RESEARCH ON NON-NATIVE SPEAKING TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN SLOVAKIA

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INTRODUCTION

As a result of the ever-growing demands in English language learning, the majority of trained teachers of English as a foreign language in the world must be non-native speaking teachers. It is generally estimated that more than 80% of the English teachers in the world are non-native speakers. And although most English language teachers worldwide are non-native English speakers, the existing amount of research conducted specifically on these teachers is rather limited.

The book *Research on Non-native Speaking Teachers of English in Slovakia* maps the current situation of non-native speaking teachers of English or teacher trainees in Slovakia. It consists of four relatively independent studies which publish results of original research probes – each from a specific perspective.

The introductory paper by Silvia Pokrivčáková analyses the concept of the teacher as professional. It discusses current trends in evaluating teachers' performance (competences) and the effect the teacher's nativeness/non-nativeness may bring into the equation. The paper also summarizes the results of existing research studies conducted in Slovakia among Slovak non-native teachers and teacher-trainees of English as a foreign language.

The main aim of Kateryna Pavliuk´s paper "Pronunciation training in English language teaching" is to analyse a selected set of English textbooks from the perspective of a non-native teacher teaching non-native learners with their specific needs and habits. The theoretical part of the paper presents developments in pronunciation research and practice that reveal the importance of pronunciation instruction, discusses pronunciation models and techniques of the training and describes the aspects of phonology that are required in the national documentation for the school leaving examination in Slovakia. The practical part provides a content analysis of pronunciation training exercises from four selected EFL courses (Insight, English File, Face2Face, Cutting Edge). A total number of 594 exercises from 22 textbooks were analysed.

Inés Fábryová studied the attitudes of Slovak teachers and students of English towards the integration of conversational robots (chatbots) in EFL classes. She carried out qualitative-quantitative research using questionnaires for students and interviews with teachers. Students were recommended to work with Mitsuku (Kuki) the chatbot.

In the fourth study, its author Kristína Ivanová intended to find out what attitudes Slovak non-native teachers of English had towards translation activities

and whether they considered them to be an effective technique in the context of EFL teaching to non-native learners. In the theoretical part she introduces the historical development of the role of translation in class; later she explains contemporary teachers' and scholars' conceptions of it, its advantages and disadvantages and the types of translation occurring in class. In the practical part, the author presents the results of the survey conducted with non-native teachers at lower secondary schools.

Both the editor and authors believe the research results published in this book will help to foster a better understanding of the attitudes, opinions, preferences, and needs of non-native speaking teachers of English as a foreign language in Slovakia. They also hope that new knowledge will help to update and improve teacher-training courses at Slovak universities.

Editor

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AmE – American English
BrE – British English
CALL – Computer Assisted Language Learning
CAPT – Computer Assisted Pronunciation Training
CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
EFL – English as a foreign language
EIL – English as an international language
ELF – English as Lingua Franca
ELT – English language teaching
ESL – English as a second language
EU – European Union
L1 – first language, mother tongue
L2 – second acquired language
LFC – Lingua France Core
NNS – non-native speaker(s)
NS – native speaker(s)
OUP – Oxford University Press
RP – Received Pronunciation

THE PROFESSIONAL SELF-IMAGE, NEEDS, AND EXPECTATIONS OF NON-NATIVE SPEAKING TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN SLOVAKIA

SILVIA POKRIVCAKOVA

1 The teacher of English as a professional

For decades, the profession of foreign language teachers has not been achieving the necessary attention of theory and research. Only since the 1970s the comprehensible study of foreign language education has been established, caused by several factors:

1. The introduction of compulsory foreign language education in schools;
2. The development of school teaching research;
3. Striving **for professionalism** in teacher education;
4. Changes in the concept of language teaching and its theory;
5. Changes in the objectives of foreign language teaching that reflected professional competencies and the personal needs of learners (Klečková, Hanušová, Píšová et al., 2019).

Drawing on the importance of teachers in a contemporary knowledge-based society, the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture) provided a list of *Common European Principles for Teacher Competencies and Qualifications* (2005) as a package of recommendations to its member states. The document inspired discussions on teachers' competencies and the establishing of national frameworks for teachers' professional development in individual countries, including Slovakia (for more, see Ivanov, 2013).

The frame principles for teacher competencies and qualifications may be characterized as follows:

- **a well-qualified profession**: all teachers are graduates from higher education institutions (in Slovakia universities), and their education is multidisciplinary, i.e. they have extensive subject/subjects knowledge, have (or possess) strong expertise in pedagogy and psychology, understand social and cultural dimensions of education, and have the practical skills and competencies necessary to support and guide learners;

- **a profession based on lifelong learning:** teachers must continue their professional development after graduation throughout their careers in a knowledge-based society. They must adapt and evolve their teaching to changing knowledge and new technologies.
- **a mobile profession**: European teachers are continually encouraged to participate in many international projects (Comenius, Erasmus, Lingua, Leonardo da Vinci, Lifelong Learning Programme) to study or to work for some time in other countries for professional development purposes. This principle is crucial for language teachers to keep their communication competencies in foreign languages fresh and accurate.
- **a profession based on partnership**: teachers should cooperate with many people: school authorities, members of local communities, parents and students. Moreover, teachers should collaborate with other teachers to reflect on their own and others' practice and thus improve teaching methods and techniques (Pokrivčáková, 2014).

The key role is played by didactic knowledge of content, which for foreign language teachers lies in the ability to convey a foreign language to specific students concerning the context of teaching (this includes knowledge of various approaches, strategies, techniques, methods and didactic tools suitable for foreign language teaching).

As Klečková, Hanušová, Píšová et al. (2019, p. 8) claim, knowledge expected of foreign language teachers includes:

- **communication competence/language skills** at a high level of proficiency (at least at level C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages);
- **knowledge of the language** (the teacher masters the issues of basic linguistic disciplines, can apply knowledge in their profession, can analyze different types of texts creatively, interpret them and use them in creating practical exercises for teaching);
- **knowledge of culture** (the teacher can interpret specific relationships between culture and language and analyze the influence of intercultural factors on communication between members of different cultures, can assess the impact of specific socio-cultural factors, in particular prejudices, stereotypes, racism and xenophobia, on contemporary society);
- **knowledge of literary texts** that represent the fundamental tendencies and phases of the culture of the language (the teacher can critically evaluate the text and place it in its historical, cultural and social context, to develop their reading skills and interests, to use literature as a means of lifelong learning and personal development and to use appropriate literary texts in teaching).

2 The myth of the ideal native teacher

Looking at the list mentioned above of teachers' expected competencies, one would not be surprised that many people see native-speaking teachers as ideal models of foreign language teachers.

A native English-speaking teacher (NEST) is a teacher of English whose first language is English. The term finds its justification in teaching English to non-native English speakers for whom the native speaker is a model of language production.

Davies (2004) listed the critical tenets of "nativeness" as follows:

- childhood acquisition of the language,
- comprehension and production of idiomatic forms of the language,
- understanding regional and social variations within the language,
- and competent production and comprehension of fluent, spontaneous discourse.

The qualities of native teachers has been a subject of continuing discussion amongst experts since the 1960s (Searle, 1969). In the early 1990s, Davies (1991, p. 167) famously stated that seeing the native speaker as the ideal "is a myth but a useful myth". Nevertheless, the public and many authors still view native speakers as the ultimate arbiters of correct or acceptable language (Braine, 1999) or as the gold standard of spoken and written language (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

3 Non-native teachers

Statistically, the majority of teachers of English are non-native speakers, i.e. teachers who teach a foreign language that is not their mother tongue or second language. The general estimates are as high as 80% (Braine, 1999; Canagarajah, 2005; Crystal, 2002, 2003; Graddol, 1999, 2006; Liu, 1999; Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Prodromou, 2003).

Some scholars believe that pointing out the differences between native and non-native teachers is beneficial and can shed light on essential aspects of teaching foreign languages (Bolton, 2008; Cheung & Braine, 2007; Han, 2005; Mengyes, 1994, 1996; Phillipson, 1992; Todd & Pojanapunya, 2008; Wang, 2012). Another group of authors believe that such distinction will lead to professional discrimination against non-native teachers (Kelly, 2016; Kiczkowiak, 2014; Maum, 2002). Instead of this dichotomy, Higgins (2003), inspired by Norton (1997), proposes differentiating language users according to different degrees of language ownership regarding their social characteristics, such as social class, local context, access to education, etc.

For a long time, pedagogical research seemed to ignore non-native teachers and paid almost no attention to them (Medgyes, 1994; Moussu & Llurda, 2008). The situation began to change in the 1960s and only in some regions, e. g. developed countries of Western Europe, both American continents and countries of South-East Asia (Bolton, 2008; Butler, 2007a;; Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002; Lee, 2000; Liu & Zhang, 2007; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, & Hartford, 2004; McCrostie, 2010; Pacek, 2005; Rajagopalan, 2005; Wu, & Ke, 2009; Yates, 2005; Young & Walsh; 2010).

In the 1990s, Mengyes (1994, 1996) published the results of the first comprehensible research into differences between native and non-native speakers of English. In general, he concluded that:

1) Native and non-native teachers differ in language proficiency.
2) They generally differ in terms of teaching behaviours.
3) Different teaching behaviours are caused by language proficiency differences.
4) Both native and non-native teachers can be equally good in teaching.

Globally, the research proved that non-native teachers are often underestimated by their students, parents, and other non-professionals. What is more, it was documented in many studies that native English speakers without any teaching qualifications or experience are more likely to be hired as English teachers than qualified and experienced non-native teachers of English (e.g. Amin, 2004; Braine, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999, Flynn & Gulikers, 2001; Kelly, 2016; McCrostie, 2010). Kiczkowiak (2014) even counted that "up to 70 per cent of all jobs advertised on tefl.com – the biggest job search engine for English teachers – are for NESTs (...) and in some countries such as Korea it is even worse – almost all recruiters will reject any application that does not say English native speaker on it". In addition, as Kiczkowiak (2014) angrily continues, such practices are usually excused by one of the following statements:

- Students prefer NESTs**.**
- Students need NESTs to learn 'good' English.
- Students need NESTs to understand 'the culture'.
- NESTs are better for public relations.

On the other side, many authors claim that full teaching qualification and professionalism should be valued much more than the teacher's native language (Canagarajah, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Lee, 2000; Llurda, 2005; Phillipson, 1992). In their opinions, non-native teachers have some different qualities and skills which might put them at an advantage in teaching English, e.g.:

- Non-native teachers learned English as a foreign language themselves, and they have first-hand experience in acquiring/learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, they know much better how to help their learners (Philipson, 1992).

- They can speak the learners' mother language and thus are aware of differences between it and English. Consequently, they are better at anticipating and understanding the reasons for their students' problems.
- Having first-hand experience as foreign language learners, they can be more sensitive to their students' learning needs. They are expected to develop an effective learner-friendly curriculum and pedagogy.

Medgyes formulated the following six positive characteristics of non-native teachers:

- They provide an excellent learner model to their students.
- They can teach language strategies very effectively.
- They can provide more information about the language to their students.
- They understand the difficulties and needs of the students.
- They can anticipate and predict language difficulties.
- In EFL settings, they can use the students' native language to their advantage.

Phillipson (1992) and Medgyes (1994) laid the foundations for the topic of non-native English teachers in educational research. Currently, three lines of research are being developed in this area of linguistic didactics and applied linguistics:

a) **the perception of native and non-native English teachers by pupils/students and other subjects of educational processes** (Cheung & Braine, 2007; Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002; Kim, 2007; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002, 2005; Liu & Zhang, 2007; Llurda & Huguet, 2003; Luk, 1998; Todd & Pojanapunya, 2008; Walkinshaw & Duong, 2012);

b) **the status and reception of their status by non-native teachers of English** (see research outputs, e.g. Amin, 1997; Braine, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Lee, 2000; Llurda, 2004; Modiano, 2005; Rajagopalan, 2005; Seidlhofer, 1996, 1999);

c) **the specific professional needs of native and non-native language teachers and alternative solutions in the training of non-native English language teachers** (Brady & Gulikers, 2004; Brinton, 2004; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Llurda, 2003, 2005; Mahboob, 2003; Moussu & Braine, 2006).

4 Research on non-native teachers of English in Slovakia

Most Slovak teachers of English are non-native speakers who studied English almost exclusively in formal academic settings. However, a growing number of teachers also have the experience of living in an English-speaking country for a longer time and then starting to teach English after coming back to their mother country. However, no systematic research has yet been conducted on this topic in Slovakia. That led to the proposal of a 3-year research project, KEGA 001TTU-

04/2019, sponsored by the Slovak Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport. The project intended to cover three main areas:

1) perception of differences between native and non-native teachers/self-perception of non-native teachers,
2) specific aspects of non-native teachers' professionalism usually viewed as prone to deficiency (e.g. teaching pronunciation, conversation, and culture),
3) professional performance and needs of non-native teachers.

The project has the ambition to contribute to scientific knowledge of the issue by covering one of the essential aspects of English teacher training in the Slovak Republic as a Central-European country where English is taught as the dominant compulsory foreign language during a large part of compulsory school attendance and is also a compulsory graduation subject. The relatively exclusive position of English as an academic subject is related to the requirement of a high number of qualified professional teachers with quality training.

The project uses the dichotomy of native vs non-native teachers for purely practical reasons and only regarding the language-pedagogy aspect of the issue. The project team members are well aware of at least two strong arguments against accepting such a division of teachers:

a) from a linguistic point of view, each user of the language is a native speaker of the language, and the dichotomy is a manifestation of linguistic elitism and imperialism (Davies, 2003; Philipson, 1992; Nayar, 1994);
b) English is currently an indigenized language in many countries around the world and exists in so many culturally neutral variants (world English) that some authors (e.g. Kirkpatrick, 2007, 2010) discuss the existence of multiple Englishes and, therefore, the impossibility to label some speakers as non-native because they do not use a particular artificially defined variant of English (McKay, 2002; Young & Wash, 2010; Rampton, 1990; Liu, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001).

4.1 Perception and self-perception of non-native teachers

Research on the perception of differences between native and non-native teachers usually involves asking students, teacher trainees or teacher trainers for their opinions and experience.

Scholars studying the self-perception of non-native teachers usually ask non-native teachers directly for their beliefs and feelings. In 1994, Reves & Medgyes found out that many non-native teachers of English feel perpetual fear of their students' judgment, they constantly feel self-conscious about their mistakes and their self-discrimination creates a vicious circle of fear leading to poorer self-image and deteriorated language performance, leading to an even stronger fear and feelings of inferiority. Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999) learned from their non-native participants that they did not feel appreciated equally and they believed

that their competencies were more often questioned than native teachers. Maum (2003) found that, while native teachers were not aware of any discrimination against their non-native colleagues, non-native teachers felt frustrated and marginalized in their profession. Braine (2004) reported frequent feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt among non-native teachers. These results correspond with the earlier mentioned Clouet (2006) and Gomes (2018).

Non-native teachers are sometimes seen as inferior educators because they lack innate linguistic skills (Wang, 2012), resulting in the 'inferiority complex' of non-native teachers. The situation was reported by Gomes (2018), who found that some non-native teachers and trainees even believe that "no matter how good they are, native English-speaking teachers are always 'five steps up the ladder' just by being native". The fact that non-native teachers often experience prejudice and see their non-native status as disadvantageous to their professional careers and teaching experience was discussed by Clouet (2006, p. 72), who wrote: "Especially in countries where the level of English at the end of secondary education is considered poor or insufficient, having native teachers in the classroom is seen as the only solution to improve the student's communicative skills and prepare them for their future work in this new global world. As a result, in those countries which can afford native teachers, non-native teachers have too often been relegated to teaching grammar or translation using their students' native language".

In Slovakia, the problem of the well-being, self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy of non-native speaking teachers of English has been discussed by Lojová (2021).

Králová and Tirpáková (2019) studied English speaking anxiety (ESA) of Slovak non-native speaking teachers of English. They claimed that "non-native teachers usually rate their communication abilities resulting from their self-perceived bad language proficiency most negatively". The authors describe "the devil's circle" of non-native teachers' low self-esteem and anxiety: "Inability to present oneself according to the self-image and self-concept of competence formed in their first language as reasonable and intelligent individuals can situate a foreign language teacher into a cycle of negative self-evaluation (...). What is more, students usually sense their teachers' discomfort in speaking a foreign language. Such apprehension of a teacher's ego being endangered in front of them can be a substantial cause of speaking anxiety. The situation often leads to speaking avoidance behaviour" when teachers try to avoid spontaneous and continuous speaking activities in their classrooms, which is rather harmful to the effectiveness of EFL learning.

As expected, participants older than 50 suffered from the most substantial speaking anxiety. All participants identified their anxiety as the main cause of their unsatisfactory English language competence. They mainly complained about experiencing a lack of vocabulary (more frequently identified amongst younger

teachers) and inauthentic pronunciation (stated by all of them). Slovak teachers of English were less concerned about their grammar, which is in line with the results observed in other countries. They tended to feel more comfortable with receptive skills than productive skills.

The authors confirmed that the best ways to overcome foreign language anxiety are the length of study, teaching practice, a stay in a foreign language environment, and contact with native speakers.

Within the frame of the KEGA project, the preliminary research on differences in perception of native and non-native teachers by Slovak students was conducted by Pišková (2021). One hundred and seventeen non-native participants (64 teachers and 53 students) took part in the research. Data was collected with two online questionnaires (the Survio application). The first questionnaire elicited learners' attitudes toward studying English with native and non-native teachers; the second questionnaire collected opinions and attitudes of non-native teachers. Both questionnaires were inspired by and similar to the questionnaires designed for other already published studies on this subject (e.g., Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Butler, 2007b; Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002; Liang, 2002; Moussu, 2002; Pacek, 2005; Walkinshaw & Duong, 2012).

Pišková found out that 88.7% of her student-respondents preferred being taught by both native and non-native teachers. Such attitude is not uniques since the growing body of research (Barratt & Kontra, 2000; Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Braine, 2010; Cheung & Braine, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2010; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Liang, 2002; Mahboob, 2003; Pacek, 2005; Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014) has indicated that the majority of students see native and non-native speaking teachers as equally competent, with strengths and weaknesses on both sides. It is widely believed that both groups of teachers can ideally complement each other. Where native teachers are valued for their pronunciation, fluency of oral communication, and cultural knowledge, non-native teachers are appreciated for their own experience as language learners, their adherence to methodology, and their ability to explain grammar and to switch to the students' first language when necessary (Mahboob, 2003).

87% of students agreed (36% strongly) that non-native teachers can achieve the same level and quality of English skills as native teachers. In their evaluations of teachers, they were more optimistic than the teachers themselves, of whom only 78% agreed with the same statement.

statement	agreement among students N1=53	agreement among teachers N2= 64	differ rence
Non-native teachers can explain grammatical features in the English language better because they understand learners' difficulties	76%	71%	-5%
2. Non-native teachers will never be able to explain the ambiguities of the English language	6%	12%	+6%
3. Non-native teachers can prepare students for communication in English better than non-native teachers	8%	43%	+25%
4. Non-native teachers cannot prepare students for communication in English	28%	22%	-6%
5. Native teachers can evaluate the communicative skills of students better than non-native teachers	60%	47%	-13%
6. Native teachers can motivate students to communicate better than non-native teachers	68%	53%	-15%
7. Non-native teachers can reach the same level and quality of English skills as native teachers	87%	78%	-9%

Tab 1: The comparison of non-native students' and teachers' opinions on the professionalism of non-native teachers (based on data presented by Pišková, 2021).

Only 6% of students agreed that non-native teachers would never be able to explain the ambiguities of the English language. However, many more students (28%) agreed that non-native teachers could not prepare students for communication in English which is in line with one of the prejudices mentioned above against non-native teachers. The answers of students and teachers were significantly different in all questionnaire items. The most significant difference between students' and teachers' opinions was manifested in the level of their agreement with the statement: Non-native teachers can prepare students for communication in English better than non-native teachers (8% of students versus 43% of teachers).

Teachers were more sceptical about the evaluation skills of native teachers and their ability to motivate students. On the other side, 12% of teachers (compared to only 6% of students) agreed with the statement that non-native teachers would never be able to explain the ambiguities of the English language to their learners. The summary of results is shown in Tab. 1.

Pišková's results showed a high level of agreement with the data published in the international context (e.g., Benke & Medgyes, 2005; Butler, 2007b; Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002; Liang, 2002; Moussu, 2002; Pacek, 2005; Walkinshaw & Duong, 2012).

4.2 Pronunciation and culture = two sensitive points

When reflecting on relevant research, non-native teachers most frequently face criticism due to their **accent** and lower English language **proficiency.** They are believed to be unable to teach English successfully if their pronunciation is affected by the foreign accent and if their English language proficiency is not as high as that of native speakers. Fluency was the only competence from many other studied aspects, which students did not prefer over nativity/non-nativity of the teacher. The study by Walkinshaw and Duong (2012) "strongly suggests that pronunciation is the key issue". They learned that 30 of the 50 respondents commented that native-speaker pronunciation was an advantage of native teachers and a handicap of non-native teachers.

