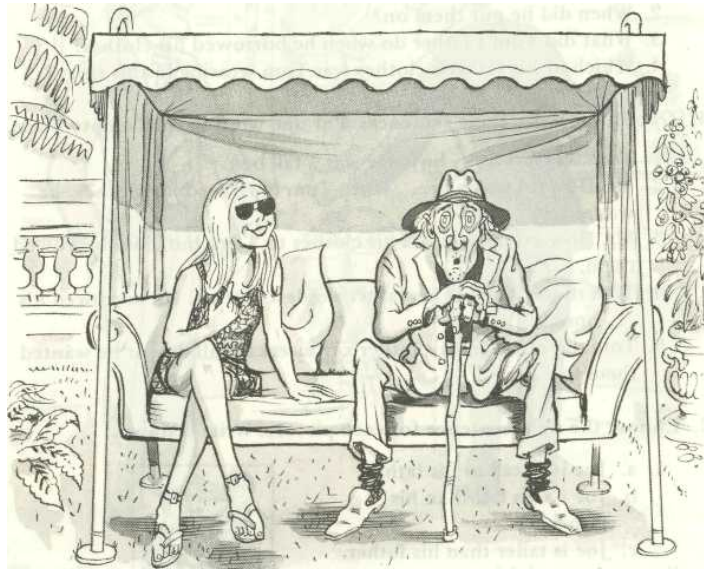
1. What were the first question and answer?
2. What were the second question and answer?
3. What were the third question and answer?
4. What was Captain Leonard’s last question?
5. And what was William’s answer?

Write this story. Put one word in each empty space. All the correct words are in the story on page 54.

Dick Leonard’s friend Joe is a . . . too. His . . . is the ‘Brighton Flower’. It is not doing any voyages now, because its . . . have broken. It is in a small . . . in the south of England. Joe enjoys doing nothing, because he is a . . . man. He does not like hard . . . much. Some men are working on the ship’s engines, and they are always very . . . They are running up and down the . . . now, but Joe is not . . . them. He is looking at his Glass. It is . . . , and he is saying, ‘I’m going to get another drink now!’

From “Introductory Stories for Reproduction 2” by L.A. Hill (pages 54, 55)

Appendix 3 – Diagnostic test – elementary level



Mr. Yates was nearly ninety, so it was often difficult for him to remember things, but he still liked travelling very much, so he and his wife went to Spain every year. One summer when they were there, they went to visit some friends. These people had two young daughters.

One afternoon Mr. Yates was talking to one of the girls in the garden after lunch. ‘You and your sister were ill when my wife and I were here last year, weren’t you?’ He said to her.

Yes, we were,’ answered the girl. ‘We were very ill.’

The old man said nothing for a minute, because he was thinking. Then at last he said, ‘Oh, yes, I remember Now! One of you died. Which one of you was it, you or your sister?’

The girl answered, ‘It was me.’

‘Oh? I’m very sorry to hear it’, said the old man.

Answer these questions.

1. Why did Mr. Yates not remember things very well?
2. Where did his friends live?
3. Who were ill when Mr. and Mrs. Yates visited Spain another time?
4. Who really died then?
5. Was the girl having a joke with Mr. Yates?

Write this story. Put one word in each empty space. You will find all the correct words in the story on page 40.

Mr. And Ms. Yates lived together for 52 years, and then she became very After a month she . . . , and Mr. Yates was alone. It was . . . for him to live in a big house without anybody else, so he married again. His new . . . was much younger than he was, and she liked . . . to foreign countries, so they began to go to Africa every . . . , in the winter. Mrs. Yates had a younger . . . , and she usually went with them too. Everybody thought, ‘Those girls are that old man’s’

One day in Kenya a man said to him, ‘Do you . . . me? I was your neighbour in Southampton.’

Mr. Jones did not answer for a few seconds, because he was Then he said, ‘Oh, yes! That’s right! That’s right! I married your daughter, didn’t I?’

From “Elementary Stories for Reproduction 2” by L.A. Hill (pages 40, 41)

Appendix 4 – Diagnostic test – intermediate level



An old porter had been working for the railway for a very long time. He was standing in one of the big railway stations in London one morning, waiting for travellers to ask him to help them with their luggage, when he saw a small man running towards the trains, carrying a bag.

The porter watched the man for a few seconds, and then the man saw the porter. At once he ran up to him and said, ‘Can I catch the 10.35 train to Newcastle-on-Tyne, porter?’ He was breathing very fast, and he sounded worried.

