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Contents

Researching the Expertise
of Foreign Language Teachers

Světlana Hanušová, Masaryk University, Czech Republic
hanusova@ped.muni.cz
Michaela Píšová, Masaryk University, Czech Republic
pisova@ped.muni.cz
Klára Kostková, Masaryk University, Czech Republic
Charles University, Czech Republic
klarinak@gmail.com
Věra Janíková, Masaryk University, Czech Republic
janikova@ped.muni.cz
Petr Najvar, Masaryk University, Czech Republic
najvar@ped.muni.cz

Abstract
The paper brings the results of qualitative analysis of teacher expertise realized within the project *Expert Teacher: the nature of expertise and determinants of professional development (in FLT perspective)*. The project designed as a multiple case study is aimed at systematic analysis of the nature of foreign language teacher expertise and the development of its empirical model. During the first phase carried out in 2011 the data were collected in interviews with 30 teachers who had been nominated as expert teachers of English or German languages by their headmasters or teacher trainers from universities. Semi-structured interviews followed the observations of the teachers in their classrooms and focused on the aspects of expertise that were not directly observable, namely the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, their knowledge of the pupils, pedagogical content knowledge, ability to analyse and interpret educational phenomena, justify their actions and decisions, formulate their subjective theories, and pursue their professional development. The results revealed some interesting aspects of expertise of foreign language teachers.

Keywords
foreign language teacher expertise; multiple case study; pedagogical content knowledge; prototype model

Introduction

The didactics of foreign languages is an inter-subjective field, a field sharing a foreign language as teaching content with two basic factors of the teaching and the learning processes, a student and a teacher. The quality of didactic processes and their results in the form of the acquired levels of students' communicative competence is determined by the quality of the teacher's didactic performance.

Within the project *Expert Teacher: the nature of expertise and determinants of professional development (in FLT perspective*) the highest level of this quality, the expertise of foreign language teachers, was investigated. In the research into expertise, which was designed as a multiple case study and whose aim was to create a model of foreign language teacher expertise, we co-operated with 30 outstanding teachers of English or German nominated by school managers, universities or educational authorities. During the first phase of the research carried out in 2011, the features of expertise which can be directly monitored (analyzed on the basis of teaching observation) as well as directly unobservable characteristics, which were identified through interviews with the nominated teachers, were examined. Semi-structured interviews enabled investigation particularly of the teachers' knowledge in different areas and the depth of their insight. The article presents the most interesting results of the qualitative analysis of these unobservable expert characteristics of foreign language teachers.

1. The aims of the study and operationalization

The main research objective set for the qualitative part of the first phase of the research project *Expert Teacher: the nature of expertise and determinants of professional development (in FLT perspective*) was the identification of those expertise features of foreign language teachers that are not accessible to direct observation of teaching in the classroom.

This objective implies the main research question: What are the critical deep (hidden) expertise features of foreign language teachers?

The operationalization was based on the concept of "knowledge base for teaching" according to Shulman (1986, 1987) and on the prototype model by Sternberg & Horvath (1995).

Within the analysis of in-depth interviews, during which we focused on the features of expertise that are not accessible through direct observation of a teacher's activities in the classroom, we especially watched teachers' knowledge which we had categorized according to Shulman's knowledge-base for teaching.

According to Shulman, the key component of the knowledge base for teaching is pedagogical content knowledge. Other elements include content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of the context of education and knowledge about the objectives, purposes and values of education and their philosophical and historical grounds (Shulman, 1986, 1987; Janík, 2007).

Another source of inspiration for the categorization was the prototype model by Sternberg and Horvath (1995), which defines the essential shared prototypical features while also leaving space for individual traits of expert

teachers. Sternberg and Horvath consider procedural efficiency and insight to be determining knowledge for the category of expert (here they are directly linked to Shulman). Sternberg and Horvath emphasize that expert teachers, unlike novices, possess knowledge that is integrated and has the nature of scenarios, propositional structures and large-scale schemata (p. 11). Procedural efficiency is based on a high degree of automation and advanced routines that allow reinvestment of freed cognitive resources for planning, monitoring and evaluation. It is this ability of reinvestment which Bereiter & Scardamalia (1993) consider to be the core quality of expertise. The higher procedural efficiency of experts manifests itself not only in the ability to perform better, but also less effort for the achievement is expended (see also Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1988; Berliner, 1995). The last prototypical characteristic, insight, allows the teacher to solve problems creatively. Experts are able to redefine the problem and find a solution at a higher level than novices are capable of achieving.

For the purposes of content analysis of interviews with teachers we have created a system of categories, in which we focus both on the individual categories of teacher knowledge and also on some other aspects that we take hold of within the categories of deep reflection and professionalism. Categories were defined *a priori* and are described in detail in Table 1 (please, note the codes are acronyms based on Czech versions of the terms).

Table 1: System of categories for interview coding

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES	CODE
1. own foreign language **communicative competence** and its development (including **intercultural communicative competence**)		**RKK**
2. **knowledge of the field** (the ability to identify **the basic structures of the field** = the knowledge about the language and culture and the knowledge of language acquisition theories)		**ZO**
3. **knowledge of pupils** (including the knowledge of developmental psychology and the knowledge of psychology of learning)		**ZZ**

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4. **pedagogical content knowledge** (the ability to identify essential representations of their subject and to convey them to pupils: ontodidactic as well as psychodidactic transformation)	• **aims** (short term, long term)	DZOc
	• content (what to teach and when) a) transforming the content (what to teach) b) creating the content (what to teach and when, in what order)	DZOo
	• **processes** (how to teach = strategies, techniques, methods, types of tasks, organizational forms)	DZOp
5. knowledge of the context (wider = e.g. society, education policy; narrower = e.g. family, school)		KONT
6. **depth of reflection** (the deep qualitative analysis and interpretation of educational phenomena, the formulation of principal reasons for their actions, i.e. subjective theory problematization of professional routines and the search for alternatives)		REF
7. **professionalism** (commitment including emotions, attitudes to students and the profession, commitment to students, the profession and the professional community, professional ethics, responsibility for their own professional development, collaboration with colleagues etc.)		PROF

The knowledge of the field was operationalized as the ability to identify the basic structures of the field, i.e. the knowledge "about the language and culture"

and the knowledge of language acquisition theories. In order to respect the specific nature of the field of teaching foreign languages, we also created a separate category for foreign language teachers' communicative competence and its development (including the intercultural communicative competence). The knowledge of pupils included not only information about specific pupils, but also more generally conceived knowledge of developmental psychology and the psychology of learning.

Due to a more accurate differentiation we have divided pedagogical content knowledge into three subcategories, namely the didactic knowledge of the aims, teaching contents and processes.

The knowledge of the curriculum was part of the knowledge of context which also included the areas of educational policy and the relationship between family and school.

The last two categories of our system were the categories of deep reflection and professionalism, which to some extent reflect Shulman's knowledge of objectives, purposes, values and historical-philosophical bases, but are conceived more broadly. In addition to cognitive aspects they also include emotional and social aspects and to some extent also reflect dimensions that Korthagen (2004) describes as a mission or Day (2005) as a passion for teaching (see also Píšová & Janík, 2011). The categories of reflection and professionalism also appear in the American certification standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBTCS) (see also Píšová et al., 2011), where reflection applies particularly to the teacher's evaluation of their own performance and professionalism includes collaboration with colleagues and working towards the inclusion of all students. In our system of categories the category of deep reflection was used for the statements expressing the deep qualitative analysis and interpretation of educational phenomena, principled reasons for a teacher's behaviour (i.e. subjective theory), problematization of professional routines and a search for alternatives.

During the interview with the teachers we did not distinguish between professionality (which is considered by some authors as a characteristic of individuals, not of the entire professional community) and professionalism (referring to the entire community) since this distinction, nowadays worked up in detail by some authors (e.g. Evans, 2008; Hoyle, 1975; see also Píšová et al, 2011), has not been fully established in the Czech language. But we were interested in both the individual and community aspects, namely occupational commitment including the aspect of a teacher's emotional adjustment, attitudes towards pupils and the profession, commitment to pupils, the profession and the professional community, professional ethics, responsibility for their own

professional development and collaboration with colleagues in school and beyond.

In addition to assigning the identified statements to particular categories the quality of insight waw also evaluated on a special scale that included four quality levels of insight statements: incorrect (or uninformed, naive) - standard - high standard - deep insight.

N - statements indicate shallow perception of phenomena and events and persons, mostly at the level of simple description, often based on misconception or misunderstanding or based on insufficient information. If there is criticism, it is not supported by arguments and the respondent does not provide a solution.

S - statements at the level of phenomena, event, or person description, which remain more or less on the surface, although there is no evidence of misunderstanding or lack of information.

HS - statements indicate somewhat deeper thinking about phenomena, events and persons, include some features of DI level.

DI - statements indicate deep representation of phenomena and events as well as relationships and connections between them, an understanding based on theoretical knowledge and practical experience, integration of knowledge, skill of viewing things critically.

2. Techniques and tools for data collection

For the semi-structured interviews with teachers of English or German, which followed direct observation of the teachers' teaching, we created an interview scenario (see Table 2). During the interview the scenario was always appropriately modified according to the specific respondent's answers to the initial question, therefore it was not considered to be fixed and unchanging.

Table 2: Semi-structured interview – scenario

Content related issues	
	Identification and choice of concrete contents optimal representations
	Here I began to draw a concept map of the observed lesson; can we finish it together? What were the aims of the lessons observed? Why have you set them this way? How do they relate to the overall aims of foreign language teaching in basic schools?
	Pedagogical content knowledge
	How do you decide what you will teach and when? What is

		the role of curricular documents, textbooks, experience, methodical manuals, and materials from training courses? What, in your opinion, is the core content? What cannot be left out from the long-term plan? And on the contrary, what may be left out?
Pupils		
	Pupils in the observed classes	
		We have met your pupils - how would you characterize this particular class? What is the source of your information about pupils? What is important to know about your pupils (in this class)?
	In general	
		How does this particular class differ from other classes? How does teaching in this grade differ from teaching in other grades? What are the implications for teaching in this class?
Teaching in context		
		Is it difficult for some pupils in this class to learn a foreign language? What are the implications for the class as a whole? How do you think children learn a foreign language best? What is particularly difficult for pupils in learning a foreign language? What is the most important component of teaching (grammar, speaking, etc.), when and why? What role do you think talent plays in learning a foreign language? Where do you look for new ideas and suggestions for your work? What are these suggestions – can you give an example?
Reflection and self-reflection (professional philosophy)		Was the teaching typical of you? What kind of teacher are you? How did your behaviour in the observed lessons reflect your personal professional philosophy? What is the role of routine (in the best sense of the word) in your work? What is the relationship between routine and creative work?

	How do you rate your own level of communicative competence in the target language?
	How do you maintain and develop your communicative competence?
	What makes you enjoy your job? What discourages you?
Professionalism + commitment	What does the term professionalism in teaching mean for you?
	What are you like as a school team?
	Do you feel the need to collaborate with other professionals outside the school (professional associations, institutions of further education)?

3. Data

The recordings of interviews with an average length of 35 minutes were transcribed and then subjected to content analysis. 30 interviews were conducted and then 29 analyzed (there were technical problems with one audio recording of an interview, so it had to be excluded from the analysis). Each transcript was coded by two coders, while their direct agreement was 87.12% on average. Another two coders then harmonized the set of codes obtained.

For each coded statement in addition to an assignment to a particular category the quality level of insight was also evaluated on the scale: incorrect, uninformed - standard - high standard - deep insight.

For the standardization of coding a brief manual for coders was created. Among the most important principles were the following:
- an analytical unit was a semantic unit,
- the categories were disjunctive, but the whole statements could fall into more than one category,
- it was always necessary to take the question into consideration, even when determining the quality of the statement (e.g. if the question was directed to the objective of the activity and the teacher was talking about the content, the statement was assessed as uninformed within the category of Pedagogical content knowledge - aims - DZOc, but at the same time also as standard in the category of Pedagogical content knowledge - content - DZOo.),
- when coding the categories ZO and ZZ were chosen if the statement was at a more general level, not directly linked to a specific activity in the teaching process.

4. Analysis and interpretation of data

During the analysis, we coded individual statements using the system of categories and at the same time, we evaluated the depth of insight that the

statements suggested. During the interpretations we focused primarily on the statements of deep insight quality (DI), which is crucial for us because of its potential to contribute to the model of teacher expertise. In the following sections, to illustrate this better, a brief comparison of statements at the DI level with statements at other levels will also be presented, which is not, however, our primary goal.

Developing communicative competence (RKK)

In this category only one statement which was evaluated as a deep insight was identified.

The statement concerned the descriptors of communicative competence levels which teacher 6[1] looked at critically and expressed doubt about the possibility of descriptors to capture the essence of communicative competence. It is interesting that teacher 6 reached the highest possible level (C2) in a standardized test.

Statements at levels N, S, and HS refer mostly to the "pleasant" maintenance / expansion of their own communicative competence (stays abroad, travelling abroad with pupils, listening to music, watching movies), or alternatively, negatively evaluate their own development in the sphere of communicative competence.

Knowledge of the field (ZO)

There were only three statements at DI quality level by three different teachers. A holistic perception of the field with an emphasis on communicative activities accompanied by a clear understanding of the major structures of the branch seems to be typical: *"I think it is important for them to learn what they actually will need the language for, so they should speak, write and read during the English lesson. Because when a person drowns in grammar and spelling, they still have a lot to learn, the goals are still clear, the preparation is relatively easy, but then it is terribly difficult to convert it to the speaking skill, if the kids are not used to it."* (T6)

The statement of teacher 15 corresponds with the latest research findings relevant for the sphere of initiation of foreign language teaching (cf. Hanušová & Najvar, 2007). The teacher problematizes the usual cliché about the automatic benefits of an early start for teaching a foreign language. She is able to argue her opinion and rely on professional information: *"I read one study that said that until eighteen, until you become an adult, you learn a foreign language equally as well,*

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[1] A note about the numbers of teachers - because of anonymity we chose numbers from 1 to 29 which we used to refer to the teachers

no matter what age you started at. Whether you start at the age of five, twelve, sixteen, seventeen, you get to the same point. Because the older you are, the more efficiently and the faster you learn. It's really true because here, when they start their language in the first year and learn it for three years, and then other pupils start the language in the fourth year, if there is the same teacher, the same language, they are really able to meet the same requirements at the school leaving certificate. The younger children absorb things very quickly, but then forget them just as quickly, whereas it's more constant for the older ones, and they have a much lower capacity for abstract thinking, I remember a time about ten years ago when they were thirteen and were learning the third conditional and it was a concept which they could not cope with mentally, in terms of abstract thinking. So, at this age to teach the third conditional is absolutely unprofitable for them [...] What they are more skilful at, on the other hand, is that they are able to imitate sounds better, so the younger they are, the better they learn to pronounce, during a short time."
(T15)

The last statement in this category at DI level concerned the transformation of the field - the content of teaching as well as content structuring according to the developmental differences of pupils. It showed the holistic perception of language as a coherent whole, rather than as the sum of the individual components and adequate sequence acquisition of its individual components: *"In the first grade they should have nice pronunciation, be able to listen, be able to respond to sentences, be able to do what is used in the course, so we train them in this, then the first, second year comes, it is, I'd say, a playful introduction, parents really like it because they have the CD, nothing is written, nothing is basically tested or little is tested. Then the third, fourth, fifth grade come, a little structure is started, but not much, because, as I say, to conjugate the verb ´to be´ in the third grade is a superhuman task, it has no meaning to teach the kids it there, so we teach mainly vocabulary, mainly to be able to talk about themselves, about their neighbourhood, family, to handle the topics in the book and the language resources are used in those parts, and we try to ensure that they have swallowed as much as possible, because they have very wide memory and absorption ability. And then the sixth grade comes, and there's summarization, because we move on to another textbook - to move from textbook to textbook is not a bad thing, I do not know why it is recommended that one course should be from the first to the ninth grade, because the children are bored after a while, when they have the same characters all the time and they close the door."* (T27)

The statements of teachers at lower levels (N, S and HS) pointed to an exactly opposite interpretation of field knowledge, which was described as the knowledge of language means, especially grammar and vocabulary: *"Well of*

course, everything which is different from Czech. Grammatical structures that are different … sentence structures, even pupils in the ninth grade sometimes begin a sentence with an object instead of a subject, so of course it is difficult … otherwise … everything depends on grammar, if you want to write, you have to know how to create a sentence, when you want to talk, it's the same … The listening … you have to know the vocabulary and the structure of the sentence, too, so grammar is very important, that's just my opinion." (T4, ZO-N)

Knowledge of pupils (ZZ)

In the category of ZZ eight statements on DI level by seven teachers were found. In the area of the knowledge of pupils the statements at DI level related to the knowledge of pupils in general, the sources of the knowledge (parents, colleagues and own experience), but also to the immediate understanding of signals that pupils send in a specific pedagogical situation, i.e. to the ability "to be a pupil" in the process of their learning. Teacher 14 answered the question, which knowledge about pupils is important to him, with these words: *"Well, all of them. Because, I'll give a specific example again, maybe Filip, who was sitting on the side, I know about him that until the end of the seventh grade his daddy felt that he had an Einstein at home. And unfortunately, he did not. Filip is aware of the fact that he is not successful at some things, but we have to prove it constantly to his father, as he has very large claims on the child. And this is the information which I need in every lesson, because if I stress him out and want something from him that is very hard for him, if I give him extra work, I just suffocate poor Philip, because his father will look on our social website, he will find out that Philip has some extra work and he will make Filip do it until it's ready. I am probably going to make him detest English than anything else. So, this kind of information. Also, a lot of things can be found out in the staff room where we sit, they come from the lesson: David is having a bad day today, send him for a walk. So, this kind of information is at school all the time."* (T14)

The relationship between a teacher and a pupil appears to be very significant for a number of teachers; it is characterized as more important for the learning process than a pupil's talent in the following statement: *"It is important, but it is not at all decisive. As if the child … Well, it usually fails when it comes to the relationship between a teacher and a pupil. If there is talent but something breaks in that relationship, talent is a nice thing, but the child stops enjoying the subject, so he or she does not learn, thus losing, losing and losing until it goes to the other way, that he or she is tired and unsuccessful in that subject. So, talent is good, it's a nice assumption, it's great when someone has such talent and if the teacher manages to develop it, but unfortunately there are also cases with talent when it goes just down."* (T8)

A child's self-esteem was also thematized, especially increasing their confidence with appropriately challenging tasks (this corresponds to "the zone of proximal development"): *"It must always be a little bit ... it may not always be an interesting thing, it must always be a little "catchy" I would say, a bit amusing, an interesting thing. But it is also good to give them tasks to handle, and just when they handle them, they grow older and gain self-confidence, also so I place those tasks that are not so interesting in front of them, like an obstacle and we still work on them until everyone has jumped over them, not so that everyone ... can get around them a little bit, but that they can get over them and improve their self-confidence. I always hold the bait in from of them, the carrot, so that they can follow me and still add something."* (T27)

The theme of integration, inclusion and teaching in heterogeneous classes, which is highly topical in Czech schools nowadays, occurred in two cases. Although a number of teachers comment on this issue in the interviews, none of the identified statements (at all levels of quality) included an explicit answer in terms of finding a satisfactory solution to integration and inclusion. Both the teachers whose statements in this area were evaluated as a deep insight reflect that integration and inclusion place considerable demands on their work and realize that they approach a compromise between an ideal adjustment of the situation and really achievable possibilities. The diction of their statements implies the acceptance of the reality of inclusion - they do not express their disapproval or irritation (which sometimes appeared in the lower quality statements) - but they are aware of not having found a resolution to the situation, including certain reserves in their own work. This sense of their own imperfection corresponds to the concept of an expert as someone who keeps moving "at the edge of their competence" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993): *"Well, both of them are borderline children, with borderline IQ, so it depends on what kind of integrated children they are, when it's dysgraphia, it doesn't affect the class in any way, it just affects my work, I know that the child cannot write, because I cannot read their writing or that we have to choose another form or I test them more verbally, but the class is not limited by it. And if the child is integrated because of a handicap, which is for example in this - reduced intellectual ability, it is seen there. Because I cannot completely escape, it is not possible, which means that I have to divide up my work among them somehow."* (T12)

"And I could certainly, and I think, that it is a terrible problem now in classrooms with children with uneven talent, because I could certainly give a lot more to the good ones, but a terrible gap is dug there between those who are behind, and then the class completely falls apart and you cannot teach them together. Yeah, I admit that I slow down some children, that I could give them more.

But I have to slow them down to be able to work with the whole class and move on. Unfortunately." (T27)

As in the category of ZO, statements that indicate a rejection of superficial perception of pupils and common clichés ("children are getting worse") occurred: *"I have been teaching for a lot of years and someone says – kids are getting worse. They are not. Children are different. It just happens over time - when I started, children were used to a system, I may not use the right word, drill, they knew - yes, I must, I must, I must. Those who come today, those pupils already have other conditions, it probably works in some families in a different way, parents really have less time for their kids. I see it here with the kids. Or they have a lot of other activities and clubs, so some of that homework, I used to rely on in the past and I knew they would do it at home, it does not work for many children here, so it is necessary to transfer it back to the work at school. That's another phenomenon, so I had to rethink my philosophy a little and I work with these children just as happily as with those who I used to teach. And I still like teaching*." (T21)

The teachers notice changes in the population of pupils concerning the approach to teaching as well as behaviour. They perceive this change as a natural process based on a wider social context which brings, for example, a change in family functioning (parents' burden and lack of time / interest in the work of the child at school, overloading children by extracurricular activities), a general liberalization of educational practices and a performance orientation in society which leads to the self-assertion of the child being perceived as a norm of behaviour. Overall, the statements in the category ZZ at DI level suggested teachers' positive attitude, their acceptance of pupils, that the teachers attribute considerable importance to the relationship between a teacher and pupils and between pupils mutually.

On the other hand, statements at lower levels of quality are sometimes superficial judgments, "events" - an illustration of a view on a particular child appear more often, which is probably related to the problem of verbalization of an opinion or to the emotional perception of the pupil rather than to a rational formation of a more general conclusion. The learning processes and their outcomes are more often associated with talent too.

While in the quality of DI the teachers perceived the demands of inclusive education and confessed their own reserves, the statements in the category of N or S often showed rather resignation on the consideration of pupils' needs, especially in cases of gifted, extremely advanced or bilingual pupils: *"No … because in the ninth grade, if you noticed the boy who was reading, he is an American, he does not work with us … he is allowed to do his own things."* (T18)

Pedagogical content knowledge – aims (DZOc)

Statements relating to PCK in the area of goals of foreign language teaching were found only with three teachers at DI level (a total of six statements).

The complex perception of aims at a level of more general features of communicative competence (integration of language skills, transfer, situational context, sociolinguistic competence) was typical for the statements: *"Because of what they can say in that language, you need to work hand in hand on refinement of expressions, because it is important in how someone will perceive them, so it will also play a role."* (T6)

"At the end of the ninth grade, yeah. But writing is certainly at a lower level. But that is not, I think, our task, for example from secondary schools there was more pressure on us to teach grammar, but because grammar can continuously be learned, from my experience, from the seventh or eighth grades, to be meaningful. So I do not listen to it, it is their thing to teach grammar rules and grammar. We focus mainly on listening, speaking, so that the children are not scared." (T27)

The teachers attributed great importance to the aims in terms of attitudes towards a foreign language, its use in communication situations and particularly the processes of learning a foreign language. Setting goals reflected the specific age of pupils (cognitive maturity). In addition to linguistic aims, also non-linguistic aims and objectives - motivation to continue learning, reducing the fear of foreign language expression, etc. appeared quite often: *"The goals … the main goal is to make the children speak somehow and not discourage them, it's the main thing which we always pay attention to, as I say myself - what the children will need when they leave us and what our purpose is here. And I do not want to discourage them at the beginning by a rigorous approach, or something like that, so I pay attention to communication, speaking, listening, then reading and a little bit of writing, so that all those skills can be linked. But mainly communication, it is our goal and not to discourage them. They should have the feeling that it's still fun and that English can be learned. That's why we have native speakers here, and I have a goal that each class should have the native speaker at least once a year, even the youngest, to see that the teacher is talking to them, and that they are able to understand him or her, and ask for example ´How are you´, or trivial things, they always should have the goal in front of them, where to get. And I think that's where I use the goal that they see outside the school, that there are some teachers that come over here … we have a relationship with Canada, with lecturers who used to teach here, but they visit us with projects. And the kids can see that it's a possible thing that it can be achieved, and we want to see them leaving school able to speak, talk about something, about what we have discussed here."* (T27)

Aims, or rather the hierarchy of aims and objectives, are clearly and distinctly defined in the statements on DI level. The aims are formulated rather as long-term (it is interesting that at DI level there were no statements regarding the objectives of a particular lesson).

"I'm like, really, if a person doesn't have it, you can't do it without language, because if you don't know the language, then you can't … cannot communicate with people and you don't know it … so I think it really enriched me as a person. Not only professionally but also personally… not like that at all and that life has changed and I am very grateful and I enjoy it all the time, because I'm just saying that these kids will need it, right? These kids do not know it yet, but …, some already suspect, some will hear it at home or go somewhere with their parents and see that they cannot do without it and some others will find out in the future, it is such a reward when our ex-pupils come and say here … just two months ago some of them turned up here, one was studying medicine and said: I still remember our first portfolio, when we were in the third grade, I found it at home! And it was a boy who was not a typical pupil, he was not a problem-free child, but then you have the feeling that … or when they come and say that if they had done their secondary school leaving exam straight away after finishing here, they'd have almost been at the same level as after this school, it's such a good feeling as the work we all here do in English, so it has some meaning for the kids … it gives them something." (T11)

Teachers are very familiar with authoritative documents like Common European Framework of Reference for Languages including the hierarchy of reference levels; they are able to approach them critically on the basis of reflection of their own experience.

"I think that the expected outputs in the FEP (Framework Educational Programme) and ultimately in the school curriculum, I think that even linguistic descriptors in the portfolio, are just like formulas, which are largely generalized. That the student can speak in a situation or answer a question, that the skill itself may still be at several levels and is somewhat subjectively perceived by the teacher and the evaluator, so I would like, I have a feeling that this guy's expected output in FEP or SEP (School Educational Programme) is better than expected or not enough there, because if I do not give it much importance, so it's something I include in the lessons." (T6)

"That's why we have a final exam, which we examine, and I think that according to the European Language Portfolio that is like B1 minus what we achieve here in speaking and listening." (T27)

While in the statements at N, S and HS levels, from the point of view of the foreign language teaching aims, the teachers depended on a textbook, at best on FEP (Framework Educational Programme) as a curriculum document, in the

statements at DI level a detached view is evident, a formulation of objectives in terms of basic structures of the course, the textbook is not mentioned in connection with the aims of teaching at all.

The following statement is typical for the statements at N level in category DZOc:

"I am working on it now, actually I have restructured it for lower secondary classes and I kept to this course, the textbooks that we study from. I used them because I think they are well-made, so they help me, and I think that they are helping these kids as well." (T7, DZOc - N)

Typical statements on N and S and to a large extent HS quality level in category DZOc related to objectives of a lesson rather than to long-term aims. In particular, at N level the teachers were unable or unwilling to formulate long-term aims: *"Not at all, I do not think about general goals and what is in these documents, those are abstract things for me, I do not think about them. If it doesn't actually affect me, I don't really think about it."* (T3, DZOc - N)

Pedagogical content knowledge - content (DZOo)

At DI level talking about pedagogical content knowledge in the area of content teaching turned out to be similarly problematic as in the area of objectives. In this subcategory the statements at DI level occurred only with two teachers (in both cases there were three statements by the same respondents as in subcategory DZOc) with a total of six statements.

They relate to the transformation of content; in particular to the selection of subject matter with regard to the pupil, taking into account age specificities, but also with regard to the specifics of the field (the relationship language means - language skills, the emphasis on the integration of language skills): *"... I think that it is closely linked to how much the lesson is based on language skills. This is automatically successful if the language is spoken constantly and the children always move within it, so then it is not that those children currently live only in the world of the future tense and other tenses are taboo."* (T6)

The respect for the student and their interest and cognitive maturity as prerequisites for the structuring of content is very evident from the following statement: *"Some kids simply hear anything, then they somehow build it into the system. I had a first lesson with the fifth years and somehow we mentioned the perfect tense, which they hadn't learned. And they wanted to ask if someone had ever seen a film and they created the phrase "Did you see .." and I suggested them that there's another way to express it, without getting into a grammatical interpretation."* (T6)

Another statement by the same teacher illustrates the importance of content for the learner and the relevance of content in terms of the field, as well as the

importance of the aesthetic function of language in the early stages of its acquisition: *"Then I also think that the text has the advantage that it is a piece of authentic English. That a kind of authentic language appears there. And Eric Carl writes very well for kids. And I think that English in the textbook is always modified to some extent. So that, even if it is very simple, you can hear poetry of the language, there is the native speaker, it's simply written by a person who thinks in the language, and this is reflected in the poetics of the text."* (T6)

The problematization of the usual stereotypes (e.g. using the same series of textbooks) appeared in the statements at DI level as well.

The statements in the subcategory Pedagogical content knowledge - content at lower quality levels were characterized by a search for a "pre-prepared" curriculum in textbooks even to the extent that the content was identified with the textbook: *"Well, even though we were told that it should not be done, we make our plan according to the textbook. Because the textbook is a basis for learning a language, as I said, and when I teach the future tense, I take the advantage of what the textbook offers, at least for most parts, because explaining and doing everything without textbooks - supplying vocabulary, listening, texts, that is almost impossible for a language."* (T3, DZOo - S)

Pedagogical content knowledge - processes (DZOp)

In this subcategory the statements at DI level were more numerous than in the other components of pedagogical content knowledge. Eleven statements with a total of five respondents were identified.