In many cases, non-native teachers' pronunciation was viewed as non-authentic, their speech less fluent than native speakers', and their knowledge of English-speaking cultures limited. Canagarajah (1999) and Thomas (1999) found that non-native speakers of English were considered less credible and less competent teachers than native teachers coming from the U.K, the USA and other countries of the Inner Circle (Crystal, 2003). Kelch & Santana-Williamson (2002) conclude that native speakers were seen as more likeable, educated, experienced, and better teachers, especially for speaking/listening skills. Lippi-Green (1997) emphasized that teachers with non-native accents were perceived as less qualified and less effective than their native speaking colleagues. According to Moussu (2002), negative responses about non-native teachers include poorer oral skills and a lack of knowledge about the 'English-speaking' culture. To conclude this cluster of references, Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, & Hartford (2004) published their research results where non-native English-speaking teachers were viewed by students as deficient speakers of the language, with imperfect grammatical and pragmatic knowledge, poor pronunciation, and insufficient knowledge about foreign cultures.

Liang (2002), on the other hand, claims that teachers' accents did not negatively affect respondents' (students of the California State University, CA) attitudes toward their non-native teachers. The students held generally positive

attitudes toward the teachers and believed that accent was not as problematic as expected. On the other side, they were praised for being able to code-switch to mother language when necessary, to provide a contrasting background for learning grammar, and to be effective intercultural mediators in the classrooms.

Within the frame of the KEGA project, Vančová (2019, 2020, 2021) systematically investigates the views of non-native teachers and teacher trainees on their English **pronunciation** and the ways in which it can be improved and taught to their students. Tab. 2 shows partial results from her research on teacher-trainees' attitudes toward their pronunciation skills and pronunciation courses.

	1	2	3	4	5	Average score
1. Pronunciation is important in foreign language communication.	**78 (66.7 %)**	31 (26.5 %)	3 (2.6 %)	3 (2.6 %)	2 (1.7 %)	**1.46**
2. I am aware of my pronunciation when I speak a foreign language.	**56 (47.9 %)**	39 (33.3 %)	12 (10.3 %)	7 (6.0 %)	3 (2.6 %)	**1.82**
3. I want to improve my pronunciation in a foreign language.	**85 (72.6 %)**	23 (19.7 %)	2 (1.7 %)	4 (3.4 %)	3 (2.6 %)	**1.43**
4. The aim of the pronunciation training is native-like pronunciation.	31 (26.5 %)	**51 (43.6 %)**	19 (16.2 %)	13 (11.1 %)	3 (2.6 %)	**2.19**
5. If I had better pronunciation, I would be more confident in English.	**53 (45.3 %)**	30 (25.6 %)	19 (16.2 %)	9 (7.7 %)	6 (5.1 %)	**2.01**
6. I think that my current pronunciation is good.	21 (17.9 %)	**52 (44.4 %)**	30 (25.6 %)	9 (7.7 %)	5 (4.3 %)	**2.35**
10. I think my teachers provided/provide me with a good pronunciation model.	30 (25.6 %)	**42 (35.9 %)**	31 (26.5 %)	8 (6.8 %)	6 (5.1 %)	**2.29**

Tab. 2: Quality of their pronunciation and pronunciation training as seen by Slovak non-native teachers and teacher trainees (selected results from Vančová, 2020, pp. 51-52)

Legend: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) disagree; (5) strongly disagree.

The results showed that the vast majority of respondents viewed pronunciation as an important part of their study specifically and as part of communication in a foreign language in general. 81.2% of Vančova's respondents

were aware of their pronunciation when speaking in English and 92.3% of all respondents wish to improve their pronunciation (meaning they are aware of some reserves and weaknesses in their skills). Moreover, 70.9% of respondents saw a direct relationship between their quality of pronunciation and self-confidence in communication and believed that better pronunciation would make them more confident in English.

Vančová compares her findings with previous studies from the Slovak context (Bodorík, 2017; Metruk, 2017, 2020a). The results of Slovak researchers in general show that the participants (either practicing teachers of English or teacher-trainees from Slovak universities) all agree on the importance of pronunciation, and they see the goal of teaching pronunciation in intelligibility and are comfortable with having an accent. Generally, all participants are aware of weaknesses in their English pronunciation and wish to improve it.

Along with pronunciation, cultural knowledge and awareness are also areas where native speakers seem to be generally favoured. The impact of teacher nationality on a language's cultural comprehension may indeed be paramount. However, while the students may prefer native speaking teachers because they have more prosperous and long-lasting experience with a foreign culture (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002), non-native teachers have the advantage of understanding differences and a set of references that native speakers do not own.

Within the presented project, selected aspects of developing the intercultural communicative competence of non-native teachers and teacher trainees in Slovakia were studied by Liashuk (2020a, 2020b, 2021). However, a more systemic and complex study is still needed, along with more profound research comparing non-native teachers across varying sociocultural and teaching contexts. Only then can we agree upon the characteristics of the intercultural identities of non-native teachers, how they are formed, and how they connect to the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour of teachers in language and culture teaching contexts (Chen, Tigelaar, & Verloop, 2016).

4.3 Professional characteristics of native and non-native teachers

Research studies have proved that a teacher's lower language proficiency is not necessarily an obstacle to being a good teacher. Even the teachers with lower proficiency may be very effective and help their learners to achieve excellent learning outcomes. If such non-native teachers are able to capture learners' attention, to enhance their motivation, and to provide them with a lot of quality-language input (listening materials, speaking models and texts for reading), they may be even more effective than native teachers without appropriate training (Straková & Cimermanová, 2010).

In Mahboob (2003; see also Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman & Hartford 2004), non-native speakers were valued for their experiences as foreign language learners,

and the respondents also recognized their knowledge of grammar and their 'stricter methodology,' hard work, ability to answer questions, and literacy skills.

Barratt & Kontra (2000) collected and compared the experiences of Hungarian and Chinese students with their teachers. Positive comments made about native teachers included positive and humorous personalities, language authenticity, knowledge of culture, the use of innovative teaching methods, and a more relaxed attitude toward error correction. Negative comments made about native teachers included lack of pedagogical preparation and organization, poor teaching styles, poor understanding of students' learning difficulties, and poor knowledge of the local culture and educational values.

In another study, students at California State University, Los Angeles, were surveyed by Liang (2002). They appeared to base their opinions of their non-native and native teachers more on the level of their professional features (such as 'being interesting', 'being prepared', 'being qualified') than on their language and national background. Cheung and Braine's research (2007) confirmed that professional skills (such as knowledge of their subject, preparation, being able to make lessons interesting and fun and to motivate students, etc.) were more essential for students than a teacher's language skills.

In Slovakia, the different roles of native and non-native teachers and "the quality of English language teaching" by these two groups of teachers at Slovak secondary schools was studied by Homolová (2004, 2007). Her aim was to examine the roles they prefer in the classroom with special focus on error management in spoken English (e.g. direct correction, eliciting self-correction, etc.), types and distribution of the teacher's questions (e.g. open questions, closed questions, etc.), kinds of teaching tasks (developing fluency vs. accuracy).

After observing 13 native and 13 non-native teachers in their classrooms directly, Homolová found that:

a) native-speaking teachers used more tasks for developing fluency (discussions, simulations, role-plays, solving problems, etc.),
b) native teachers did not devote much time to controlled exercises and preferred free communication,
c) non-native teachers were more reliant on textbooks and spent more time on controlled and semi-controlled tasks,
d) native teachers were applying a more benevolent approach to mistakes that did not cause misunderstanding,
e) non-native teachers seemed to be "obsessed" by learners' mistakes and directly corrected 3.5 times more mistakes than non-native teachers,
f) non-native teachers preferred yes-no questions and questions requiring short answers, whereas native teachers tried to motivate learners to express themselves in longer answers.

In her conclusion, the author points (without any more details) to the results of her survey with 150 students who appreciated the presence of non-native speaking teachers but "clearly expressed a preference for grammatical correctness" (Homolová, 2007, p. 39). In many aspects, if not in all, Homolová's findings and conclusions correspond with similar research studies from other countries.

Mertuk (2020b) aimed to perform a comparison between Slovak pre-service EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers' and Slovak in-service EFL teachers' perceptions of a good and effective language teacher. He used a 57-item Likert-type questionnaire to collect data from 74 pre-service and 63 in-service teachers.

The research results revealed that statistically significant differences ($p \leq 0.05$) were detected in only 12 items (out of the 57) and in each of them the teacher group assigned a higher score:

A good and effective teacher should...

1. Personalize his/her teaching to students' lives, needs, concerns, goals, and interests.
2. Provide opportunities to use English through meaningful tasks and activities.
3. Facilitate learners' responsibility and autonomy.
4. Establish clear classroom rules that everyone understands and obeys.
5. Employ plenty of pair work and group work in which his/her learners can practice English.
6. Support the notion that fluency is somewhat more important than accuracy.
7. Be flexible.
8. Be neat and tidy in appearance.
9. Show interest in students (e.g. by remembering their names, etc.) and their learning.
10. Have good communication skills.
11. Be familiar with the social and cultural backgrounds of learners.
12. Vary class interaction strategies (e.g. use group and pair work, drama, role-plays, debates, etc.).

In line with previous research results mentioned above, Metruk's results showed that Slovak students appreciate professionalism and acts of general politeness and respect more than the communicative proficiency of their teachers. One of the surprising findings was that pre-service teacher participants favoured traditional teaching more than their in-service teacher counterparts, who preferred CLT (Communicative Language Teaching).

Conclusion

Exploring differences and similarities between native and non-native speaking teachers of foreign languages may shed light on new and unexpected aspects of being a teacher. It seems unquestionable that each group of teachers has its own unique set of advantages and disadvantages in the traditional classroom (Wood, 2017). However, the ideal solution is if native and non-native teachers cooperate and share their experiences, insights, and cultural backgrounds for the sake of their learners (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2001; Homolová, 2007).

Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002) even state that there is a possibility that native and non-native speaking teachers "are each more suitable at different stages of language learning" (p. 133) and Wood (2017) develops the idea by suggesting that novice-level students would benefit more from having non-native teachers while intermediate and advanced-level students would benefit more from having native students.

The presented paper introduced a brief overview of research on the topics of self-image, perception and self-perception of non-native teachers of English in the international and national context. Even though the main focus was on research conducted in Slovakia, and especially the research studies carried out within the project KEGA 001TTU-4/2019, it was impossible to cover all activities running within the project which include research on:

- the attitudes of non-native teachers and teacher trainees towards studying and teaching English as a foreign language (Hitková, 2021; Horníčková, 2021; Vančová, 2020, 2021)
- position and developing of translating skills (Jánošíková, 2021a, 2021b; Liashuk, 2018, 2019),
- applying narrative techniques (Hitková, 2020)
- incorporating literature into foreign language education (Magalová, Hriňák, Pokrivčáková, 2020; Kocianová, 2021a; 2021b; Vitézová, 2021)
- as well as integrating digital tools into the training of Slovak non-native teachers and teacher trainees (Godiš, 2021a, 2021b; Komlósi, 2021; Pokrivčák, 2021).

More studies on the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour of non-native teachers in foreign language education would be welcome in order to gather enough material for updating and improving teacher training courses. However, based on the existing research results (Flynn & Gulikers, 2001; Braine, 1999; Liu, 2009; Oka, 2004; Canagarajah, 2005; Holliday, 2005; Kamhi-Stein, 1999; Lee, 2004; de Oliveira & Richardson, 2001, 2004; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2004; Gebhard & Nagamine, 2005; Brady & Gulikers, 2004; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004 a i.), it is expected that more attention will be paid to the areas of correct pronunciation training, proficiency and spontaneous conversation skills development,

intercultural competence development, as well as development of various professional skills.

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PRONUNCIATION TRAINING IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO NON-NATIVE LEARNERS

KATERYNA PAVLIUK

1 Pronunciation training in English language teaching

The first part of this paper describes different points of view on the importance of pronunciation instruction, presents current opinions regarding pronunciation models and accents, and provides an overview of popular methods and techniques used by teachers in English classes.

Pronunciation training involves a lot more than just practising individual sounds. Word stress, sentence stress, intonation, rhythm and word linking all influence not only the sound of spoken English but also affect its coherence and cohesion. English pronunciation contains many complexities for learners, for instance, the irregularities between spelling and pronunciation of sounds are notable (Brooks, 2015). Brooks in his *Dictionary of the British English spelling system* provides one of the main reasons for that – "English has absorbed words from many other languages (especially French, Latin and classical Greek) into its Germanic base, and mainly taken over spellings and transliteration of those words without adapting them to the original system" (ibid., p.1). As a result, it may be asier to learn some words that are common for learners' native language and English, but it is difficult to learn many other words; the pronunciation of which differs from their spelling. It is possible for learners to master pronunciation on their own. However, depending on their first language, it might be more difficult for some of them. In addition, various languages involve different movements of muscles that are involved in sound production. Therefore, training pronunciation may benefit from the presentation of basic phonetic information as a precursor for phonological activities.

In several studies of pronunciation pedagogy, Ketabi found evidence of the "relative reluctance" among teachers to teach pronunciation mostly due to the "lack of training in pronunciation instruction and access to appropriate materials" (Ketabi, 2015, p.186). Arguably, some learners are able to pick up the ability to pronounce words and phrases accurately without explicit training. When a learner is exposed to a lot of natural language or has a good ear for languages, this may indeed be the case. However, the same argument could be made for other aspects of language, and, if learners attend a language course, it seems reasonable to assume that they expect to be taught rather than be left to pick things up for

themselves. For compulsory courses of English language at schools, as it is the case with Slovakia, it is necessary for teachers to be able to teach pronunciation and choose the most suitable materials to satisfy the needs of their students and comply with requirements for students' skills and abilities. Improving pronunciation increases self-esteem, facilitates communication, and may also lead to a better job or more respect in the modern multicultural workplace. In the rapidly changing world, effective communication is essential, therefore, any issue that supposedly can hinder communication must be eliminated as soon as possible. As for English pronunciation, it is necessary to provide adequate training from the very start of the course.

1.1 The importance of pronunciation training in English language teaching

It may seem obvious why pronunciation training is a necessary part of English language teaching, however, it is very often unreasonably neglected. This subchapter places pronunciation at the base of communicative competence; discusses the goals of pronunciation teaching and possible dangers of pronunciation-based miscommunication; underlines the role of English in Europe and the implications of this status; points out the existence of certain bias against non-native speakers of English; sums up the weak points of the English pronunciation of Slovak students; and, finally, mentions issues of identity and prestige.

All economical or personal relations are based on communication. The more effective it is, the better the relations. Every lesson of English contributes to one ultimate goal, which is to develop communicative competence in each student to the fullest. Tarvin in his research defines communicative language competence as "the ability to use language, or to communicate, in a culturally-appropriate manner in order to make meaning and accomplish social tasks with efficacy and fluency through extended interactions" (2014, p.2). In order to understand the place of pronunciation as one of the constituents of this competence, it is useful to use the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), where communicative language competence is subdivided into these competencies (2001):

- Linguistic competences;
- Sociolinguistic competences;
- Pragmatic competences.

The linguistic competences are the basis of everything else here because it is an umbrella term for the practical realisation of communication and includes (CEFR, 2001, p.109):

- lexical competence;
- grammatical competence;

- semantic competence;
- phonological competence;
- orthographic competence;
- orthoepic competence.

From these, phonological competence means that the learner has a theoretical knowledge of phonological rules and has developed skills in: reception and production of phonemes; the phonetic features, which distinguish phonemes (voicing, rounding, nasality, plosion); the phonetic composition of words (syllable structure, the sequence of phonemes, word stress, word tones); sentence phonetics (prosody); and phonetic reduction (ibid, p.116). As one of the key sub-competencies, phonological competence plays an important role in communication. A learner, who can successfully pronounce a limited number of words without putting them into the correct grammatical form, can still be understood by his interlocutors better than a learner, whose words are unintelligible (Gilakjani, 2012, p.3).

In order to achieve phonological competence, a learner should train it. And the most common way is to follow pronunciation exercises from textbooks and other available materials. However, from the theoretical point of view, the main focus of course books of English as a foreign language is on vocabulary and grammar, and pronunciation exercises are few. This can be partly justified by the fact that teachers may be providing their students with correct pronunciation schemes by talking to them, as well as playing audio and video recordings. Eventually, students learn many pronunciation rules indirectly. Again, this is not the goal of teaching, nor a proper approach, and for less self-sufficient students it may lead to poor pronunciation.

Inaccurate pronunciation can lead to misunderstandings and communicational breakdowns. Browne and Fulcher (2017) in their research on the influence of familiarity on the comprehension of pronunciation discuss three important steps of communication:

- intelligibility, which is how the listener is able to recognize the phonological content of the utterance;
- comprehensibility, which reflects the meaning of a word or utterance;
- interpretability, which indicates meaning behind the word or utterance.

Those steps show that the first and the most important action that initiates successful communication is a clear and intelligible utterance, which later on is comprehended and interpreted by the listener. Nevertheless, many teachers do not pay enough attention to pronunciation teaching and this results in students being skilful in listening and reading, but unable to speak coherently and cohesively (Gilakjani, 2016). At each stage of learning English, the words should

be learnt with proper pronunciation. If this is not done in time, to change already existing memory patterns may be extremely difficult (Ibid.). Mispronunciation of certain sounds can change the meaning of the whole utterance since many English words differ only in one sound. For example, the minimal pair *fan/van*: *I need a new fan* vs*. I need a new van*.

Taking a step forward, wrong sentence stress, which is also a part of pronunciation instruction, may create a situation of communicational breakdown that is very difficult to solve. In her *Syllabus for English as an international language,* Jenkins (2002, p. 87) provides several examples of "pronunciation-based miscommunication in interlanguage talk" and notes that such breakdowns are the most frequent and the most difficult to resolve in her practice. Described problems add one more point to the importance of pronunciation training for English students.

Another current issue that underlines the need to teach and improve speakers' pronunciation is globalization and the status of English as Lingua Franca (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p.164). English is the most widely used second language in Europe (not native for the majority of users); it is one of the official languages of the European Union, the language of business, education and of academic research and publishing. In addition, it is the language of the entertainment industry, for over 80% of films and the majority of musical compositions are recorded in English (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 164). Moreover, as a dominant language of the internet network, English became a necessity for almost everyone. This predominance of English in all major spheres makes it the fastest developing language in the world, and since every scientific discovery is published in English, there are often no terms for new things in local languages. In 2017 Eurostat calculated that 95% of pupils in general upper secondary education are learning English (Foreign language learning statistics, 2019). With so many users of English, the need to master pronunciation in order to increase intelligibility is obvious.

Kirkpatrick (2007, p. 166) reasonably expects that the pronunciation of Euro-Englishes will be marked with the first language of their speakers, just as Indian English or Chinese English are influenced. Another supporter of this theory, Modiano (2017), defines European English as a language that "is not decidedly based on any one Inner Circle variety but is nevertheless characterized by influences from standardized English as well as (users') native tongues, and where there is a propensity to use culture-specific features common to the manner in which English is used as an L2 in continental Europe, when and where such usage is situationally appropriate". The appearance of Euro-English, as well as its possible future spreading and intensification due to Brexit and the weakening of the position of Standardised English in Europe, can lead to changes in pronunciation and other aspects of language use accompanied with discoursal

nativization in general (Ibid.). For instance, the pronunciation of individual words is changing, and pronunciation not characteristic for 'standardized English' is becoming acceptable. Modiano (ibid.) provides such examples: "the word *cooperation* is now commonly pronounced by many in continental Europe as [kɔːpəˈreɪʃən], and the word *unique* as [ˈjuːnɪk], and among L2 users of English, this does not seem to impede communication."

It is necessary to mention that globalization in general and the policy of the European Union concerning free movement of the workforce within the EU creates the conditions where non-native speakers of English are mostly using English among themselves. Thus, while Brexit might lead to a decrease in numbers of native English speakers in some businesses, other workers "will no longer find their use of English under scrutiny from 'native speaker' colleagues who seem eager to uphold their own standard" (ibid.). As a result, English will change and evolve, influenced to a great extent by the community of mother tongues of the people of the EU, and, eventually, its lexical register will be enlarged and reinforced by what is unique for their English (ibid.). It is reasonable to expect changes in pronunciation as well. With the expected increase of variety, it may become more difficult to understand others, therefore, pronunciation training remains an important issue.

Despite the visible tendency for globalization and "open borders" that leads to the increase of travellers, migrants and creates multicultural workplaces where co-workers are from different origins and the working language is English, there is still a noticeable bias against non-native speakers of English. Several studies documenting bias against non-natives are presented by Lindemann (2017, p. 202) and her research confirms that people judge speakers' status qualities (intelligence, education) and social qualities (friendliness, kindness) depending on their pronunciation and accent, where a noticeable accent leads to less positive judgement. After conducting impressive research on comprehensibility in the workplace where L2 speakers need to constantly communicate with native speakers of English, Derwing and Munro (2009, p. 199) claim that their findings indicate that "listeners assign considerable weight to comprehensibility" and that "adult L2 speakers would benefit from an increased emphasis on speaking skills in their (…) ESL programs, particularly fluency and pronunciation development, if they are to interact successfully with others in the workplace". The facts presented in the research support the idea of increasing attention towards pronunciation training of English speakers and underline the value of good pronunciation in modern society. In fact, proper pronunciation is requested in political circles, for instance, there exists an annual Pronunciation Guide with the names of major world leaders so that any inconvenience can be avoided (*2019 World Leaders: A Pronunciation Guide*, 2019).