The old porter looked at him for a moment and then said politely, ‘Well, sir, I’d like to help you, but I can’t answer your question, because I don’t know how fast you can run along rails. You see,’ he explained, ‘the 10.35 train to Newcastle-on-Tyne left five minutes ago.’

Answer these questions.

1. What was the old porter’s job that morning?
2. What was the small man trying to do?
3. Why was he breathing very fast?
4. Why was he worried?
5. Was the porter serious, or was he having a joke with the small man?

Write this story. Put one word in each empty space (do not use ‘said’). You will find all the correct words in the story.

A road crossed the electric . . . line near a station, and . . . were allowed to cross there when no trains were coming.

One day a . . . who worked at the station saw a small, old woman behaving very strangely. She was running up to the railway line, stopping, going back, running forward, and stopping again. The porter watched her for a . . . and then said . . . , ‘Can I help you, madam?’

The woman was . . . very fast, but she answered, ‘Oh, thank you!’ I’m afraid that the electricity may kill me if I step on these . . . !’ Her voice . . . really . . .

The porter smiled and . . . patiently, ‘Madam, unless you put one foot on a rail and another on that wire above your head, the electricity can’t hurt you.’

From “Intermediate Stories for Reproduction 2” by L.A. Hill (pages 50, 51)

Appendix 5 – Grammar exercises for the training programme

57. A VINGRINĀJUMS

Teikumus pārveidojiet tā, lai netiešais papildinātājs atrastos pirms tiešā papildinātāja!

Ted gave the rose to me. → Ted gave me the rose.

1. He lent the book to me. 2. Larry called a taxi for us. 3. Grace read the news to them. 4. I have bought some chocolates for you. 5. She sent a present to her mother-in-law. 6. The waiter brought a bottle of beer to the man. 7. Ruth made a new skirt for herself. 8. Frank told a joke to us. 9. Andrew read his poems to me. 10. Wendy knitted a pullover for Fred.

57. B VINGRINĀJUMS

Veidojiet teikumus ar dotajiem apstākļiem! Atcerieties, ka teikumā jābūt šādai apstākļu secībai: KĀ? — KUR? — KAD?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. He play tennis | (every morning / in the park) |
| 2. David has travelled | (round the world / by plane) |
| 3. He read the letter | (in his office / before lunch / quickly) |
| 4. Janet sang | (at the concert / yesterday / beautifully) |
| 5. They had coffee | (after lunch / in the garden) |
| 6. Julia will come | (tomorrow / to the party / with Bruce) |
| 7. Amy has been playing | (since 3 o'clock / with her toys / in the bedroom) |
| 8. We stayed | (for a week / in Paris) |
| 9. His family moved | (to Liverpool / two years ago) |
| 10. I had a nice time | (yesterday / in town) |
| 11. Richard wanted to go | (at lunchtime / to the bank) |
| 12. She lived | (from 1980 to 1987 / with them / in Greece) |

57. C VINGRINĀJUMS

Dotos apstākļa vārdus ievietojiet teikumos pareizajās vietās!

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Joe goes to work at half past eight. | usually |
| 2. Stan disagrees with his wife. | sometimes |
| 3. I have seen him. | never |
| 4. Have the Jacksons left? | already |
| 5. You can wear a pullover over your shirt. | always |
| 6. Brenda doesn't arrive late. | usually |
| 7. Jim goes to the cinema at the weekend. | seldom |

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 8. Has he seen this film? | yet |
| 9. Bill has finished his work. | already |
| 10. The buses are full in the morning. | usually |
| 11. Michael has been my closest friend. | always |
| 12. Mrs. Lewis shops in the afternoon. | often |
| 13. I have read this book twice. | already |
| 14. They are in Cambridge. | still |
| 15. Cliff is at home. | Already |

57. D VINGRINĀJUMS

Veidojiet teikumus ar dotajiem vārdiem!

1. doesn't have / in the bank / Larry / any money
2. only two hours / I / last night / slept
3. the boys / taught / last year / she / geography
4. were / big green bottles / on the shelf / five / there
5. the restaurant / parked / in front of / his car / he
6. the English Channel / last Monday / we / on the ferry / crossed
7. Lucy / me / this dress / made / for
8. costs / any other car / less / this car / than
9. again / my / car keys / husband / has lost / his
10. the time / Tony / glasses / wears / all

57. E VINGRINĀJUMS

Veidojiet teikumus ar dotajiem vārdiem!