The emphasis on the individualization of learning processes was reflected in a very significant way, specifically by taking into account the individual needs of pupils, and attention to individual learning styles (analytical, holistic style): *"The pronunciation test for vocabulary can be quickly remembered, but it needs a lot of practice. As for the grammar, it is very abstract for them, but here again the clever kids have a problem to accept it just as a "chunk", just as how something is said. They want to know why, and what it consists of, their analytical brains just want something and it is very difficult to find a balance between what we need to go over and not complicating it unnecessarily. And that is different for different people, some people ask 'And why?' "* (T15)

The statement of the same teacher indicating her ability to time the teaching of content with regard to the linguistic needs which the pupil expresses at some point was very remarkable: *"... in one lesson there was a boy, and he said: 'And when I want to say that someone is not like that and not like that, so how can you say it?'. And I had been expecting it, because I was prepared for the possibility that this may be an additional input, but only if someone noticed it."* (T15)

Another dominant theme is the development of pupils' autonomy – the pupils' co-decisions about the processes as well as the content of teaching, the development of the skill of pupils' self-evaluation through a digital portfolio, but also the participation in the creation of tests and leading them towards responsibility for their own learning. The statements emphasize the stimulation of pupils by various means – the use of different organizational forms (especially group work), the use of modern technology in teaching, etc.: *"So tomorrow I'd like to, because tomorrow we're back in the computer room, so I want to give them … again I put them into groups and give each group a topic and they will take their textbooks, workbooks and have to create, write, prepare one exercise on the computer to go in the test - something to read, something to do or to understand."* (T11)

The following statement is an illustration of the preference of individual relational standards in the assessment of learning outcomes and verbal evaluation. The teacher leads pupils towards the development of the skill of self-evaluation (with the help of a portfolio) and the enhancing of responsibility for their own results, to which she motivates them, besides other things, by providing of the possibility of choice/decision: *"And I think that many times I have a problem grading the children, because I'm like, well, some children know more and some less but why they should say: ´Jesus, I've got a grade three on my report´ … Well I fight with this a little because I think that the fact … it would suit me personally, if I did not have to grade their language, if I could write to the kids: you need to talk more, or you make a lot of grammatical mistakes, or you have a limited vocabulary and need … you speak well, understand when reading, but still make a lot of mistakes when writing […] the kids are responsible for what they learn on their own, not that I'm responsible, but they are responsible for what they do and so I try to make them to realize that this is ´my´ worry, because ´I´ will need it in life [….] I give them a lot of opportunity to do something extra, many children are able to do many things that are quite difficult."* (T11)

The same teacher also spoke about a balanced application of different educational styles depending on a specific situation (a tendency towards a focus on the pupil prevails, but if necessary, the application of authoritative teaching management is used) and a balance between different types of learning tasks including drill, if it seems appropriate due to the nature of the content: *"Of course, you have to devote some time again to drilling and things like that, it's the past tense now, because if I do not drill it, it will not stay in their heads."* (T11)

The following statement refers to an adjustment of teaching processes depending on the diagnosis of group dynamics and shows the teacher's effort to influence the classroom climate by modifying the teaching processes: *"Well now, I*

think we have managed to go quite a long way. And it is not only my contribution, but also thanks to the form teacher and the other teachers that are there. We try to put in a lot of cooperative activities. We want the children to have a kind of shared responsibility during the activities. And to find a space where those who are not quite so good at grammar can excel. A project." (T6)

A never-ending search for new procedures and activities suitable for particular pupils as well as contents, adding a database of activities and pedagogical creativity are characterized for experienced practitioners: *"I like using a really simple method, I saw it at a training day and it's a great method, each pupil gets a piece of paper, folds it in half and on one side they write themselves, they take a textbook and write down ten words from the textbook for example from two lessons in Czech. Below it they sign it, and it is sent to someone else who translates it into English, it goes back and is checked out, signed, then I take it back and it's done. [...] But it is just in waves, because I decide in accordance with the current situation I find in the classroom. When I find that I need to stop and do something for a long time, I do it for a long time, I try to look for even more extra material ... But I always wonder how long to spend, because it is not worth doing something for a long time, because it goes round in circles and we will come back to it again, but they should not miss it, maybe those questions with ´Did you …´ or ´Did you see …´, so that they can grasp the principle, the basis. So that's what it's like with decisions."* (T11)

"Thinking it up so that they can understand it. If there is a grammatical phenomenon, and not only in grammar, but in grammar I enjoy it. And inventing various mnemonics. That is great. And I know that for 90% it works, this method. Then there is the 10%, so I explain it differently, with completely different examples, and again and again, until the last one understands it." (T30)

In statements at N and S levels, these accents do not appear, only some partial aspects of learning processes are mentioned, typically for example the need for changing activities, the complaints about a large number of pupils in the classroom, the quality of teaching tasks in the textbook, the opinions on the use of drills, etc.: *"For me it was useful when pupils worked with other materials than with a textbook. It would be good to have a small group, I know, that this is not practical, but it would be good if there were up to ten pupils, and then the work would be much more efficient than in a group of sixteen children."* (T2, DZOp - N)

Knowledge of context (KONT)

Statements in category KONT at DI level were among the least frequent ones. Only three statements by two teachers were evaluated as DI. The statements are characterized by an emphasis on the connection between a family and a school, whether in the form of parental involvement in decisions about the school

programme or the continuity of learning activities on the theme of family: *"It is quite special also for cooperation with parents, because the parents got, actually, they were there when that programme was prepared, which means they want to participate in a much greater degree in the creation of its continuation and they want to be more involved in the decision-making mechanisms about how the programme will run."* (T6)

The statements also concern parents as key players in the competitive environment of the educational system (especially grammar schools vs. elementary schools) and the pedocentric educational style of parents today, which leads to excessive self-promotion of children at school.

"The younger ones, their needs, for example when we did that lesson about that profession, then we continued with the careers of mums and dads so that they would be able to say what they do as a profession. And I got really sweaty from that lesson, because I had said – see, who knows, we have learned something, we will do it - but it was a whirlwind. 'And my mom and my dad,' and that sort of thing. 'Be quiet, I will give you all that, I will write it on the board, all of you get what you need, what I want you to know.' But it's a difficult thing, all of them simply demand the attention of the teacher and their 'I' is not ... not held back, I would say, and parents even support them in that, because growing up with the child in the middle of everything is a frequent phenomenon in our school, so we fight a lot with this. They can't come to terms with the position of being one of several pupils, and not necessarily the first one, and so it is quite painful." (T27)

In statements at N, S, HS levels a much wider range of contextual variables appeared, such as lack of opportunities for further education, low prestige of the profession, high number of pupils in classes / schools, etc. In most cases, however, they remained at the level of a statement or complaint; there was not a deeper analysis or generalizing judgements. The typical statements of this type include the following: *"...because over the last five years, children have changed so much that what used to deserve a punishment is not even registered now and we are glad that they are at their desks and that it is not worse."* (T5)

*"It's hard to find something [*further education of teachers is meant*], because those publishers have those seminars based on the presentations of new textbooks, and that's the main thing, which I understand, it is their bread and butter, but it is quite difficult to find new ideas."* (T10)

Deep reflection (REF)

Statements in category REF of DI quality were the second most common of all categories, which is indicated by the relatively broad definition of this category (see above). It was a total of 20 statements by six teachers. The formulations of their own professional philosophy are heard repeatedly in the statements. These

are also contained in the following statement, in which the need, the will and the willingness to learn constantly, try new things and seek innovative approaches are stressed. All this is framed by a professional relationship with children and by empathy. The balance, the proportionality, and rejecting extreme positions are characteristic here, which is expressed in the relationship of drill vs. the communicative approach to teaching a foreign language: *"What kind of teacher am I? I think that one thing that is characteristic for me is that I can empathize quite well with those kids and I think I can understand them, and I think that the relationship between us, no matter which class I teach, I think it works really well. They do not have to all love me, I do not have to love all the children, but I can honestly say that I like all of them, so I can understand them and empathize with them and … what else? I think that I am not afraid of trying new things, I think I want them to be able to use the English language in real life, but on the other hand, I also think that in school, in the lessons there should also be drills. They need some translations and so on, some exercises where they only complete sentences and learn one grammar point all the time, so I think that this also has its place here. So definitely not just communication and having a lot of fun, but I think that even those things are meaningful here."* (T25)

Teachers with their own professional philosophy work purposefully, consciously changing it. They perceive their quality in a developmental perspective, i.e. they realize what they lacked as novices, what they had to work on: *"I remember, when I actually got to the school here, I think it was about something completely different, the teaching, especially because of the fact that I myself did not know exactly what I wanted from the pupils, what would be required, what was really set in concrete, what was ok, let's say disciplinary problems, that all of this becomes clear over the years and as you gain experience, so I think this does a lot, too, that I myself know what I require from the children and thus they have some rules that they know will work and that's what it's going to like."* (T25)

The shift in emphasis from the teacher's towards the pupil's responsibility for the results of learning processes and the emphasis on the aspects of autonomous learning are typical: *"Well, I've already said it here, basically after many years of experience, I have come to the conclusion that I try to offer the kids as much as possible, but I also try to explain to them that it is not my duty to learn it, that I already know it, but that they have to choose, so I try not to be a teacher who checks everything so see if they have done it. Maybe it's wrong, I do not know, but I'm not someone who, when someone says something, immediately corrects it, I think I prepare them for life because I believe: no one will prepare the way for them and they have to realize it, even though they are still relatively small, if I do not do this, I will not be able to know it, I have to learn something otherwise I will not*

know it. And if I do not know it, maybe I won't mind, but maybe I will. So I'm trying to make them realize what is important for them and ... I'm definitely not one of those teachers who is ... very controlling ... but I try to give them feedback, but not so detailed and not all the time because I just think that when they learn it, it is better for them to correct themselves and then when they do not know exactly, when they are not given the exact instruction and are then lost and do not know what to do, I think that ... it is better to lead them so that they can manage it themselves." (T11)

In the context of teaching practices and their choice the teachers talk about intuition, but they also apply it to internalized knowledge and experience. A contradiction of the stated meaning of intuition appears in the following statement, but the teacher in the same breath states what she has done for her professional development. It appears that, rather than about intuition it is about the internalization and encapsulation of knowledge, from which, then, the processes seem to result intuitively (see Boshuizen et al., 2004), i.e. that the teacher does not have to think about a number of things and operates on the basis of insight, which is given by the reflected experience and encapsulated knowledge: *"[Q] What kind of teacher are you? [A] (without hesitation) Intuitive. Definitely. I think it just cannot be learned, that it is somewhere in you, it's as if you create something. You just have to react to what the children need at that moment. I have read a lot about this, I went through a number of training courses, and I have it somewhere in myself, but on top of that there is insight into the situation, emotion, the kind of intuition of what I think is good. And when I stick to it, it works. When I go against it, it starts to fall apart."* (T27)

A further statement from the same teacher also confirms that the intuitive choice of processes, based on reflection-in-action, is accompanied by self-reflection and purposeful efforts for consistency, which appears as crucial in terms of expertise: *"And it's always good, I always, when I look inside myself, what I think is best is what I first think, so it usually works best, yes. And those children cannot get around it in any way, make a promise and not do it, do something inconsistently, which is my problem, I know I'm pretty inconsistent. And I have to be really strict with myself to be able to manage to be consistent in those limits that they need, there I have to keep an eye on myself a lot, to be organized, not to forget all that I have promised, to fulfil it, and so on."* (T27)

The unpredictability of pedagogical situations is not, unlike the statements at the lower levels, perceived as frustration, but as a positive motivational aspect and as a challenge: *"Well, I like it because that work is really – I am looking for the right word - there are a lot of moments of surprise. It is creative in the sense that within the lesson there are a lot of unexpected things which make the job interesting for me. Sometimes it happens that I have sloppy preparation, and the*

lesson, which was created somewhere in the midst of what was going on, is fantastic, and sometimes, on the other hand, I feel that I have a perfectly prepared lesson, and just by the constellations of the stars some awful lesson will come out of it. I think that's the reason why I have lasted out in an elementary school. Because this definitely works with children. For adults, what happens in the lesson and what is on the paper is more similar." (T6)

The following statement, at the same time, thematizes the experience as a source of professional self-confidence and balance which, moreover, allows improvization and flexibility: *"I would say that on the one hand it is an advantage, the years of teaching, even though I always say that I'm ready for anything, you are always surprised by something, whether you teach for a year or 30 years, it does not matter, but the kids are just like they are ... and this is perhaps every lesson, you can prepare as much as you want, and some element always gets in there ... whether it's the language, today I didn't know the word ´fortified settlement´, I will have a look how it is said, but here again ... the kids know that I do not want them to know everything, so you can't be completely perfect, I don't have the problem that young new teachers have, to tell the children I do not know, I will look ... will you find it? Fantastic, next time you can tell us ... and I also learn something new, so this is what I have learned, but on the other hand routine really helps in that I know what, where, how to do something or I know where the problem is."* (T21)

In their work, the teachers look for a balance between routine and creativity, which teacher 6 summarizes aptly: *"Then I have routines like that at the end of each lesson we write a test. Before each test, we get ready for it. I don't want to scare them about the test coming. I think it is important for them to include it in their preparation. They have to have feedback for the test. Then every lesson after the test, we correct it; I sit with each of them individually and we talk about what was wrong in the test, and what was successful. That kind of routine."* (T6)

"And creativity - I need it there to have a good feeling from my work and not get bored myself. When I do something twice the same way, I get bored. For example, when I teach the same thing to the fifth grade in the third and the fourth lessons on Monday, I have to do it differently during the second lesson." (T6)

The possibilities of the creative concept of teaching and the perception of its meaningfulness are among the reasons why the teachers continue to enjoy their work: *"Well, because it's something different, something new and then again they... You know, the reason is that, when you teach a few hours [the respondent is a headmistress], you get energy, because I go there to relax from all the paperwork. I go to relax in the class from all the paperwork, so I have more energy to bring many new things there, because it is so refreshing, because it makes you so happy when you do it... Sometimes I teach when I'm busy, so I take a book and teach in a*

traditional way, but on the other hand I think I give them a lot of extra things and look for other ways." (T11)

The statements at a lower level are typical by their description – of specific procedures, situations, children (individuals or classes); it is a rather superficial reflection and the teachers either do not formulate their professional philosophy at all or only at the level of phrases. The statements at N and S levels in category REF often included expressions about the complexity of the situation that the teachers were not able to grasp in a communicable manner: *"I think, yeah, yeah characteristic, but to characterize myself, I probably can't do that very well, someone from outside would probably have to characterize it. Of course, teaching is necessarily affected by what kind of person it is, I'm trying to put those things into a logical structure so that it can follow logically, because I think in this way."* (T3)

Professionalism (PROF)

The statements in category PROF at DI level were the most common of all categories. Altogether 22 statements by eight teachers were recorded.

The characteristics of teachers' professionalism, which appeared in the statements, emphasize lifelong learning from theory (self-study, continuing education): *"Well, it depends on the type of person, because we are here at school, when I am here … when I was elsewhere, and then we did it here at school, like a special project, it was called the Let me learn programme, which is basically something like learning styles, but it's a bit more developed, because what should I do with it if I know this, this, this, and what to do so that I can manage in every situation? So it is true that there are people who need structure and need a clear plan and need drills and need to know what happens next. And then there are people who get annoyed when it has an exact order, so I think it's probably the most difficult when teaching a group of children, who are each a little different, for the teacher to accommodate everyone."* (T11)

At the same time the teachers gain from the areas outside their own field or narrowly understood pedagogy: *"Well …. especially, how people process information. Generally. Because in this area, I really promote learning through pictures. Otherwise, you can sketch graphs, mind maps, you plan the process, and so on. I study this a lot. For example, dual coding or those kinds of things interest me. And I use it in the language too."* (T14)

Professionalism is closely related to collegial collaboration and inspiration; the involvement in projects and networks (including international) and associations: *"I get the most inspiration from when I see other teachers teach, which I have the opportunity to do quite often thanks to my function. Then probably just a reflection of what I do, what I did well, what went wrong. Also by my lecturing, I've led some training. So I spoke to other teachers. Just that I talk about*

my work with other teachers and that I see other teachers in action, this is interesting and beneficial for me." (T6)

"I am personally chairwoman of the Association B.S. B. and S. are twin cities, so I am the president of this community, then I work as a member of the Association of Teachers of German, where I work as a multiplier, I try to organize, like last year it was Deutschlehrertag for the whole country here in A. Street, this year Sommerakademie will be here, so the academy ... " (T8)

"It's a part of the project. I think that when I go over this with them, I will take these kids and other teachers, because I have had one training session with them, so I will go through it with them once again so that they can use it too, because this is digital, it has the advantage that you do not have any paperwork and in addition there is a good ... a part in which you communicate with the kids like what is shared in the dossier, in the collection, there is a part, which is shared with the teacher, so you can share a part with the teacher there, so I have access there and I can write them a comment because when we did something, some project, we tried to insert it there within a pilot study, and I wrote comments for them, they were quite amused when they saw that I had written something there, so it's different to email, isn't it?" (T11)

Some statements emphasized the importance of the school / staff room / wider community climate as a determinant of teachers' enthusiasm and professionalism: *"I think that the level of enthusiasm and the level of professionalism of the teacher partly depend on what the mood of the teaching staff, school and community is."* (T6)

The social aspects of professionalism were also reflected in the teachers' negotiations outside the classroom, for example with parents. The following statement illustrates the importance of the ability and courage to defend / justify their action or opinion, professional self-esteem, or even professional pride:

"Well, I think so. Surely they must be professional and I often tell my colleagues ... because I think that the professionalism of teachers is reflected in dealing with parents and interacting with others, because a lot of colleagues who, I think, are good teachers but have not yet come to the point that they are such professionals in the truest sense of the word, because they cannot sell what's in them and are unable to convince others because ... For example, with regard to inspection, various people asked, but I said, but after all ... I have just met a lady who came and said that her colleague had been observed by the Czech school Inspectorate, and they complained that she did not use listening during the lesson, they meant a CD or something authentic. And she asked why she should have it in each lesson ... and they said that it is a part of the lesson and it should be there, and I said, that as a professional, I could justify it, I would be able to explain to them, like that ... She said it was just

difficult to defend it, and I said, I saw professionalism in that the teacher basically knows why he or she is doing something, he or she can explain why they taught this, because when somebody comes in and sees the piece, they do not know what is behind it, what is next to it, and I have to be able to explain why I do this and I have to justify that what I do is just right. Because I'm the professional, I am in the classroom and I lead the children and nobody will tell me that I do it wrong. It's just your opinion, but I know that I'm doing well because of these reasons. So it is, I think, ... how teacher professionalism is reflected in this." (T11)

The professional pride and loyalty were described as attributes of professionalism (in connection with the low-prestige occupation they were also seen as a challenge): *"Well, I guess it also belongs to that professionalism. I think it is important that the teachers should be proud of their work and loyal to their school. They should not have any feelings of discomfort associated with the fact that they speak about their work. This negative stigma is in schools and female teachers. I think that's still the way that education and teachers must go because they in turn undermine the process. You can feel when people are ashamed of their work. And this in turn undermines the institution, and there is no way out of it."* (T6)

The main source of professionalism and professional commitment is particularly the awareness of the meaningfulness of the teachers' work. Teaching is seen as a mission and the moral dimension of teachers' work is highlighted, while the partner relationship between a teacher and a pupil is seen as crucial: *"To perceive the child as a partner, not as I know something and you have to listen to me. That is the most important thing for me, because everything else depends on it. Completely different, in my opinion. I have never felt that I watch a kid from above. I cannot say that I have had conflicts with parents, but I have a feeling that parents treat me a little differently when they see that I have this approach. Definitely to do everything I want to do responsibly, it is another quite useful thing. Well, sometimes, I don't know how to express it, but sometimes I just have fun with those kids in their own language, and I do not mind it at all, although I think that some of the teachers, especially stuffy ones, would consider this somewhat unprofessional. For example that my suggestion today in the lesson that the associate professor is here, they did not do well in the test, so let's go and poison the teacher's tea and these things, things of this type, so that all of us can laugh."* (T14)

"I do not know whether at this moment I feel like a professional teacher or a clerk in this position, unfortunately, but if I have to evaluate the teaching staff from the aspects of professionalism, I really keep a code, like lawyers have, we have also developed a code for teachers of our school here, and it is not always fully followed by everyone. Sometimes emotions play a big influence and when you say I can do it, not always, though, we should respect professionalism at all times, not always

everyone can handle it, which ... I know that we are just people, I also explain that to the kids and it is difficult to speak or act when you are feeling emotional, but the teacher professional should be able to manage their emotions, as well as following pedagogical tact, what happens in the school should stay there and not to share about it at the hairdresser ... because sometimes I get some news here and we live in a small town, of course ... I think that we have no problem with the students here in terms of trust, openness, which I acknowledge because it is very important for children to know that they can come to the teacher to confide in him or her and that he or is will help them. And it is also part of professionalism." (T21)

According to the respondents, teachers' professionalism is connected not only with education but also with personal qualities, professional commitment and ethical aspects: *"Well, ideally, they should have knowledge in their field, they should have the methodology and didactics, as it is called today, that is knowledge of how to teach, and they should be suitable for the job as a personality. And I'm afraid that I would be critical in terms of education, it is limited mainly to the knowledge of the field, and the methodology is not much there, or maybe it's too theoretical, and young teachers cannot convert it into practice. And the third thing, there is absolutely no way to influence if the teacher will be there for the child, or will be one of those misanthropes, who themselves will suffer in that profession and also torture generations of others."* (T15)

The statements indicating that the teachers are satisfied with their jobs, express positive emotions resulting from a positive attitude towards their profession and from the awareness of the meaningfulness of their work, which the teachers see in fulfilment of their role as a mentor / guide on the path of knowledge, learning, maturing, were very common: *"Well, I have an office here, I enjoy teaching more, every time I come to the classroom, I think I'm at that point where I should be and I really enjoy seeing children as they walk to the classroom on the first day, they have new dresses, those bags, I just really like it, the system in the school, it's a game, like a play, because every day is different and when that day passes, it is gone, it's such a special job that runs from September to June, then it ends, then it starts again, such a circle, so I like it, well, it also scares me, where the children will go in their lives after it, what they will reach, yeah, I'm like a guide, I'd say. So I like that. I enjoy teaching, I also enjoy teaching adults."* (T27)

"What is professionalism in teaching? ... A sort of moral credit. I do not want to exaggerate it, but it is terribly important there, because ... And maybe I would say it is in the first place - to pass on a pattern of behaviour. In the first place, in second place there is the field. That's how I see it. And raise them to be adult people, self-reliant people, and creative people. I'm like, I have chosen this profession and I'm not afraid to describe it as a mission and that's what I enjoy. Very much, I cannot

imagine another job, even if associated with language. [...] A wonderful profession." (T30)

More concise considerations very rarely appeared in the statements on N, S and HS levels, and often partial attributes such as the relation to children, enthusiasm, etc. were mentioned. The statements at N and S levels in category PROF often contained expressions about the complexity of the issue of professionalism that the teachers were unable to formulate in a communicable way (like in category REF). A typical statement on the lowest level of quality was the following statement which is the answer to the question of what defines teaching as a profession: *"Well, it is a difficult question, what defines it? ... I think the relationship with children, it is essential to be professional, it is a very general, a very broad question, do you have some subquestions there?"* (T3)

Comparison with the selected models of teacher expertise:

Following the prototype model by Sternberg and Horvath within the validation of the NBTCS study of certification (see also Píšová et al., 2011) Bond and his colleagues (Bond et al., 2000) proposed 13 prototypical characteristics of the expert teacher and established methods for measuring each of them. The prototypical characteristics included better use of knowledge, extensive pedagogical content knowledge, deep subject knowledge representation, better strategies to solve problems, better adaptation and modification of goals for individual students, better decision making, better perception of events in the classroom, greater sensitivity to the context, better monitoring of learning and providing feedback to students, greater respect for students and greater passion for teaching.

When comparing these prototypical characteristics with the results of our analysis, most of them can be considered to be unobservable characteristics of expertise, apart from four that were observed directly in teaching (namely better use of knowledge, better strategy to solve problems, better monitoring of learning and providing feedback). The remaining nine prototypical characteristics are to a large extent identical with the features of expertise that have been identified on the basis of the analysis of the in-depth interviews.

In the analysis, extensive pedagogical content knowledge was captured within the three subcategories DZOc, DZOo, and DZOp. Particularly the last of these subcategories, i.e. DZOp - pedagogical content knowledge in the area of process, was richly presented.

In addition, the subcategory DZOc noticed the ability to adapt and modify goals for individual students, which was also significantly reflected in the statements on DI level in the category of knowledge of pupils (ZZ). The category

ZZ also revealed respect for students, which is another characteristic identified by Bond et al.

Category ZO, more precisely the statements on the level of DI in this category, reflected deep representation of the subject knowledge.

Greater sensitivity considering the context was reflected in the statements in category KONT (the knowledge of the context), although the statements at DI level were not too frequent here. But to a large extent the sensitivity to the context was also recognized in category REF (in-depth reflection).

The passion for teaching and for the profession overall was very much evident in the statements in category PROF.

The analysis of the interviews showed, however, some other features of expertise that can complement the prototype model in relation to Czech foreign language teachers at lower secondary school level. These added prototypical characteristics include:

A holistic understanding of language and language teaching: In the statements at DI level, it is typical that the teachers understood relevant issues in a holistic way whether it is the understanding of language, language education, teaching, school context, etc. They were always able to see the big picture. The teachers often illustrated their holistic view by specific typical cases which, however, were not anecdotes about particulars taken out of context.

The ability of a critical view on their own competencies and context: Critical comments sometimes appeared in the DI level statements. The criticism was competent, informed, based on mature reflection and deep understanding of the issues. It dealt, for example, with the outcomes formulated in FEP or certain matters relating to students or the teacher's possibilities and capabilities. Interestingly, the teachers were often critical of their own abilities or processes (internalizing access) in statements at DI level, while statements at the other levels, especially N and S, often concerned "Czech" complaining about everything and everyone which came across as unfounded, unqualified, blanket, too generalizing and externalizing (they blamed pupils who are getting worse all the time, the situation which is complicated, etc.). The critiques of this type did not contain any outline of a specific solution.

The involvement in collaboration with colleagues in their own school and beyond: Another distinct feature which was experienced during the analysis was the social dimension of expertise relating to cooperation with both the school management and colleagues and teachers or other professionals in other workplaces. Many research surveys (see also Píšová et al., 2011) show that this is not a matter of course in the teaching profession.

The search for innovation and experimentation: Regarding the ways of working in the school, such as the methods and techniques of teaching, the teachers often expressed opinions resulting from their own informed eclecticism. Their view was mostly in accordance with current approaches to foreign language teaching; very often it was also about looking for new original innovative approaches, but sometimes the teachers expressed the opinion that some of the techniques that are now considered outdated or unwanted (typically drills or translations) belong to foreign language teaching and are beneficial. The efforts for innovative approaches were very typical for the statements at DI level. The extensive knowledge and skills of expert teachers do not lead to stagnation, but rather to efforts for the further search of new paths, flexibility, and adaptation to a changing context. This was also underlined by the statements that if there is constantly something unexpected in the school, it is a source of pleasure rather than frustration for expert teachers, which indicated a dynamic character of expertise.

The ability to formulate their own professional philosophy: The difference between the ability of expert teachers to formulate their own professional philosophy and the (often explicitly admitted) inability of the authors of the statements at N and S levels in this matter was striking. In the statements at DI level it was often evident that the teachers had asked questions about the meaning of their teaching earlier and therefore they were not surprised by this question in the interview.

It offers an interesting comparison with the study of Campbell (1990/1991 in Bond, 2000) who dealt with adaptive strategies of expert teachers and defined a set of eight personal qualities of these teachers, five of which substantially correspond to the above added prototypical features. These include especially a strong sense of mission and a strong sense of professional autonomy which, we believe, is closely related to the ability to formulate one's own professional philosophy. Campbell considered a constant search for better ways to improve teaching performance to be another important quality of expert teachers, which strongly corresponds with our search for innovations and experimentation. A holistic view of teaching is a part of our broader characteristic which comprises besides the holistic understanding of teaching also a holistic understanding of the language. The emphasis on peer support which reinforces a sense of mission identified by Campbell also has a parallel in our concept, namely in the involvement in co-operation with colleagues in school and beyond.

The ability to express a critical view of one´s own competencies and of context did not appear directly in Campbell's approach, but as his study focused on the adaptation of expert teachers to the adverse external environment, Campbell

considered the ability of teachers not to allow the outside environment to interfere in their mission as one of the key qualities. Here a certain parallel can be seen with the ability to see the external environment critically, which can also be related to the awareness of the moments when the external environment does not support the teacher's activity which they believe to be in accordance with their competencies and mission.

Conclusion

The research focused on teacher expertise contributes to the current debate concerning the professionalization of teaching. In the teaching profession, the identification of experts and their characteristics is less tangible than in most other professions, yet it is a very important prerequisite for setting a standard as the aim towards which teachers and teacher educators should be directed. We believe that our research findings have the potential to contribute to a deeper understanding of foreign language teacher expertise and inspire undergraduate and further education of teachers and the preparation of the career system which is currently taking place in the Czech Republic.

The qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews in the first phase of the research highlighted a number of features of expertise which will serve as one of the starting points during the creation of the model of Czech foreign language teacher expertise, towards which our research project is oriented. At the same time, the connection of our findings with the results of similar studies carried out abroad, especially the above mentioned studies by Bond (2000) and some conclusions by Campbell (1990/1991), is evident.

The analysis is only a partial probe within a larger multiple-case study which had aimed to uncover only selected aspects of expertise. The limits of the analysis related to the nature of the interview: the statements by teachers could be distorted because of the lack of reflection or self-censorship resulting from an effort to choose answers that suit the researchers' conceptions, are compensated for by the longitudinal nature of the research and by the data collection during the direct observation of teachers within the entire case study as well as by other methods utilized in other phases of the research.

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Contacts

doc. Mgr. Světlana Hanušová, Ph. D., Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Poříčí 9, 603 00 Brno, Czech Republic, hanusova@ped.muni.cz

doc. PhDr. Michaela Píšová, M. A., Ph. D., Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Poříčí 9, 603 00 Brno, Czech Republic, pisova@ped.muni.cz

Mgr. Klára Kostková, Ph. D., Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Poříčí 9, 603 00 Brno, Czech Republic, Faculty of Education, Charles University, Magdalény Rettigové 4, 116 39 Praha 1, Czech Republic, klarinak@gmail.com

doc. PhDr.. Věra Janíková, Ph. D., Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Poříčí 9, 603 00 Brno, Czech Republic, janikova@ped.muni.cz

Mgr. Petr Najvar, Ph. D., Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Poříčí 9, 603 00 Brno, Czech Republic, najvar@ped.muni.cz

JoLaCE

Developing Cognitive Strategies
in Foreign Language Education

Zuzana Straková, Prešov University, Slovakia
zuzana.strakova@unipo.sk

Abstract
Being able to function successfully in a foreign language requires more than pure knowledge of rules of given language. It has been defined through a complex of competences known as "communicative competence" and from late 70s spread into countries where English was being learnt as a foreign language via textbooks, teacher training publications and courses. Teachers were searching for the best ways to teach their learners to communicate in real-like situations they might probably find themselves after finishing the course. Towards the end of 20th century, the focus shifted from what the teacher does to what the learner should do in order to manage their learning process. Advocates of the development of learner autonomy especially underlined the importance of equipping learners with skills and strategies which they should be able to use when they are left on their own – with no teacher around. They were supposed to become responsible for their own learning by discovering what kind of learners they are, what kind of learning support they need and what strategies can help them learn more effectively. New millennium placed even more focus on the learner of foreign languages analyzing thoroughly processes which directly or indirectly guide foreign language learning. Thinking processes in the language classroom thus became important both for teachers, in order to bring about learning, and for learners, in order to handle the learning process with ease. This article focuses on the possibilities of supporting the cognitive development of learners in early literacy skills development. The case study, which was conducted with early language learners at an elementary school in Slovakia, highlights strategies which teachers can develop in a foreign language classroom in connection with a reading programme.