Finally, better pronunciation boosts the self-confidence of the speaker, allows them to use a wider scope of prosodic features in order to deliver shades of meaning successfully and allows listeners to perceive an image of the speaker. For Gelvanovsky (2002), pronunciation bears an important social value. He envisions it as one of the constituents of prestige that reflects intelligence, professional competence, persuasiveness, diligence, and social privilege of the speaker. The degree to which pronunciation influences the identity of the speaker is still arguable, as research does not show any particular correspondence between the two. However, a significant relationship was discovered between cultural identity and how important native-like pronunciation of English is perceived to be, which led to the conclusion that "native-like pronunciation of English should not be ruled out as a goal for learners, especially in that most did not feel that this would be a threat to their cultural identity" (Pullen, 2011, p. 4).

As for Slovakia and its current situation with pronunciation teaching, there are several points of interest, which confirm the seriousness of this issue. Firstly, there are several research papers analysing common mistakes in the English speech of Slovak students (Vančová, 2018, 2019a, 2020b). In his specific research, Bodoník (2017) questioned 90 teachers of English working in Slovak elementary schools in order to find out their experience and opinion on teaching pronunciation. According to his research, the most common phonological mistakes of students in Slovakia are as follows (Bodorik, 2017, p. 165):

- Incorrect placement of stress;
- Substitution of phoneme /ð/ for /d/, /t ʃ/, and phoneme /θ/ for /f/, /t/;
- Pronunciation of silent letters;
- Problems in differentiation between /v/ and /w/;
- Shortening of vowel sounds;
- Incorrect pronunciation of definite article;
- Incorrect pronunciation of phoneme /ŋ/, possibly suffix –ing;
- Pronouncing the word the way it is written;
- Inappropriate pronunciation of the consonant sound /r/;
- Problems in differentiation between /e/ and /æ/;
- Inappropriate intonation of various sentences;
- Problems with the pronunciation of schwa /ə/.

Further research by Metruk (2017; 2018) on the pronunciation of dental fricatives by Slovak students, as well as their mispronunciation of consonants /w/ and /v/, supports the above-mentioned findings. Metruk explains that because dental consonants (θ) and (ð) do not exist in the Slovak language, and the same absence is noticeable for the majority of languages, these consonants are difficult to master and require the special attention of teachers and extra practice of students. His research shows that "39% of the participants mispronounced the

voiceless spirant /θ/, and 50% pronounced erroneously its voiced counterpart /ð/" (Metruk, 2017, p.15). Metruk underlines that "the tendency of Slovak students to replace certain sounds for others hinders communication and often poses a threat to intelligibility" (Ibid.).

Problems in differentiation between /v/ and /w/ might be explained by the fact that English labiodental fricative /v/ has a counterpart in Slovak, but the labial-velar approximant /w/ does not (Metruk, 2018, p.25). Same as the previous issue, ignoring of such problems can lead to communicational breakdown since there are many words that bear completely different meanings but differ only in sounds /w/ and /v/, for example, *vest/west, vary/wary, wet/vet*.

To conclude, teaching pronunciation should be an essential part of an English course because it affects communication between people to a noticeable degree. Since the first thing that listeners hear is the way the speaker pronounces their utterance, it defines the success of the communicational situation, depending on the intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability of the utterance (Vančová, 2019b). This subchapter shows that, as English is used by the majority of people in all major spheres of life (education, science, business, entertainment, etc.), better speakers function in the modern world more easily than those struggling with pronunciation. Despite the popularity of the language and the fact that it is one of the obligatory subjects for school-leaving examination in Slovakia, clearly not enough time and effort is put in by both teachers and students. Multiple research studies were conducted in order to identify the most common errors in the pronunciation of Slovak students and the results are worrying. There is a strong need for English pronunciation instruction in Slovakia.

1.2 Pronunciation models and accentedness

The next subchapter presents an overview of the most common pronunciation models that are used in ELT materials and addresses the issue of accentedness as it becomes more prominent in the speech of English language users.

With the spreading of English language around the globe and the increase of its influence in multiple spheres, two approaches to teaching EFL flourished and are still considered traditional – British English and American English (Levis, 2008, p. 341). Although scholars now distinguish many more varieties of English, those two remain the most popular in teaching and learning materials.

British English is represented by Received Pronunciation (RP), which is historically associated with educated speakers and formal speech and has connotations of prestige and authority (Sangster, 2014). RP is often perceived as a standard against which other accents can be measured or judged, an unchanging accent, or, perhaps, not an accent at all, but rather a way of speaking without an accent (Ibid.). Despite the fact that only ~3% of British citizens speak with RP and Britain represents only a minority of English speaking people (Stirling university,

2006), the RP model is followed by the majority of dictionaries that give pronunciation (Sangster, 2014).

Among native speakers themselves, according to Robinson (2019), RP is no longer popular, even considered to be old-fashioned, and native speakers are "deliberately incorporating regional features to their speech" in order to "disguise their middle-class accent". However, the main advantage of learning and using RP is that it can be understood by, perhaps, all English speakers (Stirling university, 2006). At the same time, research conducted in Scandinavian countries, where English is deeply rooted in the educational system and everyone is a fluent speaker of English language, shows that British English is considered the most prestigious model of pronunciation, while American English is associated with informality (Rindal, 2010).

A form of American English that does not show prominent markers of regional characteristics and that is often used in ELT materials is called General American (Cruttenden, 2014, p.87). This pronunciation model is popular among L2 speakers of English in some Asian countries (e.g. the Philippines) and parts of Latin America (e.g. Mexico) (ibid.). Although, Kretzschmar (2008, p.37-51) argues that there is no "exemplary state of American English from which other varieties deviate" and that the speech of each region differs to a noticeable degree, the majority of language researchers and teachers tend to refer to General American as a standard American pronunciation model.

As shown in Swedish research, students learning English often mix British and American pronunciation, where American variation prevails (Östlund, 2006). One of the reasons may be the prominence of AmE in media and entertainment spheres. Moreover, as English has become Lingua Franca, as mentioned in the previous section of this work, and with the emergence of World Englishes (Harmer, 2007, p.18), it has become more difficult for users to distinguish and maintain a single pronunciation model. Therefore, they learn to improve and adapt not only their speech but also their recognition skills. Currently, researchers suggest that it may be an advantage of non-native speakers of English, as they might be able to deal with a wider range of English varieties and easily communicate with speakers with Punjabi, Greek or Malaysian accents (Ibid.).

However, as Vančová (2019a, p. 123) warns, "the difference in nonnative pronunciation may be caused by an error as well as the use of an accent or a pronunciation variety". As a result, in order to eliminate errors, teachers still teach pronunciation using traditional materials that are based on BrE or AmE pronunciation models. Levis (2005) opposes this tradition, stating that the usage of those models in actual communication may not be adequately effective, and proposes to include non-native accents to pronunciation teaching. Jenkins (2002) supports the above-mentioned statements and has developed *A Sociolinguistically Based, Empirically Researched Pronunciation Syllabus for English as an*

International Language in an attempt to improve real communication between non-native speakers of English.

The issue of accentedness can influence communication to a noticeable degree, although, in modern society, this is easily coped with. Accentedness is one of the characteristics of the multidimensional nature of L2 speech and shows the extent to which it differs from local varieties or the standardised form (Derwing and Munro, 2009, p. 185). The results of the research show that listeners need significantly less time to process a non-native speaker's accent after just one minute of exposure to that speaker (Lindemann, 2017, p.199).

Analysed research suggests that the main focus of teaching pronunciation should be switched from the nativeness principle (when learner's speech should be as close as possible to a native speaker's pronunciation) to the intelligibility principle (Derwing and Munro, 2009, p. 183). This may suggest that, perhaps, students no longer need to strictly follow traditional Received Pronunciation (or other) models, but need to learn how to communicate in the most effective manner.

1.3 Widespread methods and techniques for teaching pronunciation

The next subchapter presents various methods and techniques of English teaching that deal with pronunciation training and discusses the changes of focus in such teaching. Moreover, it introduces the emergence of modern methodology (computer assisted language learning) together with the opportunities it creates regarding the teaching and learning of pronunciation.

While planning the curricula for an English class, teachers often need to think through their strategy and define and choose the most suitable methods of teaching to fulfil their goals. There are plenty of methods that have developed in the 20th century and, among them, some consider pronunciation training unnecessary (Grammar-translation, Reading Based approach) whereas others see it as an essential practice (Celce-Murcia, 2012, p.3). An overview of the place of pronunciation within some of the most known EFL teaching methods is presented in Appendix 1.

Today, with such a wide choice of methods to follow, there exists "widespread insecurity, among native and non-native teachers alike, about whether methods of pronunciation instruction "work" or not" (Darcy, 2018, p. 22). As Yoshida (2016, p. 2) explains, in the not so remote past, pronunciation training focused "almost entirely on producing individual sounds and words correctly; not much attention was given to features such as intonation and rhythm". According to her research, both scholars and teachers began to realize the importance of Suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation and started including them more and more in ELT practice and curricula. Moreover, the analysis conducted by Yoshida allows her to state that "some scholars have gone so far as to claim that teaching individual

sounds is not so important, and intonation, stress, prominence, and rhythm should be emphasized above all" (ibid.).

Current approaches to pronunciation teaching involve "communicative and contextualized practice formats" (Darcy, 2018, p. 22), that allow learners to practice more prosodic features and involve various new techniques. However, research shows that many teachers still tend to use traditional methods and practices (Vančová, 2019, p. 127). As Vančová (Ibid.) suggests, one of the reasons why teachers might not dedicate a sufficient amount of time to teaching pronunciation, and specifically to dealing with prosodic features, may be the lack of formal pronunciation instruction during their own training. Another reason can be that the teaching of suprasegmental features should include additional explanation of specific terminology (Foote et al., 2016), which takes time and effort.

In addition, the recent shift in methodology focuses on enhancing comfortable intelligibility and comprehensibility of learners' spontaneous speech (Levis, 2005). This shift brings many novel and effective ways to teach pronunciation. Therefore, there is more than drills and "repeat-after-me", and modern diversified techniques recognize the benefits of a variety of models and standards, both native and non-native, as speaking models. This creates an environment where learners can have access to more varied and more authentic input (Darcy, 2018, p. 22). Within her work mentioned in the previous subchapter, Jenkins (2002, p. 96) offers a new approach to phonological training called the *Lingua Franca Core* (LFC), which presents the most crucial points of mutual intelligibility in ILT. She suggests that is can be more beneficial to concentrate on several specific items of phonology that are prominent in NNS's speech rather than "to address the comprehension needs of an NS listener when (…) in EIL the listener is more likely to be an NNS" (ibid.). The summary of the main core items of the LFC is presented in Appendix 2.

The next step for a teacher who wishes to teach pronunciation, after choosing an appropriate method or approach, is to decide what techniques should be used. Here are some of the common types of pronunciation training techniques. From the general variety, Celce-Murcia (2012, pp. 335-343) highlights four types: fluency-building techniques (e.g. effective listening exercises, fluency circles), multisensory reinforcement techniques (using visual, auditory, tactile or kinaesthetic aids), drama techniques (for example, enactment, interview, simulation), and imitative techniques (e.g. shadowing, mirroring, using video clips). Another point of view, presented by Baker, divides the techniques according to the degree of students' autonomy (Baker, 2013, pp. 11-12):

- controlled (non-communicative activities such as listening, text presentation, explanation and examples, production practice, kinaesthetic/tactile practice, checking, question-answer display-knowledge verification or exploration

repetition drill, visual or audio identification, repetition drill-audio identification, visual or audio recognition, etc);

- free (open-ended techniques and student-led activities, for example, a game that involves an objective, a set of rules and some competition, a drama activity that is planned, practiced and performed by students, presentation, discussion);
- guided (a mix of the previous two where the teacher navigates the activities, for example, question-answer referential, production—student feedback practice and production—audio identification or recognition, mutual exchange, preparation for a bigger project).

Baker's research shows that controlled techniques still dominate in the classroom and this may "limit the potential development of comprehensible learner pronunciation in authentic conversations", whereas the use of communicative activities involving active interaction "has the potential for greater impact on learner uptake and automatic use of targeted features of pronunciation than focus-on-form instruction alone" (Baker, 2013, p. 18).

A separate approach, characteristic of the modern era, is Computer assisted language learning (CALL), which incorporates computer technology into the teaching process. The analysis of several studies (Rahnavard, Heidar, 2017; Gao, Hanna, 2016; Thomson, 2011; Pokrivčáková et al., 2015) indicated that CALL technology has a positive effect on students' performance with pronunciation ability. A special branch of CALL, which is focused on teaching pronunciation, Computer assisted pronunciation training (CAPT), was originally developed as a tool for speech-language pathologists (Pokrivčáková et al., 2015, p. 30). However, it has found its use in the teaching of foreign languages and has now become more easily accessible and attractive for both learners and teachers since CAPT programs generally monitor all important aspects of speech/voice behaviours, measure selected parameters and provide users with intuitive visual displays to track their progress (Ibid.). In addition, such resources can provide an entertainment aspect to the learning process, which can have motivating and engaging functions with younger learners.

To conclude, academics have developed several approaches to pronunciation training within ELT methods that target pronunciation to a different degree each, as well as provide training of segmental or prosodic features (Vančová, 2020b). There is no wholesome doctrine that would suit all teachers and learners, therefore each teacher should make their own choice. There are several new approaches (the LFC, CAPT) that seem to be effective and novel and can be supported by an assortment of teaching techniques aimed at the sole goal of improving learners' pronunciation.

2 A description of phonological aspects mentioned in national documents in the Slovak Republic for school leaving exams (maturita)

The second chapter defines phonology and its constituents, provides an overview of phonological aspects and presents general information on those specific features of phonology that are mentioned in the requirements for the school leaving examination in the Slovak Republic.

Every language has its own set of sounds, which can be combined differently to create syllables and words. Some sounds bear the power of distinguishing words and meanings, for example, in pair of words *pit – bit* and *cat – cut*, the meaning changes with only one sound that is different. Those sounds are called segments or phonemes and are studied within the linguistic discipline of Phonology. According to Roach (2009), Phonology is a study of sound patterns that occur within languages; in other words, the study of how sounds are organized and used in languages. It is divided into two branches – Segmental and Suprasegmental phonology.

Segmental phonology studies individual phonemes that constitute a vocalic inventory of a particular language (Vančová, 2016, p. 6), their internal composition and external interactions (Howe, 2003, p.2). Those phonemes are in two groups – vowels and consonants. Vowel sounds are of three types: monothongs (short and long), diphthongs and triphthongs, whereas consonants are of a greater variety, according to the manner of articulation – plosives, fricatives, affricates, semivowels, nasals and approximants (Vančová, 2016).

The research suggests that "speech sounds are not just arranged linearly, but are hierarchically organized into prosodic structure: segments into moras and syllables, syllables into metrical feet, metrical feet into prosodic words, prosodic words into phonological phrases, and so on" (Howe, 2003, p.2). Suprasegmental phonology, also called prosodic, studies pronunciation features that can be observed in higher units of speech (Vančová, 2016, p.6). Prosodic phonology studies the following aspects: syllable, word and sentence stress, weak forms of words, intonation, rhythm, connected speech features (assimilation, elision, linking) (Ibid.).

Among all the aspects of phonology, several are specifically mentioned in the national documentation – *Target requirements for students' knowledge and skills of English language for levels B1 and B2* (2016) for their school leaving examination (see Appendix 3). This paper will focus on describing only those specific features, as they are the most relevant in the Slovak context.

Segmental aspects

This section describes those segmental aspects of phonology that are specifically mentioned in the requirements for the school leaving examination in English language in Slovakia (Appendix 3) with brief comments on the most common mistakes of Slovak students regarding each aspect.

Aspirated /p/, /t/, /k/. The aspirated sounds /p/, /t/, /k/ are voiceless plosive consonants that are produced with an audible airflow after the release of their construction (Reetz and Jongman, 2020, p.40). The sound that is created by a small puff of air during the release is called aspiration and it can be not only heard but also felt by placing a palm in front of the mouth while producing the sound, or seen – if a feather or a piece of paper is placed in the same way as a palm (Ibid.). In English, aspiration is present when the sounds /p, t, k/ are in the initial position in a word (pen [pʰen], top [tʰɑp]) and are followed by a stressed vowel (appeal [ə`pʰil], potato [pə`tʰeɪtəʊ]) (Ibid., Lopez Soto, 2011). There are two exceptions to those rules: first, when the sound is preceded by /s/ (for example, pain [pʰeɪn] vs. Spain [speɪn]) and second, when it is followed by /l, r, w, j/ (for example, play, cry, tune) (Lopez Soto, 2011). When language learners fail to aspirate sounds when it is needed, this can lead to the hindering of communication because other sounds can be heard instead, e.g. /b/ instead of /p/ (Baker and Goldstain, 2008, p.53).

Labio-velar approximant /w/ and labiodental /v/. The labio-velar approximant /w/ is produced by pursing the lips and raising the back of a tongue a bit nearer to the roof of the mouth and voicing out, whereas labiodental /v/ is produced by the friction between the bottom lip and top teeth, which makes them substantially different (Munro, 2018). However, the sound /w/ has no direct counterpart in the Slovak language (although, it can be an allophone), as well as several other languages (German, Icelandic), and learners of English tend to make mistakes with these two sounds (Metruk, 2018, p.25; Knútsson, 2008). With longer words this might not lead to communication breakdown, however, in minimal pairs, where the difference is in only one sound, such mistakes can create misunderstanding (e.g. vet [vet] – wet [wet], vine [vaɪn] – wine [waɪn], vow [vaʊ] – wow [waʊ]) (Metruk, 2018, p.25).

Velar nasal /ŋ/. This sound is created when the air escapes through the nose being blocked by the back of the tongue against the soft palate (Roach, 2009). Velar nasal /ŋ/ is not present in many other languages, therefore, it may be troublesome for some learners to acquire the pronunciation of this sound (Ibid.). The /ŋ/ sound never occurs in the initial position, is relatively frequent as a medial sound, and very often can be found in the final position. The majority of problems with its pronunciation are, perhaps, concerning its position at the end of a word since there is a common rule, which has several exceptions. As Roach (2009) puts it, "within a word containing the letters 'ng' in the spelling, /ŋ/ occurs without a following /g/ if it occurs at the end of a morpheme" and the exceptions are related to the

comparative and superlative suffixes, as well as the fact that /ŋ/ never occurs after a diphthong or long vowel (Ibid.).

Near-open /æ/. The sound /æ/ as in *cat* is a low front vowel, which means that the most active part of the tongue is in the lower front part of the mouth (Yoshida, p.3). As this particular sound is not present in Slovak vocalic inventory (Ološtiak, 2009) many students substitute it with /e/ or, less frequently, with /ʌ/, /a:/, /e:/ (Kráľová, 2011, p.54). The research also shows that there is a noticeable uncertainty in the way Slovak learners pronounce /æ/ and that mastering of this sound requires more attention. Although this does not necessarily lead to the complete unintelligibility of an utterance (Ibid.), some partial misunderstandings can hinder communication to the noticeable degree.

Voiced dental fricative /ð/ and voiceless dental fricative /θ/. The phonemes are articulated with the tongue placed with its tip touching the inside of the upper teeth or, sometimes, the tip slightly protrudes in between upper and lower teeth (Celce-Murcia, 2012, p.82). These two phonemes are a common problem for learners of English of different origins since those sounds are rarely present in other languages. The problematic sounds are commonly substituted by learners with the sounds /s, f, t/ for /θ/ and /z, v, d/ for /ð/ (Ibid.), however, for Slovak ESL learners the sound /d/ is the most common substituent of /ð/, whereas /θ/ is substituted with different sounds /t, f, s, d, z/ (Kráľová, 2011).

Diphthongs: /iə/, /eə/, /ai/, /ei/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/. Denham and Lobeck (2010, p.84) define diphthongs as two-part vowel sounds consisting of a vowel and a glide in one syllable. The glide is a movement from one sound to another, where the first sound is called the pure vowel and it is much longer and stronger than the second part, which takes about a quarter of the combined sound (Roach, 2009). There are eight diphthongs in the English language, however, only six of them are discussed here because they are relevant for further analysis. Diphthongs /iə/ and /eə/ are centring (e.g. beard, hair), the other four are closing (as in tide, pain, loud, load), according to the movement of the mouth (Ibid.).

Triphthongs: /aʊə/, /aiə/, /eɪə/, /əʊə/, /ɔɪə/. It is possible to say that triphthongs are the next level of diphthongs because they are created by adding the schwa sound at the end of closing diphthongs (Roach, 2009, p.19). Those sounds are considered the most difficult for foreign learners to recognise and master because the vowel movement in spoken language is very small and the middle vowel quality (/i/ or /ʊ/) can hardly be heard (Ibid.). Triphthongs "occur mostly in the vocalic inventories of non-rhotic variations of English such as BBC English (RP), where /r/ is not pronounced at the end of words or syllable boundaries" (Vančová, 2016, p.21). The examples of triphthongs in some of the frequently encountered words are: /aʊə/ – power, hour; /aiə/ – liar, fire; /eɪə/ – player, layer; /əʊə/ – lower, slower; /ɔɪə/ – lawyer, employer.