1. on / phoned / secretary / Friday / his / they
2. since / we / met / January / haven't
3. easy / he / a n / wants / have / t o / l i f e
4. airport / we / the / at / arrived / five / at
5. charming / met / last / Tony / a / their / night / girl / at / party
6. letter / the / the / on / he / left / hall / table / the / in
7. walked / upstairs / Brian / slowly
8. on / cakes / she / the / the / put / table
9. Tom's / slipped / leg / his / broke / friend / and
10. give / parties / weekend / they / every

57. F VINGRINĀJUMS

Veidojiet teikumus!

1. stole / their / night / someone / last / car
2. a / Sally / of / two / bottle / tomatoes / bought / of / and / pounds / milk

3. Luke/fish /some / potatoes/ordered /and
4. her / Daisy / dress / nail *I a I on I* tore
5. the / the / phone / writes / letters / answers / and / secretary
6. us / their / to / the / Watsons / house / welcomed
7. a / the / this / postman / morning / me /brought / letter
8. my / wind / hat / the / over / blew / wall / the
9. usually / home / about / husband / at / gets / her / five
- 10.on / afternoon / Ben / car / washes / Friday / always / his

Appendix 6 – Morphology exercises for the training programme

6 anti -

anti- can be used with two different meanings. Write 'A' in the space provided if it means that one thing opposes another. Write 'B' if it means that one thing prevents another from happening.

- 1 Following the appalling behaviour of the English football fans in Italy many people were anti-English.
.....
- 2 Anti-seasickness tablets should be taken two hours before starting a journey.
.....
- 3 After fitting the anti-theft device to her car, she hoped it would not be stolen again.
.....
- 4 The anti-apartheid movement in South Africa gained a lot of publicity when Nelson Mandela was released.
.....
- 5 Although it is more than two years since his wife died, he is still taking anti-depressants.
.....
- 6 Put anti-freeze in your radiator to prevent the water from freezing overnight.
.....
- 7 It was the first serious anti-war demonstration for fifteen years.
.....
- 8 Toothpastes containing fluoride and anti-bacterial properties should be able to virtually eradicate tooth-decay.
.....
- 9 The General took control of the army at the height of the anti-Ceausescu protests.
.....
- 10 The Church is managing to survive in the face of a great deal of anti-religious propaganda.
.....

4 Forming negatives

A large number of prefixes are used to form words with negative meanings. Some of the most common ones are listed below.

Dis-	il-	im-	in-
Ir-	non-	un-	

Now look at the words listed below. Write down their negative forms next to the appropriate prefix. The first one has been done for you.

legal	smoker	capable	practical	athletic
security	relevant	possible	obey	officially
agreement	loyal	happy	rational	willingness
logical	mature	responsible	ability	convenient

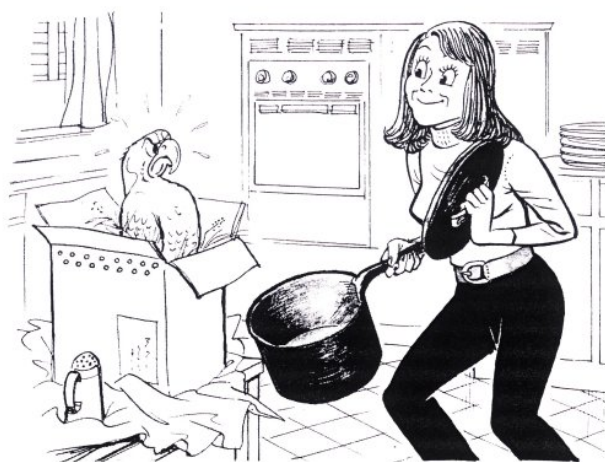
dis- _____
il- illegal _____
im- _____
in- _____
ir- _____
non- _____
un- _____

Appendix 7 – Cloze exercises for the training programme

Cloze exercise 1

Write this story. Put one word in each empty space. After you have finished, correct the words to the ones you can find in the story on page 4.

Freetown is a . . . in West Africa. Jack and another . . . from his ship went into a shop there and saw a beautiful bird. It was a red and grey . . . and it . . . , 'Hullo,' to them. Jack said to his friend, 'I'm going to . . . it to Gloria. She's the daughter of my mother's It will be a nice . . . for her.' Then Jack and his friend . . . a restaurant and ate . . . and fried potatoes there. They . . . very good.



Jack was a young sailor. He lived in England, but he was often with his ship.