Keywords
cognitive strategies, young learners, foreign language education, reading programmes

Introduction
Children start learning about the world around them from the very first days of their life. Learning process of children and their cognitive development are significantly influenced by adults in their environment whether it is in pre-school age or even later when the schooling starts. Especially younger learners need a lot of help from people around them since they lack prior experience which could get them through various life situations and tasks. They do not have their

strategies for solving problematic situations developed yet. They need to observe these in a context of their close environment or discover them by themselves in repeated actions. The latter, however, requires time, effort and predispositions while the former offers stimuli and often shortcuts in otherwise demanding tasks. Educational context seems to be the perfect space for offering such stimuli to learners from the very beginning by teaching them how to develop their thinking processes and their learning strategies. In other words, learning how to learn – and not only in the school context – should be considered as the key competence with which learners need to be equipped. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which served as a prime source for building our national pedagogical documents for language teachers, states clearly that learners should be able to "recognize their own cognitive style" and that their learning strategies should be developed accordingly (CEFR, 2001, p.149).

The reality in schools, however, does not demonstrate the inclusion of those declarations in every day practice. We still see students memorizing facts with a clear understanding, that this is what the teachers want from them and thus the main goal for the students is just to meet teachers´ expectations. The dominance of the focus on the lower order thinking processes and skills has survived in our educational system for decades, and despite the effort that latest trends in EFL methodology make, the change for better is still far ahead. Learning to learn, learning to think or learning how to use learning strategies across the curriculum is not an area that should be taught as extra content but rather as a regular means of getting and discovering the content itself. Research into foreign language learning strategies sprang from the research findings in the area of second language learning in the middle of 20th century. Most researchers focused on observation and description of how learners handled the learning tasks and what resources they used. However, the nature of learning strategies, i.e. the fact that some of the strategies are used by learners consciously and some unconsciously complicates the research in this area.

The typology of the learning strategies has been made by several researchers who categorise them into various groups. One of the first important lists of strategies was proposed by Rubin (1981) in which she focused on such strategies which directly or indirectly influence the success in the learning process. She identified six major cognitive strategies which contribute directly to language learning: clarification/verification, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice, memorisation, and monitoring. Towards the end of 20th century, the key classifications of learning strategies were presented also by Chamot and O´Malley (1994), who distinguish three main groups of strategies – cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective, and by Oxford (1990), who goes

further and proposes more detailed division focused specifically on the foreign language learning. In any categorisation, however, we will find similarities in groups of strategies – those focusing on learning the language (cognitive strategies), those focusing on directing of the learning process in general (metacognitive strategies) as well such strategies which help the learner cope with the issues happening inside or outside of them (social and affective strategies). All these factors seem to have a profound influence on the success in learning and prepare the learner for the efficient use of the language.

Teaching English as a foreign language was not left aside untouched by the results of this research. The focus on the learner brought also an interest in possibilities of equipping learners with the power to make autonomous and informed decisions about their own learning process and about the selection of such strategies which suit each learner the most. Learning strategies started to be in the centre of attention of foreign language teachers, e.g. in CALLA – The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach by Chamot and O´Malley (Lojová & Vlčková, 2011). Oxford also claimed that learning strategies can be taught i.e. people can improve their learning through strategy training (Williams & Burden, 1997). Learning strategies when incorporated into regular work in the classroom can build the confidence of the learner in accessibility of all possible sources for achieving their aims. Individual learning strategies can be in-built in the development of any language skill. This study looks at how the focused use of cognitive strategies can improve the way young learners approach the text in a foreign language. It demonstrates how conscious application of selected strategies improves the comprehensibility of the text as well as speed in which the tasks are solved.

1 Case study: Development of literacy skills and cognitive strategies

Learning a foreign language is a complex cognitive task which requires an enormous effort from the learner side, especially when we speak about early language learning. Young learners starting with the foreign language instruction encounter a massive attack of new knowledge and competences they have to master in their mother tongue. They need to focus on the basic concepts, on mastering literacy in their mother tongue and since there are big differences in the systems of their mother tongue and the foreign language it would be too complicated and confusing for them to learn reading in both languages at the same time. Psychologists seem to agree on this point – taking into consideration the complexity of the reading process - and suggest that it is best for children to master reading in their mother tongue first. Only after mastering reading in their mother tongue they should approach reading in the foreign language. However, the experience of reading in their mother tongue can be beneficial also for

learning how to read in a foreign language. As Hudson (2007, p. 118) claims, "readers approach a text with a history of how they have dealt with text in the past. They have an internal default that sets how they initially attempt to comprehend." Even cognitive strategies, used for decoding texts in their mother tongue, can be transferred to new experience, although as Dörnyei (2007) adds there is still rather limited evidence whether first and second language acquisition differ from each other only quantitatively, or whether there are also qualitative differences, especially when learning mechanisms are considered. Speaking about young learners, however, the efficiency of strategy use might be lower also due to the fact that they have not had enough space for their profound mastering.

Most studies in the area of cognitive strategies within the field of reading (e.g. Hosenfeld, 1977; Barnett, 1988; Jiménez et al., 1996) rely on recall protocols, both prompted and unprompted, or think-aloud protocols, interviews etc. in which students state how they went about approaching and grasping the text. The main research focus of this study was on the development of selected skills, interactions´ and growth of young learners´ ability to read. Since their metacognitive skills are not at such level that could serve the aim of research, the *case study research* seemed the most suitable method for investigation. Švaříček et al. (2007) characterize the case study research in the similar way; it focuses on the study in a real context, as close to real conditions as possible, and the researcher uses a combination of research methods to collect the data within a limited period of space and time.

Target focus group consisted of 22 learners (one class) aged 9 to 10 years (the fourth year at the elementary school) who were in their fourth year of learning English. The project was set into regular conditions of three lessons per week and English was taught by a qualified teacher of English from the first year.

1.1 Background of the research

The current research scheme followed the previous research project which focused on the development of reading through reading programmes at an elementary school in Slovakia. The selected elementary school has successfully implemented reading programmes in English into their school educational programme. This longitudinal project took over a period of three years and tested three reading levels in which the reading process was developed in accordance with psycholinguistic principles of the target audience. Reading programmes, which were designed for each level, took into consideration the average conditions in which English is taught at the primary level nowadays. The focus and the main aims at the first level were to help learners with noticing the differences between Slovak and English, word recognition, matching words and

pictures and pronunciation – via phonics training. The second level focused on mastering the areas such as spelling, guessing from the context, skimming, scanning, matching, filling in gaps, sequencing the text, as well as acquiring new words from the context. The programme designed for this level was based on reading a set of assigned books. The books consisted of simple texts usually accompanied by pictures for easier comprehension. Students were asked to read the books at home for the meaning, and the teacher afterwards focused on pronunciation of unknown words. After reading the book aloud to the teacher – to make sure the pronunciation of words was correct - and presenting their reading diary record, they were awarded a reading stamp for the book in order to keep the reading process motivating.

The reading programme designed for the third level consisted of intense reading taking place during the so-called Reading days. Children read a part of the chapter, worked on the meaning of the passage first and only later they analysed the language of the passage. They could use a dictionary to help themselves with the meaning of new words. The outcome of this part was a Reading diary, where they recorded new words they liked and a brief summary of the text. The stories selected for this level (easy readers, graded readers) were easy to follow because they were accompanied by motivating and very clear pictures, which helped a lot with understanding, and a picture dictionary. Pictures together with frequent repetition of key vocabulary (100 headwords) and sentences made comprehension easier. The main focus of this level was to develop especially comprehension of the text, and strategies like guessing from the context, skimming, scanning, problem-solving skills, etc. (for details see Straková, 2009). It was this level where the cognitive strategies training appeared to be the most suitable. Learners started to read longer texts, so reading comprehension could be developed.

1.2 Focus of the research

The first phase of the current research was designed for the period of one school year, and the check points for the strategies development were scheduled proportionally throughout the year. The data collection was conducted through:

– *observations*, where the prime focus was on the ability to apply selected cognitive strategies, the teacher intervention request while using the selected strategies as well as speed of mastering and comprehending the text;

– *content analysis* of reading diary logs, where the prime focus was on the analysis of the outcomes which might demonstrate the development of cognitive skills of the learner at the language level.

The research aim was to find out whether the focused training of selected cognitive strategies will enhance reading process in the target language. The

researchers anticipated that the focused training and practice of selected strategies will enhance young learners with a quicker response to the text read, with the ability to work out the meaning, the ability to see relations in the text as well as the ability to persevere with reading until the final phase. The secondary focus was placed on the pace of the task and the degree of independence, i.e. whether the learners´ pace and ability to work on their own would change as a result of the focused training.

The selection of the strategies for this study were based on the classification of Rebecca Oxford (see above) and from the battery of direct language learning strategies were chosen the following strategies: *grouping* (e.g. words from the text were grouped according to certain criteria – nouns, adjectives, topics, similarities, grammatical categories, etc. since this could help learners to see relationships between words), *creating associations* (usually based on the text read, which could help learners retrieve words from memory and thus to understand the text more easily), *using new words in a context* (which should help learners with consolidation of learnt vocabulary, and thus enhance better understanding of the text), *semantic mapping* (creating mind maps around topics, which also stimulates the ability to see the relations in the sentences and the discourse), *using physical response* (due to the age of the learners acting out new words, expressions or situations with the use of new vocabulary was a natural way of learning), *summarizing* (grasping the main idea of the text and the ability to express it though in a simple way), and *sequencing* (putting events in logical or text-based order, which also demonstrates the understanding of the text).

The memory and cognitive strategies help learners with working out the meaning of the passage read, storing and retrieving words from memory, finding connections and guessing intelligently as well as creating the structure for linguistic output. Of course, these are not the only strategies which learners use while reading a text; however, bearing in mind the specificity of the target group, the intention of the research was to map the initial reading experience with overlapping language learning strategies that young learners might use in their study.

1. 3 Discussion of preliminary findings

The *initial observations* revealed remarkable differences among the learners in the classroom in the way how they approached the text, how often they required *teacher intervention* and supportive actions. The class teacher, who was also the teacher of the subject Slovak language, confirmed that slower readers who struggled most while reading in English demonstrated similar problems while reading in their mother tongue. It was an interesting discovery that the

learners used the same strategies when coping with a problematic situation as in the mother tongue.

Learners at this stage needed a lot of support and the speed of the reading process was rather low. The students were offered a dictionary as a support. Learners at this level start with using picture dictionaries and they are not expected to be proficient users of the entire dictionary potential. However, it is important for them to realize that there is an extra source – besides their teacher - that can help them with understanding of the text. As expected, only very few students used a dictionary as a tool at the beginning; instead they took it as an attraction and flipped through it meaninglessly not being able to find the desired word meaning. However, comparing the initial and the final observation findings, the progress was evident in both speed of reading (towards the end of the school year the speed of reading doubled, measured by the length of the text and time spent on reading it) as well as the ability to use dictionaries in a more focused way (the dictionary skills were added to the focused instruction after the initial observation).

What was also evident was the decline of teacher intervention requested by the learners. As intervention request the researchers understood such moments when the learners were not able to continue with the task on their own and required the teacher´s guidance. The moments when learners asked aloud a question which just required a confirmation of what the learners thought, were excluded since that was observed as a typical action of young learners in the classroom. The final observation protocol shows that only 3 out of 22 children needed teacher´s help and instruction of what they are supposed to do next (in comparison with the initial observation protocol, the first reading lesson 19 out of 22 children requested some kind of support). The rest of the class worked either independently on the teacher or requested teacher´s help only sporadically. The three learners who still relied on the teacher to help them with the text demonstrated very slow progress also in other school subjects. The class teacher expressed her belief these three learners needed deeper psychological examination but the parents would not cooperate in this matter.

The focused instruction consisted of repetitive practice of selected strategies throughout the school year while working with any text – textbook-based or a supplementary one. The strategies were included into pre-reading, while reading as well as post-reading activities and learners were encouraged to build on their prior experience with these strategies. The dictionary skills were practised through games, focusing on searching words in a dictionary, sequencing words according to the alphabetical order, etc. Learners were set the time-limited tasks for looking up a word in a dictionary, for solving a problem with jumbled

dictionary headwords which helped them in the lessons where they read the text independently and were supposed to look up a word quickly in a dictionary by themselves.

Out of selected strategies, which the study focused on, *grouping* proved to be the strategy that learners mastered the most easily and were able to handle independently. This strategy was being practised not only in connection with a text but also when new vocabulary was being presented and practised. In order to support multisensory learning, this strategy was used with real objects or together with total physical response. No intervention request was recorded in 21 out of 34 focused activities. Since the textbook used in the class included only two exercises focused on the development of this strategy, the teacher had to supplement the textbook by modifying exercises connected to textbook texts and including a variety of strategy building activities. Puchta and Williams (2011) present a set of activities for development of children´s thinking skills where teachers can find inspiration for their lessons enrichment (see chapter 2).

Two other strategies were very close to previous results: *creating semantic maps*, since this was the way new vocabulary was presented to students from the beginning of studying English, and *using physical response* because children find it natural to learn through involving the whole body, so employing action was viewed as natural and supportive.

The strategy of *using new words in a context* (new words from the text were used in new contexts, new sentences) showed only very little improvement, which might be caused by the limited linguistic competence of the learners at this level. Intervention was requested most times and a few learners struggled with this strategy until the end of the trial period. The outcomes resembled substitution drills since learners produced sentences very similar to the original sentence.

The other end of continuum belongs clearly to *summarizing* where learners requested most interventions (20 out of 22 students), and as *the content analysis* revealed, the outcomes were rather limited from the linguistic value viewpoint. It can be demonstrated on the following example: the original text: "*She gives him her necklace. And he spins. He spins all the straw into gold*"(Arengo, *Rumplestiltskin*, 2004, p. 5). An example from a student´s summary: "*She gives him her necklace and he spins all the straw into gold*." This result, however, was anticipated since the ability to write a summary is underdeveloped at this age even in learners´ mother tongue, which was confirmed by the class teacher. She claimed that the same strategy – to copy parts of the text instead of summarizing the main facts – is used by the students in the Slovak language. On the other hand, because students need a lot of writing practice at this level anyway, even copying

parts of the text with interest is a valuable experience (Reilly & Reilly, 2005). This strategy also requires more time to be practised so the outcomes will be monitored also the following year. The other results from the *content analysis* of learners´ reading diaries shows that learners relied mainly on using words which appeared in the passage (87% pre diary log), and they tended to formulate short, descriptive sentences. However, towards to end of trial period the students managed to lower the number of sentences used for their summaries. While the first entries projected texts which were read quite closely, the final logs consisted with much lower number of sentences which learners considered to be the key sentences. Nevertheless, there was not much attempt (only 5 out 22 children) to modify sentences, to combine them or in some other way reduce the text.

2. Implications for instruction

The findings presented here are only the first results gained from the research of the development of foreign language literacy in Slovak elementary schools. This case study does not hold the validity parameters which could imply and suggest the definite approach in teaching children to read in a foreign language. However, these findings already reveal the facts that consistent training does help learners in the development of their literacy skills, and it can be approached from the very beginning of their development.

Textbooks used in schools nowadays focus on the language development in general. They do not provide the teacher with the complex material for the development of foreign language literacy. This is the task of the teacher to implement such activities focusing on the cognitive development in their lessons, whatever language skill or sub-skill is being practised.

The study presented above included a variety of classroom activities through which learners practised the areas selected for studies. Sample activities below were used in the focused training.

2.1 Grouping

Activities focusing on the development of grouping can vary from simple activities - where learners are given a set of words from various topics, and their task is to put these words to certain categories - to more demanding activities in which they search for certain relations among the words. Venn diagrams can also be used for expressing the relationships of selected objects or groups. It means that learners group objects according to their similar and dissimilar characteristics.

A sample activity where grouping involves early linguistic competence: students call out English words they like and the teachers records these words on the board. The students get a handout where they find the following instructions:

1. *Look at the words on the board. Find out the number of syllables the words have got. Count them and write the number. (Words with one syllable:_____ Words with two syllables: ___ Words with three or more syllables:_____)*
2. *Find the nouns among the words on the board. Can you put them in groups? For example: things to eat, people, sports, ...*
3. *Find words in plural and write them down.*

(Adapted from Puchta and Williams, 2011, p.46-47)

2.2 Creating associations

This strategy guides learners to make connections which might be personally relevant for them, e.g. based on their prior knowledge or experience, or it might be an original solution to a problem. This is a very important strategy to be trained since it helps learners in being flexible and inventive. Associations can be trained through simple activities in which learners build words chains: they say or write words and add the first word they associated with the previous word. They can also collect a set of words connected to a certain topic or word (e.g. school, morning, sports, lion, hot, etc.), or to contrasting words (e.g. big/small, cold/hot, happy/sad, etc.). What is very typical for creating associations is that the connections, presented by learners, can be surprising and the teacher might ask for an explanation. In this way, learners learn from each other and see things from a completely different angle as before the association was presented.

2.3 Using new words in a context

Recycling new words is a very important strategy to build strong links in the memory. It is essential that new words do not appear only in the original context they were used, but they should cross thematic borders. This strengthens the ability of the learner to retrieve the word with ease. A sample activity through which the teacher can support contextual variety: the teacher places flash cards with the words recently taught on board face down in a grid marked vertically by letters and horizontally by numbers. The class works in groups. They select a letter and a number and the teacher turns the flash card. The group of students is supposed to create a sentence using this word. Once learners get acquainted to this kind of activity, the teacher can take it to the next level and use two words in one sentence. The teacher can also use posters with more context, e.g. in the supermarket, at school, etc. and children are supposed to create sentences within the given context.

2.4 Semantic mapping

Semantic mapping is a strategy which helps learners to understand the concepts through graphical representation of relations between individual parts of the concept. With young learners, it can be used in a limited scale; however, we

can start getting them used to the strategy itself. Learners can collect the words within certain topic (e.g. this is a very suitable way of recording vocabulary for young learners). It can also serve for connecting words, actions, characteristics, etc. expressing their mutual relations; or it can serve for text/story summary and revision of certain topics. The most important keywords are included in the map and related to each other.

2.5 Using physical response

Using physical response is a natural way of expressing for young learners. It helps and supports memory to function properly, it activates learning centres of young learners, and it can be connected with any other cognitive strategy development. For instance, grouping as a learning strategy can be connected with physical action as in the following activity (Puchta & Williams, 2011, p. 34): "Learners are presented six categories (colours, numbers, food, school things, furniture, parts of the body) and the teacher brainstorms all the words children already know within each area. Then the teacher labels each category with a certain movement, e.g. Clap your hands, Stand up, Hands on your head, Knock on your desk, etc. After that the teacher calls out the words from various category and children need to respond with the matching movement."

2.6 Summarizing

This strategy teaches learners how to reduce the text to the key ideas. Learners need to decide what the most important information in the text is and which ideas can be omitted. This is not an easy task for young learners, since, for them, everything seems to be important. It is more suitable for them to start with summarizing paragraphs or shorter passages than to ask young learners to summarize longer text or the story. Visualisation helps a great deal since it is less abstract for young learners to recall what happened in the story when they link it with a visual representation of the situation. The teacher can prepare a set of pictures or flashcards representing the main ideas, and the learners will be able to summarize the story according to this visual support. It is also suitable to teach learners basic discourse markers such as *first, next, after that, finally* because these can help them to sequence and structure the summary.

2.7 Sequencing

Sequencing is an important strategy which helps learners not only to understand the text better but also to realize that things and events in every-day life happen in a certain order. The ability to search and discover this order can be practised best in story-based activities where the content always follows certain order. This can be done through picture sequencing or word/ sentence/ paragraph sequencing. Besides the stories, it is useful to teach children that even

daily actions happen in a sequenced way and through pictures or sentences ask them to put them in order. For instance, we can use sentences: *I wake up. I have a shower. I go to bed. I read a book. I go to school...*. Learners will organize those actions in the order as they happen during the day.

At this level, it is possible to start with simple activities as discovering the order of e.g. objects or animals and filling in the missing final object or animal. The learner is supposed to notice how the objects are sequenced and identify which object follows the last appearing one.

Sequencing can be developed also through grammar-based activities. For instance, learners can practise word order by lining up with word cards, each learner holding one card. Their task is to form a sentence out of the cards.

Summary and conclusions

Learning process is in general influenced by many factors. Learners may differ in the way they naturally prefer to handle the input or how they react to stimuli. These aspects influence the learner on both conscious as well as subconscious level. As learners proceed in the learning process it seems more important that they are able to direct their own steps, i.e. they do not rely on what happens in the classroom but consciously select the best ways how to reach their learning goals. The ability to make decisions about one´s own learning process, however, is not innate and has to be developed so that it could be used to the full potential (Scharle & Szabó, 2010). Using learning strategies effectively should make learning easier, faster, and even more enjoyable.

Developing cognitive strategies within reading programmes with young learners raises motivation and challenge to read in a foreign language. As Gavora (2008) claims, higher motivation supports deeper understanding of the text and activates prior knowledge of the learner as well as their metacognition.

This research paper presented partial outcomes of the initiative to discover whether training of cognitive learning strategies can help learners to approach reading in a foreign language. Since the target group consisted of young learners whose cognitive capacity is still developing and abstract thinking cannot be taken for granted, the choice of strategies was selected in such a way that it would enhance rather than hinder the learning process. Even this limited scale of strategies provided a clear indication that reading as a skill can be developed through step-by-step training of strategies developing cognitive processes of the learner. Development of cognitive processes and the development of reading are interconnected and should be treated that way by teachers in practice, whether we speak about reading in mother tongue or in a foreign language.

Next phase of the research project will pay attention to whether the focused instruction influences reader´s ability to access more extensive texts on a higher

level of comprehension with the inclusion of other, more specific, reading strategies.

Foreign language reading as a skill is frequently taken for granted, especially when older learners are addressed. However, it would be too simplistic to imagine that once a person learns how to read, he or she will automatically be an efficient reader. That is far from true and it remains an important duty of an educator to plan thoroughly the development of reading broken down to individual strategies. The sooner this education starts the better for the reader.

Acknowledgment

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Contact
assoc. prof. Zuzana Straková, PhD.,
IAA FF PU, 17. novembra 1, 080 01 Prešov, Slovakia,
zuzana.strakova@unipo.sk

Applied Linguistics Research of Bilingualism
and its Incentives for Foreign Language Pedagogy

Silvia Pokrivčáková, Constantine the Philosopher University, Slovakia
spokrivcakova@ukf.sk

Abstract

Possibly the simplest definition of bilingualism is the one pointing to the ability of a person to communicate in two languages. Most frequently, bilingualism is the outcome of raising children in a bilingual family, the result of long-term exposure to more languages, or the outcome of bilingual education that is provided by a school system. It is the latter relationship between bilingualism and bilingual education that should be of special interest to language pedagogy academics, school managers and school legislative makers because, since 1989, bilingual education has become extraordinarily popular among parents and learners, the result of which is the continually growing number of bilingual primary and secondary schools. On the other hand, it is necessary to see the many significant pitfalls in applying bilingual education in Slovak schools: nearly non-existent research which leads to a lack of empirically proven knowledge, many important aspects of bilingual education remain unexplained, and both psychological and cognitive effects of bilingual education are usually explained entirely intuitively, without reasonable empirical background. Bilingual schools in Slovakia also seek proven procedures of good practice or valid instruments for measuring the quality of bilingual education. The objective of this study is to "track" one of the possible paths to a better understanding of bilingualism and to analyse some of the latest research in applied linguistics (namely sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics), which may be inspirational for further development of bilingual education.

Key words

Bilingualism, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, bilingual education, foreign language teaching

Introduction

Worldwide, bilingual education belongs to the areas of contemporary pedagogy that brings out some important controversies (philosophical, conceptual, sociological, political, economical, etc.) and thus calls for extensive and intensive debate (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998). While in some countries (the U.S.A., the U.K.), bilingualism is connected with negative social aspects (such as

poverty, social and economical exclusion) - since in those countries bilingual education is related mostly to schooling immigrants or teaching heritage languages; however in Slovakia and other central European countries, the term (mostly related to education provided both in mother language and one of foreign languages, e.g. English, Spanish and Italian) connotes with exclusivity and elitism.

In previous papers, we investigated the contemporary state of bilingual education in Slovakia, in particular, analysing seven areas: reflection of bilingual education in school **legislation** and state pedagogical documents, **purposes** of bilingual education in Slovakia, its organization, structure of bilingual s**chools curricula, types of bilingual** education applied in Slovak bilingual schools, and how bilingual education is both reflected in (and saturated by) the latest **research** findings (Pokrivčáková, 2013a) and the need of specific teacher training for bilingual education (Pokrivčáková, 2013b). In those papers, we pointed out some significant pitfalls of applying bilingual education in Slovak schools: nearly non-existent research leading to the situation when some crucial aspects of bilingual education have remained unexplained and unconfirmed. Psychological and cognitive effects of bilingual education are usually explained entirely intuitively, without reasonable empirical background. Bilingual schools in Slovakia also seek proven procedures of good practice or valid instruments for measuring the quality of bilingual education. This led us to defining the objectives of this study as to "track" one of the possible paths to a better understanding of bilingualism through learning the bilingualism-related knowledge of other disciplines, especially applied linguistics, which has already been gathered. In other words, the aim of the paper is to analyse some of the latest research in applied linguistics (namely sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics), which may be inspirational for further development of bilingual education and it specific means (e.g. specific evaluation instruments).

Used terminology

Most likely, the simplest definition of **bilingualism** comes from Valdez & Figueora (1994) claiming that bilingualism means "knowing" two languages. The prolem is the authors do not explain what "to know" means.

On the contrary, other authors see bilingualism as a complicated complex influenced by multiple factors such as the age of acquisition of both languages, the amount of exposure to both languages, the way how both languages were learned, and the level of proficiency and communication skills in each language. Modern definitions admit that bilingualism is composed of multiple subskills and a bilingual (a person with the trait of bilinguialism) can have varying levels of proficiency in both languages. It means a person may be highly proficient in one

language and less proficient in the other, or he may be highly proficient in reading and nearly unable to speak in a second language.

Tokuhama-Espinoza (2009) summarized several key factors influencing (both in positive or negative way) development of bilingualism:

1. **Timing** (when exposure to two languages or formal bilingual education started);
2. **Aptitude** (a language "talent");
3. **Motivation** (both positive and negative);
4. **Strategy** (how both languages are learnt);
5. **Consistency** (how stable and consistent the exposure to both languages is);
6. **Opportunity and support** (does a person have enough opportunities to communicate in both languages? Are they supported by their families, friends, community, etc?
7. **Linguistic and historic relationship between languages** (it is much easier to become bilingual in languages coming from the same language family, e.g. Slovak and Czech, than to be bilingual in "distant", unrelated languages with different graphical, lexical and syntactical characteristics, e.g. Slovak and Chinese);
8. **Closest people´s attitude** (e.g. parents, siblings, closest friends);
9. **Gender** (it is believed that thanks to better cooperation of both hemispheres, girls are better in acquiring bilingualism);

Based on the combination of the above mentioned factors, researchers usually distinguish several types of bilingualism. Timing, for example, is crucial for distinguishing between **simultaneous bilingualism,** which occurs when two languages are acquired from birth or very early, prior to one year of age (De Houwer, 2005) and **sequential bilingualism**, when one language is acquired following another.

Many laics and also some pedagogical documents understand the term bilingualism as the situation when a person has a native-like proficiency in both languages – **true, "pure" bilingualism.** Such people are very difficult to find. Much more frequent are **additive bilinguals** who maintain their high-quality communicative skills in a mother language and they learn a second language as an addition to it. The situation is rather opposite with bilingual learners who, while improving their skills in a second language, gradually lose or decrease their communicative skills in mother languages (**subtractive bilingualism**). Moreover, some authors define **balanced bilingualism**, as neither of two languages is dominant, and a bilingual communicates in both languages equally

well. **Elective bilingualism**, on the other hand, is developed if a learner chooses to be bilingual and learn a second language, not because of social or work-related reasons, but because they want it.

Most frequently, bilingualism is the outcome of either raising children in a bilingual family, or the result of long-term exposure to more languages in various social environments, or the outcome of formal bilingual education provided by a school system. Considering various types of social environments in which bilingualism is acquired and various types of links between languages, researchers have identified seven possible topologies of bilingualism (c.f. Maghsoudi, 2010, p. 36):

Ambilingualism: a bilingual demonstrates equal ability in both languages and in all domains, it is nearly impossible to trace any influence of one language on the other;

Equilingualism: a bilingual has roughly equivalent ability in both languages;

Functional bilingualism: a bilingual can perform a limited set of activities in a second language;

Receptive/passive bilingualism: a bilingual comprehends a second language (either in spoken or written form) but is not able to produce it;

Productive/active bilingualism: along with comprehension, a bilingual can produce second language utterances;

Natural/primary bilingualism: the acquisition of a second language in a natural setting (e.g. bilingual family) without formal instructing or training;

Academic/secondary bilingualism: a bilingual acquires a second language through formal teaching at school. This type of bilingualism integrates developing biliteracy as a rule (c.f. Bialystok, 2007; Bialystok, Luk, & Kwan, 2005).

Bilingual education (both formal and informal) is provided in at least two languages. In reality, the concept is more complicated and a comparative study of the situation in various countries has proved that it "means different things in different places" (Hall, Smith & Wicaksono, 2011, p. 177). In this paper, bilingual education is understood as a term enveloping any system of education in which the curriculum (or at least part of it) is presented to learners in two (or more) languages, irrespective of their combination, so that they may develop bilingualism and biliteracy as close to true bilingualism as possible.

3 Initial background of the study

In Slovakia, bilingual education has become extraordinarily popular among both parents and learners; the result of which is the continually growing number of bilingual primary and secondary schools (the number of bilingual schools in

Slovakia has increased in the period of the last 10 years by more than 100% - from 25 to 56 schools).