Silent letters. The pronunciation of English words differs a lot from spelling and English orthography may seem complicated and illogical for beginner learners, however, there are many regularities to it (Brooks, 2015). Silent letters are one of the problematic issues for many learners since there are certain languages where spelling equals pronunciation. The term defines those letters (graphemes) that are present in the spelling of a word but are left unpronounced (Mahapatra, 2017). For example, the letter k in knee or the letter h in honest. This issue exists due to historical changes in the language that happened over the last 300 years, where pronunciation evolved and changed quicker than spelling (BBC Learning English, 2005). Another reason is loaned words, where the spelling was kept from their original source (Mahapatra, 2017).

Prosodic aspects

This subchapter focuses on the prosodic aspects of phonology that are specifically mentioned in the requirements for the school leaving examination in English language in Slovakia and their importance for English language learners.

Linked pronunciation. The natural speech of a person does not reveal clear pauses between every word because in a normal speech the words are smoothly connected in order to create fluid and easily understandable utterances. Linking, also called liaison, is the connecting of the final sound of one word or syllable to the initial sound of the next; however, speakers do not link all the words (Celce-Murcia, 2012, p.165). The amount of linking depends on several factors, e.g. the level of formality of the situation where, the higher it is, the more clear the speech should be; the rate of speaking (faster speech will lead to more linking); and the individual characteristics of the speech of a speaker (Ibid.). Words may be linked together in several different ways, for example, the most common types of juncture for RP are "linking r" and "intrusive r" (Roach, 2009, p.115; Vančová, 2016, p.69). The "linking r" is the sound that is present in the spelling of a word, which is not pronounced when the word is said individually but will be pronounced when the next word in an utterance begins with a vowel, e.g. four [fɔ:] vs. four eggs [fɔ:r egz] (Roach, 2009, p.115). The "intrusive r" sound might be added at the end of a word with the final vowel sound to link this word with another one that begins with a vowel as well, for example, media event [mi:diər ɪvent] (Ibid.). Other types of linking sounds that can be found in the textbooks are /y, j, w/. Research aimed at Slovak students' pronunciation of English suggests that this aspect is relatively problematic for students, so their speech can be perceived as bland and garbled by native speakers (Kráľová, 2011, p.54).

Primary and secondary word stress. Word stress is defined by a stressed syllable, which is a syllable – the vowel of which is longer, louder and higher in pitch. In other words, stress involves a greater effort of the speaker in expelling the air from the lungs while articulating stressed syllables (Celce-Murcia, 2012,

p.184). Apart from the length, loudness and pitch, Roach (2009, p.74) suggests the fourth factor that influences the prominence of the stressed syllable is quality, which describes the difference between vowels in one word. The difference between stressed and unstressed syllables is greater in English than in other languages and teaching/learning materials present three levels of word stress: primary, secondary, and tertiary (strong, medial, weak), where tertiary stress is a feature of unstressed syllables (Ibid.). The primary stress is put on a syllable that has the most prominence, secondary stress can be found in longer words (with more than three syllables) and it is weaker than the primary stress and, at the same time, stronger than tertiary (Ibid.). For example, in the words 'photographic' [ˌfəʊtəˈgræfɪk] and 'anthropology' [ˌænθrəˈpɒlədʒi] the first syllables have secondary stress.

Research (Celce-Murcia, 2012; Field, 2005) shows that if lexical stress is wrongly distributed, it might have a negative effect on the ability of the listener to locate words within an utterance and, therefore, undermine intelligibility. Moreover, it has been established that intelligibility is most impaired when the lexical stress is redistributed to the right of the syllable that should be stressed (Field, 2005). The findings of Kráľová (2011, pp.42-45) suggest that Slovak students have noticeable lack of knowledge of stress distribution in polysyllabic words and tend to shift the position of stress both to the left and to the right of its original place. The placement of stress is influenced by such factors as a word's historical origins, changes in the word due to affixation, and the word's grammatical function within an utterance (Celce-Murcia, 2012, p.184).

Distinctive function of word stress. Another feature of word stress is its ability to distinguish the meaning of words with identical spelling. There is a list of words of Latinate origin (Celce-Murcia, 2012, p.94) that consist of prefix and stem, and have identical spelling, for which Roach (2009, p.87) defines a rule of stress distribution: the verbs will have their stress placed on the second syllable, and the noun or adjective will have their first syllable stressed. For example, words like 'present' and 'record' can be adjectives and verbs, words 'contrast' and 'permit' can be nouns or verbs.

Weak forms. Another feature of connected speech is weak forms of words, which are unstressed versions of (mostly) function words (prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries, etc.) that appear in a sentence (Roach, 2009, p.89). In the weak form, the vowel of such words will change to the schwa sound /ə/ (Ibid.), for example, the word 'that' can be pronounced as [ðæt] in "I want that' (strong form) and [ðət] in 'I know that he is ill' (weak form). Other frequently used words with weak forms are: from, to, have, and, the, but, than, your, as, there, etc. The strong forms of some words will be used when they occur in the final position in a sentence, when they are being contrasted, emphasized, cited or quoted; for other words, their form depends on whether the next word begins with a vowel or a

consonant, and what function it bears (Ibid., pp.89-95). Although it is possible not to use weak forms in one's speech, this aspect of phonology needs to be taught because weak forms can drastically change the sound of an utterance and learners might have difficulties distinguishing the meaning of the speech of a person who uses weak forms (Ibid.). In her research, Kráľová (2011, p.58) presents the four words in which the pronunciation of strong and weak forms was the most problematic for Slovak students: have, and, to, is.

Sentence stress and sentence rhythm. While word stress refers to the most prominent syllable, sentence stress is best explained as the most prominent word(s) of a sentence (Celce-Murcia, 2012, p.208). The combination of word and sentence stress creates rhythm, in the English language this rhythm is regular, the patterned beat of stressed and unstressed syllables. As English is a stress-timed language, learners whose native language is syllable-timed might stress syllables in their English speech more equally, without giving sufficient prominence to the main words, which can lead to communicational breakdown or misunderstanding (Ibid.). In English, the most important content words bear the most noticeable stress, thus, directing the attention of the listener to specific information and providing hints on new facts. The stress-timed nature of the language means that the time between each stressed element of a sentence will tend to be the same, irrespective of the number of the unstressed syllables between them (Roach, 2009, p.107). To illustrate this issue, the sentences 'Cats chase mice' and 'The cats have been chasing the mice' can be compared by pronouncing them, and while only the same three words will be stressed (cats, chase, mice), the amount of time needed for airing the whole sentences is roughly the same. Together with intonation, sentence stress and rhythm help speakers of English to segment and highlight information in discourse, which the speaker considers important in their message.

Intonation: ascending, descending and combination. Speech has a melody called intonation, which is a variation in the pitch (tone) of the voice in connected speech that is produced by the vibration of the vocal cords (Roach, 2009). To carry linguistic meaning, this variation should be controlled by the speaker and perceptible by their interlocutor (Ibid.). Every person has a certain pitch range, which can be described as the difference between the lowest and the highest possible tones they can produce (Vančová, 2016, p.59). By varying the direction of the pitch, the speaker introduces attitudinal or grammatical changes, whereas the lexical material stays the same. The specific usage of intonation has the ability to change the meaning of words or utterances, enables the speaker to emphasize selected parts of speech, add an unspoken part of information or express intention (Ibid.). The symbols _, /, \, ∧, and ∨ indicate the direction of intonation movement as – level (unchanged), rising, falling, and combinations: rise-fall and fall-rise respectively (Ibid.). Ascending, or rising, intonation creates an impression of continuity, that more information will be added. It is used in yes/no questions,

repetition questions, unfinished statements, open-choice questions, enumerations (Roach, 2009). Descending intonation is regarded as more or less neutral and gives the listener an impression of finality. It is used in statements, wh-questions and commands (Ibid.). The fall-rise tone is used to signal limited agreement or response with reservations, it is often a marker of uncertainty, whereas rise-fall tone is used to convey strong feelings of approval, disapproval or surprise (Ibid.). As for Slovak learners of ESL, research shows that they sometimes tend to speak with what appears to the native speaker as monotonous intonation, where the intervals in the height of their pitch are significantly lower than those of native speakers of English (Kráľová, 2011, p.58). Such monotonous speech can be perceived as disengaged and unnatural.

Tag questions intonation. Tag questions follow statements and are used in such situations (Celce-Murcia, 2012, pp.234-238):

- the speaker is seeking confirmation or making a point, where tags signal certainty and have falling intonation;
- the speaker is seeking further clarification or is genuinely asking for a yes/no answer - allowing both possibilities. In this case, the intonation will be rising.

Regardless of the intonation pattern of the tag question, the statement that precedes it will always have a rise-fall pattern (Ibid.). Having two different intonation groups (the statement and the tag itself) with possible different intonation patterns (rise-fall + falling; rise-fall + rising), tag questions can create confusion for learners. According to Baker and Goldstein (2008, p.51), some students tend to use rising intonation on all tag questions. The researchers suggest that this issue might be addressed by explicit instruction and more focused pronunciation training exercises.

3 Content analysis of English course books according to aspects of pronunciation and techniques for its improvement

3.1 Research aim and methodology

The main aim of the chapter is to analyse the selected books of four courses of English that are or may be used in Slovak schools in terms of pronunciation training techniques and exercises focused on specific aspects of pronunciation. The following research objectives were set:

- To select the textbooks of EFL courses and provide their description;
- To analyse pronunciation tasks in the selected course books of English that are or may be used by teachers in Slovak schools and provide:

- The amounts of exercises;
- Segmental/Suprasegmental distribution;
- Focus, techniques and types of exercises used;

- To contrast the findings in order to estimate to what degree does each series of course books correspond to the requirements for Slovak students in English language courses set by national authorities.

After setting the objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What books are going to be analysed and why?
2. What is the total amount of exercises aimed at pronunciation training in each book?
3. How are those exercises distributed in terms of segmental and prosodic features?
4. What is the focus of the exercises, are they focused on one specific issue/sound/feature or the combination of phonological aspects?
5. What types of exercises are used in the analysed textbooks?
6. What teaching techniques can be applied?
7. What aspects of phonology, which are mentioned in the requirements for the English language school leaving examination in Slovakia, are covered by the textbooks?
8. To what degree does each series of course books correspond to the needs of Slovak students that are reflected in the national documentation?

Expectations about the outcome of the research were identified, which allowed the formulation of the following hypotheses:

H1: The quantity of pronunciation training in the analysed textbook sets is approximately the same.

H2: There is more training of suprasegmental features of phonology than segmentals training.

H3: The dominant type of task is "listen and repeat".

H4: Controlled practise teaching techniques fit with the analysed textbooks more than other techniques.

H5: All aspects of phonology required by national documentation, provided in chapter 2, are trained in all course book sets.

H1 is based on the fact that all textbook sets are modernized editions, published in the same period of time (2012-2015) and presented as general English courses by their publishers. In addition, as phonological competence is a vital constituent of communicative competence, it seems necessary to train pronunciation to a similar degree in every general English course (CEFR, 2001). The second hypothesis H2 is based on the common position towards the increase of suprasegmentals training and the recent dispute among researchers on the current needs of learners and approaches that should be used for ELT (Yoshida, 2016; Levis, 2005; Darcy, 2018; Jenkins, 2002). Both H3 and H4 are based on theoretical research (Baker, 2013) that shows that controlled practise techniques

are generally the most popular and that the "listen and repeat" type of task has historically been used more often for the purposes of pronunciation training. The assumption in H5 is based on the fact that the 16 aspects in question are all essential for speaking English and therefore must be included in every general English course.

In order to present the findings of the completed tasks, this chapter paper is written using theoretical methods of compiling and organizing information such as analysis, synthesis, systematization, comparison and contrasting. In addition to other methods, the method of content analysis is used.

Content analysis is an observational research method which is used to determine the presence of certain items or concepts within a text or sets of texts in order to quantify and analyse the presence, meanings and relationships of such items or concepts, finalised by inferences (CSU, 2004). The content analysis performed in this work follows the following steps (Cohen, 2007, pp.476-483):

1. Define the research questions to be addressed by the content analysis;
2. Define the population from which units of text are to be sampled;
3. Define the sample to be included;
4. Define the context of the generation of the document;
5. Define the units of analysis;
6. Decide the codes to be used in the analysis;
7. Construct the categories for analysis;
8. Conduct the coding and categorizing of the data;
9. Conduct the data analysis;
10. Summarizing;
11. Making speculative inferences.

The content analysis is focused on those aspects of phonology that are mentioned in the national documentation – *Target requirements for students' knowledge and skills of English language for levels B1 and B2* (2016) for their school leaving examination, available in Appendix 3. After the general information on all analysed textbooks, a detailed analysis of the techniques and exercises aimed at each aspect separately is presented.

3.2 General characteristics of the selected textbook series

The next section presents the procedural details of the second, third and fourth steps of the content analysis process that form the basis for further analysis.

This chapter presents the analysis of the four course book series' that were selected according to the following characteristics:

- All textbooks belong to the category of general English textbooks.
- The textbooks train British English pronunciation.

- The textbook series covers A1-C1 CEFR levels. For the complexity of this investigation, all available levels of materials were analysed.
- Each textbook contains explicitly pronunciation-oriented sections.
- Three of the course books (*Insight, English File* and *Face2Face*) are found in the list of recommended teaching and learning materials compiled by the Publishing portal of Slovakia (2020), which means that those materials are government approved. Moreover, those courses are used in practice locally - in secondary Grammar schools in Trnava as well as at Trnava University.
- The fourth book series – *Cutting Edge* – is not present on the list, but it is suitable and available for the research.

The *Insight* series. Published by Oxford University Press (OUP), it is a five-level course of English as a foreign language. For the present analysis, Student's books, Teacher's books and Workbooks of all levels were analysed, however, the pronunciation training sections are present only in the Workbooks. Consequently, five *Insight* Workbooks are taken into consideration: Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate (all published in 2013, Upper-Intermediate (2014) and Advanced (2015). Each Workbook is divided into 10 units that correspond with the units in Student's books. Every unit is supported with the "Pronunciation insight" section, all ten of which can be found at the end of each Workbook as a separate section with focused practice. Apart from that, the series is complemented with audio recordings and online practice tools for individual work. The total number of analysed materials is 15 textbooks, out of which only 3 Workbooks are relevant for the research since Upper-intermediate and Advanced level Workbooks do not contain any pronunciation activities or tasks.

The *English File* series. The third edition of this OUP publication series is presented in seven course book levels: Beginner (2014), Elementary (2012), Pre-Intermediate (2012), Intermediate (2013), Intermediate Plus (2014), Upper-Intermediate (2014), and Advanced (2015). Here, the authors of the series have distributed pronunciation training evenly throughout the Student's books, the first three levels of which are structured into 12 units each, while the four higher levels have 10 units each. The Contents section of every level provides a list of pronunciation issues that are covered in each unit. The pronunciation tasks are titled "Pronunciation" and marked by colour. In addition, every level of the series provides audio recordings and a "Sound bank" located at the very end of the Student's books, which provides a reference for students with sound symbols and many example words that is easily accessible at any times. The total number of analysed materials is 21 textbooks, out of which 7 Student's books are relevant for the research.

The *Face2Face* series. The second edition of Student's books of this series was published by Cambridge University Press in 2012 and 2013 and consists of six levels: Starter, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate

and Advanced. There are ten units at both Starter and Advanced levels, while the rest of the books have twelve units. Similarly to the *English File* series, the pronunciation training exercises are titled ("Help with Pronunciation") and highlighted by colours, however, here the sections are also outlined as a separate section of the page. Each unit has one pronunciation section that is mentioned on the contents page with a direct reference to a particular page in the book, which enables both students and teachers to navigate quickly to the topic of interest, if needed. In addition, the section titled "Help with Listening" often contains information and exercises aimed at prosodic features of phonology. At the end of each Student's book, there is a table with phonological symbols of sounds, each of which is provided with two example words. Audio recordings are added to enhance the learning process. The total number of analysed materials is 18 textbooks, out of which 6 Student's books are relevant for the research.

The *Cutting Edge* series. The second edition of the last selected series of EFL textbooks is published by Pearson and, similarly to Face2Face course books, is provided in six levels, all of which were published in 2013. The Starter, Intermediate and Upper-intermediate levels have twelve units, and, while there are fourteen levels in Elementary and Pre-intermediate, the Advanced level has only 10 units. Such division is less consistent when compared to other series. However, the contents also provide information on what features of pronunciation are discussed in every unit but without exact page numbers. The pronunciation training exercises are distributed throughout the books in the form of an outlined section marked by colour and titled "Pronunciation" boxes with instruction and tasks. There may be one or more such boxes per unit. Likewise the previously mentioned courses, *Cutting Edge* offers audio recordings for their exercises, which is available in the form of CD or online MP3s. Yet, there is no chart of phonological symbols or other additional phonological materials provided in the Student's books.

3.3 The classification of exercises for pronunciation training

Different textbooks present different approaches to the formulation, organisation and distribution of tasks. Notes on distribution are presented in the previous section and this section focuses on the types of tasks and their organisation as they are selected among the units of analysis.

Since this chapter is aimed at the analysis of exercises training specific phonological features, it is necessary to create the classification of the tasks used for this purpose that are found in the selected course books. In order to perform content analysis of the four series of textbooks, the following types of exercises were established:

1. Listen and repeat/practice – historically, this is the most common type of task for pronunciation training and is still widely used.
2. Listen and notice – this task type provides learners with audio input and instruction on what they should focus on while listening.
3. Listen and mark/underline – similarly to the previous task, here students need to work with the text after listening to the recording in order to mark the sound, stress, linking, etc.
4. Listen and complete (sounds, words, phrases) – involves noting some parts of the information in a given place, e.g. a table, an omitted word in a sentence, etc. The analysis here includes exercises where a student needs to listen to the recording and write down the whole sentences as well, for it is, in essence, the same type of activity.
5. Say and complete – this task differs from the previous type in that there is no audio input for the students that will guide them while completing the table, sentences or other blank spaces. These tasks require learners to produce language on their own, read aloud or remember how specific words sound, which syllable is stressed, etc., write the information down, and is often followed by "listen and check" instruction (which is considered an essential constituent of this type of task and, therefore, is not analysed separately).
6. Listen and respond/answer – these tasks include an audio input, to which students will provide a response in their own words or using prompts from the book (pictures, words, expressions).
7. Match words/sounds – with rules, other words or phrases.
8. Write the words from their transcription.
9. Speaking – here all production activities are included, which do not have audio input. Usually, students are asked to work in pairs and ask and answer each other's questions, or create their own dialogues, role-play, etc.
10. Choose the odd one out.
11. Count the number of syllables.

There are more types of tasks identified than these exercises themselves in the analysis. The reason for this is the fact that often one rubric provides several tasks at once, for example, "Match the words with the sounds. Listen and repeat". In order to provide comparable results for each course, task types will be counted separately from the number of exercises in the textbooks.

Generally, in the *Insight* Workbooks, there is no particular organisation of tasks, some variety of exercises is present and the order does not seem to have any specific pattern. Whereas in *Cutting Edge* materials, the tasks are almost always presented in pairs where the first bring the learner's attention to the specific issue and is followed by a "practice" activity. Occasionally, and in higher levels (Intermediate and Upper-intermediate), the exercises are grouped in threes, out

of which the first one involves listening in order to notice a specific aspect, the second one involves marking or writing down what is heard, and the third involves monitored production.

English File presents exercises without a particular outline. However, in *Face2Face* they are distributed all over the book. Moreover, practically any activity with an audio is marked as "Pronunciation" and asks students to "listen and practice". Those instances were not included in the analysis, which focuses on those specific activities that are outlined and marked "Help with pronunciation".

3.4 Content analysis of selected course books of English for pronunciation training exercises

The following section presents the findings of the content analysis of the pronunciation exercises from the selected course books. It begins with a general overview and progresses to the individual instances of segmental and prosodic features training according to the list of the required aspects from Appendix 3.

For the purposes of this research, a total number of 594 exercises from 22 textbooks were investigated and analysed. The number of pronunciation tasks analysed in each course book series that corresponds with the specific features relevant for this research is presented in Table 1. As can be seen from the table, the *Insight* textbooks offer significantly fewer exercises for pronunciation when compared with the other three series, however, these exercises are distributed between only three levels. On the contrary, the *English File* course offers seven course books with the highest number of exercises focused on pronunciation of the required aspects. Although the number of exercises for diphthongs may seem noticeably greater in *Face2Face* and *English File* textbooks, they do not present all diphthongs in each exercise, like the rest of the analysed courses do. Instead, they introduce diphthongs gradually, one or two at a time. Both the *Cutting Edge* and *Face2Face* textbooks have similar numbers of tasks distributed between the same numbers of books (6). Table 1 also shows that there is no course that covers all the required features of phonology and the lowest number of these features is found in the *Insight* course books.

The ratio between segmental and suprasegmental features training exercises found in the analysed textbooks expressed as a percentage is illustrated in Figure 1. There is a noticeable dominance of suprasegmentals in every course and, despite the difference in the quantity of exercises, the ratio among the *Insight, Face2Face* and *English File* is very similar. The suprasegmental category was identified to a greater extent in the *Cutting Edge* books, where 92% of exercises train these aspects, which is on average 11% more than the other textbooks. However, as seen from Table 1, this series contains exercises focused on only 4 out of 9 required segmental features, which is the lowest indicator. As mentioned in the theoretical part, recently there has been a shift towards greater amounts of prosody in

pronunciation training, and, perhaps, this may be the reason for the prevalence of suprasegmentals in the analysed course books.