One summer he came back from a long voyage and found new neighbours near his mother's house. They had a pretty daughter, and Jack soon loved her very much.

He said to her, 'My next voyage will begin in a few days' time, Gloria. I love you, and I'll marry when I come back. I'll think about you all the time, and I'll write to you and send you a present from every port.'

Jack's first port was Freetown in Africa, and he sent Gloria a parrot from there. It spoke five languages.

When Jack's ship reached Australia, there was a letter from Gloria. It said, 'Thank you for the parrot, Jack. It tasted much better than a chicken.'

From "Elementary Stories for Reproduction 2" by L.A. Hill (pages 4, 5)

Cloze exercise 2

Write this story. Put one word in each empty space. After you have finished, correct the words to the ones you can find in the story on page 20.

Helen always ate a lot, but she never got very . . . : she was always . . . than her sister Mary, although Mary ate very little and shoes her diet Helen usually . . . about 35 kilos, and Mary was always about 10 kilos . . . than her sister.

When people . . . Helen's house and saw her . . . a lot of potatoes and bread, they were always . . . and said, 'Why don't you get fat when you eat such . . . ?'

She answered, 'I don't know. I asked my . . . about it, but he didn't tell me anything useful.'



Miss Green was very fat. She weighed 100 kilos, and she was getting heavier every month, so she went to see her doctor.

He said, 'you need a diet, Miss Green, and I've got a good one here.' He gave her a small book and said, 'Read this carefully and eat the things on page 11 every day. Then come back and see me in two weeks' time.'

Miss Green came again two weeks later, but she wasn't thinner: she was fatter. The doctor was surprised and said, 'Are you eating the things on page 11 of the small book?'

'Yes, doctor,' she answered.

The next day the doctor visited Miss Green during her dinner. She was surprised to see him.

'Miss Green,' he said, 'Why are you eating potatoes and bread? They aren't in your diet.'

'But, doctor,' Miss Green answered, 'I ate my diet at lunch time. This is my dinner.'

From "Elementary Stories for Reproduction 2" by L.A. Hill (pages 20, 21)

Cloze exercise 3

Write this story. Put one word in each empty space. After you have finished, correct the words to the ones you can find in the story on page 28.

Mr. Jones went to the sea for a holiday one . . . , and he . . . in a cheap . . . , because he was not a . . . man. At 7 a. m. on the first morning a woman came and said, 'Please get up.' Mr. Jones . . . getting up early, so he said, 'I don't want to yet. I am still . . . tired.'

The woman went away, but at 8 a. m. a . . . one came and said to Mr. Jones, 'Mr. Jones, please get up. We need the . . . from your bed.' Mr. Jones still . . . to sleep, so he answered . . . , 'Why?'

'Because breakfast is starting,' answered the woman, 'and we need to put them on our tables. They're our table-cloths too.'



Mr. Leonard was twenty-three years old and not very rich. He was not married and he lived in two rooms in a small house in a city.

Every summer, Mr. Leonard went down to the sea for a holiday. He stayed in small, cheap hotels, but he always wanted to have a clean, tidy room. He hated dirty places.

One summer a friend of his said, 'Go to the Tower Hotel in Whitesea. I went there last year, and it was very nice and clean.'

So Mr. Leonard went to the Tower Hotel in Whitesea. But there was a different manager that year.

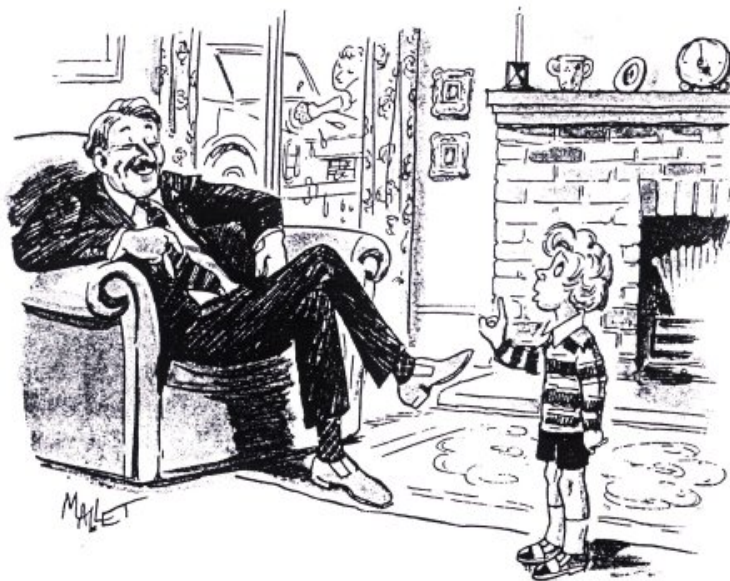
The new manager took Mr. Leonard to his room. The room looked quite nice and clean, but Mr. Leonard said to the manager, 'Are the sheets on the bed clean?'