In Slovakia, the additive type of bilingual education is dominant when considering the degree to which the two languages are used. In most cases, a mother tongue is used as the first language of instruction, while a foreign language is used only as a secondary instructional language in some subjects, or in the teaching of only some topics or lessons (which points to a strong form of bilingual education which promotes bilingualism and academic literacy in both languages). The weak form of bilingualism is performed only at 11 Slovak schools where English, German and Bulgarian are used as the only languages of instruction (for more details see Pokrivčáková, 2013a). Despite its growing popularity, many important aspects of bilingual education remain unexplained (e.g. both psychological and cognitive effects of bilingual education are usually explained entirely intuitively without a reasonable empirical background). Bilingual schools in Slovakia also seek proven procedures of good practice or valid instruments for measuring the quality of bilingual education. These are the areas where research in applied linguistics (more specifically in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics) might help to understand bilingualism and mechanisms of bilingual education better, as well as to model effective procedures of academic bilingual education together with valid instruments for measuring its quality. The objective of the paper therefore, is to introduce and analyse some of the latest researches in applied linguistics, which may be inspirational for further development of bilingual education. The paper focuses exclusively on academic bilingualism and discusses the results of recently published applied linguistic research that may be interesting and inspirational for language pedagogy academics, school managers and designers of school legislation.

Sociolinguistic impulses

Sociolinguistics as one of the disciplines of applied linguistics comes out from the initial assumption that people acquire/learn languages in social environments and thus any language phenomena should be studied in relation to relevant social phenomena (Auer, 2007). As Lanza (2008, p. 73) pointed out, sociolinguistic research proved that bilingual speech is always "socially embedded". Or, as Angermeyer (2010, p. 467) concludes: "It seems clear then that any theory of bilingual speech needs to include the socio-cultural context of language use and needs to account for a relationship between the community-level social facts of the contact situation and the linguistic facts of the bilingual speech of individuals".

Sociolinguistics studies bilingualism either as a characteristic of social groups, or communities located in a particular region (societal bilingualism), various language-in-contact phenomena, and impact of various social-environmental factors on developing individual bilingualism (c.f. Wei, 1994; Woolard, 1997).

The following social and environmental factors having impact on whether individuals become bilinguals or remain monolinguals were identified by sociolinguistic research (e.g. Pearson, 2007):

a) **the amount of continual exposure to both languages** (e.g. a greater chance of true bilingualism exists if learners are exposed to both languages early and often, not only at schools but in families and in communities, as well);

b)

c) **the attitudes of close social surrounding** (parents, siblings and peers) toward bilingualism has been proved to be a significant determinant as well;

d) **the popularity/attractiveness of languages in community** has been proved to be another significant factor (i.e. if learners and the community they live in, perceive both languages as attractive, the potential for reaching higher levels of bilingualism increases. However, if one of the languages is perceived as unattractive in a particular social community or context, learners are more likely to reject it and remain monolingual).

In addition to the above mentioned factors, sociolinguistics studies the specific socially determined language-contact phenomena such as:

- **socially-determined language choice** (e.g. diglossia), i.e. using different languages for different functions in various social contexts. Learners, for example, use one language for family discussions, for counting and praying, and the second language for formal communication (Spolsky, 2010);

- **codeswitching**, i.e. switching between two languages within a single conversation, usually at a turn boundary (Auer, 1998; Gardner-Chloros, 2008; Gregor, 2003; Poplack, 1980).

> Example**:**
> A: I have a stomach-ache.
> B: Oh, I am so sorry. Are you hungry?
> A**:** *Hej!* Yes.

- **codemixing,** i.e. including material from two languages (words or syntax structure) in a syntactic structure or a single utterance (Muyske, 2000).

> Example: Today was a very good day. I went to school and took my *vysvedčenie* (= a final school report). After that, the holidays started*.*

Codemixing is most frequently represented by using **borrowings** (**insertions**) when elements from one language are included to the structures

of the other language (Muysken, 1997; Auer, 1998; Angermeyer, 2010). Studying bilingualism, researchers point to the possibility to identify the dominant language of a bilingual by studying symmetry/asymmetry in his/her using insertions. Identification of a dominant language is interesting also in exolingual context. For example, Angermeyer (2010) studied the frequency and types of socially determined language-contact phenomena in performance of litigants and court interpreters. He found out that insertions of English elements to structures of their mother languages were noticeably more frequent while the inverted insertions were very rare. Angermeyer, reminding of the results of previous studies by Muysken (2000), concluded that this asymmetrical structure of language contact reflects social dominance of English language in analysed interactions and "relates to power asymmetries found between speakers of different languages who participate in these interactions" (2010, p. 476). (In the light of such a conclusion, it would be interesting to study and compare the perception of languages of instruction of bilingual school learners and then compare the results with the perception of Slovak and English of learners at mainstream Slovak schools. Language pedagogy would then apply the findings on dominance/subordinance of languages in bilingual education while studying the topic of learners´ motivation);

- **and language transfer**, which will be either positive or negative. Positive transfer occurs when a particular word, unit or structure of both languages in context is similar or even the same (e.g. cognates). It helps individuals exposed to both languages acquire a second language easier and produce a correct language sooner. In the contrary situation, when speakers and writers transfer words, units and structures that differ in two languages, negative transfer occurs, potentially causing errors in language production (e.g. using Slovak syntactical rules for word order while writing a text in English). Research of language transfer may thus be very useful for bilingual education pedagogy; since it would help both model procedures of more effective teaching based on positive transfer and explain some typical mechanisms of making errors caused by negative transfer (Ordonez, Carlo, Snow, & McLaughlin, 2002).

Bilingualism in psycholinguistic research

The social factors explained above, play crucial roles in other areas of applied linguistics, such as psycholinguistics (for more see Kroll & de Groot, 1998) and neurolinguistics (c.f. Paradis, 2004). For example, psycholinguistics focus on determining how two languages are organized in a bilingual´s brain and

consequently, whether they assist each other (positive transfer) or interfere with each other (negative transfer) (Gottardo & Grant, 2008).

Psycholinguists distinguish two fundamental types of bilingualism:

- **compound bilingualism**: two languages are closely connected since one language was learned after (and through) the other. The result is that two languages are integrated in one language system with two sets of words (e.g. for compound bilinguals words "a house" and "dom" are absolute synonyms naming the same mental concept).

- **co-ordinate bilingualism**: each language was learnt in different circumstances and in a separate context. Mental vocabulary and language systems are so distinct that they do not interfere. Two languages exist in a bilingual´s brain as two independent systems, each with its own vocabulary and grammar rules (e.g. for a co-ordinate bilingual a word "house" is related to a completely different concept – e.g. a mental picture of Victorian house in London - than a word "dom" which could relate to a mental picture of a typical wooden house in Slovakia).

Psycholinguistics is also interested in research activities, such as identifying and analysing a bilingual person's mental dictionary, and examining cognitive consequences of bilingualism, i.e. whether bilingual children have better or worse cognitive and language skills in comparison to their monolingual peers (Dijkstra & van Heuven, 2002; Feldman & Healy, 1998; Jiang, 2004).

At present, there is a relatively general psycholinguistic assumption that bilingualism affects different language and cognitive skills in both positive and negative ways. It has been proved by many research studies that vocabulary development is typically delayed in learning a second language, whether that language is acquired sequentially or simultaneously (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005). On the other hand, some research has proved the positive impact of bilingualism on literacy acquisition (Schwartz, Geva, Share, & Leikin, 2007) and metalinguistic awareness (Bruck & Genesee, 1995; Caravolas & Bruck, 1993). As far as bilingualism´s impact on other cognitive functions is concerned, many research studies (e.g. Morales, Calvo, & Bialystok, 2013) have shown that bilingual children develop a better working memory, they have a longer concentration span, they are better in focusing their attention, and they perform better in multitasking (Kraus et al., 2012).

Neurolinguistic perspectives

Neurolinguistics, as the last discipline of applied linguistics discussed in this paper, deals with the consequences of bilingualism for the neural architecture of human brains (Fabbro, 1999). Like sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics, it

focuses on phenomena such as language contact, language interference, and code-switching; but from the neurological perspective.

Neurolinguistics named 4 components of verbal communication: implicit linguistic competence, metalinguistic knowledge, pragmatics, and motivation. What might be of immense importance for language pedagogy is the relationship between linguistic competence (i.e. ability to communicate in a language) and metalinguistic knowledge (descriptive knowledge of a language, usually acquired in the academic environment through formal education in schools) neurolinguistics identified. While linguistic competence „is acquired incidentally, is stored implicitly, is used automatically, and is subserved by procedural memory", metalinguistic knowledge „is learned consciously, is stored explicitly, is used in a controlled manner, and is subserved by declarative memory" (Paradis, online). Therefore implicit linguistic competence and metalinguistic knowledge rely on different cerebral structures; they can be only unlikely developed by the same procedures and means. "Metalinguistic knowledge never becomes implicit competence, or the other way around. Both develop independently" (Paradis, online). It means that learning about the language (e.g. Grammar Translation Method techniques or academic way of learning languages through explicit grammar rules) can never be directly transformed in knowing a language (the ability to communicate fluently, communicative competence).

Conclusion: Implications for formal bilingual education

Based on multiple observations in bilingual classes, Gondová (2012) concluded that the only difference in the teaching practice of teachers at Slovak monolingual schools and those who teach at bilingual schools lies in the fact that the latter ones teach either in a foreign language, or they integrate two languages of instruction. In general, both groups of teachers teach rather "traditionally", preferring monolingual and frontal teaching techniques (e.g. lecturing) and applying nearly exclusively a convergent type of tasks. Teachers seem to give up using more creative and cognitively more challenging teaching techniques. Moreover, it seems that many teachers at bilingual schools are not even aware of a positive impact bilingual education might have on the development of their students´ cognitive functions and they do not apply techniques that could assist in achieving such an impact. Informing teachers about the latest research findings in applied linguistics, as well as incorporating these findings into teacher training courses, could help overcome this deficit.

Another serious problem related to bilingual education in Slovakia, which was mentioned above, is the lack of valid evaluation instruments, or even the lack of basic information on evaluation of language production in the context of bilingual education. A good example of such misunderstanding is the incorrect evaluation

of code-switching in learners´ performance. Teachers usually see code-switching as an attempt to hide fluency or a gap in active vocabulary. Applied linguistics, on the other hand, distinguishes several functions of code-switching (Zentella, 1985), thus hiding the deficit of lexical items in a second language, which accounts for only about 10 per cent of code-switches (Gudykunst, 2004). Other reasons/functions of code-switching might include co-ordinate bilingualism or creative experimentation with language. Deeper understanding the sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and neurolinguistic background of code-switching and other bilingual speech phenomena would assist pedagogical documents designers to design more valid and objective procedures of evaluating learners outcomes in academic bilingual education.

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Contact
doc. PaedDr. Silvia Pokrivčáková, PhD.
Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies
Faculty of Education, Constantine the Philosopher University
Dražovská 4, 949 74 Nitra, Slovakia
spokrivcakova@ukf.sk

On Selected Phenomena of the ICT-supported Foreign Language Teaching/Learning: Research Results

Ivana Šimonová, University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic
ivana.simonova@uhk.cz

Abstract

The paper deals with three phenomena relating to the ICT-supported process of foreign language teaching and learning: mind mapping, testing and communication. Latest changes in society and education and latest results of research activities held at the Faculty of Informatics and Management, University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic, are introduced focusing on (1) Concept of e-learning reflected in learners´ mind maps; (2) open-answer versus multiple-choice tests and (3) communication in online courses under the virtual observation.

Keywords

ICT, foreign language, teaching, learning, ESP, research

1 Introduction

The 1990´s events in the Czech Republic evoked changes in all spheres of the society, including education. General development towards democracy and information and knowledge society transformed the existing structure of the educational system - new competences reflected in new learning content were defined; demands for new teaching methods, organizational forms, ways of evaluation were detected; new relations between elements participating in the educational process arose; different subjects and competences were emphasized, i.e. Humanities and foreign languages, Informatics, Environmentalistics; learner's responsibility for his/her own education, creativeness and motivation; economic aspects of education and competitiveness, and last but not least the call for lifelong education appeared. These features have been slowly but steadily included into the new educational system, which is hardly to be imagined without implementation of modern information and communication technologies (ICT).

The main objective of the ICT implementation is to optimize the educational process. But this new approach does not only mean adding new teaching aids, methods, forms to the existing ones. It requires revision of the whole system and active ICT implementation in the process. Having undergone the starting period

of material and technical problems, the time came we dealt with didactic aspects of ICT implementation into the instructional process. And what are the results? Are teachers able to apply suitable means, create and use those which are offered by new technologies? Do students have higher level of knowledge if they attend lessons supported by ICT or those run traditionally by teachers? Are the new didactic means (methods, forms and aids supported by modern information and communication technologies) able to optimize the process of forming knowledge (Šimonová, & Poulová, 2012)?

2 Research activities

In this paper, we focus on researching selected phenomena relating to the ICT-supported process of instruction: (1) monitoring the concept of e-learning in learners´ mind maps; (2) considering features of open-answer tasks in tests in comparison to multiple-choice ones and (3) observing tutor – learner communication in online courses. All research activities relate to foreign language instruction focusing on English for Specific Purposes (ESP). They were held at the Faculty of Informatics and Management, University of Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic and students of Applied Informatics and Information Management study programmes were included in the sample group.

2.1 Concept of e-learning reflected in learners´ mind maps

Searching for new approaches to education which would provide teachers with deeper reflection of students´ knowledge is evoked by crucial efforts towards improving the process. Receiving realistic and objective feedback is the key problem of each educational concept. There exist various approaches to taking it, and the mind mapping (mental mapping, semantic mapping, concept mapping) is one of them.

The term of mind mapping first appeared in 1970s in the concept introduced by psychologist Buzan (2001) who searched ways of remembering experience and concluded they were saved in individual's memory in the form of clusters showing mutual interrelations. In the field of education the mind mapping relates to developing meaningful learning, i.e. a new piece of knowledge becomes meaningful to learners if in-built in their existing knowledge structures which he understands to be are identical with mind maps.

The mind map as a research method was first applied by Novak (1998) in late 1970s. In his concept mind maps are understood as diagrams expressing significant relations between terms in the form of statements. These are represented by links between terms which describe their mutual relations. This concept was later adapted by Åhlberg (2004). Buzan (2010) says the mind maps thus can be understood as external expressions of knowledge integrated in individual´s mind. He emphasizes the mind map is neither "correct", nor

"incorrect", but it must be always accepted in a certain context, while it could be rejected in another one.

The mind maps can be applied in different phases of instruction, e.g. for revising, practising and fixing the knowledge, and as a means of feedback. Novak (1998) distinguishes four ways how the mind maps can be used, i.e. learning strategies, teaching strategies, means to forming concept and content of single subjects and the instruction as the whole, and a means of collecting information about learner's understanding of the learning content. He also mentions other ways, e.g. strategies towards acquiring new learning content, evaluation etc. The information and communication technologies can be used for the same purpose, e.g. electronic applications for creating and analyzing the mind maps, which are available on web pages of iMind-Map (2011), brainstorm and mind map online (2011), Edraw Mindmap (2011) etc.

Research design and methodology

The main research objective was to monitor how students understand the term of e-learning. Despite the term is generally and widely used within the field of education (Bertrand, 1998), there still does not exist a generally accepted, common definition of e-learning. Until this is provided, two approaches can be applied. First, accept the definition presented in main European administration documents, e.g. (EC, European Commission growth, competitiveness and employement, 1993), (EC, 1995) saying that e-learning means using modern multimedia technologies and the Internet towards improving the quality of education thanks to easy approach to sources and services (EC, 2001). Second, e-learning can be considered from two different points of view Zlamalova (2001): (1) it is the *educational process supported by information and communication technologies*; (2) it is a set of *technological tools supporting education.* Above all, Zlamalova (2001) emphasizes that under no circumstances eLearning means the technical "*e-*" only, but the traditional didactic "*-learning*" must not be omitted. Or, as Khan says (2006): "E-learning may be considered a new approach to providing a quality, interactive learning environment, easy available to everybody, anytime, anywhere, using features and sources of various digital technologies, and also other learning materials which suit to open, flexible and distributed learning environment." And, last but not least, a completely different approach is introduced by Logan (2010) who defines that "The *e* doesn't stand for electronic. Better to think of the *e* as *e*volving, or *e*verywhere, or *e*nhanced or *e*xtended ... and don't forget *e*ffective".

The research sample included 104 respondents, the 1st-year students (aged 18 - 20 years) of the Faculty of Informatics and Management who in 2011/12

enrolled in the Applied Informatics and Information Management study programmes.

Respondents had not had any experience in being tested in this way, so the method of mind mapping was not used in the traditional form, i.e. the respondents did not create the mind map themselves, but they were provided the eight-dimensional schema of e-learning designed by Khan (2006). The eight-dimension schema replies to the question what is required for the open, flexible and distributed learning. It is presented in two versions which differ in graphic presentation (Figure 1). In the middle of schema 1 (left) the figure of a human being is presented but Khan does not explain how this symbol should be understood. Two basic approaches can be applied: e-learning as a learner-oriented process; or e-learning as a way of learning which enables/provides highly individualized approach to learning which is defined by each learner and is reflecting individual learning style preferences and other didactic-psychological characteristics (i.e. requirements-oriented learning). In schema 2 (right) the word e-learning is placed in the centre instead of the human figure.
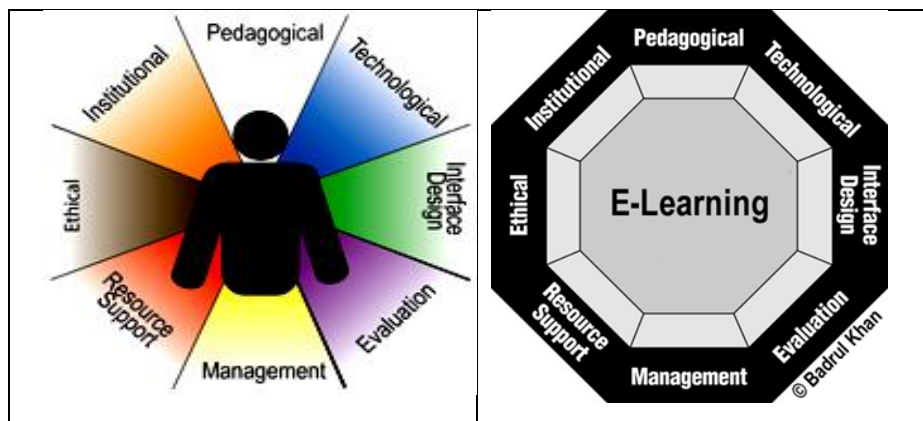
Figure 1: Concept of e-learning: two versions of schema (Khan, 2006)

Before the research started, the principle of mind mapping and Khan's schema were explained to the respondents. Then, students modified the Khan's schema and adjusted it to their individual mind concepts by matching 17 terms defining e-learning by Khan to the eight dimensions and describing each match by an appropriate verb. In case of disagreement respondents removed the term or dimension. Additionally, they were provided several other terms by the researcher which were not mentioned by Khan (learning, tutor, communication)

and which focus on concrete subjects and foreign language learning (a subject, foreign language/s, English (ESP). In case of total disagreement with the concept provided, respondents were encouraged to draw their own schema.

The Khan's structure of e-learning includes eight dimensions as follows: Pedagogical (P); Technological (T); Interface Design (D); Evaluation (in this research marked as feedback, F); Management (M); Resource Support (R); Ethical (E); Institutional (I). The 17 terms defined by Khan are listed below: analysis of objects, content and media used, analysis of participants (dimension P); organization, methods, strategies used in the environment (T); infrastructure design (hardware, software) (D); design of e-learning programme (design of pages, content, navigation, tools for testing) (F); management (evaluation of learner's work during the instruction using the assignments, evaluation of the learning environment (M); resource support (learning management, ways of providing and spreading information, online support, maintenance (R); social influence, cultural and geographical differences, differences in level of entrance knowledge, differences in accessibility to information, ethical and legal rules (E); institutional support in the field of e-learning services for students (I).

The collected data were processed by the method of frequency analysis.

Research results
The data were structured according to five criteria:
a) Dimensions used in the respondent's concept of e-learning.
b) Dimensions not included in the respondent's concept of e-learning.
c) Additional terms included in the individual concepts.
d) Levels included in the individual mind map.
e) Defining a new model of the mind map.

a) Dimensions used in the respondent's concept of e-learning
First, respondents matched 17 terms to the eight dimensions of the Khan's concept of e-learning. Results are displayed in figure 2 showing that one third of respondents (33.6%) did not make any changes in the concept, they used all eight dimensions and matched one term to each dimension at least; 16.3% respondents worked with seven dimensions; 15.3% used six dimensions; 14.4% of respondents matched terms to five dimensions and 17.3% to four ones; 3% of respondents used only three out of eight dimensions. Results are displayed in figure 3.

b) Dimensions not included in the respondent's concept of e-learning
As mentioned above, respondents could have matched terms to eight dimensions. Results showed that nearly 34% of them had done it while 66% of respondents had used from three to seven dimensions. Not a student worked

with one or two dimensions only. As clearly seen the lowest scores describing the frequency of matches were detected in the Design interface dimension (D; 3%), followed by Pedagogical dimension (P; 7%), design of e-learning programme, i.e. design of pages, content, navigation, tools for testing (F; 16%) and technological dimension (T; 19%). These scores closely relate to respondents´ study programmes (Applied Informatics, Information Management) and prove what reflect their professional interests. Results are displayed in figure 3.

Figure 2: Dimensions used in the respondent's concept of e-learning (left)
Figure 3: Dimensions not included in the respondent's concept of e-learning (right)
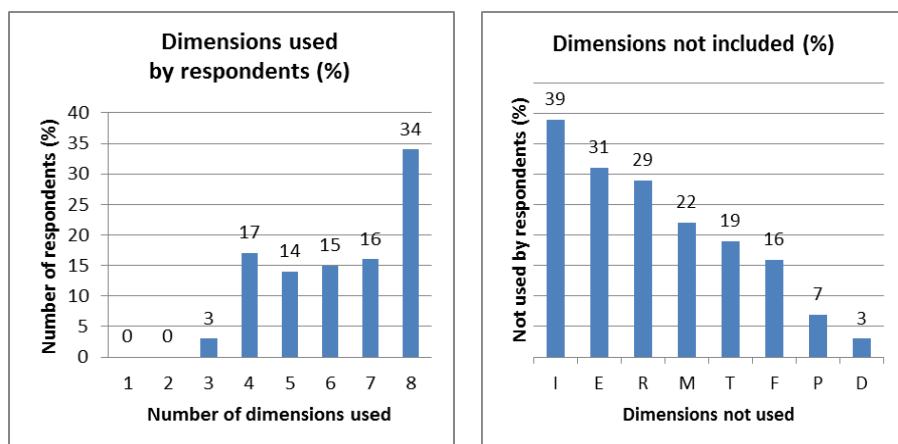
c) *Additional terms in the concept*
Except of the above mentioned terms, there exist other ones which were not mentioned by Khan but in our opinion strongly relate to the topic: *learning, tutor, communication*. The results show that only few students included any of them in their individual concepts: learning 7.7%; tutor 3.9%; communication 1.9%. Totally 3.2% of respondents used one of the terms in their mind maps, no respondent implemented two or three terms.

The reflection of a particular subject, foreign language/s and/or English (ESP) was also monitored. The results showed no respondent had included any of these terms in the individual mind map; English was mentioned by one respondent as the language of professional communication in the LMS Blackboard which was used for the ICT-supported instruction at FIM and language of IT professionals,

not the subject taught/learned with the ICT-support. Our expectations were different in this field – we expected at least EPS and/or a foreign language and an IT subject would be mentioned in mind maps, even under the circumstances, when the ESP teacher and Database Systems teacher were the main organisers and present within this research activity. In the given academic year the ESP teacher taught approximately 20% of respondents and all of them attended lectures of Database Systems.

d)   *Levels included in the individual mind map*

If the presented Khan's schema is considered to be the first level of the mind map, then 92.3% of respondents added the second level and 6.7% of respondents designed the three-level model.

e)   *Defining a new concept of the mind map*

Nine respondents (8.6%) drew their own, totally different concept (model) of the mind map. Eight of them first started with re-organizing the Khan's concept but finally they designed their own schema; one respondent rejected the Khan's concept at the very beginning and designed a completely new model. Similarly to Khan the human body was situated in the centre but it was not defined who s/he is, because the teacher and learner were displayed separately. Several from the above provided terms were included in the schema; others were added according to the respondent's choice (friendship, stressfulness). In the text below the mind map, other two items were mentioned (motivation, responsibility) being related to all dimensions. The centre of the circle was called the system. Within the following interview the respondent explained he had considered the whole schema to be a system, not only the body in the centre which was not linked to any other dimension or described by other characteristics.

Summary and discussions of results

The results of researching the term of e-learning by the method of mind mapping showed that one third of respondents (33.6%) had not made any changes in the provided Khan's schema; respondents had matched at least one term to each dimension; the others adjusted the schema and matched terms to 4 - 7 dimensions. The least frequently used dimension was the institutional one (more than one third respondents did not match any term to it), followed by the ethical, resource support, management and technological dimensions which were not used 20-30% of respondents. This result proves that 97% of respondents understand e-learning from the point of design interface, pedagogical dimension (93.3%) and evaluation (83.7%), followed by management, ethical and institutional dimensions and group of dimensions, e.g. IER, IEM, IEF, IET. This result reflects the structure of the sample group consisting of students of the

Applied Informatics and Information Management study programmes who attend the institution where e-learning and ICT-supported instruction have a relatively long tradition and have become standard. The mind maps were structured in two levels by most respondents, 7% of them designed three-level mind maps. Respondents matched 17 terms to eight dimensions of the Khan's concept; in general, they used 6-17 terms. One third of respondents (33.6%) matched all 17 terms to the dimensions, using fewer dimensions step-by-step decreased from 12.5% up to 1%. Nine respondents designed their own mind map; eight of them worked with the provided Khan's schema first.

It is hardly possible to sum up all the collected data to a single and homogenous conclusion. Results mostly express agreement on the Khan's concept of e-learning, which can be appreciated because this concept is complex, considering e-learning from the whole width of this phenomenon. On the other side, it should be taken into account that the respondents were students of study programmes focusing on Informatics who focus on this field from the point of profession and interest and pay more attention to technological aspects. For the future, similar research should be held so that to monitor the e-learning concept of students of teachers´ training and other faculties and check whether their concepts are influenced by their future profession, i.e. whether e.g. pre-graduate teachers emphasize the pedagogical dimension of e-learning as the Informatics students do with dimensions closely relating to information technology and how the didactic approach is reflected in the e-learning concept.

2.2 Open-answer versus multiple-choice tests

Didactic tests belong to frequently applied research tools in educational sciences and relating fields. Czech authors, e.g. Byčkovský (1986), define the didactic test as a tool of systematic measurement of results of instruction. Didactic tests are generally classified according various criteria which have been analyzed by numerous authors, e.g. Byčkovský (1986), Chráska (2006), Pelikán (2011), Průcha et al. (2009) etc. In our research the quasi-standardized, cognitive, objectively scored, comparative, monothematic tests monitoring the entrance knowledge were applied. Further on it is highly required the test contained tasks of various types. The entire type is pre-defined by the educational content and the main objective of testing. If these rules are kept, the test reliability increases (Chráska, 2006). The tests applied in this research contained tasks of two types: open-answer tasks (i.e. translation from Czech into English, test 1, T1) and multiple-choice tasks (providing four distractors per task, test 2, T2).

Since the World War II when applied first, the *multiple choice tests* have become the tool which is frequently used in various fields of human activities and

knowledge, including the field of higher education (Hymes, 2011). Currently, the multiple-choice tests are mostly used in the electronic form, i.e. they are set and assessed with the ICT support. Everybody concerned could agree it might seem to be less difficult for students to choose the correct answer from several provided ones randomly than to actively formulate it by themselves. If chosen randomly, the received results do not reflect student's real knowledge but they are influenced by other characteristics, i.e. good luck, intuition, "guessing" the answer etc. Thus the multiple choice tests might be understood the tool of lower reliability than open-answer tests (Hymes, 2011). To contribute to solving this problem and verify or reject this expectation is the main objective of the described research.

So as the random choice was minimized, the risk is lowered by increasing the number of provided answers (distractors). Four distractors seem to be optimal, as too many choices make the task not clearly arranged, and fewer choices make the "guessing" easier. If two or three distractors are applied, it is highly recommended to make the correction of the test result (Chráska, 2006). If the teacher is going to apply the test score correction, learners should know about it before the test starts to decide whether to apply the random choice if they are not sure their choice is correct, or not to answer at all. The main pre-condition is all distractors were plausible for the learner (Johnson, 1999).

Another approach is if both types of tests are applied. In our research, first, the open-answer test (i.e. translation from Czech to English) was used; second, the multiple-choice test was applied. This two-tier testing enables the teacher to analyze learner's cognitive structures and knowledge and defining misconcepts (Prokša, 2008). Calculating the test reliability, difficulty, sensitivity and discussing the validity are the obligatory preconditions.

Research design and methodology

The research objective was to verify whether students reach higher level of knowledge in the Czech-English translation or in the multiple choice test.

The research sample consisted of 101 students of the Faculty of Informatics and Management, University of Hradec Králové, who enrolled in the first year of the bachelor study programme Applied Informatics and master study programme Information Management in the 2010/11 academic year. The testing was held at the beginning of the second term. Students were randomly (by drawing lots) divided in the experimental and control groups.

The process of testing was structured into two phases, each of them applying a different tool: (1) the Czech-English translation was applied (Test 1, T1), i.e. the open-answer tasks were used, when respondents translated Czech sentences into

English; (2) the multiple-choice test (Test 2, T2) was applied providing four distractors in each task.

Each test contained 11 tasks (sentences) based on the same lexical material so that the result, i.e. knowledge of English tenses, was not influenced. In each sentence *Mr Parker* did an activity, i.e. *to wash the car*. The verb *wash* and noun *car* belong to basic vocabulary acting under regular rules without any exceptions which might influence the result. This vocabulary is used in each sentence describing various situations by different tenses, e. g. *Mr Parker is washing his car., Have you washed your car, Mr Parker?*

The selection of grammar items resulted from the expert analysis of 16 academicians from the Applied Linguistics Department, Faculty of Informatics and Management and Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Kralove; Slovak University of Agriculture, Nitra; Department of Language and Intercultural studies, Faculty of Education, Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra and University of Economics, Bratislava. The visual similarity of the sentences emphasized differences in the application and translation of single tenses, which could help in discovering learner's potential misconceptions in this field (Prokša, 2008). This intention was supported by the order of single grammar items, which has been used in most grammar books, i.e. from easier to more complicated ones, using the comparison of similar forms of various tenses (Present Simple/Continuous, Present Perfect Simple/Past Simple, Gerunds, Indirect Question, Sequence of Tenses, Conditionals etc.).

Each test was set independently, i.e. the following type of test was assigned only after finishing the previous one. Thus e.g. the T1 results could not be influenced by feedback provided in T2. Reflecting the testing procedure, the large amount of respondents (101 respondents) and low number of seats in IT laboratory (25 seats), the testing cycle would have to be repeated several times, which might have lowered the testing conditions, the tests were not provided in the electronic version, as it might be expected with students of Informatics, but in the printed form.