Aspects of phonology		Number of exercises in all textbooks			
Segmental features		Insight	Cutting Edge	Face2Face	English File
1.	Aspirated /p/, /t/, /k/	-	-	-	-
2.	Labio-velar approximant /w/ and labiodental /v/	-	-	3	5
3.	Velar nasal /ŋ/	1	-	-	4
4.	Near-open /æ/	-	-	2	4
5.	Voiced dental fricative /ð/	1	8	3	5
6.	Voiceless dental fricative /θ/	1	1	2	2
7.	Diphthongs: /iə/, /eə/, /ai/, /ei/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/	5	1	13*	24*
8.	Triphthongs: /aʊə/, /aiə/	-	-	-	-
9.	Silent letters	4	2	3	10
Prosodic features					
1.	Linked pronunciation	10	19	23	32
2.	Primary and secondary word stress	23	52	22	51
3.	Distinctive function of word stress	-	-	-	3
4.	Weak forms	11	31	19	2
5.	Sentence stress and sentence rhythm	-	23	27	79
6.	Intonation: ascending, descending and combination	10	24	14	12
7.	Tag questions intonation	-	-	-	3
Total		66	161	131	236

Table 1. The number of exercises aimed at specific phonological features found in the analysed course books (all levels).

*each task deals with some of the diphthongs (one or two), not all simultaneously.

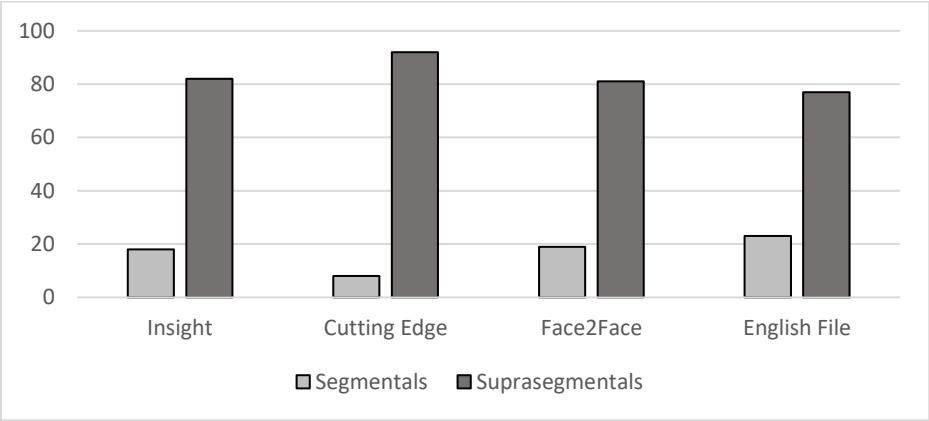

Figure 1. The ratio between exercises that train the selected segmental and prosodic features found in all textbooks of the four analysed series' shown in percentages.

3.4.1 The analysis of exercises for training of segmental aspects of phonology

Aspirated sounds /p/, /t/, /k/

Careful analysis of pronunciation training exercises in all four series of books revealed the absence of tasks aimed at the training of aspirated sounds /p/, /t/, /k/. Yet, in each series, there were tasks focused on consonants in general, which may serve as a base upon which the teacher can explain aspiration. Those exercises may influence the pronunciation of aspirated sounds indirectly, but none of the books deal with the issue of aspiration specifically. This may cause a particular decrease in the intelligibility of an utterance.

Labio-velar approximant /w/ and labiodental /v/

The series of course books *Insight* and *Cutting Edge* do not point out the differences between the pronunciation of sounds /w/ and /v/, whereas this issue is mentioned in both *Face2Face* and *English File* courses. As errors and mistakes in the pronunciation of those two sounds are relatively common for Slovak speakers of English, as was mentioned in subchapter 2.1, it is important to teach students how to notice the difference and pay attention to it. The authors of *Face2Face* and *English File* courses cover the pronunciation of labio-velar approximant /w/ and labiodental /v/ at the very beginning of their courses. The topic of interest can be found in the 5th Unit in both the Beginner level Student's book of the *Face2Face* course and the Starter level Students' book of *English file*, which are essentially equal levels. In addition, there are more exercises on this topic in Unit 5 of *English*

File Intermediate Plus Student's book aimed at polishing students' knowledge and skills, as this level is described as an additional one (see subchapter 3.2).

Although present in both courses, /w/ and /v/ are trained with only one exercise in the initial level of *English File* compared to three exercises in the first course book of the *Face2Face* series. *English File* suggests to "listen and repeat" the words and sounds as follows:

- w: witch, where, when, work, welcome;
- v: vase, have, live, TV.

Face2Face offers a different approach to training recognition of sounds for beginners, where first students listen twice to two words (waiter, vegetables) and try to notice the difference in the first two sounds. After that, they can listen and practice more individual words (see Appendix 4), and eventually work their way up to training those sounds in sentences individually, as well as in pairs.

Series	Levels and units	Starter / Beginner	Intermediate Plus	Total number of exercises
English File		5	5	5
Face2Face		5	NA	3
Insight		NA	NA	0
Cutting Edge		-	NA	0

Table 2. The distribution of the exercises for the /w/ and /v/ sounds among the units of the analysed Student's books.

However, in order to master the pronunciation of /w/ and /v/, the authors of *English File* added 4 more exercises in the Intermediate Plus *English File* Student's book, where their approach is similar to the one in the *Face2Face* textbook, and they also added the sound /b/ to be trained simultaneously with others (see Figure 2). The task types identified here are the following: two instances of listen and repeat, listen and mark, practice.

In addition, each task for the training of the segmental feature of interest is supported with an audio recording from the CD accompanying all of the analysed course books.

The comparison of the sets of exercises from the two textbooks suggests that, although approaches to training the pronunciation of /w/ and /v/ in both courses are similar, more focused instruction at the early stages of language learning is provided by the *Face2Face* Beginner level textbook. As was mentioned in the first

section of this paper, it might be more beneficial to learn the basics of the pronunciation of sounds at the beginning of a language learning journey than it is to "unlearn" later what has been used for a long time. At the same time, the inability to pronounce sounds properly might impair communication.

Velar nasal /ŋ/

The exercises aimed at practicing another important and troublesome for Slovak students sound, velar nasal /ŋ/, are mentioned in *English File* Beginner and Elementary levels Student's books and *Insight* Intermediate Workbook. Content analysis of *Cutting Edge* and *Face2Face* course books shows that there are no exercises for the pronunciation of this specific sound.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, every unit in the *Insight* course Student's books has a reference to the *Pronunciation insight* section, which can be found at the end of the respective level Workbook. Therefore, it is possible to state that the pronunciation of /ŋ/ is covered in the second unit of the Intermediate level course materials. The *Pronunciation insight 2* section is dedicated to consonant sounds in general, however, mentions the /ŋ/ sound in the tasks of "listen and notice" type (the only word with /ŋ/ sound is "sailing") and "write the words from their transcription" ([jʌŋ], [θæŋks], [ˋsɪŋə]).

As for the *English File* series of course books, the first Student's book for Beginner level has three tasks where students can practice the /ŋ/ sound (see Appendix 5). The first two are based on audio recordings with individual words for exercise 1 and a conversation for the second exercise. The mentioned tasks do not focus solely on the /ŋ/ sound; attention is also paid to /ʊ/ and /u:/ sounds. The second exercise allows students to practice those phonemes while repeating the conversation after the recording, whereas the third exercise requests them to come up with their own sentences, but provides the necessary vocabulary. Consequently, the variation of students' utterances is limited and it may be easier for the teacher to monitor and correct pronunciation.

English File Elementary level presents two tasks for practicing just the /ŋ/ sound. The first one is "listen and repeat" the words and sounds, with such examples: "singing, dancing, going, doing, studying, language, wrong, young, think, bank, pink, thanks". The second exercise rubric is the following – In pairs, point and ask and answer about the people in the flats. *What's he doing? What are they doing?*", which makes it a speaking exercise according to the developed classification. This exercise is communicative and, similarly to the third task from the Beginner level textbook, allows students to create semi-guided dialogues using the pictures from the book. The completion of this type of tasks involves more cognitive processes from learners and, therefore, the information is more likely to be remembered.

The /ŋ/ sound is illustrated by example words that belong to the categories of –ing infinitives, adjectives and nouns (e.g. swimming, young, thanks) in both Insight and English File books. Other than that, there are no similarities in pronunciational training exercises specifically focused on the sound /ŋ/ in the analysed textbooks.

Near-open /æ/

The performed content analysis points out the exercises that are either fully concentrated on the specific phonological issue, or when there is more than one word that illustrates the analysed sound. Although the near-open /æ/ sound is mentioned in the materials of *Insight* and *Cutting Edge* series, these exercises are not included in this analysis for they are insufficient to help students train the pronunciation of near-open /æ/. On the other hand, sufficient exercises were identified in *Face2Face* and *English File* textbooks.

The sound /æ/ is presented at the very beginning of the *Face2Face* course: in the first Unit of the Starter level and in the 10th Unit of the Elementary level Student's books. Whereas *English File* places the emphasis on the /æ/ in the 4th Unit of the Beginner level and the 6th Unit of the Advanced Student's books.

To begin with, *Face2Face* introduces the sound /æ/ by contrasting it with the sound /ə/ (see Appendix 6). Here the developers of the material show that, despite the fact that both sounds are often spelt as "a" in the words, they are pronounced differently; and the same grapheme "a" can be pronounced as/æ/ or /ə/ in one word (e.g. Japan). The structure of the three exercises is the same as it was for /w/ and /v/ sounds in the same series of books. The difference between /æ/ and /ə/ is highlighted by the recording of an example word followed by the careful practice of individual words. Afterwards, students are requested to listen to the sentences twice and practice saying them with a partner. Therefore, both tasks are of "listen and repeat" type.

In the next level textbook, the sound /æ/ is seen as one of the four possible sounds for the letter "a" and is noticeable in all three exercises with several example words and sentences. Some of the exercises ask students to distribute the words from the list into the table according to the sound they pronounce and then check whether they are correct. Overall, the sound /æ/ receives discerned attention in the *Face2Face* materials.

In contrast to the previous findings, the *English File* Beginners Student's book mentions the /æ/ sound only twice, in the exercises where it is presented together with /ʌ/ and /ə/ sounds. Task 1 reads "listen and repeat" the words and sounds, where the example words for the sound /æ/ are "cat, bag, family, man, thanks, that". Task 2 puts the sound in the sentences asking to listen and repeat them as well. For /æ/ sound, there are two: *I have a big family. Is this your bag?*

The next *English File* level where the sound /æ/ is practised is Advanced level. Here, the aim of the exercises is to "fine-tune" the pronunciation of /æ/ and /ʌ/.

The first and the second exercises provide the recording of minimal pairs and individual words to contrast the sounds, whereas the second task allows practising the sounds by repeating sentences (see Appendix 7). Again, all exercises of "listen and repeat" and "listen and notice" types.

The mentioned exercises in all four analysed textbooks share common features, such as contrasting /æ/ with other sounds presented by audio recordings of individual words and moving to practice sentences afterwards. However, the *Face2Face* and *English File* textbooks differ in number and scope of exercises – there is more training in *Face2Face* Student's books; and in the distribution of tasks by levels and Units.

Voiced dental fricative /ð/ and voiceless dental fricative /θ/

The two sounds /ð/ and /θ/ are the consonants that are represented with the grapheme 'th' and in pronunciation instruction, they are often discussed in contrast to each other. However, in the *Insight* Intermediate Workbook, they are only noted in the general "Consonant sounds" section of the *Phonological insight 2*, thus the contrast and specific differences in pronunciation of the two sounds is not discussed. There are only two example words offered for students to train each sound in one "listen and repeat" exercise, and in this case, those exercises are not counted as sufficient and will not be analysed further.

The other three analysed courses all present the mentioned sounds at the beginning of the course. Table 3 shows the distribution of the exercises between the levels of each course. Both the *Cutting Edge* and *English File* series' start with the presentation of the /ð/ sound in isolation because they present it together with existential constructions, there is/are and the pointing words this, that, these and those. Students use these words a lot at the beginning of their language learning adventure and there are many tasks in the books for that.

Series / Levels and units	Starter / Beginner	Elementary	Pre-intermediate	Total number of exercises
Cutting Edge	/ð/ - units 3, 4	/ð/ - unit 2	/ð/ and /θ/ - unit 4	9
English File	/ð/ - unit 3	/ð/ and /θ/ - unit 2	/ð/ and /θ/ - unit 11	7
Face2Face	/ð/ and /θ/ - unit 4	/ð/ and /θ/ - unit 3	-	5
Insight	NA	-	-	0

Table 3. The distribution of exercises for the /ð/ and /θ/ sounds among the units of the analysed Student's books.

Cutting Edge textbooks always present pronunciation issues in two steps – a "listen and notice" activity is followed by a "listen and repeat/practice" task. Whilst at the Starter level only individual words with /ð/ sound are presented (this, that, these, those), the Elementary level textbook requires students to work with phrases. Similarly, *English File* introduces the sound with a "listen and repeat" activity for individual words that is followed by a practice rhyme with phrases, although here those two activities are both presented in the Beginner level Student's book.

Later, however, the courses contrast the two sounds and train students to notice and distinguish the difference. The *Cutting Edge* Pre-intermediate Student's book presents /ð/ and /θ/ with one "listen and practice" exercise, while there are three exercises in the Elementary level *English File* textbook and two more for Pre-intermediate level. Here, "listen and repeat" tasks are followed by semi-guided practice ("ask and answer the questions according to an example") in the first case and "listen and respond" in the second.

The *Face2Face* course introduces the topic by contrasting the sounds from the very beginning of the course – in unit 4 of the Starter level Student's Book, and the developers of the course present /ð/ and /θ/ again in the next level, perhaps, for the students to revise and master their pronunciation. In the first instance, there are three combined exercises that consist of two steps – "listen and notice" is followed by "listen again and practice". The Elementary level students have two similar exercises, the first of which presents the difference with individual words, whereas the second exercise has sentences, and after the first two steps suggests students to work in pairs and check each other's pronunciation.

Overall, although formally there are fewer exercises aimed at the pronunciation training of /ð/ and /θ/ sounds in the F*ace2Face* course, they are all combinations of two or more types of activities and, therefore, involve more practice than the exercises in the rest of the analysed textbook series'. On the other hand, the exercises provided in *English File* textbooks engage students to talk freely, not only asking them to repeat after the recordings, but also promoting cooperation between students, which may seem like a more attractive form of activity for the learners.

Diphthongs: /iə/, /eə/, /ai/, /ei/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/

The diphthongs, as one of the aspects of segmental phonology, are often presented in the analysed materials together with other vowel sounds or as a matter of change of the vowel in words spelt with the final e. Although some exercises that train the pronunciation of these sounds can be found in all of the analysed sets of textbooks, in each of the materials they are covered to various degrees. As can be seen in Table 4, the exercises are distributed among the different levels textbooks of the courses, but in all cases, this topic is discussed in

the Pre-intermediate level. Particularly, in the *Cutting Edge* series, the diphthongs training is present only in the middle of the Pre-intermediate Student's book with one "listen and notice" exercise.

Series	Levels and units	Starter / Beginner	Elementary	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate +	Upper-intermediate	Total number of exercises
Insight		-	-	6	1	NA	-	5
Cutting Edge		-	-	5	-	NA	-	1
English File		1,7,9,10	1,6,8	4,5,6,7,10	6,8	4	-	24
Face2Face		-	-	4,11	8,9	NA	9	13

Table 4. The distribution of the exercises for the diphthongs /iə, eə, ai, ei, aʊ, əʊ/ among the units of the analysed Student's books.

In the *Insight* course, the diphthongs are also introduced in Pre-intermediate level, however, the topic is available in the Intermediate level Workbook as well. When the authors of the series first introduce diphthongs, they present a brief introduction with an explanation of what diphthongs are and how are they pronounced. In the second instance, there are two exercises aimed at practising and no additional theory.

Comparing the total number of exercises and their distribution in all four sets of textbooks, it is possible to notice that *Face2Face* and *English File* series have many more exercises that are focused on diphthongs. However, as was mentioned earlier in Table 1, these exercises are introducing the diphthongs gradually and do not present all of them at once, as in *Insight* and *Cutting Edge* textbooks. Table 4 shows that the exercises are also distributed among more levels than in the other two series of course books. The information received from this content analysis does not allow making assumptions on how this approach of dividing the diphthongs training among more exercises and levels affects the learning process.

The types of tasks for diphthongs training used in the selected courses are presented in Table 5. Eight types of tasks were identified in all the textbooks where diphthong-training exercises were found. The data in Table 5 suggests that the majority of tasks in this topic are of "listen and repeat" type. *English File* course provides not only the highest quantity of exercises but also the greatest variety of task types – seven out of eight identified.

Types of tasks	*Cutting Edge*	*Insight*	*Face2Face*	*English File*	Total
1. Listen and repeat/practice	-	3	10	16	29
2. Match the words/sounds	-	2	3	4	9
3. Listen and notice	1	-	3	3	7
4. Say and complete/mark	-	1	3	2	6
5. Listen and complete	-	3	3	-	5
6. Choose the odd one out	-	1	-	2	3
7. Listen and mark	-	-	-	1	1
8. Listen and answer	-	-	-	1	1
Total	1	10	22	29	-

Table 5. Types of exercises that train the pronunciation of diphthongs and their quantity in the textbooks of four analysed sets of materials.

The analysis of the quantity of exercises and task types in all four selected English courses has shown that *Face2Face* and *English File* sets provide greater possibilities for learning and practising diphthongs for students than the *Insight* and *Cutting Edge* sets.

Triphthongs: /aʊə/, /aiə/

Similarly to the aspirated sounds, careful investigation of pronunciation training exercises in all four series of books failed to reveal any exercises that introduce triphthongs.

Silent letters

The aspect of silent letters is invaluable for both pronunciation and spelling training, and since there are not many rules to this phenomenon, sometimes the silent letters are quite unpredictable. This is why students need to memorise the spelling and pronunciation of many words. Although formally each set of course books offers training of the mentioned aspect to the learners, there are only two exercises in the Pre-intermediate *Cutting Edge* Student's book that present just three words, "knee, wrist, thumb". This amount of learning material can be considered insufficient.

Both the *Face2Face* and *Insight* courses mention the issue of silent letters once but the whole sections of exercises are provided there and a brief theoretical explanation as well. While the topic is introduced as early as the Elementary level of *Face2Face* course, which is the second level of the course, *Insight* includes silent letters within their third level Intermediate textbook. The *English File* set, in a similar fashion as with the diphthongs training, distributes the tasks on the topic of silent letters between four different levels: Elementary, Intermediate, Upper-intermediate and Advanced.

The theoretical part of this paper mentions that each letter of the English alphabet can be silent in certain words. In the *English File* course silent letters are first introduced in unit 4 of the Elementary level Student's book with three exercises aimed at the letter 'h' that is not pronounced in several common words. Later on, in unit 9, the authors introduce other examples of silent letters. This approach is different from the rest of the books that were investigated.

In Table 6, data on the types of tasks that are used to train silent letters is provided for all four sets of course books. A maximum of five different types of tasks are found in the *English File* course, with the most number of exercises as well. Here, again, "listen and repeat" tasks are the most common, however, the tasks where students need to "say and mark" are also common. For this particular topic, students are asked to cross out the letter that is silent from the list of words. It is not possible to judge whether the amounts of exercises in different course books correspond with the success of the learners that are using them, which is why the three courses (*Insight, Face2Face, English File*) formally fit the requirements for the school leaving examination in Slovakia on the topic of silent letters.

Types of the tasks	*Cutting Edge*	*Insight*	*Face2Face*	*English File*	Total
1. Listen and repeat / practice	1	2	2	6	11
2. Say and complete/mark	-	2	1	3	6
3. Listen and mark	-	-	1	3	4
4. Listen and notice	1	-	1	1	3
5. Listen and complete	-	1	1	1	3
Total	2	5	6	14	-

Table 6. Types of exercises that introduce the aspect of silent letters and their quantity in the textbooks of four analysed sets of materials.

3.4.2 Analysis of exercises for training of prosodic aspects of phonology

Linked pronunciation

As was already mentioned, all the courses offer more training of Suprasegmental features of phonology. The difference in numbers compared to any of the segmentals is noticeable already in Table 7, which presents the distribution by units of the exercises that train linked pronunciation of each of the analysed course book sets. As can be seen from the table, the topic is introduced starting with the first level of each course and is fairly evenly distributed throughout most of the levels. Both the *Insight* and *Cutting Edge* set do not train this particular aspect in higher levels, while the number of occurrences of this topic in *English File* and *Face2Face* series decreases towards higher levels of proficiency.