'Yes, of course they are!' he answered angrily. 'We washed them this morning. Feel them. They're still damp.'

From "Elementary Stories for Reproduction 2" by L.A. Hill (pages 28, 29)

Appendix 8 – Cloze exercises for the progress test

Introductory level



Neil was five years old, and he had no brothers or sisters. He lived with his parents in the country, and there were no neighbours near his house.

One Saturday Neil's Uncle Fred came and visited them. He had lunch with Neil and his parents, and then Neil's mother went into the kitchen and washed the dishes, and his father went out and washed the car.

'Stay here and talk to Uncle Fred,' Neil's father said to him.

'And show him your toys,' his mother said.

Neil showed his uncle his toys and they talked for half an hour in the living-room. Then Neil said to his uncle, 'I'm going to go out and play with God in the garden now.'

His uncle was surprised. 'How do you play with God, Neil?' he asked him.

'It's easy,' Neil answered. 'I throw the ball up, and then God throws it back down to me.'

Write this story. Put one word in each empty space. All the correct words are in the story on page 30.

Joan Brown is a small girl. Her . . . are Mr. George Brown and his wife Dorothy. They live in a nice . . . in the . . . , and their . . . on both sides have children. Joan is going to . . . with them this afternoon, but first she is washing the . . . with her mother in their small Joan has a lot of . . . , but she likes playing ball with her friends in her . . . the best of all. They . . . it to each other and catch it.

From "Introductory Stories for Reproduction 2" by L.A. Hill (pages 30, 31)

Elementary level



A small boy and his father were having a walk in the country when it suddenly began to rain very hard. They did not have their umbrellas with them, and there was nowhere to hide from the rain, so they were soon very wet, and the small boy did not feel very happy.

For a long time while they were walking home through the rain, the boy was thinking. Then at last he turned to his father and said to him, 'Why does it rain, Father? It isn't very nice, is it?'

'No, it isn't very nice, but it's very useful, Tom,' answered his father. 'It rains to make the fruit and vegetables grow for us, and to make the grass grow for the cows and sheep.'

Tom thought about this for a few seconds, and then he said, 'Then why does it rain on the road, too, Father?'

Write this story. Put one word in each empty space. You will find all the correct words in the story on page 50.

A lady and a . . . girl were getting very wet, because they were walking in the . . . and they were not wearing . . . or carrying The girl did not like being . . . , so she did not feel Then they saw a star between two clouds. 'Do you know,' the lady . . . , 'that star's much bigger than our world.' The small girl . . . about that for a few . . . , and then she . . . to the lady and answered, 'Well, why doesn't it keep the rain off us then?'

From "Elementary Stories for Reproduction 2" by L.A. Hill (pages 50, 51)

Intermediate level



Mrs. Robinson had one small son. His name was Billy. Mrs. Robinson loved Billy very much, and as he was not a strong child, she was always afraid that he might get ill, so she used to take him to the best doctor in the town four times a year to be examined.

During one of these visits, the doctor gave Billy various tests and then said to him, 'Have you had any trouble with your nose or ears recently?'

Billy thought for a second and then answered, 'Yes, I have.'

Mrs. Robinson was very worried. 'But I'm sure you've never told me that, Billy!' she said anxiously.

'Oh, really?' said the doctor seriously. 'and what trouble have you had with your nose and ears, my boy?'

'Well,' answered Billy, 'I always have trouble with them when I'm taking my jersey off, because the neck is very tight.'

Write this story. Put one word in each empty space. You will find all the correct words in the story on page 26.

A businessman who had been working too much found that he could not sleep at night, but kept on falling asleep during the day. He became so . . . that he went to see his doctor.

'Can you help me, doctor?' He asked . . . 'I . . . to sleep so well, but . . . I haven't been having more than two hours a night.'

The doctor . . . him carefully, gave him some . . . , advised him to work less hard, and told him to take . . . kinds of medicine to help him. He said he was . . . that he was not . . . ill, and that he would soon be better.