The following hypothesis was set to be verified:

H₁: Students will reach higher test scores in the multiple-choice test (T2) in comparison to the open-answer test (T1).

Research results

The collected data were summarized and analyzed in two steps.

First, the occurrence of correct answers in both tests was monitored and presented in table 1. The results clearly showed students reached higher test scores in test 2 (T2), i.e. in the multiple choice test, than in the open-answer test (test 1, T1), i.e. Czech-English translation. Comparing the data it is clearly seen

that respondents provided 45.63% of correct answers in the Czech-English translation (T1), while in the multiple choice test (T2) it was 50.67% correct answers. This result verified the expectation that they reached higher test scores in multiple-choice test.

Table 1: Correct answers in T1 and T2

Responses	Correct in T1	Correct in T2
total score (n)	507	563
total score (%)	45.63	50.67

Second, the hypothesis was verified by the single-pair t-test on the 0.05 significance level. The collected data were processed by the NCSS2007 statistic software and results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of statistic results in T1 a T2

Paired differences				
Tests	Mean	SD	t-test	p-value
T1 : T2	-5.04	2.560	-0.535	0.012

The results proved there the statistically significant difference was discovered in the amount of correct answers in T1 and T2 tests, i.e. between the Czech-English translation and multiple-choice test (Mean is -0.535; p-value (Sig.) is 0.012). The correlation coefficient between T1 and T2 tests is 0.25, which refers to the significant relation between the test scores in both tests. Thus the H_1 hypothesis was accepted.

Above all, the correlation coefficient between the amount of identical (both correct and incorrect) answers is 0.707 in T1/T2 which refers to the strong relation and the results cannot be considered the random choice ("guessing") but answers based on good knowledge.

Partial results supporting the verification of hypothesis are displayed in Table 3 and Figure 4. Higher test scores in single tasks are highlighted light grey, the lowest test scores are highlighted dark grey and written in italics.

Table 3: Partial results in tasks: correct answers

Task N.	Grammar item	Test 1 (%)	Test 2 (%)
1	Present Continuous	93	97
2	Present Simple	45	94
3	Past Simple	61	49
4	Present Perfect Simple and Past Simple	67	31
5	Present Perfect Continuous	33	39

6	Gerund	50	57
7	Indirect Question	24	27
8	Future (going to)	75	90
9	Sequence of Tenses	24	21
10	Conditional Clause	*19*	33
11	Wish Clause	*14*	22
Total (%)		**46**	51

Figure 4: Partial test scores
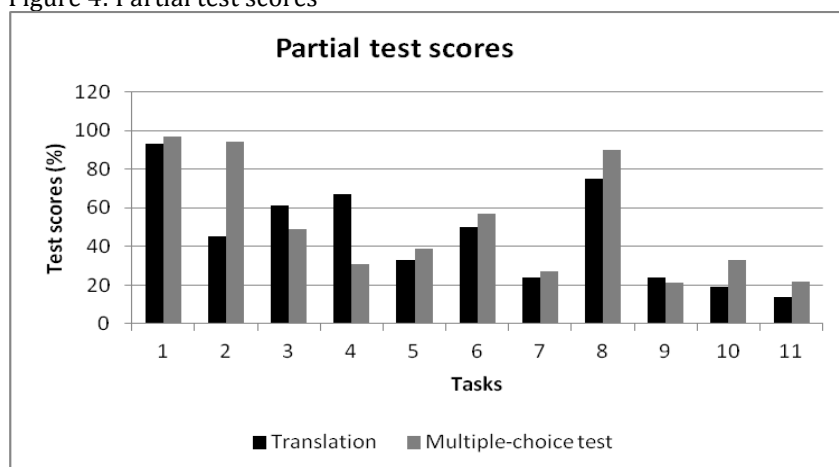
As it can be clearly seen in figure 4, the highest test scores in both tests were reached in task 1 (present continuous tense) and task 8 (expressing the future - going to). Surprisingly, the high score appeared in task 4 (combining present perfect and past tenses, 67%). A reason might be this task follows the one where present perfect was applied. Generally, using this tense is often difficult for numerous students, which is the reason why special attention is paid to this tense and the test result might be influenced by this feature. The high test score in task 2 (present simple, 94%) in test T2 (i.e. the multiple choice test) shows that numerous students are able to select the correct answer but only fewer than half of them (45% in T1) apply the tense correctly in the Czech-English translation.

Lower test score appeared in task 5 (present perfect continuous tense, 39%) in the T2 test (i.e. multiple choice test with feedback), in the Czech-English translation (T1, 33%) and the multiple choice test. The lowest test score (fewer

than one third of correct answers) appeared in task 11 (wish clause), task 9 (sequence of tenses) and task 7 (indirect question).

Despite the tested hypothesis confirmed our expectation (students would reach higher test score in the multiple-choice test and the difference in comparison to the open-answer test scores would be statistically significant) this result will not lead us to completely stop using the multiple-choice tests. What we consider to be more important is the fact that the level of knowledge of the first-year IT students is low and does not meet the required B2 level of secondary school graduates. Differences in partial test scores and their seeming illogicality result from and reflect the higher secondary school situation. While the grammar school graduates meet all requirements, the secondary professional school graduates (mainly those who did not pass the school leaving exam in English) have crucial problems. Generally, it is not their fault, but the blame should be mainly laid on the education system, when teacher's competence may be of low level or the period of being taught by a teacher is short, e.g. two teachers per school year. The situation requires more from both the teachers and learners, including those who reach the adequate level. Working in classes of different knowledge is demanding and stressful for teachers who are looking for adequate didactic strategies and for learners, whose level of knowledge differs significantly.

Taking the credit system into account, the weak students have enough time (18 months) to study independently (individually) and reach the required level of knowledge. Providing motivation (both inner and outer) and didactic support lead to succeeding in this process. The organization of study, which reflects the situation, from the FIM side and providing additional courses organized by the Institute of Further Education at FIM on the other side support those students who are interested and make efforts to meet the demands.

2.3 Communication in online courses under the virtual observation

Observation belongs to traditional, natural and widely spread research methods of collecting data within the educational environment. Generally, it is understood as monitoring of sensitively perceived phenomena, mainly human behaviour, course of activities (Mareš, 1995). Some authors emphasize this activity to be objective, intentional, purposive, systematic, planned and directed but on the other hand having some limits (Travers, 1969). Relating to the wide variability there exist various typologies covering e.g. long/short-term, intro/extrospective, non-/structured, non-/mediated, in/formal observation etc. Modern technologies, e.g. ICQ, Skype e-mail, short message service (sms) running on the Internet, are understood as a special way of (electronic) communication.

Information and communication technologies have introduced a new approach to observation. Some authors call it the virtual observation, i.e. the observation in the virtual environment, or tracking (Kalwar, 2011). It is mostly defined as a record of exact facts which can be monitored either by single electronic tools (e.g. e-mail), or by the whole virtual learning management system (Mareš, 1995). The record includes all learner's activities since the logging in the LMS, i.e. frequency and length of studying, the tools used, evaluation of work and outcomes, participation in discussions, team work, assignments etc. If the observer is expected not to disturb the process of instruction during the real observation, i.e. to be hidden, this requirement is met to maximum extent with the virtual observation, as it is the LMS which plays the observer's role. From this point of view the virtual observation applies the ex-post-facto approach, as past activities cannot be changed but analyzed and serve for deducting conclusions. On the other hand, the quality of data is limited to pre-defined phenomena and no other (additional, unintentional) data can be received. Despite the limits the observation supported by ICT/LMS provides valuable data which enable to tailor the course of instruction to learner's needs and thus make it more efficient.

Within this research we focus on communication in online courses. Teachers and students are there in the educational communication, which is a special type of social communication, when information between educants and educators are exchanged so that educational objectives could be reached. The particularity of this relation between the teacher and student(s), and the environment which the communication runs in, belong to important factors of the process (Nelešovská, 2005).

Research design and methodology

The research focuses on the student – tutor communication in the situation when the students are submitting assignment for tutor's evaluation within the LMS. The main research objective was to monitor and analyze the situation so that such measures can be taken which will support the communication in the future as the communication is expected to improve the student – tutor relations and consequently contribute to the learning "climate" in the virtual class.

The observed process of instruction was organized in online courses designed in the LMS WebCT. Data were collected in two 3-year periods and processed by the NCSS 2007 statistic software. The frequency and content of communication were evaluated by two methods: first, the contingency table – the independence test was applied; second, the relative frequency was calculated. Hypotheses were tested on the 0.05 significance level and the normal distribution of data had been proved. The research was held in four subjects which are crucial for the study

programmes - Database Systems (D), Management (M), IT English (ITE) and Business English for FM students (FME). The subjects were taught by three tutors (ITE and FME were taught by the same tutor) in eight online courses where 16 assignments were submitted, totally 2,954 assignments were analyzed (2,781 in AI and IM, 173 in FM). The communication, i.e. messages were structured according to the content into 14 types as follows:

1 Assignment sent without comments.
2 I am sending my assignment.
3 I am sending my assignment + greetings.
4 I am sending my assignment + greetings + some comments.
5 Apology but not for late submission.
6 Apology for late submission.
7 Apology for late submission + brief explanation (1 line).
8 Apology for late submission + medium-sized explanation (2-3 lines).
9 Apology for late submission + long explanation (4-more lines).
10 Apology for late submission + brief explanation (1 line) + provides some extra work for being late.
11 Apology for late submission + medium-sized explanation (2-3 lines) + provides some extra work for being late.
12 Apology for late submission + long explanation (4+ lines) + provides some extra work for being late.
13 Without apology for being late.
14 Other comments.

Because of low data occurrence under criteria 7-14, the data were restructured in six types and all data relating to groups 7-14 were included under the type 6). Thus two groups were set as follows: non-communicating respondents (type 1), communicating respondents (types 2-6).

Resulting from the research objectives the following hypotheses were set:

H_2: The frequency of communication differs in subjects IT English, Management and Database Systems.

H_3: Financial Management students communicate more frequently in comparison to those in Applied Informatics and Information Management.

H_4: The frequency of communication increases from the first the third year of study.

Research results

Collected data were processed and are presented below following single hypotheses, i.e. data relating to communication monitored in subjects, study programmes and years of study.

Verification of H_2

Differences in frequency of communication in *various subjects* are expected in H_2 hypothesis. It arises from the fact that each subject belongs to the different field of science, different methods and outcomes (knowledge and skills) are required from the students. The research sample included students of Applied Informatics and Information Management (years 1-3) who submitted 2,807 assignments in three subjects: IT English (E), Management (M) and Database Systems (D). Data of each subject were structured into six types of messages under the criteria 1-6 as mentioned above. The received data are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Communication in subjects : content (n)

ype of message	Message content	E	M	D
1	Assignment without comments.	1,162	458	299
2	I am sending my assignment.	137	122	74
3	I am sending my assignment + greetings.	200	174	19
4	I am sending my assignment + greetings+comments.	39	22	4
5	Apology (not for late submission).	21	7	0
6	Apology for late submission.	58	9	2
Total in subject		1,617	792	398
TOTAL				**2,807**

Data presented in table 4 were summarized from the point of non-communicating students in Table 5.

Table 5: Total communication in subjects: non-communicating students

Students / Subject	E	M	D
Non-communicating students: type 1 (n)	1,162	458	299
Communicating students: types 2-6 (n)	455	334	99
Total (n)	1,617	792	398
Non-communicating students (%)	**71.86**	**57.8**	**75.1**

First, the H_2 hypothesis was tested by the method of contingency table – independence test on the 0.05 significance level. Second, the data underwent the comparative analysis of relative frequency by the F-test and Z-test. The relative amounts of non-communicating students (type 1) were compared to those who

communicate even though minimally (types 2-6). Differences in communication between subjects were discovered by both methods.

The partial results were as follows:

- **M < E:** There is the statistically significant difference in communication in Management and IT English. (Z-test: -6.820).
- **E < > D:** There are more non-communicating students in IT English and Database Systems in comparison to Management (the difference is 3.24 10%) but the difference is not statistically significant (Z-test: -1.155).
- **M < D:** There are fewer non-communicating students in Management in comparison to Database Systems (the difference is 17.3%), which is the statistically significant difference (Z-test: -5.803).

Conclusion

The H_2 hypothesis supposing the differences in communication between the subjects was accepted. The results discovered higher amount of communicating students in Management, followed by IT English and Database Systems. The statistically significant differences were proved between all groups except E versus D.

Verification of H_3

Differences in communication in various *study programmes* were expected in H_3. The hypothesis was based on teachers´ experience that Financial Management students communicate more frequently in comparison to those of Applied Informatics and Information Management study programme, they show better ability to express their minds logically, fluently, they speak and write in standard language, apply grammar rules, keep the social code and last but not least, they do not have problems with presenting their ideas to the public. These features do not relate to all students, individual differences appear.

The communication was monitored in two subjects - IT English and Management and totally 217 messages were included in the research. The collected data were structured into six types as mentioned above. The results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: Communication in study programmes and subjects: content (n)

	Message content	**ITE**	**FME**	**ITM**	**FMM**
1	Assignment without comments.	68	25	21	7
2	I am sending my assignment.	3	6	12	9
3	I am sending my assignment+greetings.	3	12	21	12
4	I am sending my assignment+greetings+comments.	1	4	0	0

5	Apology (not for late submission).	4	2	4	0
6	Apology for late submission.	2	1	0	0
Total in study programmes (n)		81	50	58	28
TOTAL (n)					**217**

Legend:
E: English; M: Management; IT: Informatics; FM: Financial Management; ITE: English for IT students, FME: English for FM students, ITM: Management for IT students, FMM: Management for FM students

Data presented in Table 6 are summarized from the point of non-communicating students in Table 7.

Table 7: Total communication in study programmes and subjects: non-communicating students (%)

Students / Subject	**ITE**	**FME**	**ITM**	**FMM**
Non-communicating students: type 1 (n)	68	25	21	7
Communicating students: types 2-6 (n)	13	25	37	21
Total (n)	81	50	58	28
Non-communicating students (%)	**84**	**50**	**36**	**25**

First, the H_3 hypothesis was tested by the method of contingency table – independence test on the 0.05 significance level and differences in the subjects were discovered. Second, the data underwent the comparative analysis of relative frequency by the F-test and Z-test. The relative amounts of non-communicating students (type 1) were compared to those who communicate, even though minimally (types 2-6). The results did not discover any statistically significant differences between students of Financial Management and IT study programmes (Applied Informatics, Information Management) (Z-test: 1.457).

Conclusion: The H_3 hypothesis supposing statistically significant differences in communication in various study programmes was rejected. Despite the results discovered fewer non-communication (i.e. more communicating) students in the Financial Management study programme in comparison to Applied Informatics and Information Management, the difference was not statistically significant.

Verification of H_4

Differences in communication in various *years of study* were expected in H_4, mainly the increase in frequency in the third year of study in comparison to the first year. The research was held in the subject of IT English in two three-year periods. Group 1 included students enrolled at the faculty in 2007/8-2009/10 academic years; group 2 consisted of those enrolled in 2008/9-2010/11. The research timing is displayed in Table 8.

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Table 8: The course of research

	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Group 1	year 1	year 2	year 3	
Group 2		year 1	year 2	year 3

Data from 418 respondents (222 respondents in group 1, 196 respondents in group 2) were included in the research sample, which is 873 assignments (450 in group 1, 423 in group 2). The total amount of assignments is displayed in table 9.

Table 9: Assignments included in the research (n)

Subject	E, year 1		E, year 2		E, year 3	
Assign.	*1/1*	*½*	*2/1*	*2/2*	*3/1*	*3/2*
2007	**107**	**107**	55	52	41	-
2008	**81**	**81**	**53**	**53**	87	87
2009	127	116	**96**	**72**	**68**	**62**
2010	39	40	49	49	**50**	**43**

The data were summarized, structured in two groups (see table 8) and displayed in table 10.

The results prove the H_4 hypothesis showing the higher occurrence of non-communicating students in the first year in both groups. We understand the students were at the beginning of their study and the process of developing their relation to tutors was at the starting point. So there was the reason to build social contacts and communicate despite the technical or didactic support to submitting assignments were not needed. Partial data show students did not have late submissions of assignments at the beginning of study, nor any other problems. In years 2 the number of non-communicating students decreased rapidly (24% in group 1, 12% in group 2), which means communication became more frequent. In both groups the communication of type 2 and 3 increased, i.e. I am sending my assignment, I am sending my assignment and greetings; and type 6 in group 1 (Apology for late submissions). In the third year of study this tendency continued in group 2 only and reached 62% non-communicating students (from 80.5% in the second year), while in group 1 the number of non-communicating students reached 67% (from 50.5% in the second year). When comparing the data of the first to those of the third years, we can see the decrease in the number of non-communicating students in both groups (8% in group 1, 31% in group 2). The results are displayed in Figure 5.

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Table 10: Three-year communication in IT English: non-communicating students (%)

Communicating per group/assignment (%)					
	year 1		year 2		year 3	
Assignments	E 1/1	E 1/2	E 2/1	E 2/2	E 3/1	E 3/2
Group 1:	Total communication (%)					
1	70	79	55	46	65	69
2-6	30	21	45	54	35	31
Average per year (%)						
1	74.5		50.5		67	
2-6	25.5		49.5		33.5	
Group 2	Total communication (%)					
1	100	85	80	81	54	70
2-6	0	15	20	19	46	30
Average per year (%)						
1	92.5		80.5		62	
2-6	7.5		19.5		38	

Figure 5: Three-year communication in two groups in IT English: non-communicating students (%)
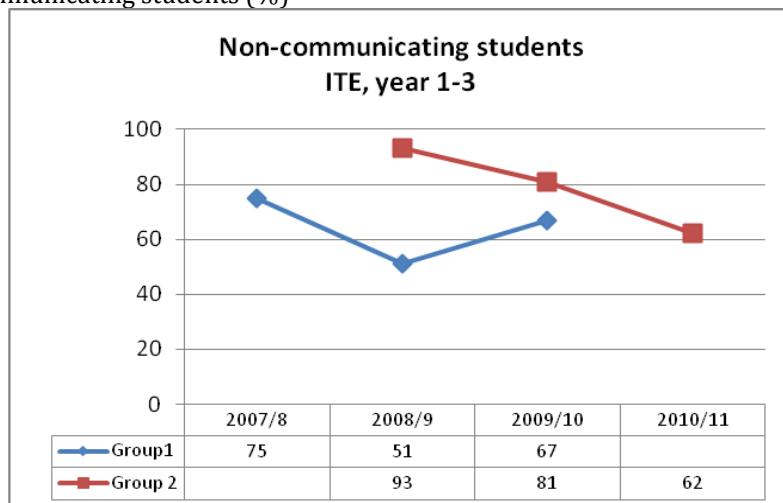
Conclusion: The H_4 hypothesis supposing the increase in amounts of communicating students in the third year in comparison to the first year of study was accepted. The highest amount of non-communicating students appeared in the first years. The reason might be students did not have any relation (positive or negative) to the tutor, as they were at the beginning of their study, so the need to communicate did not arise. Partial data show students submitted their assignments in time at the beginning of their study; they did not have any other (e.g. technical) problems. In second years the amount of non-communicating students sharply decreased (i.e. number of communicating increased) (24% in group 1, 12% in group 2). Amount of messages of type 2 (*I am sending my assignment*) and type 3 (*I am sending my assignment* and greetings) increased, as well as type 6 (*Apology of late submission*) in group 1. This trend continued in the third year in group 2, when amount of non-communicating students decreased to 62%. The relative amount of non-communicating students increased in group 1, but results in both groups are similar (67% in group 2). Totally the increase in number of communicating students was discovered in the third years in comparison to the first years (8% in group 1, 31% in group 2).

To sum up, communication is an essential part of the process of socialization and the ground of upbringing and education. This research aimed at a small part of educational communication only which appeared in the ICT-supported distance form of instruction in online courses in LMS. Despite this some recommendations can be deduced. Positive relations and trust between teachers and students are reflected in the way of mutual communication, and it contributes to higher quality of the educational process, i.e. it supports positively the course of instruction. The "non-invitational communication", i.e. such a type of communication from students to teachers which is not obligatory but desirable, is highly appreciated. Current fast development of information and communication technologies makes the distance e-communication easier. It still holds man is the sociable creature longing for communication in any form. Following long-time observations would be highly desirable as they could provide other data and result in conclusions applicable to teaching other subjects and to the field of e-learning in general (Šimonová, Poulová, & Bílek, 2010).

3 Conclusion

Much has been said and written on foreign language teaching and learning. Despite the importance of latest research activities reflecting the entire impact of current technologies, common sense, experience and intuition may contribute to this process making it more natural and "human being- friendly" as both the citations below clearly prove.

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"Only providing technologies do not change the situation much, but it can start new activities and approaches. Bringing computers to schools is less important than provide teachers with new ideas. Technologies do not aim at removing traditional educational methods and forms. The new technologies do not automatically bring positive changes into the process of instruction. But they may contribute to increasing its effectiveness, under some conditions" (Venezky, 2002).

"For more than 40 years, hundreds of thousands of students, managers and employees have filled in learning style inventories, their scores have been subjected to factor analyses of increasing complexity, numerous learning styles have been identified, and what are the conclusions that stem from such intensive labour? We are informed that the same teaching method does not work for all learners, that learners learn in different ways and that teachers should employ a variety of methods of teaching and assessment. Comenius knew that and more in seventeenth century Prague and he did not need a series of large research grants to help him find it out (Coffield, 2004).

Acknowledgements

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Contact
Assoc. Prof. PhDr. Ivana Šimonová, PhD.,
University of Hradec Králové, Rokitanskeho 62,
500 03 Hradec Králové, Czech Republic

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ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Traditional and Computer-based Teaching Aids and Learning Resources in Foreign Language Education in Slovakia

Zuzana Sándorová

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia
e-mail address: zuzana.sandorova@ukf.sk

Abstract

The continuous development of educational technology has undoubtedly a lot of advantages also in the field of foreign language teaching. Thanks to this, teachers are given newer and newer possibilities to catch their students´ attention. One of them is to supplement traditional course-books with computer-based teaching aids. Furthermore, teachers can enrich the content of foreign language lessons also by bringing other learning resources in the classroom, such as authentic materials, the positive effect of which on students´ foreign language competence has been supported by numerous scholars.

But do teachers really grasp these opportunities to make their lessons more attractive? Do traditional course-books still represent the core of foreign language teaching? What other complements and learning resources are used to enrich foreign language lessons? Do learners of English as a foreign language have the chance to experience real language inside their classrooms? And, finally, are authentic materials perceived by them useful, enjoyable and motivating, or rather demanding and demotivating?

The aim of the present study was to find answers to the given questions. The questionnaire, which was answered by first-year students of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, focused on students´ experience during their secondary school studies. The paper also compares answers given by students of different specializations attending the subject "English for Academic Purposes" with those provided by students of the Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies.

Keywords

EFL course-books, EFL course-book complements, learning resources, authentic materials

Introduction

It is commonly acknowledged that the aim of foreign language teaching (FLT) is or should be to improve learners´ communicative competence. According to Homolová (2003), this term is generally understood as the ability of a foreign

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language (FL) learner to use the language efficiently in real situations of communication. In order to reach the above mentioned goal, learners of a FL should be provided with a great variety of teaching methods, techniques and materials, including both non-authentic and authentic materials (AM).

According to Peacock (1997, p. 144) non-authentic materials are "materials produced specifically for language learners". Undoubtedly, the course-book is the best known and most often used non-authentic material or artificial material. According to Harmer (2007) one of its main advantages is that it provides a framework for the content of the lessons.

However, the boom of technology in the last two decades has influenced the world of education, including the area of FLT. Due to it, a great variety of accessories has appeared, such as class CD-ROMs, MultiROMs, iTools, etc. which do not decrease the importance of course-books; on the contrary, they are perfect supplements to them. They do not only contribute to the development of language proficiency and enrich the lessons, but challenge students´ overall competences, including their computer or technical skills.

A further benefit of technological innovations is that they make the world smaller and bring the real world in the classroom. They provide an access to the real language mainly through AM, which are materials originally produced for native speakers (Homolová, 2003). AM include literary texts, job advertisements, radio programmes, songs and audio-visual materials, such as films, videos, etc.

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of using AM in the FLT process. Some of them focus on the effect of AM on different language skills, the most often surveyed of which are receptive skills, e.g. reading and listening comprehension (Mousavi, 2011; Ghaderpanahi, 2012). Others deal with the impact of real language materials on the motivation of language learners (Peacock, 1997).

Certainly, using AM has both its advantages and disadvantages. Their proponents often argue that AM are more interesting than traditional materials, such as course-books and their components, because they are up-to-date and provide a precious source of the target culture making the lesson more enjoyable and motivating. Due to the fact that they demonstrate a true picture of the target language and the culture, they are useful when developing communicative competence.

However, teachers often refuse to bring real language to their classrooms, as they find it too demanding to work with and time-consuming to prepare. They claim that these materials do not correspond with their students´ language level, as they are full of difficult expressions and grammar structures. Furthermore,

some teachers also argue that AM might be a bad example for students, since grammatical and stylistic rules are often disobeyed in them (Homolová, 2003).

Resulting from the above presented theoretical background, the research was run focusing on the reality of using traditional and computer-based teaching aids and other learning resources in secondary foreign language education in Slovakia. The methodology of the research is discussed in the following part of the study.

Research design

The main objective of the research was to learn about the reality of using course-books and their complements as well as other learning resources in EFL lessons in Slovakia through a questionnaire survey.

Further objectives were defined as follows:

1. to examine the attention given to AM in teaching EFL at secondary schools in Slovakia.
2. to find out students´ opinion about the use of AM in EFL education.
3. to compare answers given by students of different specializations attending the subject "English for Academic Purposes" (EFAP) with those provided by students of the Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies (DLIS).

According to the mentioned objectives we have stated the following research questions:

1. What are the most often used titles of course-books used in EFL education at secondary schools today? Did DLIS respondents use different course-books than EFAP students?
2. Which complements of the given course-books are applied in EFL lessons? Can any differences be traced in the answers given by DLIS and EFAP students?
3. What other materials and sources are used to enrich the content of EFL lessons? Are they the same in the group of DLIS respondents as amongst EFAP participants?
4. What types of AM are used? Were they present equally in EFL lessons of both groups?
5. How often did students use them? Were EFAP students as frequently exposed to them as DLIS respondents?
6. What types of tasks did they have to do while working with AM? Are the answers of EFAP students different from those of DLIS participants?
7. Do students think of AM as demanding, funny, useful and motivating tools of improving language competences? What is the agreement between DLIS and EFAP respondents?

Research sample

A sample of 76 first-year students took part in the research, while 38 of them studied either *Teaching of English Language and Literature* or *English Language and Culture* at the Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies (DLIS students). Three students of the whole group attended a study programme called "*Elementary Pedagogy*" and they were offered a certain number of subjects also in the English language. Another 38 respondents involved students of different study programmes all attending a subject called "English for Academic Purposes" (EFAP students), which means that they learned English two hours per week during thirteen weeks.

The respondents came from different regions of Slovakia and their age distribution was from 19 to 23 years. 51.32% of all the respondents were 19 or 20 years old which means that they started their studies right after having finished their secondary education. Another 43.42% were 21 or 22 years old; these students had had one year "off" or attended another institution before they started their recent studies. Only 3.95% of all the students (3 people) were twenty-three or more years old, which means that they had left their secondary school more than one year ago. Based upon these statistics, we assume that the vast majority of the respondents remembered well the educational reality of their secondary schools and, thus, they could provide us with valuable and reliable information on the investigated area.

Concerning the level of their English proficiency, almost 90% of them passed "maturita" (i.e. secondary school leaving examination) in the English language at either B1 or B2 level of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR), while the rest learned English as a second foreign language.

Research tool

The respondents were given a one-sheet questionnaire of two pages with twelve questions in the Slovak language.

In questions from one to five the basic data on respondents were collected (age, gender, recent study programme, level of school leaving examination, etc.). Participants´ answers helped us to characterize our research sample.

Questions from six to seven dealt with course-books and their components used during the secondary school attendance of the participants.

The second page concerned respondents´ experience with AM and other learning resources during the lessons of English language at their secondary schools. Questions focused on the types of AM applied in EFL lessons, the frequency of using them, as well as tasks connected with them. The last question investigated respondents´ opinions on AM.

All the questions were formed in Slovak language in order to ensure that respondents understand them together with the given list of offered items properly. Except from the first five ones focused on basic information about the respondents, all the other questions were formed as close-ended in order to make students able to answer them. It intended to help their memory, e.g. served as prevention from getting back unanswered questionnaires. Moreover, in questions from six to nine they were also given the possibility to add any kind of extra information about the given issue.

Data processing and analysis

The data were collected during February 2013. The questionnaires were filled anonymously and the respondents did not have any time limit. All questions of the questionnaire were analysed manually in a separate chart by filling the collected answers in it, in the end of which they were summed up. At a further stage they were calculated into per cents and put into graphs or charts. Based upon these statistics, we tried to make our conclusions about the reality of using different learning resources in EFL lessons in Slovakia.

Results and discussion

Below, the complete results are presented, being structured in seven main parts reflecting the statements of the questionnaire.

1. Today´s most popular titles of course-books used in EFL education at secondary schools

In question six, students were given a list of EFL course-books written for secondary-school students which we had selected from webpages of different bookstores. In order to help students´ memory to recall the name of EFL course-book(s) used during their secondary studies, the list included both the most widely used publications, which we had been able to find almost at all webpages, such as New Headway, New Opportunities, as well as the latest, less known course-books, such as Laser, Inside out, Code, etc. Moreover, the respondents were also provided with the possibility to add any other publication(s) which they had used and they could not find on the list.

As it can be seen in Figure 1, in general the order of the five course-books used by most students is as following: New Headway, New opportunities, New Horizons, Solutions and Laser. Comparing the two groups, the three "winners" are New Headway indicated by 57.89% of DLIS students and 36.84% of EFAP respondents, New Opportunities circled by 23.68% of DLIS and 39.47% respondents and New Horizons chosen by 13.16% of DLIS and 5.26% of EFAP participants. Apparently, differences can be noticed in the percentages, as except

for New Horizons, New Headway and New Opportunities were used by far more DLIS students than EFAP respondents.