The *Insight* series of textbooks offers the lowest number of exercises (10) compared to other courses, from which *English File* offers the most (32). Each level of this course offers one up to five sets of exercises that are aimed at mastering connected speech. The first two levels introduce the topic with general information and sentence examples. Starting from the third Pre-intermediate level, the rules of linking begin to be presented (regarding the same consonants, sounds /r, j, w/, etc.). The majority of exercise sets in these two levels include the "listen and complete" tasks, where learners need to listen to the recording and write down the sentences they hear, thus training the ability to listen and recognize words in the connected speech of native speakers. Other tasks mostly focus on the practice and include semi-guided communicative activities, for example, where students work in pairs to ask and answer questions or express their opinion on some given input. In some cases, individual linked expressions are trained (e.g. going to, used to).

The lowest amount of pronunciation training exercises aimed at the aspect of linking is found in the *Insight* series of textbooks, although here it is mentioned in every analysed level. The aspect is divided between the levels and introduces a part of the topic in each: linking of phrasal verbs in Elementary level, consonant-vowel linking in the Pre-intermediate and linking sounds /w, j, r/ in the Intermediate workbook. Four types of exercises are used, the most common of which is "listen and repeat", which is presented in Table 8.

Table 8 shows the types of pronunciation training tasks that are found in the analysed textbooks. "Listen and repeat" is common in all textbook series, however, *Face2Face* introduces many instances of "listen and notice", that may promote the awareness of the learner towards linking. Yet, the primary reason for the prevalence of this type of exercises in the *Face2Face* course may be the fact that suprasegmentals training is presented and practiced within the section 'Help with listening', which shifts the focus of attention and trains pronunciation indirectly.

Series	Levels and units	/ Starter Beginner	Elementary	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate +	Upper-intermediate	Advanced	Total number of exercises
Insight		-	9	3	9	NA	-	-	10
Cutting Edge		6,11,12	6,8	-	4,11,12	NA	-	-	19
English File		4,5	2,4	3,7,8,10,11	3,4,5,9	2,6,7	6	5	32
Face2Face		6,8	4,8,11	3,4,8	3,4,8,10	NA	2,6,7	8	23

Table 7. The distribution of exercises aimed at linking pronunciation among the units of the analysed Student's books

Types of the tasks	Cutting Edge	Insight	Face2Face	English File	Total
1. Listen and repeat / practice	9	6	11	17	43
2. Listen and notice	8	-	29	2	39
3. Listen and complete	1	2	-	10	13
4. Say and complete/mark	-	4	8	-	12
5. Speaking activities	-	-	-	10	10
6. Listen and mark	1	2	1	1	5
7. Match the words/sounds	-	-	-	1	1
8. Listen and answer	-	1	-	-	1
Total	19	15	48	41	-

Table 8. Types of exercises that introduce the aspect of linking pronunciation and their quantity in the textbooks of four analysed sets of materials.

The *Cutting Edge* course provides almost equal amounts of "listen and repeat" and "listen and notice" types of tasks but the overall number of tasks is two times lower as in *English File*. The issue of linking is presented here in connection to questions, consonant-vowel relationship and past modals.

Primary and secondary word stress

The distribution of exercises on the word stress aspect among the units of the analysed textbooks is shown in Table 9. As can be seen from the table, this topic is covered at roughly all levels of the courses that were selected for analysis. While *Insight* and *Cutting Edge* introduce a lot of practice from the very beginning of the course, *Face2Face* and *English File* increase the number of instances towards higher levels of proficiency.

Cutting Edge and *English File* offer a similar number of exercises, however, Table 10 shows that the number of tasks in *Face2Face* is not far behind. As can be seen from Table 10, *Cutting Edge* and *Face2Face* both present five types of tasks, where the "listen and repeat" activity is the most common. The other two course book series include eight types of tasks, and the most frequent one in English File is "say and complete", which may possibly allow students to show their knowledge to a greater extent and become more aware of stress patterns in the English language.

Series	Levels and units	/ Starter Beginner	Elementary	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate +	Upper-intermediate	Advanced	Total number of exercises
Insight		NA	4,5	4	3,4	NA	-	-	23
Cutting Edge		1,2,3, 4,5,7, 9,10	1,2,6, 9	2,4,9	5,7,9, 10	NA	2,4,11	2	49
English File		5	1,11	2,5,6,9	1,2,8,10	1,3,4, 8,9	2,3,5, 8,9,10	2,3,6	51
Face2Face		1	1	1,3,12	1	NA	2,6,8, 10,12	-	22

Table 9. The distribution of exercises for primary and secondary stress training among the units of the analysed Student's books.

Cutting Edge and *Face2Face* courses call attention to word stress by presenting words that belong to the same categories by their meaning, e.g. jobs, numbers, places, family, science words. *Insight* categorises its practice words according to their function, for example, stress in two-syllable nouns, compound nouns and adjectives, quantities, 3,4-syllable words, word families etc. Whereas *English File* textbooks rarely offer any categorising.

Overall, the topic is covered relatively extensively in all the four courses, the number of exercises may be considered sufficient and task types can provide some variety in the learning process.

Distinctive function of word stress

Just one instance of a set of exercises that focus on this aspect was found, which suggests a way of improvement for the future editions of the analysed courses. The *English File* Upper-Intermediate Student's book contains three exercises that deal with the distinctive function of word stress. The first task involves practising individual words, next, students are asked to underline stressed syllables in the set of sentences, and then practice sentence examples from task 2 with the recording. The tasks present several of the most common words that illustrate the distinctive function of word stress such as progress, export, refund, increase, produce, transport. In addition, the words are presented in two contrasting sentences.

The amount of practice in the *English File* course might be sufficient, however, the lack of this aspect in the other three courses can result in some inconsistencies and mistakes in pronunciation, which can have a negative effect on the process of communication.

Weak forms

A different pattern can be seen regarding the training of weak forms in the analysed courses in Table 11, where *English File* presents the lowest number of exercises on the topic, followed by a number 5 times higher in *Insight*. Both mentioned courses present weak forms in two middle levels of their course, while the other two – *Cutting Edge* and *Face2Face,* introduce the topic in their entry-level textbooks with many exercises.

Table 12 shows the types of tasks found in the textbooks that deal with weak forms of words in English. The highest number of 40 tasks is found in *Face2Face,* where half the rubrics are of "listen and repeat" type. However, this series offers five various types of tasks, which can be compared to the *Cutting Edge* course. The latter offers a relatively high number of tasks but of only two types and this repetition can be less engaging for the learners. Another point is that this course presents weak forms of individual words or word classes in each exercise, which may allow more focused attention on the issue.

The three courses with the highest amount of pronunciation of weak forms work present rules and short explanations on the topic and, overall, provide a sufficient amount of training.

Types of the tasks	*Cutting Edge*	*Insight*	*Face2Face*	*English File*	Total
1. Listen and repeat / practice	24	10	19	12	65
2. Say and complete/mark	6	6	8	18	38
3. Listen and mark	19	4	3	7	33
4. Listen and notice	4	4	7	3	18
5. Match the words/sounds	-	-	5	2	7
6. Speaking	-	-	-	6	6
7. Listen and complete	1	3	-	-	4
8. Count the number of syllables	-	2	-	-	2
9. Choose the odd one out	-	1	-	1	2
10. Listen and answer	-	1	-	1	2
Total	54	31	42	50	-

Table 10. Types of exercises that introduce the aspect of primary and secondary stress and their quantity in the textbooks of four analysed sets of materials.

Series	Levels and units	Starter / Beginner	Elementary	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Upper-intermediate	Total number of exercises
Insight		NA	-	7	8	-	11
Cutting Edge		5,12	3,4,7,12,13,14	3,5	4	1,6,8	31
English File		-	-	7	-	7	2
Face2Face		-	3,4,5,6,7,9,11	2,7	2,7,12	3	19

Table 11. The distribution of exercises for weak forms training among the units of the analysed Student's books.

Types of the tasks	*Cutting Edge*	*Insight*	*Face2Face*	*English File*	Total
1. Listen and notice	14	2	21	1	38
2. Listen and repeat / practice	17	5	7	1	30
3. Say and complete/mark	-	4	6	-	10
4. Listen and mark	-	-	5	-	5
5. Listen and complete	-	1	1	1	3
6. Listen and answer	-	1	-	-	1
Total	31	13	40	3	-

Table 12. Types of exercises that introduce the aspect of weak forms and their quantity in the textbooks of four analysed sets of materials.

Sentence stress and sentence rhythm

This aspect is not covered in any of the *Insight* Workbooks, yet the numbers of exercises in the other three courses are relatively high. As shown in Table 13, sentence stress and rhythm are distributed between all levels of courses but one course stands out especially. *Cutting Edge* and *Face2Face* textbooks offer a similar number of exercises (23 and 27 respectively), while *English File* includes 79 exercises and the topic appears in up to nine units of each level. Such distribution suggests that this topic receives special focus in all courses, after the completion of which students shall have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills.

Eight different types of tasks were identified within the textbooks, and the results of the analysis are presented in Table 14. Similarly to the previous aspect tasks distribution, *Cutting Edge* concentrates its tasks in two major areas of practice and training of awareness. *Face2Face* provides a greater variety of the task types (7) and here the most popular task is "listen and notice". Together with the first and the fifth types from the table, these three task types create a logical chain of awareness building (type 2), performing of the task individually (type 5) and practicing (type 1).

As *English File* has the most tasks, it offers seven task types to the learners, 52% of which are "listen and repeat" (49 out of 95). What is different from all the previous aspects of prosody, however, is that - after the practice type of task - the most widespread are speaking activities that involve the semi-guided free speech of learners, often in pairs. This may create a counter balance for the repetitive nature of the majority of the tasks and make the learning process more engaging and entertaining for the learners.

Series	Levels and units	/ Starter Beginner	Elementary	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate +	Upper-intermediate	Advanced	Total number of exercises
Cutting Edge		-	1,3	1,5	1,3,7	NA	6,9,10, 12	6,7	23
English File		2,5, 6,7,8 9,10, 11	1,3,4,5, 7,9,10, 11,12	1,2,3, 5,8,10,11	1,2,3, 4,6,7,9	3,5,8 9,10	1,3,4, 5,6,10	1	79
Face2Face		5,9	1,2,6, 10,12	1,5,11	1,6,7,11	NA	1,3,4, 10,11,12	5,9	27
Insight		NA	-	-	-	NA	-	-	0

Table 13. The distribution of exercises for sentence stress and rhythm among the units of the analysed Student's books.

Types of tasks	*Cutting Edge*	*Face2Face*	*English File*	Total
1. Listen and repeat / practice	14	18	49	81
2. Listen and notice	11	24	6	41
3. Speaking	-	1	20	21
4. Listen and complete	3	1	13	17
5. Say and complete/mark	-	11	1	12
6. Listen and mark	4	2	4	10
7. Listen and answer	-	-	2	2
8. Match the words/sounds	-	1	-	1
Total	32	58	95	-

Table 14. Types of exercises that introduce the aspect of sentence stress and rhythm and their quantity in the textbooks of four analysed sets of materials.

Intonation: ascending, descending and combination

Intonation is one aspect of phonology, the mastering of which might require a lot of practice. This assumption is especially valid for those learners, whose L1 intonation patterns differ a lot from English patterns. The importance of this issue is underlined by all the textbooks that were analysed for this research. Yet, none of the courses provide explicit instruction with detailed schemes and description of intonation patterns.

Table 15 presents the findings of intonation focused exercises in the units of the analysed textbooks. All courses, except for *English File*, introduce the intonation aspect starting with Elementary level and continue the topic throughout the whole course. The amount of pronunciation work in *Insight* and *Face2Face* textbooks are relatively equal while *Cutting Edge* offers twice as many exercises. *English File,* however, mentions the issue in the first and third levels but focused attention is only noticeable towards the end of the course.

Series	Levels and units	Starter / Beginner	Elementary	Pre-intermediate	Intermediate	Upper-intermediate	Advanced	Total number of exercises
Insight		NA	3	5	7	-	-	10
Cutting Edge		-	6	6,11,12,14	1,5,8,11	1,3,5	5	24
English File		7	-	3	-	1,3,5	7,10	12
Face2Face		-	10	7,9,11	2,7,10	6	4,6	14

Table 15. The distribution of exercises aimed at intonation training among the units of the analysed Student's books.

Generalizing the data from Table 16, all four courses offer a limited variety of tasks aimed at intonation training – just 3 to 5 types per course. Taking into account the presence of these exercises in almost every textbook of the course, it may seem repetitive and unengaging, yet familiar and easy to understand for the students. Despite the absence of explicit instruction, together with prominent listening exercises all course books provide the ultimate function of the particular intonation pattern, e.g. being polite, asking for directions, intonation in wh- and yes/no questions, friendly intonation, agreement, disagreement, suggestion, being sympathetic, calm, annoyed etc.

Similarly to the training of other aspects, *Cutting Edge* focuses student's attention on building awareness with "listen and notice" exercises that are

followed by the extensive practice of the recognised patterns. *Face2Face* course books, in addition, point out marking exercises that may help students in recognizing and memorizing specific instances of intonation usage. *English File* is the only course that involves free speaking activities focused on intonation training.

Types of the tasks	*Cutting Edge*	*Insight*	*Face2Face*	*English File*	Total
1. Listen and repeat / practice	11	4	12	10	37
2. Listen and notice	14	2	5	2	23
3. Listen and mark	-	3	8	1	12
4. Listen and complete	1	-	-	-	1
5. Say and complete/mark	-	1	-	-	1
6. Speaking	-	-	-	1	1
7. Listen and answer	-	1	-	-	1
Total	26	11	25	14	-

Table 16. Types of exercises that introduce the aspect of intonation and their quantity in the textbooks of four analysed sets of materials.

Tag questions intonation

There were no exercises focused on tag questions intonation in any of the analysed textbooks of *Insight*, *Face2Face* and *Cutting Edge* courses. The *Insight* Pre-intermediate Workbook, however, introduces a theoretical description of the issue in Grammar reference 9.2 but without tasks for practising. The fact that this feature of prosodic phonology is omitted leaves learners with the option to practice this topic on their own, with the help of the teacher, or, maybe, gain the necessary knowledge indirectly. Yet, the tag questions intonation knowledge is required for the school leaving examination.

The *English File* Intermediate Student's book is the sole textbook that presents the topic with a set of exercises in unit 10. There are three exercises that introduce tag questions intonation, however, an explanation of when to use rising or falling intonation is missing. The task types are as follows: "listen and complete", "listen and repeat" and a "role play". Presuming the teacher will provide explicit instruction, the focused attention to question tags intonation in this course might be beneficial, particularly for Slovak students.

In conclusion, as this chapter presents the analysis of the phonological exercises found in the selected textbooks that are structured according to the list of requirements for the school leaving examination for Slovak students, there are

several features that are not covered by the coursebooks at all. From segmental aspects, those are aspirated sounds and triphthongs. Only 4 out of 9 segmental features are covered in all four courses. As for prosodic features, the only course that includes exercises that train all seven aspects of suprasegmental phonology is *English File*, whereas the other three lack exercises aimed at the training of the distinctive function of word stress and tag questions intonation. The degree to which the topics are covered in the textbooks, as well as numbers and distribution of the exercises, differs from aspect to aspect.

Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to analyse the selected books of four courses of English that are or may be used in Slovak schools in terms of pronunciation training techniques and exercises focused on the specific aspects of pronunciation. In order to fulfil the goal, the practical part of the paper dealt with the content analysis of course books of English according to the aspects of pronunciation and the techniques of its improvement. The outcomes of the research allowed the following conclusions to be drawn.

H1: The quantity of pronunciation training in the analysed textbook sets is approximately the same. – Rejected.

The first step, partial goal, research question and the basis of the content analysis was the selection of course books suitable and available for the analysis. Four course book sets of all available levels were selected:

- *Insight*, 3 relevant levels;
- *English File*, 7 levels;
- *Face2Face*, 6 levels;
- *Cutting Edge*, 6 levels.

The criteria of the analysis were chosen on the basis of the national documentation – *Target requirements for students' knowledge and skills of English language for levels B1 and B2* for their school leaving examination. This allowed the identification of sixteen aspects of phonology and the performance of content analysis of the textbooks focused exclusively on those aspects.

The second research question is partially answered in Table 1, which provides detailed data on the amounts of exercises aimed at pronunciation training in each book. For the purposes of this research, a total number of 594 exercises from 22 textbooks were investigated and analysed. 66 relevant exercises were noticed in the *Insight* course, *Face2Face* offers 131, *Cutting Edge* has 149 and as many as 236 apposite exercises were found in the *English File* textbooks. As can be seen, the *Insight* textbooks offer significantly fewer exercises for pronunciation when compared with the other three series; however, these exercises are distributed between only three levels. On the contrary, the *English File* course offers seven

course books with the highest number of exercises focused on pronunciation of the required aspects. Although *Insight* and *English File* courses both are published by OUP and both are presented as general English courses recommended for secondary schools, the amount of pronunciation work in each of them is drastically different. Both *Cutting Edge* and *Face2Face* textbooks have close numbers of tasks distributed between the same numbers of books (6); however, the numbers are significantly lower compared to *English File*. This data leads to the rejection of the first hypothesis.

H2: There is more training of suprasegmental features of phonology than segmentals training. – Confirmed.

The answer to the research question on segmental/suprasegmental distribution details can be found in Figure 1 in the third chapter, which shows that suprasegmental aspects training prevails in all analysed course books. Figure 6 illustrates the ratio between the training of segmental and prosodic aspects of phonology in the analysed course books, in which the prevalence of prosody is clearly visible.

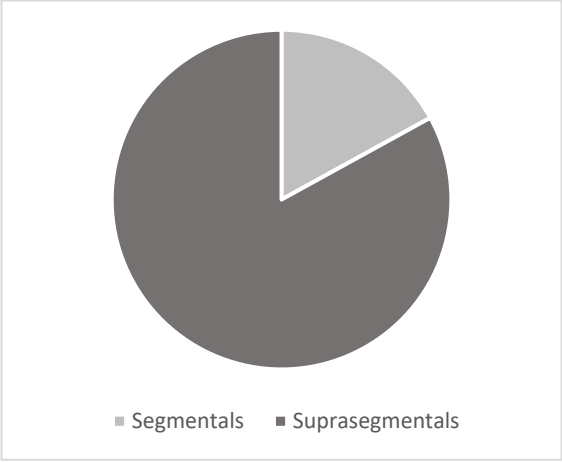

Figure 2. The ratio between the training of segmental and prosodic aspects of phonology in the analysed course books

Providing an answer for the fourth research question requires a complex approach to investigation of the focus of the exercises. Some exercises are indeed focused on one specific sound or feature of phonology, however, this can be valid for only a very low number of tasks. The majority of tasks assume work with whole words, sentences and texts, where it is impossible to isolate one specific aspect

completely. It is tenable to conclude that, in most cases, the analysed exercises provide training for a combination of phonological aspects in the form of an integration of several types of exercises. As an example, in the *Face2Face* Intermediate Student's book (2013, p. 68) there is a task where students need to focus on sentence stress:

"Listen to these sentences. Where are the main stresses in Mr Krane's sentence? Listen to four more pairs of sentences from Ella's conversations. Which words, letters or numbers have the main stress? Practise saying these pairs of sentences. Take turns to be Ella."

Here, students will be paying attention to sentence stress, word stress and intonation, not to mention individual sounds. The exercise types in this example are "listen and notice" and "listen and repeat/practice".

In the *Cutting Edge* Intermediate Student's book (2013, p.117) the rubrics of the pronunciation training section read as follows:

"In speech, past modal forms often sound like one word. Listen to the verbs on their own. […] Listen to the verbs in full sentences. Practice, paying attention to the pronunciation of the modals."

This example combines even more task types, while simultaneously increasing awareness of the issues of weak forms, spelling/pronunciation relationship and partly sentence stress and intonation. Such examples, where task types are combined and integrate several phonological aspects, are common among all the textbooks of the four analysed sets and illustrate the difficulty of separation of individual features in phonological training together with the complexity of phonology as such.

H3: The dominant type of task is "listen and repeat". – Confirmed.

As for the types of exercises used that correspond to research question 5, overall, there are 11 different types of tasks identified in all materials. The task types and their portions are presented in Table 17. As the table shows, the majority of tasks are of "listen and repeat" type (50% in the case of segmentals and 40% of suprasegmental training tasks), which is common for pronunciation rubrics in general. Such dominance confirms the third hypothesis.

The task type with the second highest occurrences is "listen and notice", which may promote awareness of the studied aspects in learners. One of the significant findings is a fairly common occurrence of tasks that involve free or guided speech and pair work in pronunciation training. The completion of this type of task involves more cognitive processes from learners and, therefore, the information is more likely to be remembered in the long term. Moreover, these exercises might bring additional colour and variety to ordinary pronunciation instruction.

The amounts of exercises and task types for individual analysed aspects can be found in sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2. The analysis shows that training of one aspect is

realised in several different ways using various task types, which may promote the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills. In one particular case, regarding weak forms training, *Cutting Edge* and *English File* courses provide the least variety of tasks – just two and three types respectively. Other than that, there is a fair diversification of task types.

Despite the theoretical findings on the topic, the rubrics in the analysed textbooks do not provide specific explanations that may highlight the importance of certain aspects of pronunciation. Most often, no explicit instruction is offered. Occasionally, the textbooks present a brief explanation of the issues, e.g. "Remember: in sentences we say many small words with a schwa /ə/ sound. These are called weak forms" (F2F-I, 2015, p.59). Similarly, the issues of nativeness, intelligibility and accentedness that were raised in the theoretical part are not reflected in pronunciation training tasks of the analysed courses, perhaps leaving the appropriateness of these topics to the judgements of individual teachers.