But the businessman grew worse instead of better. He slept even less than before at night, and was continually falling asleep in his office. His . . . to the doctor became more frequent, and it took the doctor a long time to discover the reason: the businessman's servant was giving him the sleeping medicines in the morning, and the ones to keep him awake at night!

From "Intermediate Stories for Reproduction 2" by L.A. Hill (pages 26, 27)

Appendix 9 – Closing questionnaire

1. Vai esat pamanījis, ka, pēc vingrinājumiem (ar izlaistajiem vārdiem), lasot angļu valodā, ir vieglāk uzminēt nepazīstamu vārdu nozīmi?

1. Nē nav vieglāk
2. Mazliet
3. Jā, ir vieglāk
4. Nezinu

2. Vai esat pamanījis, ka pēc vingrinājumiem, lasot angļu valodā, vairs nav tik liela vēlme iztulkot un saprast katru vārdu?

1. Nē, vēlme tulkot ir tāda pati
2. Vēlme mazliet samazinājusies
3. Jā, vēlme ir stipri samazinājusies
4. Nezinu

3. Vai esat pamanījis, ka, lasot angļu valodā, pēc vingrinājumiem ir uzlabojusies Jūsu spēja saprast izlasīto pat tad, ja lielu skaitu vārdu nesaprotat vai nevarat iztulkot?

1. Nē, spēja saprast nav uzlabojusies
2. Spēja saprast mazliet ir uzlabojusies
3. Jā, spēja saprast ir uzlabojusies
4. Nezinu

4. Vai esat pamanījis, ka pēc vingrinājumiem, lasot angļu valodā, nesaprotamos vārdus var vieglāk uzminēt no konteksta?

1. Nē, nesaprotamos vārdus ir tik pat grūti uzminēt pēc konteksta, kā agrāk
2. Spēja uzminēt nesaprotamos vārdus ir mazliet uzlabojusies
3. Jā, ir uzlabojusies spēja uzminēt nesaprotamos vārdus pēc konteksta
4. Nezinu

5. Vai esat pamanījis, ka pēc vingrinājumiem, lasot angļu valodā, nesaprotamos vārdus var labāk uzminēt no to vietas teikumā?

1. Nē, nesaprotamos vārdus pēc vietas teikumā ir tik pat grūti uzminēt, kā agrāk
2. Spēja uzminēt nesaprotamos vārdus ir mazliet uzlabojusies
3. Jā, ir uzlabojusies spēja uzminēt nesaprotamos vārdus pēc vietas teikumā
4. Nezinu

6. Vai esat pamanījis, ka pēc vingrinājumiem, lasot angļu valodā, nesaprotamos vārdus vieglāk var uzminēt pēc to latīniskā izcelsmes saknes vai no to priedēkļa, piedēkļa vai galotnes?

1. Nē, nesaprotamos vārdus pēc priedēkļa, saknes vai piedēkļa ir tik pat grūti uzminēt, kā agrāk
2. Spēja uzminēt nesaprotamos vārdus ir mazliet uzlabojusies
3. Jā, ir uzlabojusies spēja uzminēt nesaprotamos vārdus pēc priedēkļa, saknes vai piedēkļa
4. Nezinu

7. Vai Tev patīk, ka skolotājs tavā vietā izvēlas grāmatas lasīšanai angļu valodā:

Skolotājs vienmēr nekļūdīgi zina, kāda grāmata mani interesētu	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Man pašam patīk izvēlēties tādas grāmatas, kas man interesē	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Skolotājs labāk zina, cik grūtas vai vieglas grāmatas spēju lasīt.....	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Ja grāmata, kuru pats izvēlos būtu par grūtu, es to atdotu atpakaļ	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Man patīk ka varu brīvi izvēlēties grāmatas no bibliotēkas plaukta	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Man patīk lapaspušu skaita lasīšanas sacensības	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Man patīk lasīt daudz un neiedziļinoties sīkumos.....	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Man patīk lasīt nedaudz lapaspuses rūpīgi, lēni un ar tulkošanu un tad pildīt vingrinājumus vai atbildēt uz jautājumiem par tekstu.....	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Man vispār nepatīk lasīt.....	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Es lasītu vairāk, ja būtu motivācija	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>