Figure 1: Titles of course-books used by at least 5% of students
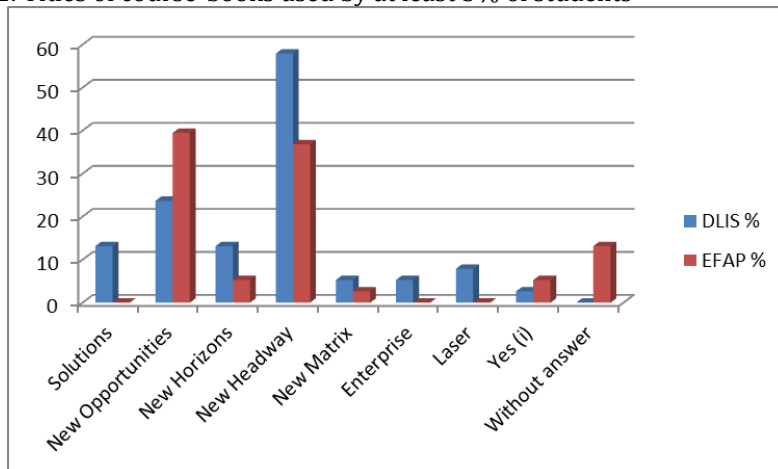
In the group of DLIS participants, the list of course books was further completed by Solutions, chosen by 13.16% and Laser by 7.89%; furthermore New Matrix and Enterprise both indicated by 5.26% of the respondents. However, none of the EFAP participants circled Solutions, Enterprise or Laser and even New Matrix was chosen only by 2.63%. (The other books included on the list as well as added by students, reached only 2.63%, e.g. one student or 0% in both groups. Therefore, in order to make the figure clearly arranged, we have decided not to include them.)

An interesting phenomenon can also be noticed when examining the percentage of students who neither indicated any kind of course-book, nor added any other title. In the group of EFAP respondents it is 13.16%, while amongst DLIS participants it is 0%. Although the reason of ignoring the given task might be interesting, we can only hypothesize that they either did not use any kind of course-book, which is undoubtedly the worst alternative, or they simply did not feel like answering the question. Another option may be that they forgot the title of the book they had used during their secondary studies and the provided list could not help them to recall it.

Summarizing the results of the sixth question, there cannot be seen very sharp differences between the DLIS and EFAP group when it comes to the order of the three most popular titles. As shown in Figure 1, almost all titles were indicated by more DLIS students than EFAP ones. Also in the group of DLIS

participants, the number of different titles is higher comparing with the group of EFAP students. However, as results of the differences between the two groups are almost unexplainable, further research into the content of the course-books would be necessary. Yet, the answers of the two groups as a whole provide us with precious information about the titles used by most students. This can be useful as an option to choose the source when starting our research about the authenticity of course-books used by secondary-school students today, which we intend to realize in the near future.

2. Course-book complements in EFL education at secondary schools

Question number 7 focused on course-book components that the students used during EFL lessons at their secondary schools. They were asked to both circle or add any other accessory they used as a part of the "course-book package", such as workbook, class CD-ROMs (compact discs containing audio tracks for listening exercises included in the student book), MultiROM (compact discs containing data used only for reading) and iTool (e.g. a set of digital resources for Interactive Whiteboards).

If we look at the two groups as a whole (Figure 2), we can see that the components of the given course-book most preferred by the EFL teachers were workbooks (85.53%) and class CD-ROMs (77.63%). All the other accessories included on the list, e.g. MultiROM and iTool usually available to the given courses were indicated only in one or two cases. As to the possibility to add any other teaching aid than the mentioned components, two of all the respondents wrote that they had used glossaries published to the given course. Two other students did not indicate any of the given options, neither added anything.

Seeking for differences between the two groups, according to Figure 3 we can claim that there are not any sharp contradictions. However, when examining the usage of class CD-ROMs in the two groups an interesting fact occurred to us. There were 81.58% of DLIS respondents and 73.68% amongst EFAP students who had had the chance to listen to class CD-ROMs. It means that in the former almost 20% and in the latter nearly 30% of the students learnt EFL without doing listening comprehension exercises contained in the given course-books.

Figure 2: Course-books complements used in EFL education at secondary schools in percentages
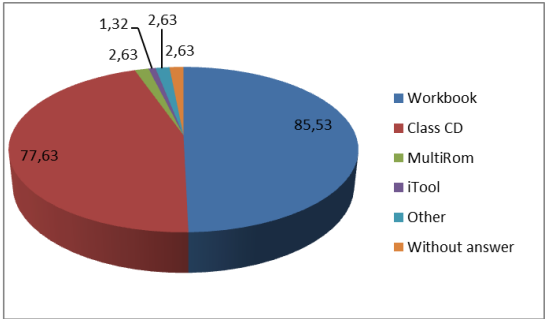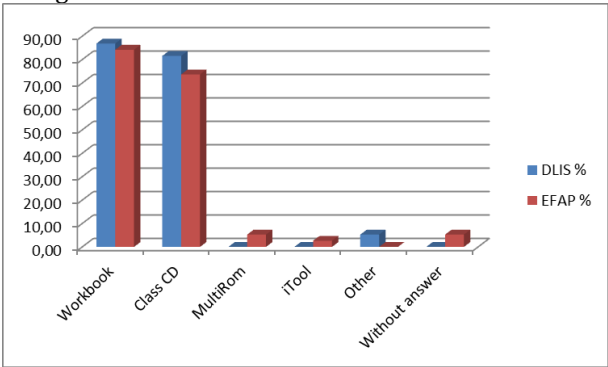

Figure 3: Distribution of the usage of course-book complements in the two groups in percentages

We have found it surprising because in order to develop language competences effectively all the four skills must be treated as equally as possible. In case of neglecting the skill of listening comprehension, one might have difficulties to understand native speakers and even other foreigners speaking English. What is more, developing perceptive skills, such as speaking and writing is almost impossible without improving receptive skills first. If students are not exposed to listening to the language by using class CD-ROMs released to the given course, they should at least be provided with authentic listening materials. Therefore, we have decided to look at the answers of those students who did not indicate the usage of class CD-ROM from another angle, e.g. whether they were exposed to aural AM.

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Results in Figure 4 show that all of those DLIS students who did not indicate the usage of class CD-ROMs, were at least given the possibility to listen to AM. However, in the EFAP group, we can find 10.53% of respondents who listened neither to class CD-ROMs, nor to language spoken by native speakers. The only sources of the spoken version of English for these students were their EFL teachers what we find completely insufficient.

Figure 4: Respondents provided neither with class CD-ROMs nor with AM
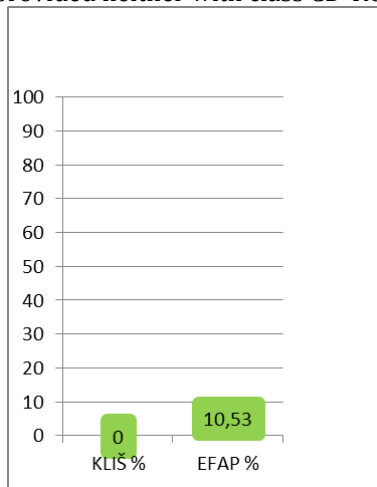
Regarding the usage of course-book components other than workbooks and class CD-ROMs, such as MultiROM and iTool we can claim that they are almost absolutely put aside, what is quite surprising in the era of the Information and Communication Technology (Figure 4). However, learning about the reasons would require another research focused on the role played by new technologies in FLT. Surely, they may be different, beginning with the small number of EFL lessons per week, through the lack of teachers´ confidence and experience with using such aids, to the lack of finances in education.

3. Using different learning resources in EFL education

In question eight we tried to get an answer whether the teachers of the participants had also used other materials except from the given course-book and its components. The respondents were given six options and they could indicate more than one. They included AM (with an explanation and examples in the brackets), copies from other course-books and teaching aids (than the ones

they used daily), magazines written in English for learners of EFL (such as Friendship, Bridge, etc.). They were also given the possibility to add anything else that came to their minds or to indicate that they had not used any of the given options.

According to Figure 5 we can assume that AM are the most frequently used types of additional teaching aids, as 85.53% out of all the respondents indicated this option. The second most often used learning resources are magazines written in English for learners of English (53.95%) and parts or components of other courses than the ones they used on a daily basis (30.26%). However, there is a group of students (10.53%) who did not use any sort of additional material, including the lack of AM.

Figure 5: The most frequently used learning resources in percentages
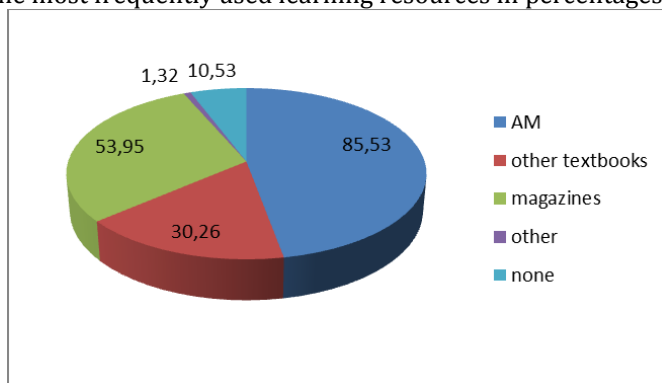
Examining the differences between the two groups, we can see the following (Figure 6). In the use of magazines, there is not a sharp contradiction. On the other hand, we can assume that more DLIS students were exposed to authentic language (94.74%) than EFAP respondents (76.32%). However, copies from other course-books and their components were indicated by 36.84% of EFAP participants and only by 23.68% DLIS students. Furthermore, the percentage of those who did not indicate any of the given options is 15.79% amongst EFAP respondents and only 5.26% in the group of DLIS participants.

It seems that teachers of EFAP students preferred to choose traditional textbook-kind materials and did not really experiment with alternative types of teaching aids, such as AM. 23.68% of EFAP students claimed that they had never met AM during their secondary education, while amongst DLIS students there were only 2 such participants (5.26%). In our opinion, it could be one of the

reasons why EFAP students had less confidence to choose English language as their academic specialization.

The next part of the questionnaire is focused only on the answers of those students who experienced learning English language through AM.

Figure 6: The use of different learning resources in the two groups in percentages
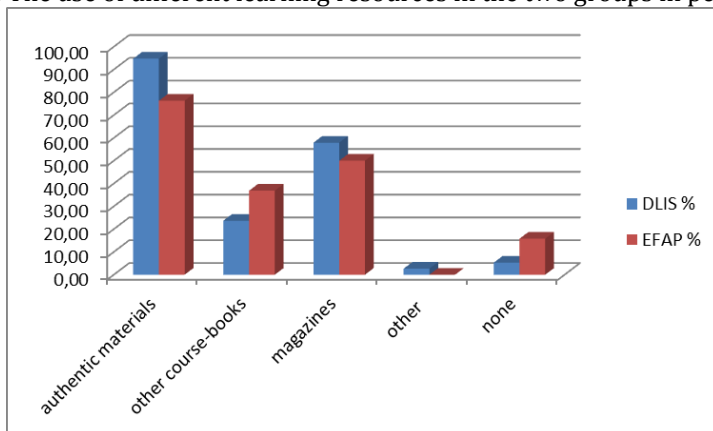

4. Types of authentic materials used in teaching English as foreign language

According to Homolová (2003), we distinguish a wide range of different types of AM, including visual (for example leaflets, menus, tickets, etc.), audial (songs, radio interviews, etc.) and audio-visual resources (films, videos, computer games, etc.). In question 9, we have divided them into 10 categories and the students were asked to indicate the types of AM they had met during their secondary studies. These groups were created based upon the most commonly used AM in FL teaching. Group number 9 called "Materials of every-day life" includes all kinds of practical things which native speakers encounter in their lives, such as menus at restaurants, timetables and tickets at stations, leaflets at museums, etc. In the tenth category, they were given the possibility to add any other resource or type of AM which they had experienced to work with within the lessons of EFL.

The results in Figure 7 show that songs and films in English were met by more than the half of all the students. Among the most popular AM, we can also rank articles in newspapers and magazines read by 35.53% of students. Watching videos from You Tube (28.95%), reading authentic literature (27.63%), working with different documents (25%) and materials of everyday life (26.32%) reached similar values, as indicated by more than one quarter of all the students. The least frequently used materials were commercials (14.47%) and job advertisements (11.84%).

Figure 7: Types of AM used in EFL education in percentages
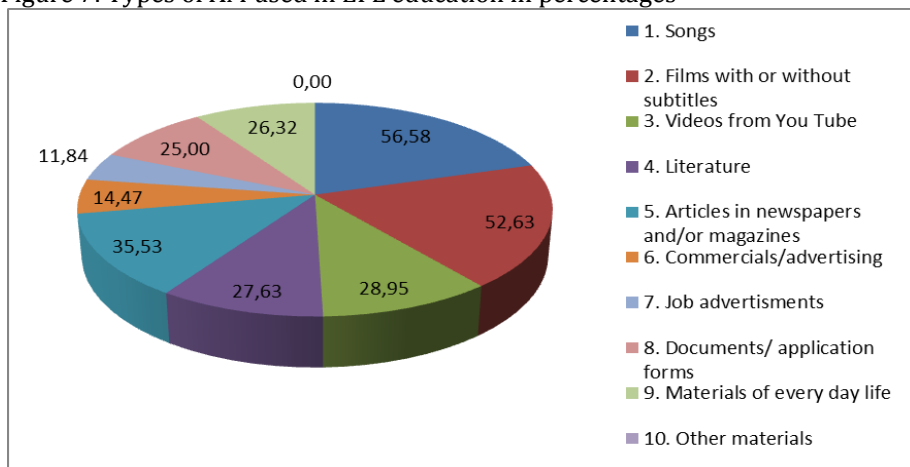
Examining the results shown in Figure 8, we can claim that the majority of EFAP students used songs as AM in the lessons of EFL, while the majority of DLIS participants was provided with films. The least often used AM by EFAP students were job advertisements; on the other hand, DLIS respondents worked the least frequently with commercials and advertising.

Figure 8: Frequency of using AM in percentages
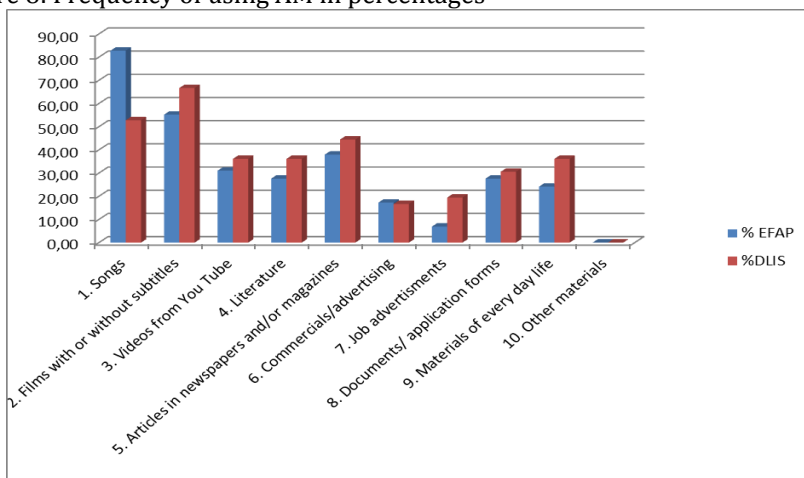
The significant difference can be seen in using songs as AM, as they were used by 52.78% of the DLIS students, while more than 80% of EFAP respondents listened to songs during English lessons. There is only one more type of AM - commercials or advertising - which was used by more EFAP than DLIS students, but this difference is quite insignificant. All the other types of AM were used by more DLIS than EFAP students. Consequently, we might assume that DLIS participants were provided with a greater variety of AM, which might be the reason why their skills developed more effectively. Furthermore, it also seems that bringing only songs to the lessons of EFL is not sufficient if one wants his/her students to be in contact with the real life language.

5. *Frequency of using authentic materials in English as foreign language teaching*

As we have stated in the previous chapter, it is important to use various types of AM if we want our students to be able to distinguish different shades of the real language. In order to reach this aim it is necessary to bring AM more than once or twice in a school-year. Therefore to get a reliable picture of the reality of using AM, in question 10, respondents were asked to indicate how often they had worked with AM during their secondary school studies.

Figure 9: Types of AM used by DLIS and EFAP students in percentages
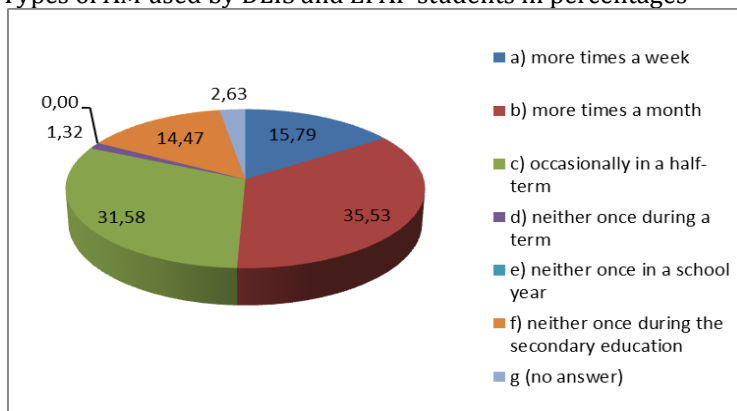
As the results show in Figure 9, 15.79% of all the students were exposed to AM more times a week and 35.53% more times a month. On the other hand, 31.58% met AM only occasionally in a half-term and there is quite a big group of those who did not have any experience with AM during the term, the whole school year or even during the whole secondary school attendance.

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When looking for differences in the answers of the two groups (Figure 10), 23.68% of EFAP students claimed that they had never met AM during their secondary education, while amongst DLIS students it is only 5.26%. In Figure 10, we can see that twice as many DLIS students used AM more times a week than EFAP students. All the other possibilities were also chosen by more DLIS students than by EFAP respondents. It might indicate that DLIS students were, in general, more often provided with AM, which could contribute to the development of their level of English proficiency and, thus, to their decision to choose English language as their academic specialization.

Figure 10: Frequency of using AM amongst DLIS and EFAP students
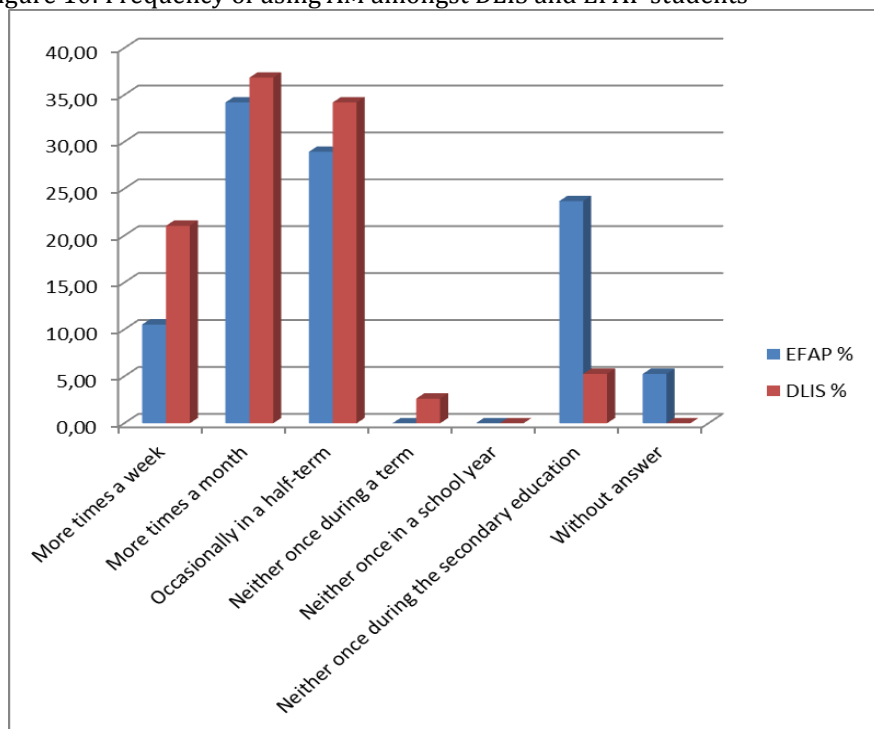
6. Using different types of tasks with authentic materials

In question 11, participants of the survey had to indicate the types of tasks they were asked to do with AM. According to the stage of the task, Homolová (2003) distinguishes "pre-", "while-" and "post" activities. As the list of these tasks is very long, we have grouped them into seven categories regarding the skill

they are to develop. Some of them we have selected relying on recommendations of different course-books, while others were included based on the reality of every-day practice of TEFL in Slovakia.

As it is commonly known, AM are mainly used to develop receptive skills, such as reading and listening comprehension. Therefore, the most frequently used task connected with them is reading or listening for a gist, e.g. to get the main idea; and the second one is looking for some information or finding answers to questions. According to Pokrivčáková (2009), developing writing skills is possible through the tasks of controlled (e.g. matching), guided (e.g. gap-filling) or free writing (e.g. essay-writing), which we have divided into two groups for the purpose of the present study. The category of developing speaking skills through AM includes different types of speaking tasks, such as discussion, debates and so on.

Figure 11: Types of tasks used with AM in percentages
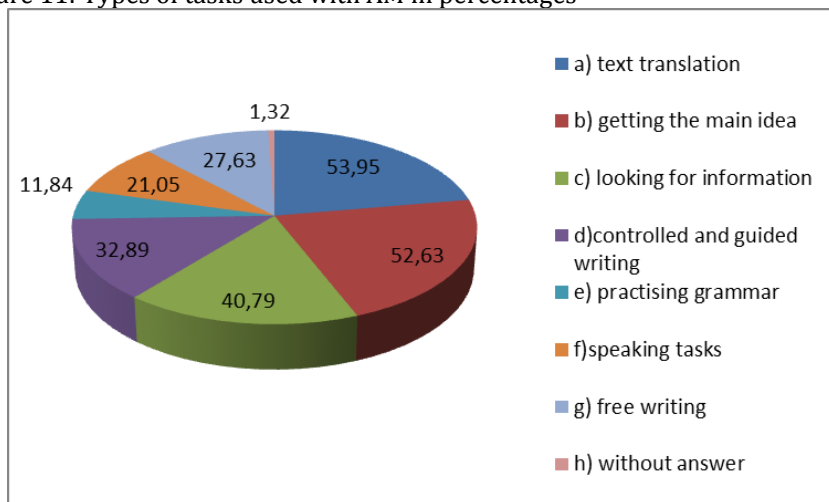
The reason why the two other groups were added even if they are not considered to be skills was that they play a crucial role in FLT. One of them is focused on using AM to explain or practise grammar, while the second one is concentrated on building vocabulary. We have created a separate group for the latter, in spite of the fact that developing vocabulary can be found in all the previous categories. This category includes tasks using text translation and looking for the meaning of words in dictionaries. Although translating texts into

the mother language is criticised by a lot of scholars, it still represents a widely used method in the every-day practice of TEFL.

As can be seen in Figure 11, in spite of the methodological recommendations of theorists and experts, the most often applied activity connected with AM is still translating them into the mother tongue of the students. However, similarly frequently students are asked to get the main idea (52.63%) and a bit less often they are to look for some information (40.79%) in AM. Controlled and guided writing were indicated by 32.89%, but tasks of free writing only by 27.63%. As to the development of speaking skills through AM, only 21.05% claimed they had had such an experience. The least often were AM used to explain or practise grammar (11.84%), which is not surprising as AM are usually full of untraditional grammar structures.

Figure 12: Types of tasks used with AM amongst DLIS and EFAP students in percentages
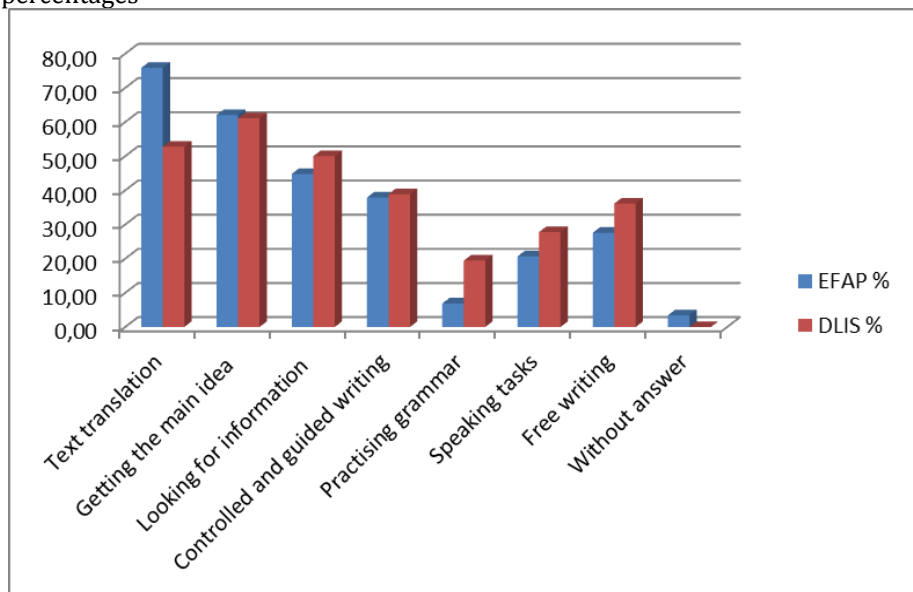
Comparing the results in Figure 12, a significant difference in the answers of the two groups can be seen in two cases. Firstly, more than 75% of EFAP respondents indicated that they had used AM to build vocabulary through text translation; while amongst DLIS students it was 52.78%. It corresponds with their previous answers given in question 9, in which over 80% of EFAP students and over 50% of DLIS students indicated they had listened to songs. These

percentages prove the fact of the every-day practice of teaching English by translating songs through looking for words in dictionaries.

The second difference between the answers of the two groups can be seen when it comes to using AM to explain grammar, which is quite demanding and therefore also unusual in the Slovak educational reality. Yet, 19.44% of DLIS participants experienced explaining grammar this way. However, in the group of EFAP students it was only 6.90%.

In all the other answers, we cannot see a bigger difference than 10%, although almost in all cases more DLIS students indicated that the particular option had been one of the tasks of English lessons when using AM.

7. Students´ views on authentic materials

According to Pietilä (2009, p. 3) materials used in FLT "should be created from the learners' point of view since they are the ones who benefit the most from the materials". The following part of the study is focused on students´ opinions on authentic teaching materials from the next four different points of view:

1. AM are difficult to work with
2. Using AM makes EFL lessons more enjoyable
3. AM as useful tools of developing language competence
4. AM motivate students to learn English language

7.1 Authentic materials are difficult to work with

One of the arguments why some EFL teachers refuse to use AM is that students often struggle with the unusual vocabulary and structure and so they get easily demotivated and frustrated (Homolová, 2003; Pietilä, 2009). In question 12a students had to indicate whether they agree or disagree on this viewpoint (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Agreement amongst students that working with AM is demanding

Agree: 27,69 %
Do not agree: 70,77 %
No response: 1,54 %
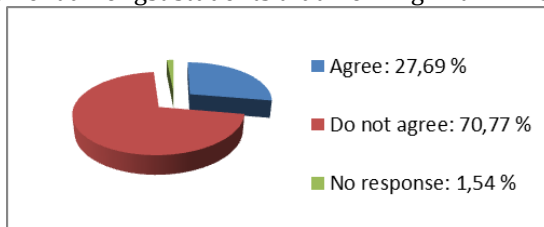
The results show that only 27.69% of the respondents felt that AM had been difficult to work with. Comparing the views of the two groups of respondents, in the group of EFAP students almost twice as many respondents thought that AM

materials had been demanding to work with than amongst DLIS students (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Working with AM is demanding – comparing opinions of the two groups
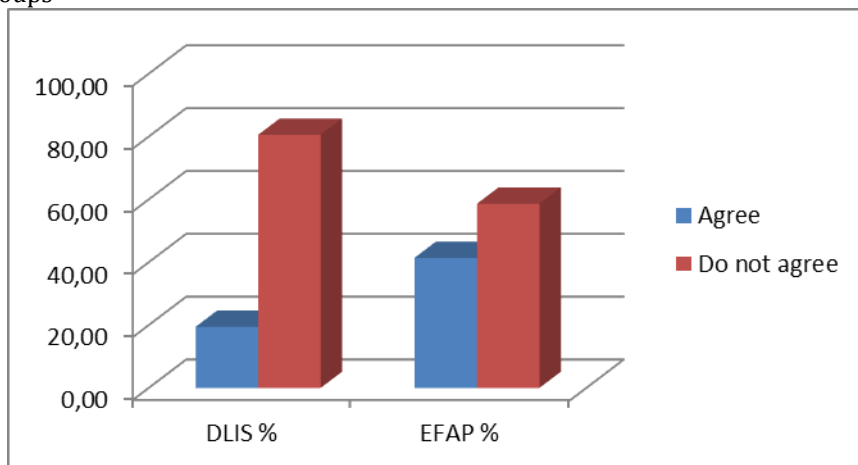

Apparently, DLIS students (80.56%) felt more confident when working with AM in comparison with their colleagues of other study programmes (58.62%). The lack of confidence and having difficulties with AM could have an impact on EFAP students´ choice of study programmes different from those offered by DLIS. The solution to students´ lack of confidence and difficulties while working with AM might be a careful selection of materials regarding "the age, language level, interests, usefulness and background of the learners" (Reid, 2009, p. 83). On the other hand, in both groups more than half of the respondents thought that working with AM was not demanding. It means that teachers are encouraged to involve tasks based on AM in their lessons.

7.2 Using authentic materials makes EFL lessons more enjoyable

Communicative competence does not only mean linguistic competence. It is equally important to be aware of different peculiarities that characterize the target culture. As, according to Hatoss (2004, p. 28), "we teach culture even when we are not intending to or are not aware of doing so", teachers should be careful when choosing the appropriate material. In order to give the learners a true picture of the target culture, the use of AM should be considered crucial, as they are trustful representatives of the target culture (Homolová, 2003; Reid, 2012; Pietilä 2009). Due to this function, they are also considered to be more interesting and enjoyable than artificial teaching materials.

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In question 12 b, the respondents were asked to express their opinion on whether AM are enjoyable to work with (see Figure 15). As demonstrated, 75.38% of all the respondents consider learning through AM to be fun and only 23.08% disagree with this statement.

Figure. 15: Students´ agreement that working with AM is enjoyable

- Agree: 75,38 %
- Do not agree: 23,08 %
- No response: 1,54 %
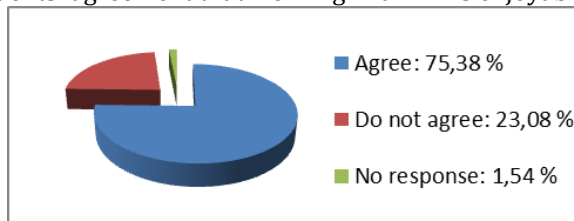
According to the statistics in Figure 16, no sharp difference can be seen between the answers of the two groups, as 75% of both consider AM enjoyable.