Task type	Number of occurrences in the training of			
	segmental features		suprasegmental features	
	instances	%	instances	%
1. Listen and repeat/practice	66	50%	258	40%
2. Listen and notice	24	18%	159	24%
3. Say and complete	7	5%	74	11%
4. Listen and mark/underline	6	4%	65	10%
5. Listen and complete	8	6%	38	6%
6. Speaking	1	1%	38	6%
7. Match words/sounds	15	11%	9	1%
8. Listen and respond/answer	3	2%	7	1%
9. Choose the odd one out	3	2%	2	0.5%
10. Count the number of syllables	-	-	2	0.5%
11. Write the words from their transcription	1	1%	-	-
Total	134	100%	652	100%

Table 17. Types of relevant tasks found in the 4 selected course book series and what portion of the training exercises of segmental and suprasegmental features of phonology they comprise.

Regarding pronunciation models, although all four courses use British English models, two of them (*Cutting Edge* and *English File*) present the differences between British and American pronunciation explicitly in Advanced level

Student's books. While *English File* compares just the two discussed models, *Cutting Edge* also introduces the learner to the existence of other varieties, stimulating interest and broadening general knowledge.

H4: Controlled practice teaching techniques fit in the analysed textbooks more than other techniques. – Confirmed.

As for the next, sixth, question on the teaching techniques that can be applied to the analysed materials, it is noticeable from the range of found task types that the majority of exercises suggested by the developers of courses should be realized in the form of controlled practice. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is also confirmed. Lesser quantities of exercises that normally belong to guided and free practice techniques were also identified in the textbooks. However, the teacher always has an option to modify materials according to their needs and abilities. There seems to be no limit for creativity in such matters.

H5: All aspects of phonology required by the national documentation, provided in chapter 2, are trained in all course book sets. – Rejected.

None of the four analysed courses contain exercises for all sixteen aspects in question. The closest is the *English File* course that covers 14 aspects and offers the most exercises with which to train them. Perhaps such dominance over other courses can be counted as the best correspondence between the textbooks and the requirements. There is also the greatest diversity in task types estimated for this course, which is surely beneficial. It is possible to put other analysed courses in such order of sufficiency of the tasks presented in the textbooks to the demands for the students' abilities: *Face2Face* covers 11 aspects, whereas both *Cutting Edge* and *Insight* cover only 9 of the 16 aspects of phonology that were considered for the analysis.

Finally, there was no intention to conduct the presented analysis aiming for the evaluation of the general quality of the materials. This research is narrowed by the context of the *Target requirements for students' knowledge and skills of English language for levels B1 and B2* valid in the Slovak Republic and, therefore, refers only to the issues mentioned in the work. Further analysis is necessary in terms of pronunciation training in ELT, perhaps, using a greater sample of textbooks, in order to find the most suitable single material set. Another issue is that the findings of this paper may add to the current dispute on the need for nationally developed ELT materials that would take into account all the previously identified needs of Slovak students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Teaching Pronunciation: Methodological Variation

Method	Focus	Tolerance of pronun. errors	Method used	Summary
Grammar-Translation	N/A	Relatively tolerant	Teacher correction via lecture/explanation	Little or no attention is paid to pronunciation.
Direct Method	Accuracy	Relatively intolerant	Teacher correction and repetition	Students learn to pronounce by listening to and repeating the teacher's model of a word or phrase.
Audiolingual	Accuracy	Relatively intolerant	Teacher correction; repetition drill and practice in the language lab; minimal-pair drill	Pronunciation is emphasized and taught from the beginning
Silent Way	Accuracy first, then fluency	Non tolerant	Teacher correction cued by sound-color charts and Fidel charts; use of gesture and facial expression	There is a strong emphasis on accuracy of production; words and phrases arc repeated until they are near nativelike.
Community Language Learning	Fluency, then accuracy	Somewhat tolerant	Teacher correction via repetition	Learner decides what degree of accuracy in pronunciation to aim for.
Total Physical Response and Natural Approach	N/A	Very tolerant	Native-speaker input	Production is delayed until learners are ready to speak, which gives them time to internalize the sounds of the new language: thus good pronunciation is assumed to come naturally.

Communicative Approach	Fluency obligatory accuracy optional	Relatively tolerant	Learner engagement in authentic listening and speaking tasks	Communicatively adequate pronunciation is generally assumed to be a by-product of appropriate practice over a sufficient period of time.

From: Celce-Murcia, 2010

Appendix 2

Jenkins' Lingua Franca Core (LFC) for Communication Between Nonnative Speakers

This is a list of pronunciation targets that Jenkins (2000, 2006) proposed based on her research on interactions between normative speakers:

1. **Consonants except** /θ, ð/[†]
   Jenkins found the clear articulation of consonants important. This includes /r/ pronounced in all positions, as in American speech, rather than only pronounced when followed by a vowel in the same or next word, as in British English. Since substitutions and variations of the two *th* sounds /θ, ð/ and dark, or velarized [†], caused no difficulty in intelligibility in Jenkins' research, she recommends not teaching them.

2. **Certain positional variation features**

a. Aspiration of word-initial voiceless stops /p, t, k/ (e.g., to distinguish *pat* and *bat*)
b. Vowel length (e.g., to distinguish *bet* and *bed*)

3. **Consonant clusters**

a. No omission of sounds in word-initial clusters
b. In word medial clusters, only certain deletions are permissible

4. **Tense-lax vowel distinctions.** Regional variations in vowel articulation were not problematic in Jenkins' research if vowels were pronounced in a consistent manner relative to one another. The crucial vowel distinction to be taught is between tense (long) and lax (short) vowels (e.g., leave versus live).

5. **Prominence** (Jenkins uses the term *nuclear stress*), especially when used to highlight a contrast, e.g., He came by TRAIN versus He CAME by train (Seidlhofer 2004. p. 216)

In her data, Jenkins found that certain features were *not* crucial for mutual intelligibility. Although these may have been an integral part of the traditional pronunciation curriculum. Jenkins designates them as non core. These features include: vowel quality, weak forms, connected speech, word stress, rhythm, and pitch movement.

From: (Celce-Murcia, 2010)

Appendix 3

5.1 ZVUKOVÁ STRÁNKA JAZYKA

Žiak na úrovni B1 vyslovuje zreteľne a zrozumiteľne, nepresnosti vo výslovnosti a prízvuk materinského jazyka nenarušujú komunikáciu. Žiak na úrovni B2 má zreteľnú a prirodzenú výslovnosť s ojedinelými nepresnosťami.

Žiak ovláda zásady správnej výslovnosti:

- aspirovaného [p], [t], [k]: *Peter, take, come*;
- obojperného [w] a pernozubného [v]: *very well, one*;
- zadopodnebného ng [ŋ]: *morning, training, strong, sink, younger*;
- otvoreného [æ]: *Alice, cat, pack, hat, back*;
- znelého pernozubného [ð]: *this, that*;
- neznelej pernozubnej hlásky [θ]: *thank, think*;
- dvojhlások: [iə] *here, ear*, [eə] *where, there*, [ai] *right, side*, [ei] *they, say*, [aʊ] *how, about*, [əʊ] *old, no*;
- trojhlások: [aʊə] *flower*, [aiə] *fire, tired*;
- nemých hlások: *know, write, hour, doubt, climb*.

Žiak uplatňuje:

- viazanú výslovnosť: *Where are you? How old are you? That' s my aunt.*;
- hlavný a vedľajší slovný prízvuk: *Thursday, video, probably, hotel, thirteen, thirty, equipment, cosmetics, performance, introduction, examination*;
- rozlišovaciu funkciu prízvuku: *report – report*;
- redukovanú výslovnosť samohlásky v neprízvučných slabikách tzv. weak forms: *was, were, can, have, and, at*;
- vetný prízvuk a rytmizáciu vety: *Come on, John. What are you doing? I'm looking for my keys. I don't know where I left them.*

Žiak rozlišuje a vie uplatniť:

- intonáciu vo vetách (stúpajúcu, klesajúcu a ich kombinácie*): I've got an English penfriend. Have you ever spoken to a tourist? Where do you live? Do you live here? Do you want to go by car or by train?*;
- intonáciu v krátkych prídavných otázkach: *You are coming, aren't you? You saw him, didn't you?*.

Žiak je schopný porozumieť rôznym variantom výslovnosti anglického jazyka a pasívne ovláda znaky medzinárodného fonetického prepisu.

From: Cieľové požiadavky na vedomosti z zručnosti maturantov z Anglického jazyka / úrovne B1 a B2, by National Institute for Education In The Slovak Republic, 2016, p. 18.

Appendix 4

Exercises for training of pronunciation of /w/ and /v/ from *Face2Face* Starter Student's book (left) and *English File* Intermediate Plus Student's book (right) (F2F-S, p. 45; EF-I+, p. 44).

HELP WITH PRONUNCIATION /w/ and /v/

1 CD2 ▸ 39 Look at the pictures. Listen to the sounds and words. Listen again and practise.

/w/ /v/

waiter vegetables

2 CD2 ▸ 40 Listen to these words. Notice how we say *w* and *v* in these words. Listen again and practise.

/w/	/v/
waiter always	vegetables very
women when work	evening never live
where Wednesday	every vocabulary
week weekend twelve	five seven eleven

3 a CD2 ▸ 41 Listen to the conversation. Listen again and practise.

A Where do you work?
B I'm a waiter and I work in a very nice café in Vienna.
A When do you work?
B I work every evening from five to eleven in the week.
A Do you work at the weekend?
B Yes, I work seven days a week.

b Work in pairs. Practise the conversation.

2 PRONUNCIATION & SPEAKING

/w/, /v/, and /b/

a 35 Listen and repeat the three sound pictures and words.

we	TV	be
switch	volume	button
weather	over	celebrity

b 36 Listen to the pairs of words. Can you hear the difference? Practise saying them.

1	a why	b buy
2	a ban	b van
3	a vet	b wet
4	a boat	b vote
5	a bake	b wake
6	a wine	b vine
7	a fiver	b fibre
8	a very	b berry

c 37 Listen and circle the word you hear.

d Practise saying the sentences.

Let's buy a wide-screen TV.
I never watch live sport.
Switch over to channel five.
It won't be over before eleven.

Appendix 5
Exercises for training of pronunciation of /ŋ/ sound from *English File* Beginner Student's book (EF-B, p. 49)

3 PRONUNCIATION & SPEAKING /ʊ/, /uː/, and /ŋ/; sentence rhythm

a 3 41 Listen and repeat the words and sounds.

 bull	cook book look good
 boot	too food soon school
 singer	going doing swimming thing single

b 3 42 Listen and repeat the conversation. Practise it in pairs. Copy the sounds and rhythm.

A I like cooking. What about you?
B I like cooking too.
A Do you like reading books?
B Yes, I love reading good books.
A Do you like cycling?
B Yes, I do. I love cycling!
A Are you single?
B No, sorry!

c Look at the pictures in **1a**. In pairs, talk about the activities with *love*, *like*, *don't like*, or *hate*.

I love camping. What about you? / *Me, too! I hate buying clothes. What about you?*

Appendix 6
Exercises for training of pronunciation of /æ/ sound from *Face2Face* Starter Student's book (left) and Elementary Student's book (right)
(F2F-S, p. 13; F2F-E, p. 87)

HELP WITH PRONUNCIATION /æ/ and /ə/

1 CD1 27 Look at the pictures. Listen to the sounds and words. Listen again and practise.

/æ/ /ə/

bag computer

2 CD1 28 Listen to these words. Notice how we say the pink and blue letters. Listen again and practise.

/æ/	/ə/
bag man apple	computer woman
practise vocabulary	teacher Italy China
that Japan camera	Brazil Japan camera
understand alphabet	understand alphabet

3 a CD1 29 Listen to these sentences. Listen again and practise.

1 Is your camera from China?
2 Your apples are in my bag.
3 Practise the alphabet.
4 My computer is from Japan.
5 Is he from Italy or Brazil?
6 Is your teacher a man or a woman?

b Work in pairs. Practise the sentences.

HELP WITH PRONUNCIATION
The letter *a*

1 CD3 24 Listen and notice four ways we say the letter *a*. Listen again and practise.

/æ/ hat bank /eɪ/ lazy headache
/ɑː/ bath father /ə/ ago stomach

2 a Work in pairs. Write these words in the table.

~~rabbit~~ radio another contract
answers games elephant family
arm famous island dance

/æ/ hat	*rabbit*
/ɑː/ bath	
/eɪ/ lazy	
/ə/ ago	

b CD3 25 Listen and check. Listen again and practise.

3 a CD3 26 Listen and practise these sentences.

1 I often have my laptop with me when I travel by taxi.
2 My hard-working father likes fast food and dancing.
3 Take a suitcase when you go on holiday by plane.
4 This is the address of the accountant's company.
5 The manager of our company has fast food every day.

b Work in pairs. Take turns to say the sentences.

Appendix 7
Exercises for training of pronunciation of /æ/ sound from *English File:* Advanced level Student's book
(EF-A, p. 58)

2 PRONUNCIATION /æ/ and /ʌ/

Fine-tuning your pronunciation: /æ/ and /ʌ/
The sounds /æ/ and /ʌ/ are quite similar and it can be difficult to hear and produce the difference. The /æ/ sound is always spelt with the letter *a*, and the /ʌ/ sound is usually spelt with the letter *u*, though it can also be *o*, e.g. *come*, or *ou*, e.g. *touch*.

a 3.34 Listen to the difference between the two vowel sounds.

1	a rang	b rung
2	a app	b up
3	a hang up	b hung up
4	a cat	b cut
5	a ran out	b run out
6	a match	b much
7	a track	b truck

b 3.35 Listen. Which word or phrase did you hear?

c Practise saying the sentences.

1 Whatsapp is currently one of the most popular messaging services in the country.
2 Jack was cut off so he hung up.
3 I ran out of credit so I had to top up my phone.

ATTITUDES OF NON-NATIVE SPEAKING TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AND THEIR LEARNERS TOWARDS INCLUDING CHATBOTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH CONVERSATION

INÉS FÁBRYOVÁ

1 What is CALL?

This paper deals mainly with the issue of foreign language teaching through information and communication technologies (ICT). A teaching method that helps students achieve their learning goals at their own pace and abilities has been referred to as Computer Assisted Language Learning, in short CALL. However, using a computer to assist in presenting, reinforcing, and assessing the material is often seen as a relatively narrow approach to language teaching and learning aimed at some form of interaction. It consists of presenting the learners with a rule and some examples and then asking them to answer a set of questions that assess their understanding of the rule. A computer usually gives feedback and calculates a mark, which is then stored for later review by the teacher (Vančová, 2021). Nevertheless, the use of the computer should be linked to the regular classroom work like any other teaching aid, and CALL lessons should be carefully planned like all other classes (Pokrivčáková, 2013).

It is believed that CALL originated in the 1960s. Until the late 1970s, CALL projects were typically restricted to universities, where central mainframe computers were used to develop computer programs. In the early days of CALL, popular practices used in programmed instruction were heavily emphasized, which resulted in Computer-Aided Language Instruction (CALI). This term remained in everyday use until the early 1980s when CALL began to replace it. Throughout the 1980s, a range of new technologies and communicative approaches have grown out of CALL. When utilizing computers in CALL centres and software like CD-ROM, CD-I, or videodiscs, students had access to electronic encyclopaedias and films related to a particular topic at the touch of a button. Many educational institutions made computer laboratories an integral part of their foreign-language programs. Since the 1970s, computers have been used to research and teach languages (Vančová, 2014).

According to Warschauer & Healey (1989), CALL historical development can be classified into three phases:

1) Behaviouristic CALL
   It was developed in the late 1960s and made popular in the 1970s through audio-lingual teaching methodology. This repetitive language teaching method, known as drill-and-practice, was employed in the first phase of CALL. Computers were considered mechanical tutors who impeded motivation because they did not enable work at a student's pace. The courses included extensive drills, grammar explanations, and translation at intervals of 198 different words.
2) Communicative CALL
   The 1980s was a period during which behaviouristic approaches to teaching languages were increasingly rejected both at the theoretical and pragmatic levels, alongside the introduction of personal computers that enabled students to work more independently at school. Communication-based CALL, drawing on cognitive theories, stressed the process of discovering, expressing and developing at the heart of learning.
3) Interactive CALL
   Since the 1990s, CALL has come under criticism. Many teachers use more social and learner-centred methods to teach second language acquisition influenced by social-cognitive views. There is an emphasis on integrating students in authentic social contexts, including tasks, projects, and content-based modules that address learners' ability to integrate language learning and use within authentic environments. As part of an integrated approach, students are permitted to use various technological tools in a continuous language learning process rather than to study isolated exercises in the computer lab every week.

CALL in practice

It is difficult for computers to learn on their own. Therefore it is up to the teacher and students to determine how effective computers are in the classroom. Computers, however, permit the user to perform tasks that would be impossible through other methods, including providing automatic feedback on certain types of exercises or editing a written piece by deleting, moving and inserting text. There are also some exercises that students can complete independently and have computerized marking applied to them. This is evident in programs with multiple choices and total deletions. Using exploratory work to see the effects of their decisions, students may perform a work that is not evaluated by the computer (Luke & Britten, 2007). Hardisty & Windeatt (1989) cite word processing and spreadsheet programs as examples of this.

The following features characterize CALL methodology:

1 - Using a variety of interaction patterns in the classroom:

CALL laboratories allow for the participation of individuals, pairs, groups, and the entire class.

2 - Information-transfer and information-and opinion-gap tasks:

a) Information-transfer activities: The CALL typically involves students or groups transferring information from one medium to another. Using tape recordings, students order events in a story, match sentences spoken with the characters in a story, or import texts written by another group of students into word processors. In a networked computer environment, information can be transferred efficiently and securely.

b) Information-gap activities: are a frequent component of CALL lessons, as one or more students need to ask other students for information to complete their activities. Occasionally, the computer itself conceals the information. Activities based on such an information gap would include programs that involve total or partial deletions.

c) Opinion-gap or problem-solving activities: Each student has a different opinion on how to solve a specific problem, such as allocating resources in a spreadsheet or using a simulation tool. Alternately, the disagreement may arise over the most satisfactory ending for a short story written on a word processor. Students can be encouraged to become more creative when they are assigned different roles.

CALL and language skills

Learners can use computers to develop various language skills through different activities. The following is Warschauer and Healey´s (1998) description of them as motivating and helpful mediums for integrated skills and additional activities:

Reading skills: Computers can assist language learners in developing their reading skills in three different ways.

a) Incidental reading: In most CALL programs, there is a requirement for the learner to read the text to complete an activity successfully.

b) Reading comprehension: Traditionally, CALL programs involve asking and answering reading comprehension and grammar questions.

c) Text manipulation: Computers are capable of manipulating continuous text in a range of ways that require the learner to be intimately familiar with the structure and content of the text. Authentic texts can be provided to students through shadow reading (Vančová, 2014). As well as sentence structure and speed reading, cloze reading is another alternative way to develop reading skills.

Writing skills: The most common uses of computer technology include word processing, which is regarded as the most powerful program to begin with when

using CALL. The keyboard of the computer must be familiar to users in order to use word processors.

Speaking skills: Simulators can serve as a stimulus for such activity because they allow learners to talk about a constantly changing scenario and focus on their oral activities. It has been established that computers can develop oral skills when used effectively (Hammersmith, 1998). Students watching created dialogues can clearly comprehend the setting, the conversation, and the cultural atmosphere. Moreover, they will notice the body movements and the semiotic background of the conversation and acquire a valuable experience, thereby enhancing their communication skills. Through the improvement of accuracy, understandability, and fluency, they improve their communicative performance.

Listening skills: Using the computer in listening activities is more complex than using other types of CALL materials. Using the latest multimedia program containing a recording device is an easy way to practice listening comprehension. Aside from the regular feedback provided after a wrong response, the computer can help the learner listen again to the relevant part of the tape.

Grammar skills: Students and teachers can benefit from computer software programs and the World Wide Web by integrating language skills, including the activities for grammar, vocabulary, reading, and other topics. A computer can be used to carry out various grammar activities, including matching, multiple-choice, filling in gaps, and completing the following (Blackie: 1999; Sperling: 1998).

2 ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES OF CALL

The issue of whether or not computers are capable of teaching natural language from a communicative perspective seems to be settled. Perhaps it would then be worthwhile to reconsider some of the advantages and limitations of CALL programs.

Advantages:

- development of real-life skills related to computer use (Warschauer and Healey, 1998),
- providing feedback on a multimodal practice,
- providing individual attention in a large class,
- resources and learning styles available in a variety of ways,
- teamwork in pairs or small groups.

Disadvantages:

- Those with no prior keyboard experience can waste a lot of time filling in the fields, printing their responses etc.
- In a classroom setting, computers may not be appropriate for all activities. Unexpected events and ambiguities are difficult for computers to handle.
- Computers are not capable of engaging in open-ended conversations or providing feedback in response to open-ended questions.