Appendix 10 – List of books for the extensive reading competition

The Title	Num. of cassettes	Level	Genre	Series	Year	Illustrations
Animals in danger	-	1	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	1998	Full colour
England	-	1	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2001	Full colour
London	1	1	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2002	Full colour
New York	1	1	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2002	Full colour
Scotland	-	1	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2002	Full colour
Titanic	1	1	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	1999	Full colour
A little princess	1	1	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
Love or money?	1	1	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
Sherlock Holmes and the Duke's son	1	1	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2003	Grey
The adventures of Tom Sawyer	1	1	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1999	Grey
The coldest place on earth	1	1	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2003	Grey
The elephant man	1	1	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1997	Grey
The monkey's paw	1	1	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1998	Grey
The phantom of the opera	1	1	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
The witches of Pendle	1	1	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1998	Grey
The Wizard of Oz	1	1	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
A biker's ghost	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Amazon Rally	-	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Island for sale	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Lisa in London	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Mike's lucky day	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Rip Wan Winkle and the legend of Sleepy Hollow	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
The adventures of Tom Sawyer	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
The battle of Newton Road	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
The Crown	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2002	Full colour
The house of the Seven Gables	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
The Missing Coins	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2005	Full colour
The Winner	1	1	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
20,000 leagues under the sea	1	1	Fiction	Express Publishing	2002	Full colour
Beauty and the Beast	1	1	Fiction	Express Publishing	2003	Full colour
Blackbeard's Treasure	1	1	Fiction	Express Publishing	2002	Full colour
Journey to the centre of the Earth	1	1	Fiction	Express Publishing	2001	Full colour
Simon Decker & the secret formula	1	1	Fiction	Express Publishing	2003	Full colour
Sherlock Holmes: the blue diamond	1	1	Fiction	Dominoes	2002	Full colour
Football	-	2	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	1998	Full colour
Forty years of pop	1	2	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2001	Full colour
Ireland	-	2	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2001	Full colour
Rainforests	1	2	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2002	Full colour
U.F.O.s	1	2	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2001	Full colour
Alice's adventures in wonderland	1	2	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey

The Title	Num. of cassettes	Level	Genre	Series	Year	Illustrations
Anne of green gables	1	2	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
Dracula	1	2	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1999	Grey
Henry VIII and his six wives	1	2	Historical story	Oxford Bookworms	2003	Grey
Huckleberry Finn	1	2	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
New Yorkers	1	2	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2002	Grey
Robinson Crusoe	1	2	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
Sherlock Holmes short stories	1	2	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
The Jungle Book	1	2	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2003	Grey
The piano	1	2	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2002	Grey
Voodoo Island	1	2	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1997	Grey
Black Beauty	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Five famous fairy tales	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2004	Full colour
Fly away home	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1998	Grey
Gentlemen Prefer Blondes	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Gulliver's travels	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Johnny English	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2003	Full colour
Jurassic Park III	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2002	Full colour
Mr. Bean	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Mr. Bean in town	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2001	Full colour
Persuasion	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1998	Grey
Robin Hood	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Robinson Crusoe	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Round the world in eighty days	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2004	Full colour
Sweet Valley high secrets	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1998	Grey
Tales from the Arabian nights	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
The Flintstones In Viva Rock Vegas	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2003	Full colour
The fox	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1999	Grey
The secret garden	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1997	Grey
The three musketeers	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Treasure island	1	2	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1999	Grey
Hampton House	1	2	Fiction	Express Publishing	2002	Full colour
Perseus and Andromeda	1	2	Fiction	Express Publishing	2001	Full colour
Robinson Crusoe	1	2	Fiction	Express Publishing	2002	Full colour
Swan Lake	1	2	Fiction	Express Publishing	2002	Full colour
The Last of the Mohicans	1	2	Fiction	Express Publishing	2003	Full colour
White fang	1	2	Fiction	Dominoes	2002	Full colour
Australia and New Zealand	-	3	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	1999	Full colour
Recycling	1	3	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2001	Full colour
The USA	1	3	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	1999	Full colour
A Christmas Carol	2	3	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
Frankenstein	1	3	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
Love story	1	3	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
Tales of mystery and imagination	2	3	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1998	Grey
The call of the wild	2	3	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
The prisoner of Zenda	2	3	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1997	Grey