Figure 16: Working with AM is enjoyable – comparing opinions of the two groups
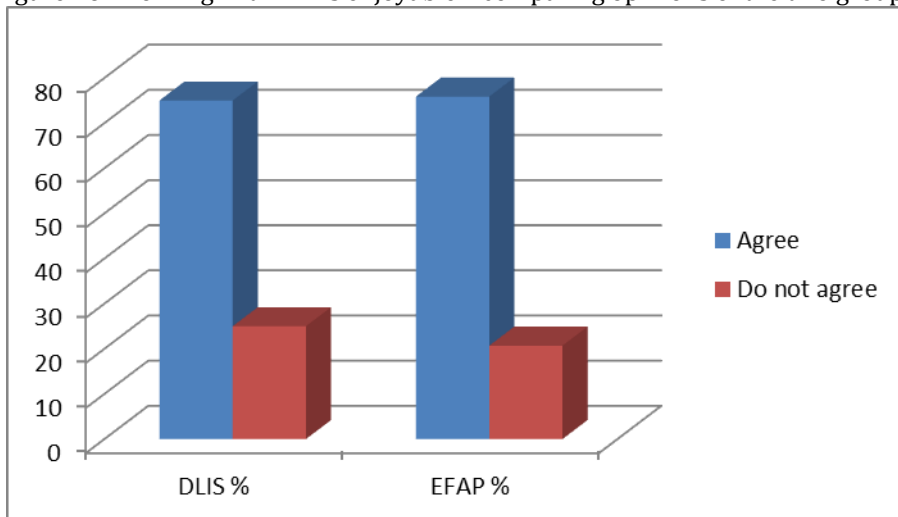
Based on the results, we might assume that AM are equally entertaining for all the respondents, even for those who had difficulties while working with them. What is more, only 20.69% of EFAP students did not agree with the statement that AM had been enjoyable to learn with, while amongst DLIS students, 25% thought the same. These statistics might support teachers to bring real language

into their classrooms to make lessons more joyful for students, even if they might have difficulties with them.

7.3 AM as useful tools of developing language competence

Reasons why some students have a stronger willingness to learn a foreign language can be different. Some people simply love the language itself. Other may have practical intentions (Harmer, 1998), such as to get a job abroad or to apply to a university in a foreign country and, therefore, they prefer to learn from materials which might be useful for their future.

Question 12c was focused on respondents´ opinion about the usefulness of AM. According to the statistics demonstrated in Figure 17, almost 90% of all the students consider AM to be a useful tool of improving language competence and only 9.23% do not agree with the statement.

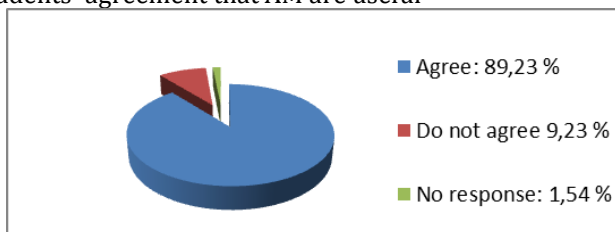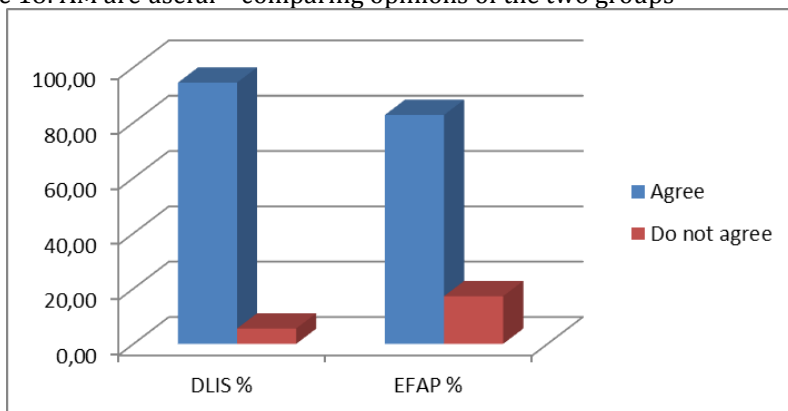Figure 17: Students´ agreement that AM are useful

Figure 18: AM are useful – comparing opinions of the two groups

As displayed in Figure 18, 94.44% of DLIS students and 82.76% of EFAP students think AM efficiently contribute to the improvement of their language

proficiency. In their opinions, the slight difference of 10% might indicate that DLIS students have probably recognized the importance of using AM in the process of developing language skills to a level which corresponds with the requirements of English language studies. However, according to this high rate of agreement, we might assume that students not only find AM useful, but they even require the enrichment of traditional teaching materials with them.

7.4 Motivating students to learn English language through AM

"Motivation is one of the most important factors influencing learner achievement"(Pokrivčáková, 2009, p. 26). To be more precise, according to Tandlichová (1985, p. 95) it "determines how much a person will learn and when he will learn it". It might differ from person to person, as it depends on numerous factors which influence individuals, such as their needs, interests, personal goals or even their background.

In question 12d, respondents had to express their views on whether they thought AM had motivated them to learn English language. As statistics in Figure 19 show, 55.38% of the respondents thought that they had got motivated when AM had been used in lessons of English language.

Figure 19: Students´ agreement that AM are motivating to learn English
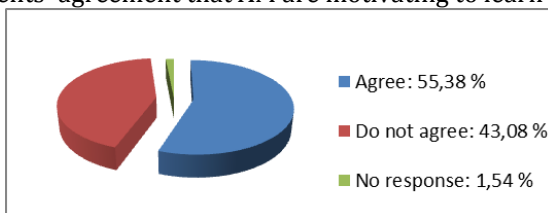
Comparing the results in Figure 20, a significant correspondence can be seen between the two groups. Surprisingly, in both groups approximately 55% of the respondents thought that using AM had made them more motivated to learn English language. These results are interesting in the light of students´ responses to the previous questions, as one could hypothesize that if students considered AM to be undemanding, enjoyable and useful they might have also found them motivating. Although undoubtedly, the percentage of those who agreed that AM were motivating to learn English is higher than of those who did not. Therefore, we might consider it to be a success if more than half of the students in a group get more motivated to learn English due to using AM in the lesson.

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Figure 20: AM are motivating to learn English – comparing opinions of the two groups
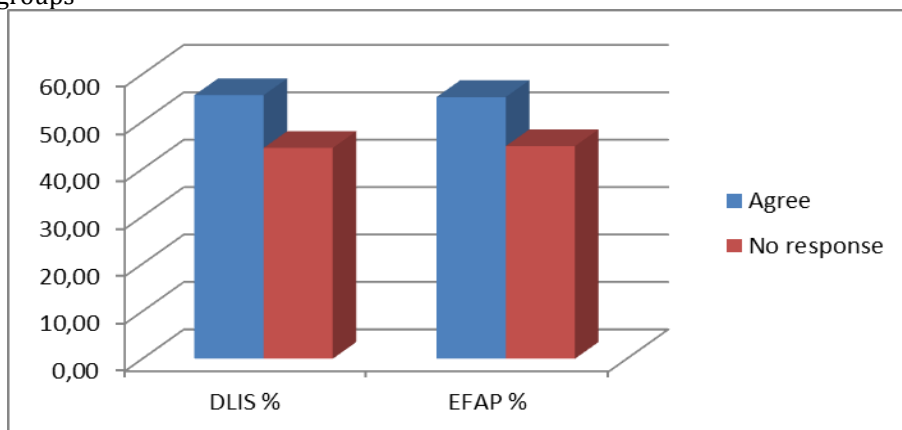
Conclusions

To summarize the results and partial conclusions we have decided to answer our research questions one by one.

1. *What are the most often used titles of courses used in EFL education at secondary schools today? Did DLIS respondents use different course-books than EFAP students?*

- The order of the three course-books used by most students is as following: New Headway, New Opportunities and New Horizons. The same titles were also found when examining differences in the answers of DLIS and EFAP respondents.

2. *Which complements of the given course-books are applied in EFL lessons? Can any differences be traced in the answers given by DLIS and EFAP students?*

- The most preferred components released or published to the given course-book are workbooks (85.53%) and class CD-ROMs (77.63%). However, untraditional teaching aids such as MultiRom and iTool are still neglected despite the boom of technology.

- There are not any sharp differences between the two examined groups regarding the usage of course-book complements. However, when it comes to the use of class CD-ROMs, in the group of EFAP students 10.53% did not listen to the exercises included in the course-books, neither worked with aural AM; whilst DLIS students who did not indicate the usage of class CD-ROMs were at least given the possibility to listen to the real language.

3. *What other materials and sources are used to enrich the content of EFL lessons? Are they the same in the group of DLIS respondents as amongst EFAP participants?*
- The most frequently used types of learning resources others than course-book complements are AM (85.53%), followed by magazines written in English for learners of English (53.95%).
- As to the differences between the two groups, magazines were used approximately by the same percentage of EFAP students as of DLIS respondents. However, EFAP participants were provided with less AM but more copies from other course-books than DLIS students.

4. *What types of AM are used? Were they equally present in EFL lessons of both groups?*
- Among the three most often used types of AM we can rank songs, films and articles in newspapers and magazines.
- We might assume that DLIS participants were provided with a greater variety of AM, as except from songs and commercials all the other types of AM were indicated by more DLIS students and EFAP students.

5. *How often did they use them? Were EFAP students as frequently exposed to them as DLIS respondents?*
- 15.79% of all the students were exposed to AM more times a week and 35.53% more times a month. However, 31.58% met AM only occasionally in a half-term and there is a considerable group of those who did not have any experience with AM during a term, the whole school year or even during the whole secondary education.
- DLIS students were in general more often provided with AM, as 23.68% of EFAP students claim that they had never met AM during their secondary education, while amongst DLIS students it was only (5.26%). Also twice as many DLIS students used AM more times a week as EFAP students. All the other possibilities were also chosen by more DLIS students than by EFAP respondents.

6. *What types of tasks did they have to do while working with AM? Are the answers of EFAP students different from those of DLIS participants?*
- The three most often applied activities connected with AM are translating them into students´ mother tongue, reading and listening to them to get the main idea and looking for some particular information.
- A significant difference in the answers of the two groups can be seen when it comes to text translation and grammar explanation. In the case of the former

it was much more widespread amongst EFAP students, while the latter reached a much higher rate in the group of DLIS students.

- Except from the mentioned text translation, all the other tasks were indicated by more DLIS students than EFAP ones.

7. *Do students think of AM as demanding, funny, useful and motivating tools of improving language competences? What is the agreement between DLIS and EFAP respondents?*

- The vast majority of the respondents think AM are enjoyable as well as useful and they do not consider them to be demanding. In addition, half of the respondents got even more motivated to learn English language while working with AM.

- Both groups find AM funny, useful and motivating. More than half of both groups think they are not demanding to work with; however, amongst DLIS students the percentage of those who agree with this statement is much higher than in the group of EFAP participants.

To summarize with regard to our research objectives:

1. In the light of the answers to our research questions, we might conclude that as far as course-books and their complements are concerned, there are not any sharp contradictions between the answers of DLIS and EFAP respondents. Course-books still represent the core of the EFL lessons and workbooks as well as class CD-ROMs are their most preferred helpers. Regarding the latest innovations in the world of foreign language course-books, they are still surprisingly neglected. In order to ensure the development of FL education:

- a further investigation into the content of the most popular course-books would be needed;

- involvement of computer-based course-book supplements in FLT should the sooner the better become a must;

- a balanced combination of traditional and modern teaching aids is necessary.

2. Concerning additional learning resources, we may assume that AM become more and more applied in EFL education, which is undoubtedly a positive phenomenon. Yet, differences can be traced from school to school, mainly in the variety of types of these materials and of the tasks connected with them, as well as the frequency of involving them in the lessons of EFL. Unfortunately, these differences may influence the level of English proficiency and in the case of EFAP students, it might have an impact on their choice of study programmes different from those offered by DLIS. To avoid it, we suggest that the following recommendation should be taken into consideration:

- *The more times AM are used, the better.*

In order to effectively build one´s communicative competence, AM should be provided as complements to traditional course-books systematically.

- *The more types of AM students meet, the better.*

It gives them the possibility to experience as many shades of the given FL as possible, so meeting native speakers might not be so shocking. Furthermore, different types of AM challenge students much more and make them more motivated to learn English.

- *The more types of tasks we use with AM, the better.*
  Varying types of tasks with AM is at least as important as varying the types of AM. First of all, because by different tasks, different skills are developed, that contributes to the overall improvement of one´s communicative competence. Secondly, varying tasks do not let students get bored so easily, but makes the lesson more enjoyable and thus more motivating for students.

3. As far as the students´ opinions are concerned in both groups they are fully supportive to involve real life materials in EFL lessons, as they consider them to be funny, useful, motivating and undemanding to work with.

- The solution to students´ lack of confidence and difficulties while working with AM might be the careful selection of materials taking into account several factors, such as learners´ level of English proficiency, their age or interests. (Reid, 2009)

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Contact
Mgr. Sándorová Zuzana,
KLIS PF UKF, Drážovská 4,
Nitra 949 74, Slovakia
zuzana.sandorova@ukf.sk

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Multimedia in the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Blanka Frydrychová Klímová,
University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic
blanka.klimova@uhk.cz

Abstract

Multimedia has an enormous impact on the whole society since it is nowadays exploited in many industries (e.g. engineering or medicine) and as a common means of reference (e.g. encyclopaedias or dictionaries). Thanks to its great potential for learning, multimedia is also widely used in the teaching of foreign languages. This article gives an explanation of the term *multimedia*; states reasons why it should be used in foreign language teaching; outlines its important role in the acquisition of second language learning; illustrates how multimedia is delivered in foreign language teaching; and provides a list of web sites with their descriptions which L2 English teachers can exploit in their classes.

Keywords

foreign languages; multimedia; resources; teachers

Introduction

With the boom of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the past 20 years, the teaching of foreign language (FLT) has become inconceivable without implementing them. More and more teachers started to explore various kinds of ICT in order to keep up with their students (cf. Meiers, 2009). Furthermore, they began to exploit them in their classes to make their students motivated. This is also true for language teachers. One of the areas of ICT is multimedia. The word itself consists of two words: *multi*, which means various and *media*, which refers to any hardware (e.g. computer, television, interactive whiteboards or mobile phone) or software used for communicating (e.g. e-mail or videoconferencing).

The term itself was firstly used by singer and artist Bob Goldstein during his show in a New York club in 1966 (Zuras, 2010). However, it took 27 years when the definition of the word was provided by Tay Vaughan in 1993. He defined multimedia as follows: *Multimedia is any combination of text, graphic art, sound, animation, and video that is delivered by computer* (Vaughan, 1993, p. 3). Nowadays, multimedia is characterized as a combination of text, audio, still images, animation, video, or interactivity content forms. Particularly, the interactivity plays an important role because it differs a multimedia work from a

classic one (e.g. film) or a document, which only combines a text with graphs, tables and pictures (cf. Dostál, 2009; Pavlovkin, 2007; Sultan, 2013).

Multimedia can be divided into linear (e.g. an e-book) or non-linear (e.g. a video game or a self-paced eLearning course). The users of linear media usually have no control of the multimedia content. They are only passive receivers. However, the users of non-linear multimedia are able to interact with the content. It is a two-way communication then.

Generally, multimedia has an enormous effect on the whole society. Multimedia is nowadays used in many industries, such as engineering in the form of Computer-aided design (CAD), medicine for virtual surgeries or in entertainment in the form of video games. In addition, multimedia is also exploited for education and training, especially for young learners. Various educational programmes try to attract these learners and make their learning interesting and entertaining. These programmes are usually called *edutainment*, which is a blended word of education and entertainment. Moreover, multimedia is used as a common means of reference, such as encyclopaedias or dictionaries.

Multimedia as a teaching resource in FLT

Multimedia is undoubtedly important for FLT because it is known that they concurrently affect more senses at one time. This is not a new finding since this idea was already promoted by great teacher of nations - Jan Ámos Komenský (Patočka, 1958) in the 17th century who insisted on presenting teaching matter to as many senses as possible. Two centuries later Edgar Dale, an American scholar, designed the so-called *Cone of Experience* (Dale, 1946), which demonstrates how people generally remember things and experiences and what they are able to do (Figure 1).

Similarly, Lindfors (1987) points out that multimedia can provide a sensory and real learning experience; it presents a greater potential for learning. Furthermore, multimedia can serve as an important tool for managers and students in their efforts to connect and apply classroom theory-based learning with the analysis of real-world problems (cf. Mbarha, Bagarukayo, Shipps, Hingorami, Stokes et al., 2010). In addition, Mayer (1999, 2003) claims that multimedia promotes deeper learning.

Thus, multimedia should be an inseparable part of FLT in order to facilitate FLT and help with the acquisition of second language (L2) learning. At present multimedia is a common teaching resource, aid or tool in foreign language (FL) classes since it is:

- modern/fashionable;
- up-to-date as it can be usually easily modified;
- user-friendly;

- relatively inexpensive;
- eye-catching/appealing to students;
- stimulating; and simply, a natural means of student's everyday use.

Moreover, the exploitation of multimedia in FLT changes the traditional form of teaching (cf. Lynch, 2012; Parveen, & Rajesh, 2011).

Figure 1: Dale's Cone of Experience
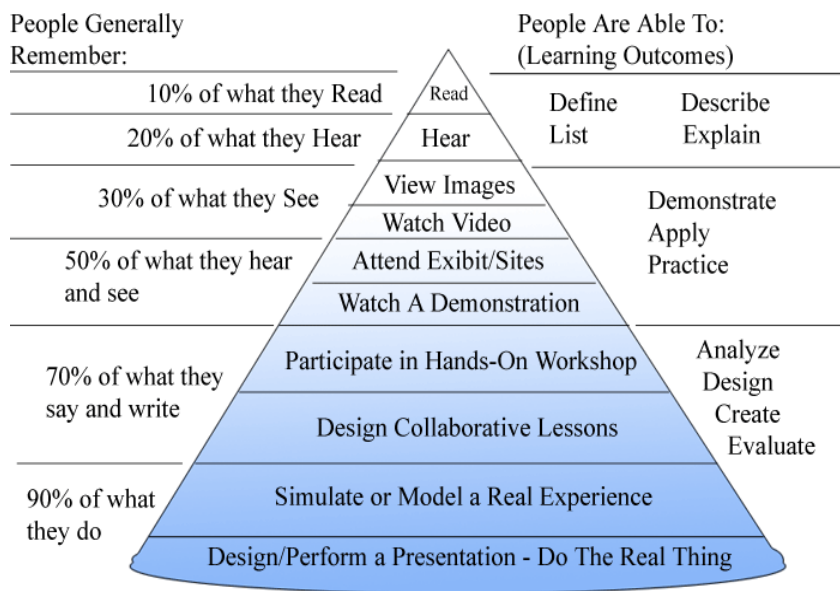
Dale's Cone of Experience

Teachers become rather facilitators and mediators and learning focuses more on students themselves. On the one hand, it increases their autonomy, but on the other hand, it imposes greater demands on them and makes them responsible for their own learning.

Multimedia in FLT is delivered through web pages; this is the so-called web-based multimedia, or it is delivered through compact discs and then it is called the CD-based multimedia. Table 1 below shows differences between these two kinds of multimedia (Sultan, 2013).

Table 1: A description of differences between the web-based and the CD-based multimedia (Sultan, 2013)

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Web-based multimedia	CD-based multimedia
- limited in picture size and low resolution	- can store high end multimedia elements, such as video
- can be changed, damaged or deleted by irresponsible individuals	- can be permanently stored and is not changeable
- information for multimedia can be updated easily and is cheaper	- information on a multimedia can be quickly outdated

FL teachers use both types of multimedia delivery. They usually use CDs as counterparts to their course books. And they exploit the web sites to enliven their language classes and make their lessons more attractive. Below there is a list of tried and tested websites by English language teachers (cf. Šimonová, 2012) which they use in their teaching.

1. *Youtube.com* is a website which is widely used by English teachers because it affects most of student's senses and develops all four language skills at a time: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Figure 2 below illustrates a song through which children can learn words for colours in English.

Figure 2: A song for learning colours in English
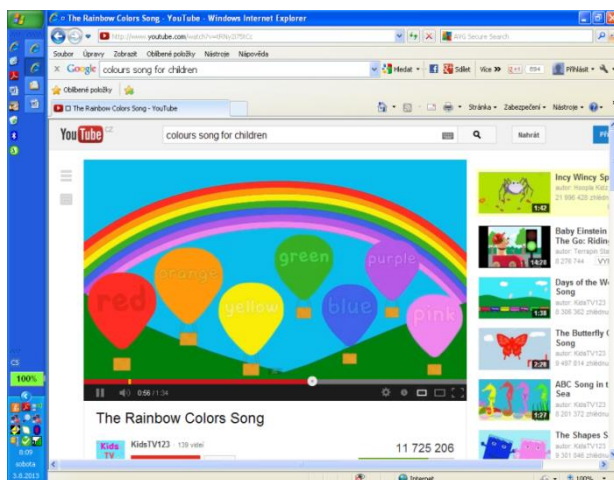
2. *ToLearnEnglish.com* is another useful website where L2 English teachers can find a lot of ideas and

ready-made materials for all ages. Figure 3 below presents various activities available for young learners of English.

Figure 3: A web page for young learners of English and its offers

3. *TeachingEnglish.org.uk* is a website which was developed by the British Council and BBC. Besides teacher training, teacher development, exams in English, and various events, this site also serves as a valuable resource for L2 English teachers. It offers plans and activities, completed with worksheets to download, for primary, secondary and adult teachers. Figure 4 below shows a ready-made material for talking about Christmas with young learners of English.

Figure 4: An example of a lesson on *Christmas* for young learners of English

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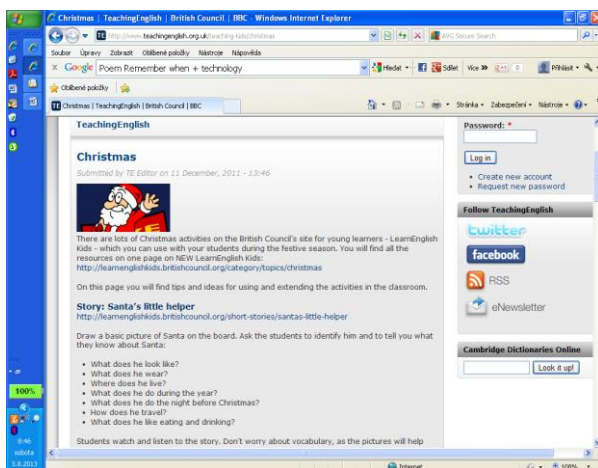
4. *HelpForEnglish.cz* is a website developed by a Czech teacher of English. It again focuses on all age levels and offers a great number of teaching resources, such as tests, grammar and vocabulary exercises, pronunciation, reading and listening activities, quizzes, and many more tips. Figure 5 provides an introductory web page.

Figure 5: An introductory web page of *Help for English*

5. *Lesson Sense.com* is a website with worksheets, lesson ideas and plans for pre-school, kindergarten, first grade and other elementary school students on a wide range of themes and topics. Original lesson materials are free to download for usage in English classrooms or at home. Each topic comes with ideas, crafts and materials for lessons. Figure 6 below provides ready-made flash cards on the topic of *Food*.

Figure 6: An example of flashcards on the topic of *Food*

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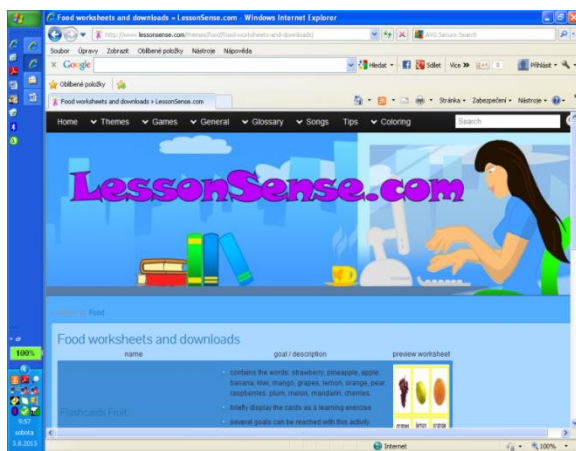
6. *BusyTeacher.org* is another website which supplies ready-made worksheets on different everyday and seasonal topics for English teachers. In addition, it provides ESL (English as a second language) articles, classroom management worksheets, flashcards, classroom posters and other materials. Once again this website covers all age groups. In addition, Figure 7 below illustrates how the topic of *Family* can be taught in an entertaining way with the help of using the family tree of the Simpsons.

Figure 7: An example of teaching the topic of *Family*
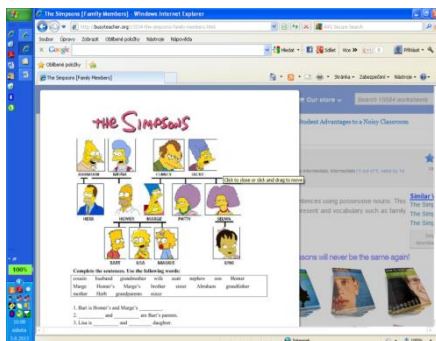
6. *ToolsForEducators.com* is a versatile website, full of custom worksheets, games, crosswords, and other resources. Moreover, it is aimed not only at teaching English, but also at teaching other languages, such as Spanish, German, Portuguese, Italian, Turkish, Swedish, or French. Figure. 8 presents an introductory web page.

Figure 8: An introductory web page of *Tools for Educators*

7. *ListentoEnglish.com* is a podcast website for the intermediate and advanced learners of English, mostly aimed at adult learners. The podcasts on this site help to improve English vocabulary, pronunciation and listening skills.

Figure 9: An example of a podcast on *School dinners* in the UK
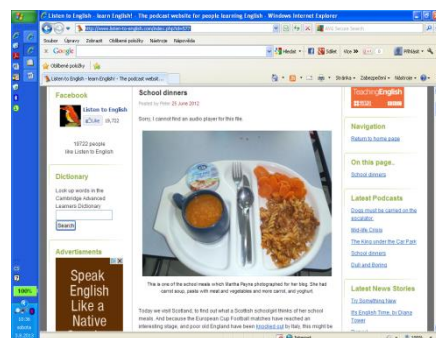
They are quite short (5 or 6 minutes) and delivered in clearly spoken English. Many are linked to grammar and vocabulary notes, exercises or quizzes. See Figure 9 which provides a podcast on School dinners in the UK.

Conclusion

At present multimedia is part and parcel of FLT since it has a positive effect on the development of L2 language acquisition (cf. Sperling, Seyedmonic, Aleksic, & Meadows, 2003). Nevertheless, although multimedia is a good teaching resource/aid, it must be carefully chosen to suit a particular teaching situation and to meet specific needs of students because not all kinds of multimedia are relevant for teaching or learning situations (cf. Myer & Moreno, 2002).

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Web sites used for Figures 26-34

Figure 26. Dale's Cone of Experience. Retrieved August 3, 2013, from
http://www.google.cz/imgres?imgurl=http://teacherworld.com/dalescone.gif&imgrefurl
=http://teacherworld.com/potdale.html&h=525&w=700&sz=60&tbnid=nQJjMM-tXpxuAM:&tbnh=87&tbnw=116&prev=/search%3Fq%3Ddale%2Bcone%2Bof%2Bexperience%2Bmodel%26tbm%3Disch%26tbo%3Du&zoom=1&q=dale+cone+of+experience+model&usg=vDraZ6_GvY-2l8UVyciUo6nRKf0=&docid=vHX5gcSjG-6buM&hl=cs&sa=X&ei=IjQuUsC4LOaL7AbZ7ICQAg&ved=0CDMQ9QEwAA&dur=1015

Figure 27. A song for learning colours in English. Retrieved August 3, 2013, from
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRNy2i75tCc

Figure 28. A web page for young learners of English and its offers. Retrieved August 3, 2013, from http://www.tolearnenglish.com/kids/

Figure 29. An example of a lesson on Christmas for young learners of English. Retrieved August 3, 2013, from http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-kids/christmas

Figure 30. An introductory web page of Help for English. Retrieved August 3, 2013, from
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Figure 31. An example of flashcards on the topic of Food. Retrieved August 3, 2013, from
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Figure 32. An example of teaching the topic of Family. Retrieved August 3, 2013, from
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Figure 33. An introductory web page of Tools for Educators. Retrieved August 3, 2013, from http://www.toolsforeducators.com/

Figure 34. An example of a podcast on School dinners in the UK. Retrieved August 3, 2013, from http://www.listen-to-english.com/index.php?id=577

Contact
PhDr. Blanka Frydrychová Klímová, M.A., Ph.D.
University of Hradec Králové, Faculty of Informatics and Management
Rokitanského 62, 500 03 Hradec Králové 3, Czech Republic
e-mail: blanka.klimova@uhk.cz

JoLaCE

Assessment and Learning

Danica Gondová, Žilina University, Slovakia
danica.gondova@fhv.uniza.sk

Abstract

Assessment has got many purposes and may serve various formative and summative functions. In our paper we deal with assessment for learning which is process-oriented, helps learners improve and enhance their learning and understand it better. In order to achieve that learners need to know their learning objectives and the criteria which are used to assess their performance, they should be given a lot of descriptive feedback and have many opportunities to self-assess. In our study we analyze if assessment for learning is implemented at gymnasia in Slovakia, how students are assessed, if the focus of assessment is on the product (summative assessment) or on the process (formative assessment) and if teachers facilitate self-assessment. The results which we arrived at indicate that assessment for learning is not done at the observed schools, the feedback students get on their learning is evaluative and as such it does not help them improve their learning, succeed in achieving the objectives and learn how to self-assess.

Keywords

assessment for learning, sharing objectives and criteria, descriptive feedback, self- and peer-assessment

Introduction

It is a self-evident proposition that assessment is an integral part of the learning process and it influences the teaching and learning activities. Traditionally, assessment is used as a tool of measuring the products of learning and providing information about learners' achievements, but in addition to that it should, first and foremost, become an integral part of the learning process and support and enhance learning. Assessment should become a tool which facilitates learning thanks to effective, descriptive feedback that helps students review their learning and make further progress. In our study we discuss differences between assessment of learning and assessment for learning and analyze how assessment for learning is implemented in some schools in Slovakia.

1 Assessment in schools

Assessment has got many purposes which may often be contradictory, it may motivate students, provide information to their parents or some authorities about their achievements, support learners' effort to participate in the learning processes, develop learners learning styles, diagnose their problems, feed back

on their learning, enhance their learning, compare learners with each other, measure if learners have achieved a certain standard, etc. P. Black (1998, in Earl, 2003, p.12) identified "three broad purposes of assessment in schools: support learning; report achievement of individuals for certification, progress and transfer; and satisfy the demands for public accountability."

1.1 Assessment of learning

The kind of assessment that is easy to observe and comment on is summative assessment which is also referred to as assessment of learning. The objectives of summative assessment are to judge or accredit the work of students or the outcomes of the learning process after a certain period of time. It also measures how much students have learned and if they meet the required standards.

Students understand summative assessment as the responsibility of the teacher and usually do not participate in it: the teacher decides what is going to be taught and assessed, when and how it is going to be done, and the teacher also marks the outcomes of tests or exams.

This kind of assessment often detects differences between students and ranks them according to their achievements, but only few of them are able to build on their success and learn more by themselves if they are assessed summatively. According to Stiggins (2007, p. 23), "for students on winning streaks assessment results provide continual evidence of success" whereas "for those on losing streaks it provides continual evidence of failure". Failing students gradually lose all their confidence and give way to resignation. That's the reason why assessment is a kind of powerful 'weapon' in the hands of the teacher.

As an inevitable part of students' learning, assessment also defines what is worth learning, particularly if students are only assessed summatively. It is well-known that students only learn what is being assessed. In this way it directs students' learning, teaching as such does not. This is another reason why it has a decisive, powerful backwash effect on the learning process.

However, this kind of assessment does not differentiate learners and does not take their needs into consideration. Because it only focuses on the products of the learning it does not help learners understand the objectives of the learning process and what they need to do to achieve the objectives and therefore, it does not enhance learning, does not serve a formative function and does not contribute to learners' autonomy which is the ultimate objective of today's education.

1.2 Assessment for learning

The objective to help children become autonomous learners and thus prepare them for lifelong learning has changed the perceptions of the learning process as well as of assessment and it has been acknowledged that assessment may also

have a formative function. According to Scharle & Szabó (2010, p.3) autonomous learners should be able to "consciously monitor their own progress, and make an effort to use available opportunities to their benefit".

In order to learn how to monitor their progress, learners need to understand the objectives of the learning process and the criteria against which the outcomes are going to be measured. This can only be achieved if teaching and learning are understood as interactive processes and if assessment is interactive as well, which means that the teacher and students are partners in assessment. The interactive approach towards assessment makes it possible for learners to participate in it actively and use it as a tool for learning, which leads them to autonomy and responsibility for their own learning.

Pedder & James (2012, p. 35) stress that the promotion of autonomous learning "is a key principle underlying purposes and practices of assessment of learning. When teachers develop deep understanding of such principles and find practical ways of realizing the potential of assessment for learning for promoting learning autonomy, they reflect the 'spirit'of assessment for learning." Assessment for learning, by some authors also referred to as formative assessment, improves and enhances learning considerably, which is illustrated by a lot of research (Black & William, 1998, p. 61).

From what has been said, it follows that assessment for learning is not a set of techniques that can be used in the classrooms without any further changes. It requires changes in the behaviour of teachers and students and their roles. Assessment for learning must become part of the learning process, which means it must be done continuously during the process of learning, not at its end. Its main objective is to improve learning and teaching through frequent interactive assessment of learners' progress. It also aims at identifying learners' needs and adjusting the teaching process accordingly. Assessment only becomes formative and enhances the learning processes when "the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching to meet student needs" (Black & Wiliam, 1998 p. 140), which means when the teacher differentiates learners.

William & Thompson (2007, in Pedder & James, 2012, p. 33) have identified five strategies which help the teacher promote assessment for learning in lessons:

a) clarifying and understanding learning intentions and sharing criteria for success;
b) promoting and supporting effective classroom discussions and developing activities and tasks that elicit evidence of learning;
c) providing feedback that moves learners forward;
d) activating students as pedagogic resources for one another;

e) activating students as the owners of their own learning.

In the next part of our paper we are going to deal with these strategies in more detail.

First, it is necessary to stress that assessment only promotes learning if it helps "students answer three questions: *Where am I going? Where am I now?* and *How can I close the gap?*" (Chappuis, 2005, p. 39). In other words, students need to understand what their learning objectives are, they need to be given constant feedback on their achievements and should be involved in self-assessment activities to be able to set their own goals, and finally they should be able to understand what they have achieved so far and what else they need to do to be able to achieve the objectives and what learning strategies they need to use to achieve them. Gardner (2012, p.3) defines assessment for learning as "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers, to identify where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" and summarizes the principles for assessment for learning as follows:

Assessment for learning

- Is part of effective planning;
- Focuses on how students learn;
- Is central to classroom practice;
- Is sensitive and constructive;
- Fosters motivation;
- Promotes understanding of goals and criteria;
- Helps learners know how to improve;
- Develops the capacity for self-assessment;
- Recognizes all educational achievement (ARG, 2002, in Gardner, 2012, p.3).

As mentioned above, assessment for learning can best be implemented in learner-centred activities which make it possible to focus on what students are going to learn, not on what the teacher is going to teach. In addition to that, learners should be involved "in their own learning not just through reflection but also as co-constructors and co-negotiators of their learning" (Spendlove, 2009, p. x).

Another concept that is central to assessment for learning is learner differentiation. Since learners' learning styles differ, they all have different needs and require different kinds of support, scaffolding and intervention to be able to meet the requirements and produce the expected outcomes.

When planning lessons teachers should also think about how they are going to gather data from the students showing how they understand and apply new language (grammar, vocabulary) or how well they develop a skill (reading, listening, speaking, writing). That means they need to plan such activities or tasks

which elicit evidence of learning on which feedback can be given either by the teacher or students themselves.

The feedback students get on their work should move them forward, i.e. should highlight their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, evaluative feedback is not sufficient, learners need to be given descriptive feedback which is crucial for learning. It is not enough to tell a student that his work is good or not satisfactory or just give him a mark; it is also necessary to tell him what is good about his work and what needs to be improved. "The quality of the feedback, rather than its quantity, determines its effectiveness" (Chappuis, 2005, p. 41).

Feedback is only effective if it helps students make progress and if it helps them find out what to do in order to improve their achievement during the process of learning not at its end. It is also necessary to stress that both the teacher and students have to understand that the main purpose of feedback is to facilitate learning, not to criticise a student.

Another condition of successful implementation of assessment of learning is students' self-assessment and peer-assessment. In order to be able to do that and understand assessment, students need to be trained to self-assess and set goals for improvement. The first step in this process is the understanding of learning objectives and criteria used to assess their performances. That of course often means that the objectives need to be "translated" into the language students can understand. When assessing some work, especially at the beginning of the process, students may imitate the teacher's descriptive feedback which serves as a kind of sample. They may also use the set of criteria the teacher uses to assess their work, e.g. the set of criteria used to assess speaking or writing tasks in the Maturita examination. They may be asked to think about which of the descriptors describes their own performance the best and what they need to work on to improve.

Because it is well-known that it is much easier to assess someone else's work, students may be invited first to assess the work of their peers. When thinking about their strengths and weaknesses, they learn to understand their own much better.

When monitoring their own progress or that of their peers', after some training they can use assessment criteria both for formative assessment (How am I doing? What can I do very well? What needs to be changed? How can I improve? What do I need to work on more?) and summative assessment (they can give themselves or their peers a mark). In this way they can take an active part in the assessment, but the teacher needs to think very carefully about at which stage s/he can use students' grades (marks) as part of the official summative assessment.

When applied properly, the assessment for learning becomes a "process used by teachers and students to recognise and respond to student learning in order to enhance that learning, during the learning" (Cowie & Bell, 1999 p. 103). Moreover, students become resources for one another and through better understanding they gradually become owners of their own learning and change from consumers of assessment to self-assessors.

As mentioned above, the impact of classroom assessment practices on learners is enormous, which is documented in many studies. Research documents that assessment may influence learning outcomes negatively, but when used appropriately, it enhances learners' achievements. Some research even suggests that if formative assessment is implemented regularly, students' achievements are 70 – 80% better even in standardized tests (Leahy & Wiliam, 2012, p. 67).

Black & Wiliam (2009, p. 9) state that "practice in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited." From this it follows that the decisions are not only made by the teacher, as they are in a traditional classroom, but also by learners who thus become co-creators of the learning process.

2 Implementation of assessment for learning at schools in the Žilina region

In the research which we carried out in 2009 – 2012 at some schools in the Žilina region, we aimed to find out how English teachers assess students in their lessons; if the focus of assessment is on the learning process or the product; and if teachers facilitate self- and peer-assessment. During the research we observed 35 English lessons at gymnasia and another 30 English lessons at primary and lower-secondary schools (fifteen lessons at each level). 45 out of these lessons have also been videoed for the purposes of more detailed studies. In addition to that we interviewed fifteen teachers and asked another fifty teachers to fill in questionnaires.

Since we have not got space to analyze all the results in this qualitative study, we will only focus on the results that we got when we observed those 20 lessons at gymnasia which were not videoed and we will also use some teachers' comments from the questionnaires or interviews.

2.1 Understanding the objectives and criteria

In order to put assessment for learning in practice it is necessary for teachers to understand assessment globally and to formulate the learning objectives

correctly. It is also necessary for students to understand the objectives of their learning which should be presented to them in a learner-friendly language so that they understand *where they are going*.

Thirteen out of twenty teachers (65%) presented the objectives of lessons at the beginning and, from the point of view of the formulation and the choice of vocabulary we believe that most of the objective might have been clear to students (two teachers used words *promise, obligation* and *permission*, which might have been too difficult for students). However, none of the teachers checked if it was really so and none of them discussed the objectives and how they could be achieved with students in more detail. Six teachers did not present any objective at all and one teacher, instead of presenting learning objectives talked about what activities they were going to do in the lesson (first some listening and then some exercises from the book).

We also observed that in sixteen out of twenty lessons, the techniques students were asked to do in the lessons did not always help learners to achieve the objective which was presented by the teacher. For example, in one of the lessons students were supposed to practise their listening comprehension skills, but while listening to the text they were allowed to follow its script in their course-books. In another lesson the objective was to talk about permissions and obligations, but the teacher focused on the form of modals throughout the lesson. It wasn't until the end of the lesson that the students were asked which of the verbs on the board express permission and which express obligation. In another lesson, students were supposed to practise reading comprehension skills, but the teacher asked them to underline and explain unknown vocabulary first, translate the text and only then do the comprehension tasks. In one of the lessons, the objective presented by the teacher was to talk about the internet, but students were studying vocabulary connected with the topic during the whole lesson and did not speak at all, etc. If objectives are presented in this way, it may be misleading and confusing for students because the information they get about the objective of their learning is not correct.

Another problem was that the objective of the lesson was only mentioned once in the lesson. It was done very briefly at the beginning and afterwards it was 'forgotten'. Only one of the teachers came back to it at the end of the lesson and asked 'which collocations students have learned in the lesson'. Otherwise, students were not reminded about objectives during lessons and did not discuss if they were achieving them or not.

According to the principles of assessment for learning, students should not only be aware of the objective of the lesson but they should also know the criteria which describe a successful performance. However, these were not presented to

learners in any form by any of the twenty teachers. That of course causes many problems because students are not able to judge if they meet the requirements or not and have to rely on the judgment of the teacher. For example, in one of the lessons the objective was to talk about traffic and students were asked to work in groups and describe a picture. Students were not given any assessment criteria which they could use while they were preparing for the task which means they didn't know what the objective was. The teacher was monitoring their work, but did not comment on it. Afterwards he asked one student to describe the picture in front of the whole class. The teacher didn't invite others to comment on the performance and he didn't comment either. Actually, the description the student produced was on A2 level (the range of vocabulary and the range of grammatical structures were very limited), which means he did not achieve the objective, but was not informed about that.

In conclusion, it seems that even if teachers try to set the objectives, this is understood as a formality and teachers do not consider the information about the objectives important for the process of learning. The criteria which describe a successful performance are not presented to students at all. That of course means that students do not know what is expected from them and what they need to achieve. This is also true if students have an opportunity to work in small groups and produce outcomes that may serve as evidence of their learning because the objectives are not clear to them and they do not know what a successful performance should look like. Since they do not understand the objectives and do not know the criteria of success, they do not understand the assessment and thus miss out on opportunities to learn.

2.2 Evidence of learning

As mentioned above, one of the pre-conditions of the successful implementation of assessment for learning is to plan activities that make it possible to elicit evidence of learning for every student in the classroom. In our opinion that means that students should be aware of how much they already know about the given topic so that they know where their starting point is and how much they need to learn. They should also be given as many opportunities as possible to work in pairs or small groups so that each of them has to produce the expected outcome either orally or in a written form. That makes it possible for the teacher to observe the work of every individual student, comment on his/her achievement and provide him/her with understandable information that they can use to improve their performance immediately. Such support also helps students to achieve success and thus they become more confident and motivated.

Only in four of the twenty observed lessons, students had an opportunity to think about how much they already know about the topic (*Where am I now?*), e.g.

how much vocabulary they know connected with a topic, how much they can remember about a grammatical structure, how they can express permissions, which strategies they can use when doing listening or reading comprehension tasks, etc. These questions help students link their previous learning to the new objective and activate their schemata, which makes learning easier.

As to the outcomes, these can be produced by students either in tasks done as whole-class tasks or in small-group tasks. 86% of all tasks teachers asked students to do were done with the whole class. In that case, the answers are only given by a few students who can work fast and are usually high-achievers. This does not make it possible for the teacher to elicit evidence of learning for everyone and gather information about how individual students learn and where they have problems. Students do not get the information about their own learning either. Moreover, only some of the students are active and not everyone has sufficient space to really do the task – the task is solved before some of them can even try to think about it. One of the teachers explained that she insisted on students raising their hands and waiting for her permission to speak so that all of them are involved in solving the task and have some time to think about it. The problem is that even if she waits for everyone to raise their hands, the evidence is only produced by one learner.

In several lessons, we also observed another problem: sometimes the teacher sets a task and from the students' reaction it is clear that they don't really understand what they are supposed to be doing because they do not react to teacher's questions in any way. However, instead of explaining the task again and giving learners some space to do the task and achieve the objective, the teacher answers the questions for them and moves on. This indicates teachers' product-orientation – they are more interested in students having the correct answers then they are in the learning process.

The product-orientation was also clear when students were asked to do listening or reading comprehension tasks. Only three teachers encouraged students to check their answers in pairs, otherwise students were asked to work individually. When they finished, the answers were checked with the whole class, but none of the teachers asked for evidence or discussed the reasons for the answers with students. If the answers were not correct, the key was provided by the teacher. Such feedback, however, is not sufficient because it does not help learners to understand their weaknesses, improve their understanding of texts and enhance learning.

Our research results show, that only eleven out of twenty observed teachers implemented group work and pair work, but these small-group activities only took 14% of the overall teaching time and the rest of it was spent doing up-front

tasks. From what we have observed, we can also make the conclusion that even if some teachers try to apply small-group activities, they do not really understand principles of group- or pair-work. First, they set a task, but do not explain to students what a good outcome is, do not discuss any assessment criteria or give them a sample. As it has already been discussed above, students do not know what is expected from them and without realizing it, they may produce outcomes that do not meet the criteria. However, that also means that they cannot assess their own performance, and have to rely on the teacher's assessment without really understanding it. Moreover, out of twenty teachers only one observed students' work while they were working in small groups and helped them if they had problems or if they asked her for help. The others did not comment on students' work and very often they did not join the groups at all. That of course means that they could not collect any evidence about students' learning.

Moreover, we observed three teachers who set a task for pair work, but did not interfere when students were working individually. Obviously, students did not understand the meaning of pair work and were not really used to doing it; and the teacher ignored their decision to work on their own. This shows that neither the teacher nor the students understand why they should work in small groups and how it can enhance their learning.

To sum up, up-front tasks do not give all students an opportunity to produce assessable outcomes because the answer can only be given by one of them. Some students do not join whole-class work. This might be because some of them do not have time to do so, other just do not care. But even if students do activities in small groups, they do not really benefit from them because the feedback they get is not sufficient to enhance learning.

2.3 Differentiating learners

If assessment for learning is to be applied successfully, it is also necessary to meet students' needs and set tasks that are achievable for them. In other words, it is necessary to differentiate learners. However, in the observed lessons, only one of the teachers tried to prepare activities that would follow some of the principles of differentiation. Otherwise, all tasks students had to do were set for all of them and all students were expected to do them within the same time constraints. Only one teacher respected the fact that learners do not work at the same speed and when a group finished doing an unrehearsed role-play, she gave them another set of stimuli so that they could continue working and developing their speaking skills while the others were still working on the first one.

In the interviews the teachers mentioned that they do realize differences between students but their attitudes towards different needs of learners vary. Five teachers said that their expectations differ according to how good or weak

students are. Low-achievers are not expected to do more challenging tasks and their language errors are tolerated. Their teachers have given up on them and do not even try to help them achieve the objectives. Even if they set a task for everyone, they do not expect low-achievers to do anything. They do not help them with the task and so these students experience failure and are left behind. Actually, none of the teachers thought about how they could help these students learn more. The other teachers mentioned that they plan their lessons so that they meet the needs of average students. They were all aware of the fact they were neglecting the weakest and the strongest students but insisted they did not have time to do any activities with them. As to talented learners, three teachers said they are satisfied with having such students in class because *talented learners can answer all questions and do all tasks quickly*, which makes teachers' work easier. However, none of the teachers was thinking about how to move these learners forward and help them learn even more.

Eighteen teachers believe that if children do not do very well in English lessons it is mainly because they do not do their homework and do not study at home regularly. They also blame parents for not helping children study for school. Only one of the teachers stressed the fact that a lot depends on the teacher who needs to teach strategies and study skills so that children can manage to do what is expected from them even if they have to work on their own. Learning strategies is another important pre-condition of assessment for learning because strategies help learners understand *how* they can reach the objectives.

2.4 Descriptive feedback

Providing descriptive feedback that moves learners forward is another condition of the successful implementation of assessment for learning. During the twenty lessons which we observed we could hear a lot of evaluative and affective feedback. Teachers either praised students for their answers or they indicated incorrectness. However, descriptive feedback was practically non-existent. What we also found a problem was that learners were not given space to discuss the difficulties they encountered when doing tasks and teachers' feedback was product-oriented, i.e. the teachers were interested in the answers not in how students arrived at them. For example, when they did a listening or reading comprehension task, the teachers checked their answers against the key but did not discuss the evidence. Neither did students have a chance to listen to a section of the text which they could not understand for the third time in order to try to locate the needed information and thus learn more about strategies which might help them be more successful.

The feedback on the outcomes produced during pair-work or group-work was also product-oriented. If students were asked to read out their answers to some exercises, teachers expressed agreement or disagreement with their answers without any explanatory comments. If students were asked to practice a role-play or a dialogue during pair-work, nineteen teachers did not comment on their work at all and when they performed the role-play or dialogue in front of the whole class, it was always evaluated by the teacher as *good*. Even though affective feedback and praise may motive students, they do not really move them forward and that is why it is necessary to use affective feedback reasonably. Only one of the teachers commented on students' work while they were working in groups. She was helping them formulate correct sentences in their dialogues and supplied the vocabulary they needed to express some ideas.

Another problem we encountered was the way teachers organized feedback on speaking activities done in small groups. Students were asked to perform rehearsed role-plays or dialogues in front of the whole class, but the students who were supposed to listen to these performances were not involved in the assessment of the performances and became passive listeners, which often resulted in their disinterest in the performances of their peers.

Some researchers (Black & William, 2012, p. 19) argue that summative testing may also be used for formative purposes to enhance learning both before after the test. When students prepare for a test, they can decide themselves which language structures that the test will focus on they feel confident about and which of them they would like to review. After the test has been marked by the teacher, students' may be asked to do those tasks which caused the most problems again and discuss the difficulties before the marked test is given to them. More advanced learners may even be asked to write tasks for each other and then mark them. Even though during our research, we could observe four teachers assessing students summatively, none of them used these opportunities for formative purposes.

From the teachers' responses in the interview it follows that they often gather information about students' learning through progress or achievement tests or oral exams which are very often administered at the beginning of a lesson. However, they only use these techniques to build their lessons or to measure how students have mastered the subject matter they were supposed to learn rather than to make useful assessment which students could benefit from. In lessons they give students a lot of affective and evaluative feedback which in itself does not help students improve.

3.5 Self- and peer-assessment

"Self-assessment is essential to learning because students can only achieve a learning goal if they understand that goal and can assess what they need to do to reach it" (Sadler, 1989; in Black & William, 2012, p. 18). Therefore, it is essential that students understand the criteria used to assess their work. They also need to understand the objectives of their learning and what they need to do to achieve the objectives successfully. Various studies on assessment for learning stress the importance of regular student self- and peer assessment as part of assessment for learning. It should involve the analysis of one's work as well as some reflection on one's learning strategies. As mentioned above, if this is done, students become resources for one another and they gradually become the owners of their own learning.

This was also confirmed by one of the teachers in the interview who expressed the opinion that students *can explain the subject matter to each other in their own language – often better than I can do it. I use pair work if I want to find out if they really understand the subject matter.* Obviously, she understands that the feedback provided by students may be valuable for students' learning and may really help them improve.

Despite these facts, we have to state that the observed teachers did not encouraged self- or peer-assessment systematically even though we could observe some attempts. In one of the lessons, after students have performed the dialogues which they had prepared in pairs, the teacher invited a student to choose the best dialogue. The student chose one but did not give any reasons for her decision. The teacher agreed with her, but did not explain either.

In another lesson, the teacher invited students to listen to rehearsed role-plays and take notes of students' mistakes. However, she did not specify which mistakes they should focus on, which might be the reason why students did not respond at all. Another teacher asked students to count their correct answers and praise themselves if they deserved it. However, they were not invited to discuss difficulties and no suggestions for improvement were offered.

Conclusion

In order to answer the question how students are assessed in English lessons we need to say that those lessons which we observed were dominated by evaluative feedback. Because evaluative feedback is product-oriented, students are not provided any information about how much they already know, they do not learn how to link their new knowledge with the previous one or how they can improve their learning and succeed in achieving the objectives, and they are not presented any learning strategies that might enhance their learning.

Another problem is that teachers choose to do tasks with the whole class, which does not make it possible for them to gather evidence of students' learning. If learners do not have a chance to actively do every task, they cannot produce their own assessable outcomes and in that case they themselves do not know how much they have learned in the lesson. Many teachers do not really expect students to learn much at school, and expect them to study at home on their own or with the help of their parents. If that does not happen, teachers blame students for the failure.

Teachers generally do not facilitate self- and peer-assessment. Even if they present learning objectives to students, they do it rather superficially and do not check if students really understand them. Moreover, they do not provide students with any assessment criteria and do not give them a sample or a description of a successful achievement. Therefore, it is hardly possible for students to self-assess because they do not know what should actually be assessed. If teachers provide any feedback on grammatical or lexical activities, they do invite other students to correct mistakes, but all the feedback that is given is evaluative, i.e. focused on the correct answer. We did not observe any formative assessment when students were doing activities whose objectives were to develop their receptive or productive skills. Sometimes, students were asked to correct the answers given by their peers, but they were not encouraged to discuss problems or difficulties or reasons for different answers. Feedback on speaking activities was done without the involvement of the other students. That makes students rely on the teacher's assessment, which stops them from thinking about and understanding their learning process.

At present, "language teaching is being shaped by several important ideas. First, the shift toward a cognitive paradigm means that *learning* has taken precedence over *teaching.* What the student learns is the important outcome of the teaching-learning process, not what the teacher teaches" (Lynne, 2008, p. 379). In order to change the current situation, it is necessary to move from assessment of learning (summative assessment) to assessment for learning (formative assessment) and balance them. Students should be informed about learning objectives and success criteria so that they understand where they are and where they are going, but also what they need to do and which learning strategies they need to choose to get there. In order to achieve that they should be involved in small-group work which enables them to produce evidence of their learning, and use the knowledge of their peers and their own to improve and enhance their own learning. They should also be allowed to assess themselves and their peers because assessment deepens the understanding of the learning process. Teachers should respect students' needs, set tasks which

are achievable for them and enable all of them to experience success. That is very important because success motivates and enables learning.

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Contact

PhDr. Danica Gondová, PhD.,
Katedra anglického jazyka a literatúry FHV ŽU
Žilinská univerzita, Univerzitná 8251/1, 010 26 Žilina, Slovakia
danica.gondova@fhv.uniza.sk

JoLaCE

Reviews

Training TEFL students to be interculturally communicative competent

Kostková, K.: Rozvoj interkulturní komunikační kompetence. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2012, 224 s. ISBN 978-80-210-6035-7

The monograph written by Klára Kostková offers an insight into her research on the development of intercultural communicative competences of university students of English language. The research includes curricular document analyses and a case study of English language teacher trainees.

The first part of the book introduces the fundamental terminology and clarifies the theoretical and methodological foundations for the study. The author covers several perceptions of culture, differentiates between intercultural and multicultural education and includes the issue of competences. She discusses the connection between language and culture within the understanding of hermeneutic philosophy, introduces several models of intercultural communicative competences, which can serve as basis for foreign language teaching. The author chose the four dimensional model by Fantini (2000) as the basis for further analyses. She also described several theories and approaches of ICC development within foreign language teaching.

The place of intercultural learning is analysed in the context of the Czech national curriculum and school curricular documents. Kostková claims that curricular documents do not sufficiently include development of ICC. Even though the national curriculum for the English language covers all dimensions of ICC, the dimensions are covered only superficially, without any deeper elaboration of individual dimensions. 17 school curricula for English language were quantitatively analyzed according to the four categories of ICC (knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness) and one category of communicative competence. The communicative competence was present in 94% of instances, while only 6% of instances were devoted to development of ICC. Overall, the development of ICC is included only on general basis and the curricular documents do not offer sufficient support for the language teachers. This statement can be only agreed with, as I came to very similar findings (2012) that Slovak national curriculum for the English language does not offer sufficiently elaborated guidelines concerning the development of ICC.

The most valuable part of the study is the development and execution of a new study subject *Intercultural communicative competence* for university teacher trainees. The efficiency of this subject is supported by the YOGA form questionnaire and focus group discussions with the students. The researcher and teacher - as the same person - appears to have done a very valuable job creating a completely new subject, and she has succeeded in achieving better results i.e. developing the ICC of her students. My only criticism is the choice of quantitative content analyses of the focus group, as the quantitative outcomes comparing the focus groups at the beginning and then at the end of the semester, do not show the development of ICC. The author herself points additionally to the importance of qualitative analyses which she also carried out, as the numbers (quantitative analysis) in this case did not reflect the real development of ICC. The YOGA form questionnaire at the beginning and the end of the course showed a positive development of the ICC of the teacher trainees. Comparison of the questionnaire outcomes and the qualitative analyses of the focus groups support the reliability of research. The author proved that the development of ICC is also possible in an artificial classroom environment. I agree with Kostkova's point that to be interculturally communicatively competent does not guarantee to be a good teacher of ICC. There is definitely a need to create a subject, which would be didactically preparing teachers on how to develop ICC of their learners within English language lessons. I suggest that the created subject of *Intercultural communicative competence* should be applied into other study programmes, not only foreign language teacher courses, as education of interculturally competent people is one of the priorities of the education in general, and not only the domain of foreign language study.

Eva Reid

Slovakia, a Shattered Idyll, Could Become His Home
Milan Kovacovic: Ma's Dictionary: Straddling the Social Class Divide. Duluth: Greysolon Press, 2011. 340p. ISBN 978-0578081687

Saint-Aquilin, Bzince pod Javorinou, Paris, Chicago, San Francisco, Würzburg, Duluth. These are just few places Milan Kovacovic's life is connected with and which together create an exotic setting for a memoir written by a professor of French language, literature and culture at the University of Minnesota.

To understand his quest for identity, as he states it to be the primary impulse that initiated the writing of this book, it is useful to review his ethnic and social background. Kovacovic was born in 1942 to Slovak parents who worked for a

rich family in a village in Normandy. When Milan after eighteen months loses his father, who dies of cancer, life for him and his two elder sisters gets very hard and this unhappy beginning changes his life path forever. Due to financial problems, as his Maman becomes the only bread giver, Milan has to live with elderly, although, loving couple whom he calls Pépère and Mémère. Kovacovic is afterwards separated with his sister Eva, who is left with Slovak relatives in Bzince, for seventeen years.

After finishing lyceum at the age of 15, Milan routes to The United States of America with self-willed mother to find out that American dream is just too far from him. He also realizes that the social stability he used to indulge in as a son of a favored cook and the luxury of wearing fine clothes has disappeared from his life. It is then apparent, as the subtitle of the memoir indicates, that after losing father and sisters, material wealth for Kovacovic represent also mental stability and by entering the new world he deprived of this much needed secure point.

Consequently, Kovacovic is lifted, not solely by his passiveness, into the world of manual work and many pages in the book describe wasted time of a teenager seen from the perspective of an old man who is able to spot adolescent frailties: "I envied people my age, namely students, who had a perspective on the future along with seemingly achievable projects or goals. I hungered for employment that would allow me some measure of self-direction and autonomy. This aspiration seemed unrealistic and unattainable for ´people like me´". (p.152) Furthermore, he explains the insecure social path from the viewpoint of an immigrant in 1965 who is triggered by following American dream: "But without support from family or any other source, I could progress only under an institutional umbrella, in my case the military. Whether due to lack of imagination on my part, or lucid perception of reality, I saw no other possibility. ´America – the land of opportunity´ had become for me a myth, a cruel hoax." (p.265) It is quite peculiar for a reader to see how Kovacovic afterwards takes taste in study by attending numerous courses in the army.

Kovacovic chooses special moments and puts them separately in the book. Several chapters have appeared in literary journals receiving various awards, to be exact the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council. Interestingly, Ma's Dictionary, the first excerpt to be published, telling the story of Maman's dictionary and its essential place in her life, was chosen for Boundaries of Twilight (1991), a volume of poetry and prose where not only well established but unknown writers of Slovak and Czech ancestry revealed their sense of ethnicity.

The answer for a question what will become of a boy with French accent and poor background in America is clear from the very beginning and the back cover

reveals that the memoir follows the journey of a professor in France, Slovakia and the U.S.A. What is then the most expressive means in this story? Weather it is through his honesty, writing talent or accuracy in depicting life situations, one has to admit that all these devices together enable him to touch reader's heart and employ reader's mind. To imagine a voyage portrayed in the book he adds his personal photos with Maman, sisters or just a picture of one of his step homes in Paris.

If the narration set in France is guided by his Maman and Pépère and Mémère, in America themes of intimate and professional life predominates. Subchapter Slovakia, A Shattered Idyll is intended to explicate Kovacovic's Slovak background but, surprisingly, he does not pay much attention to depiction of life in his parents' native village Bzince pod Javorinou that he revisited when working for international airlines in San Francisco. The last part of the book called Fast Forward is more a personal essay than a memoir because the core of the text is about university teaching and Kovacovic confesses how much he has found himself in this profession.

Ma's Dictionary is an important memoir for Slovak culture for several reasons. Although Kovacovic was born in France, his maternal and paternal roots lie in Slovakia. Slovak readers will find in this book a true, well written story by a man who can handle poetic words, who achieved his American dream, and finally, who sets to find out who he really is. Moreover, Ma's Dictionary, in many respects, follows a very exceptional line along with Thomas Bell's In the Midst of Life or Paul Wilkes' In Due Season. We shall, after all, have one daring wish - let there be more memoirs from our American compatriots who perceive Slovakia as an idyll.

Diana Židová

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