The Title	Num. of cassettes	Level	Genre	Series	Year	Illustrations
The railway children	2	3	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
The secret garden	2	3	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
A Catskill eagle	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1994	Grey
Braveheart	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1999	Grey
British life	1	3	Fact files	Penguin Readers	2001	Full colour
Emil and the detectives	-	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Ghost in the guitar	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
How to be an alien	1	3	Humour	Penguin Readers	1998	Grey
Jane Eyre	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1998	Grey
Little women	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1997	Grey
Princess Diana	1	3	Historical story	Penguin Readers	2001	Full colour
Rain man	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1999	Grey
Sherlock Holmes and the mystery of Boscombe Pool	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1998	Grey
The black cat	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1998	Grey
The book of heroic failures	1	3	Humour	Penguin Readers	1999	Grey
The ring	-	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
The thirty –nine steps	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1999	Grey
The turn of the screw	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1999	Grey
The Yearling	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2001	Grey
The Young king and other stories	1	3	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour
Excalibur	1	3	Fiction	Express Publishing	2002	Full colour
The blue scarab	1	3	Fiction	Express Publishing	2001	Full colour
The golden stone saga	1	3	Fiction	Express Publishing	2002	Full colour
Disaster!	1	4	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2001	Full colour
Great crimes	1	4	Fact files	Oxford Bookworms	2001	Full colour
Black beauty	2	4	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1999	Grey
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde	2	4	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1998	Grey
Gulliver’s travels	2	4	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1999	Grey
Little women	2	4	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
Sherlock Holmes – the hound of the Baskervilles	2	4	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1997	Grey
Silas Marner	2	4	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2001	Grey
Three men in a boat	2	4	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	1999	Grey
Treasure island	2	4	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2000	Grey
Washington Square	2	4	Fiction	Oxford Bookworms	2001	Grey
The picture of Dorian Gray	1	4	Fiction	Penguin Readers	1994	Grey
Management gurus	1	4	Historical story	Penguin Readers	2000	Grey
The Mosquito coast	1	4	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Grey
King Solomon’s Mines	2	4	Fiction	Penguin Readers	2000	Full colour

Appendix 11 – Reading competition questionnaire

1. Vai nākošgad piedalīsies lasīšanas sacensībās?

1. Nē
2. Varbūt
3. Jā
4. Nezinu

2. Vai diplomu šajās sacensībās bija skaisti noformēti?

1. Nē
2. Varbūt
3. Jā
4. Nezinu

3. Kādas mantas, saldumi vai citas lietas varētu būt uzvarētāju godalgā ?

Saldumi.....	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Grāmatas.....	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Dāvanu karte.....	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Interesanta pildspalva vai cita kancelejas prece	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Cita lieta: _____	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>

4. Vai sacensības bija aizraujošas?

1. Nē
2. Varbūt
3. Jā
4. Nezinu

5. Ko tu guvi no sacensībām ?

Iemācījos ātri un klusi lasīt.....	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Uzzināju daudz jauna	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Iepazinājos ar interesantiem stāstu varoņiem.....	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Redzēju daudz brīnišķīgu krāsainu ilustrāciju, kuras man patika.....	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Iemācījos jaunus vārdiņus	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>
Cita lieta: _____	<u>Jā / daļēji / nepavisam</u>

Appendix 12 – The questionnaire on student’s preferences

Please, circle the level of your interest in these topics (genres) of literature:

	Low interest (0 points)	Significant Interest (2 points)	Extremely high interest (3 points)
Science Fiction	0	2	3
Classics and Modern classics	0	2	3
Mystery	0	2	3
Thriller	0	2	3
Romance (love)	0	2	3
Family life	0	2	3
Adventure	0	2	3
Crime & mystery	0	2	3
Fantasy & Horror	0	2	3
Travel	0	2	3
Discovery & invention	0	2	3
Historical fiction	0	2	3
History	0	2	3
Biography	0	2	3
Sport	0	2	3
Politics	0	2	3
Business	0	2	3
Animals	0	2	3
Friendship	0	2	3
Relationship	0	2	3
Teenager problems	0	2	3
Film script	0	2	3
Nature	0	2	3
Science	0	2	3
Culture (music, theatre, cinema)	0	2	3
Achievement, success	0	2	3
Humour	0	2	3
Myths, legends, folk	0	2	3

Bakalaura darbs “Ekstensīva lasīšana angļu valodas mācīšanās procesā un mācīšanās”
izstrādāts LU Moderno valodu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts pastāvīgi, izmantojot tikai tajā norādītie
informācijas avoti un iesniegtā ‘darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

Autors: Arita Takahaši _____ 15.05.2007

Rekomendēju dabu aizstāvēšanai

Vadītāja: docente Dr. Filol. Vita Kalnbērziņa _____

Recenzents: _____

Darbs iesniegts anglistikas nodaļā 15.05.2007

Metodiķe: _____

Darbs aizstāvēts bakalaura gala pārbaudījuma komisijas sēdē