Artificial intelligence in education

AI is a machine programmed to emulate human cognition and act as if it were a human. The term may also refer to any machines that exhibit traits similar to those found in a human mind, for instance, the capacity to learn and solve problems. Artificial intelligence is best characterized by its ability to rationalize and take action that maximizes the chances of achieving specific goals. Computer programs can automatically learn from and adapt to new data without human involvement as a subset of artificial intelligence. Machines can absorb large amounts of unstructured information through deep learning techniques, such as text, images or videos, to facilitate automatic learning.

3.1 Artificial intelligence for language learning

In every field of research, there is the potential for artificial intelligence algorithms to advance e-learning solutions that large corporations can use to improve their employees' knowledge. Individuals can use AI language learning to study whenever and wherever they choose. In addition to the traditional curriculum, traditional schools can incorporate artificial intelligence-based language learning programs to provide students with more choices.

Artificial intelligence offers many advantages for eLearning (Schultze, 2018; Pokrivčáková, 2019), including:

Adapting to the educational requirements of students: Through the use of artificial intelligence to learn a new language, learners' individual needs can be taken into account. With AI integrated into the teaching process, educators can collect various data about students, their interests, and abilities. This data can help to personalize education when analysed.

Providing immediate feedback: An artificial intelligence platform can grade assignments right after people finalize them, indicating errors and offering recommendations on how to avoid them. AI language learning solutions can identify and prevent weaknesses in course content, simplify lectures and practical assignments, and establish which learners require additional guidance. For students, this allows them to immediately correct their mistakes and probably perform better in subsequent assessments.

Engagement in the learning process: With the help of artificial intelligence applied to learning a new language, learners have the flexibility to study from anywhere in the world at their own pace, establish their own goals, and follow a tailored curriculum according to their needs. Due to a personalized learning method that changes from student to student, teachers will no longer have to go over the same material year after year. In addition, AI will help teachers create entertaining and engaging games, quizzes, and other educational activities that match academic studies with student interests.

Redefining the role of teachers: Despite the popular belief, AI will not result in the loss of teachers' jobs. However, it will redefine their function. With AI taking care of the grading and paperwork, teachers will have more time to coordinate the learning process and mentor students. They will become the guide by the side, with technology assisting them in the mundane tasks and the teachers serving as advisors to learners.

3.2 AI/Chatbot

Many people do not even know what a chatbot is, though they may have already communicated with one and did not even realize it. The chatbot is a computer program that is used to communicate over the Internet. It is possible to connect to it through messaging applications or even through voice assistants. Chatbot systems can converse with users electronically using text, text-to-speech, or even voice instead of living agents. Created to simulate the way people would behave as conversational partners, the technology emulates the way humans communicate with one another.

The chatbot can be used in dialogue systems for several purposes, including customer service, routing requests, teaching in schools, or gathering information. There are many usage categories for chatbots: commerce (e-commerce via chat), education, entertainment, finance, health, news, and productivity. This chapter focuses on chatbots in education.

3.2.1 Background

In 1950, Alan Turing published his article "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," which introduced what is now known as the Turing test to judge intelligence. The criterion of the test holds that the computer program must be capable of reliably impersonating a human in a written conversation, with an individual judge and in real-time, to the extent that the individual cannot distinguish the program from a human on the basis of conversational content alone. In this work, Turing poses the question, "Can machines think?" (Turing, 1950). As soon as he sees those words, he quickly concludes that they are too difficult to explain with any degree of specificity. He answers the question in this way because he wants to ask another similar, but different, question. In recent years, this question has become known as the "imitation game".

In the 1960s, Joseph Weizenbaum developed the program ELIZA, which led to the invention of chatbots. The ELIZA program was used to interact with individuals typing in English. It is a software system that appears to understand humans and interact with humans authentically, through relying on keywords and phrases for which it has pre-programmed responses. Despite not understanding what was being said, the software did appear quite human-like. A type of psychoanalysis commonly known as "Rogerian analysis" in the 1960s was utilized in its

communication. According to Weizenbaum (1996), the program asked questions based on the text entered by the user.

Another bot is A.L.I.C.E, or commonly Alice. This chatterbot is a type of Natural Language Processing software program which interacts with humans by matching a set of heuristic rules based on the input they provide. It was inspired by Joseph Weizenbaum's ELIZA program. The original version of Alice was composed by Richard Wallace. This robotic assistant program is one of the best of its kind and was awarded three times (in 2000, 2001, and 2004) the Loebner Prize for accomplishment in the category of humanoid talking robots.

3.3 Advantages/Disadvantages of chatbots

People train chatbots by having a conversation with them, which allows them to learn how to converse with another person. However, some things are not comparable to a human being; thus, the ability of chatbots differs from the ability of human beings. For example, while humans are limited in the number of clients they can serve simultaneously, chatbots can assist an unlimited number of clients (Jia, 2004a, 2004b, Kerly et al., 20é7).

Advantages of chatbots:

Savings: Automated customer service eliminates the need for human interaction during online chats. A company that receives a large number of inquiries simultaneously will obviously benefit from this feature. Moreover, companies may be able to justify the chatbot with their objectives to optimize customer conversation as well as save costs.

Availability at all times: Chatbots provide customer service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In the case of conversation with students, a chatbot can teach students anywhere and at any time, unlike a human teacher.

Learn from interactions: Chatbots equipped with artificial intelligence are capable of learning from interaction and updating themselves.

Disadvantages of chatbots:

Interface complexity: A chatbot is frequently regarded as complex and requiring substantial time to understand the person's desires. In some cases, some people will also be irritated with chatbots because of their delays in responding or not filtering responses.

It takes time: Chatbots are designed to reduce time spent interacting with customers by speeding up responses and helping to improve customer service. Nevertheless, this process can be slow and difficult, as limited data is readily available and self-updating takes a considerable amount of time. Consequently, it is possible for chatbots to become confused and unable to serve their intended purpose when serving multiple customers simultaneously.

Installation cost: Chatbots provide convenience by ensuring they are always available and can answer multiple questions at once. However, unlike humans, each chatbot must be programmed differently, increasing installation costs. The risk of last-minute changes makes this an extremely risky investment, as the cost of updating the program could be very high.
Lack of memory: The chatbots do not remember previous discussions, causing them to have to type the same messages over and over again repeatedly. People may find this to be difficult and time-consuming. As a result, it is important to design chatbots carefully and ensure the program understands and responds to the user's questions.

3.4 Chatbots in use

In the classroom and classroom settings, bots can be an extremely helpful tool. Although chatbots were not explicitly designed as language teachers or as language learning tools, they may have some potential use in language teaching. By their nature as communicators, chatbots can assist students with much-needed practice, review, and confidence-building. A teacher may benefit from chatbots in the following six ways (Luke, Fryer, Nakao, 2009):

Free Speaking: Whenever possible, it may be helpful to let students experiment with their abilities through free speaking in a classroom with computers at every desk. Students who complete their classwork early will receive an excellent reward for their efforts. In some cases, it may be beneficial to assign students a topic to discuss the second time they engage in free-form dialogue with a chatbot.

Review: This is the most practical application of chatbots. The teacher might allow students 10-15 minutes to practice their newly acquired skills in the language with a chatbot.

Self-analysis: Some chatbot websites offer a facility of viewing the transcripts of conversations. After interacting with the students, a transcript can be generated, viewed, printed, or emailed and students can use the text as a tool for evaluating each other, the bots or themselves.

Extra information for the teacher: By subscribing to a bot such as Jabberwacky, teachers can monitor student-bot conversations and determine how students are doing, what they would like to learn more about, and what they are struggling with.

Listening: An automated chatbot will use text to create sounds to varying levels of skill. Alicebot utilizes Oddcast's streaming audio function quite well. In contrast, Jabberwacky uses the text-to-speech function already present in the computer to provide high-quality audio. By enabling this option, students may read and listen simultaneously, making the experience more fun and exciting. However, for more skilled students, covering the screen, except for the line in

which the student is typing, with a piece of paper (a little imagination and scissors are needed) is a more effective way to encourage the student to concentrate on the audio and improve their understanding of the question.

3.5 Kuki-chatbot

The empirical part of the chapter deals with the research into perceptions of chatbots by English language teachers and their students. In the beginning, respondents tried an interview with a Mitsuku / Kuki chatbot. Mitsuku, also known as Kuki, is a virtual assistant created by Steve Worswick based on Pandorabots AIML technology. The chatbot has been awarded five Loebner Prizes (in 2013, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019), which is so far a world record. With Kuki, people can chat via various social networks such as Facebook / Messenger, Telegram, and group chat via Twitch.

The chatbot claims: "I am Kuki, I am an 18-year-old female, I am from Leeds, England." She is intelligent in that she can reason about specific objects. When a person asks, "Can you eat a house?" Kuki goes through the properties associated with the word "house". It finds the value of "made from" to be "brick" and responds by saying "no" since a house cannot be eaten. Upon request, she can perform magic tricks and play games. In 2015, she conversed on average more than a quarter-million times per day. As mentioned above, by 2019, Kuki had won the Loebner Prize five times, the most of any entrant. Until 2019, the artificial intelligence award was given to the computer program deemed the most humanlike, as determined by an expert panel of judges. After that, the award is determined by an audience vote.

4 Research

4.1 Research objectives

In the empirical part of the research, a questionnaire and an interview were used. The primary goal was to find out the attitudes of English language teachers to the involvement of chatbots in the teaching of English conversation and to find out students' attitudes and opinions towards chatbots.

My research questions were as follows:

1. What are the attitudes of teachers and students to the involvement of chatbots in teaching and learning English conversation?
2. Would students like to learn with a chatbot?
3. Did teachers enjoy a conversation with Mitsuku/chatbot?

The research questions aimed at students' responses to the new technology, trying to find out if they could imagine communicating with a chatbot. Another aim was to learn about the teachers' responses to this highly innovative method; whether they would accept chatbots as their online colleagues, how they communicated with the chatbot, and what they thought about it.

4.3 Research methods

The research used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, based on data collection via a questionnaire and an interview regarding the attitudes of students and teachers to the inclusion of chatbots in education. First, an interview was conducted with two English language teachers, and their responses were analysed. The interview took place at the school where both teachers worked. The answers were recorded through a Dictaphone and translated as the teachers told them. There were ten questions. The following subchapters provide teachers' responses to the questions and an evaluation of the answers received during the interview. The interview was conducted based on a standardized structured interview, using questions prepared in advance.

The second part was focused on a questionnaire delivered to high school students. It aimed at finding out their attitudes to the involvement of artificial intelligence/chatbots in conversation in English language at school. It was an online questionnaire, consisting of 9 questions with an option of one answer, and was sent to fourth graders in the high school with the consent of their English teachers. The students who filled in the survey were students of a high school in Modra, Slovakia. The research component consisted of twenty students—two classes with two different teachers.

The types of questions used in the research included:

1. Open-ended questions: Question which evoke a free answer without any limit and create space for the expression of opinion and attitude.

The open-ended questions were used in the interview. For example, ''How would you use a chatbot in teaching?". The answer of the first teacher: ''It could help me with vocabulary training, pronunciation practice and easy conversation with students." The answer of the second teacher: "I would use the chatbot individually for each student. Mainly for conversation. The student could communicate with it about various topics. Ideally, the chatbot would correct the student's errors."

2. Closed-questions: These are questions answered only in the affirmative or in the negative or in one word, ''yes'' or ''no''. Such questions were used in the questionnaire. For example: "Have you ever been to English speaking countries?" Respondents' answers were either "yes" or "no".

3. Informationally-concretizing questions: Sometimes, they can take the form of closed questions, that is, questions asking for a specific fact. They were used in the questionnaire. For example, question no. 9 in the questionnaire: "Was it fun chatting with chatbot Mitsuku?" The answer to this question may be simple, based on the words "yes" or "no", but the point is to find out the facts about the conversation with Mitsuku, whether it was very funny, entertaining, partly funny, less funny, or even boring.

4.4 Respondents

The research was carried out among students and teachers. Students completed the survey, and teachers answered the interview questions. The respondents were high school students from Modra, and the teachers were from the same school. The school in Modra is a state, non-bilingual school.

The students were fourth-graders aged 18-19. The questionnaire was given to 20 students divided into two groups: ten students from one fourth grade class and ten students from a second fourth grade class.

The teachers were the second group of respondents, asked to answer questions for the interview. The answers of two teachers from the same school were compared. They were non-native English language teachers of approximately the same age - 38 to 42 years old. It must be stressed that they were thus not age-divided, which could lead to very different views and attitudes to research issues from an age perspective. One teacher teaches one group of students who participated in the research results, and the other teacher teaches the other half of the students.

4.5 Research data

The interview was conducted via formal communication, which means that the questions were planned and participants were informed about their role. The interview was conducted based on a qualitative method with two English language teachers. The answers were recorded through a Dictaphone and translated as the teachers told them. The interview contained ten questions focused on the attitudes of English teachers to the involvement of chatbots in education.

The survey aimed to find out students' attitudes to the involvement of artificial intelligence/chatbots in conversation in English language in the school environment. The survey consisted of 9 questions and was sent to fourth graders in high school with the consent of their English teachers. The research sample consisted of twenty students.

4.5.1 Interview analysis

The teachers' attitudes towards the chatbot differed. While one was excited, the second was confused. Both teachers answered that Mitsuku had been grammatically correctly and also very clear. One of the teachers said that even though grammatically everything was fine, he still had a strange feeling about the chatbot, which he could not explain. The second teacher spoke to the chatbot in an uncommonly cheerful way and said that it was amusing for him when the chatbot wrote to him that he was the man of her dreams.

Both teachers believed that chatbots could help teachers, but they will not be in schools soon. Both teachers agreed that chatbots could, to some extent, improve the educational system in Slovakia. It also looks like teachers should have more

skills in informatics, and this is a further development of modern education with chatbots.

Both teachers agreed that a chatbot could never replace a human teacher, though it could replace a human teacher at home or outside of school as a perfect help in self-education.

4.5.2 Questionnaire analysis

As many as 35% of respondents liked the conversation partially, 25% of respondents liked the conversation with a chatbot, 20% of respondents did not like the communication, and another 5% (1 respondent) did not like talking to Mitsuku at all. The remaining 15% of students were exceptionally satisfied with the conversation.

Most respondents could imagine learning with a chatbot (35% voted for this option). 20% of students said that they could imagine it, but only in part. 20% of students could hardly imagine teaching/learning English with a chatbot, and three respondents (15%) could not imagine learning with a chatbot at all.

30% of respondents claimed that the communication with a chatbot was fine, 25% of respondents stated that the communication was very good, another 20% of respondents noted a chatbot for the excellent communication. On the other hand, a few of the respondents also indicated negative possibilities. 10% stated that they did not like it, and 15% of respondents indicated that they did not like the communication at all.

40% of students indicated the quick responses Mitsuku provided. For 35% of students, the communication with the chatbot was smooth or relatively smooth (15%). 5% of students said that the chatbot answered slowly, and another 5% of students felt that the chatbot responded very slowly. More than 80% of students evaluated the communication with the chatbot as natural or rather natural. The conversation was fun for 30% of respondents, and for 20%, it was entertaining. 20% of respondents were not satisfied, and only 10% of students did not like the communication at all.

5 Research conclusions

1. What are the attitudes of teachers and students to the involvement of chatbots in teaching and learning English conversation?

First, many respondents did not recognize the term chatbot. Having a chance to converse with one, most respondents expressed their positive or rather positive attitude towards chatbots. Teachers clearly agreed that a chatbot could be a very good helper in teaching. On the other side, they agreed that a chatbot certainly could not replace a human teacher. The majority of students saw chatbots as a very creative way of teaching.

2. Would students like to learn with a chatbot?

They would often like to be taught via this form of teaching; of course, a few students were strongly against such teaching, but most students said it would be more fun and they would have more space for self-education.

3. Did teachers enjoy a conversation with Mitsuku/chatbot?

One teacher said that he had a bad feeling from communicating with the chatbot; he did not feel comfortable because he found it strange that the chatbot responded quickly. On the contrary, the second teacher expressed his opinion of Mitsuku very positively and even humorously. The teacher asked Mitsuku if she would go on a date with him, and she replied that he was the man of her dreams.

Regarding satisfaction with the chatbot communication, generally, the respondents' satisfaction prevailed.

Pedagogical implications

Based on the research, several suggestions and recommendations for the development of chatbots in the education of English conversation can be made. One of the main proposals for the use of chatbots in education is communication itself. Communication is the most important language barrier. Many students understand the language but have difficulty communicating, so a chatbot could be very helpful for each student to improve. If it could be recommended, a chatbot is an excellent tool for both teachers and students. It would be very good if chatbots were in schools and thus could help people communicate in English in the future. A chatbot is an amazing helper that can also remind students of their school duties such as homework, preparing students for the oral exam, written test, and improving vocabulary and pronunciation.

The research results seem to be quite positive since the teachers expressed that chatbots could be good helpers to some extent, especially as far as teaching duties are concerned. From the students' point of view, the research showed that learning with chatbots could be exciting.

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Appendices

Research questions of the interview:

1) Have you ever heard the term Chatbot/ Chatter robots?
2) How would you use a chatbot in teaching?
3) Do you think students would like to learn with a chatbot?
4) Do you think, in practice, students will respect the chatbot and communicate with it?
5) Would chatbot help you at work? For example, it would help you fix the tests, inform students of their homework or remind them of the dates of school duties.
6) Did you like communication with Mitsuku/Chatbot?
7) How did you feel after the conversation with Mitsuku? Did she answer what you asked? Could she answer? Were the answers clear?
8) Do you think that artificial intelligence has the potential to create the conditions for teaching?
9) Do you think that this innovative method could help to better the education system in Slovakia?
10) Do you think chatbots can replace the role of the teacher?

Research questions of the questionnaire:

1) What is your relationship to the English language?
2) Have you ever been to English speaking countries?
3) How long have you been learning English?
4) How did you like the conversation with the chatbot?
5) Can you imagine learning with a chatbot?
6) What was the communication with the chatbot?
7) How did the chatbot respond to you?
8) Did the chatbot answer your questions naturally?
9) Was it fun chatting with chatbot Mitsuku?

TRANSLATION ACTIVITIES IN EFL TEACHING

KRISTÍNA IVANOVÁ

Historical overview of translation in EFL teaching

Translation has always been a crucial object of debates on the best way of teaching a foreign language. It was even the key element of the first school teaching method known worldwide. It implies the use of learners' mother tongue, which has been seen throughout history either as a supportive tool in language learning or an obstacle. However, there have also been attempts to bridge the gap between these two opposite approaches. Today, scholars and teachers find a justifiable place for translation in language teaching and learning.

In Antiquity, in the centre of one's education was the linguistic acquisition of both Latin and Greek on the level corresponding with the proficiency of rhetorical skills. Němec (2013) explains that translation served for presenting and practising grammatical and rhetorical rules. Besides direct translation, learners often transformed Greek texts into Latin and vice versa. This system had become the model of education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. However, as Němec (2013) states, several humanistic reforms took place. Roger Ascham reestablished standard features of the Roman school, especially transliteracy, paraphrasing, summarizing and rhetoric. Webbe's approach can be characterized as the "non-grammar – translation" method. He brought the idea of the direct method, but translation was still at the centre of interest. The unit of translation is not a word but a "chunk", a phrase, without the need for explicit presentation of grammar.

The second humanistic stream, represented by Francis Bacon and later by Komenský, took "a meaning" as a translation unit, and pictures accompanied the translated text. At the beginning of the 17th-century, demand for school teaching of modern languages began to emerge as Latin was not used as the primary communication tool among people speaking different languages anymore. Although teaching modern languages was demanded more than teaching classical languages, translation and bilingualism prevailed in linguistic education and stressing the importance of grammatical rules in teaching modern languages was the means how to make it as respected as was the teaching of classical languages (Němec, 2013). Howatt and Smith (2014) call this era "the Classical Period". At the end of the 18th century, the Grammar-Translation Method appeared and tried to simplify teaching foreign language through complex texts. Therefore, long texts were replaced by individual phrases. A rule was first explained to learners,

supported by examples of phrases, and then practised by translating other phrases. The Grammar-Translation Method has some advantages for today's learners in some specific situations when the primary aim of teaching is not speaking skills, but reading comprehension, and when in the centre of interest is not foreign language learning but the content of specialized literature (Rodgers, 1991 in Němec, 2013). In general, we cannot deny the following merits of this method enumerated by Němec (2013): it facilitates the presentation of grammatical rules, develops the reading and writing skills and provides a comparison of L1 and L2. Brown (2000) takes note also of the fact that this method allows for the possibility to create tests of grammar rules and translations which are easy to construct and objectively score. Indeed, such a type of test is quite common in today's language courses.

However, in the second half of the 19th century, as a reaction to unsatisfactory effectiveness and usability of teaching practices applied at that time, the Reform Period, as it was called by Howatt and Smith (2014), had started. Its core concern was the teaching of the spoken language. It also made foreign language acquisition achievable to those previously rejected as "unsuited" to foreign language learning. It supported the idea of presenting new content of teaching through context, the inductive approach to grammar rules, and the acquisition of new words and structures through associations with the elements of L2 already learnt and not through equivalents in L1 (Němec, 2013). Howatt and Smith (2014) perceive two branches of the reform – the pan-European Reform Movement and the Natural Method.

The pan-European Reform Movement was concerned with foreign language teaching in secondary schools and *"entailed shifting the main pedagogical emphasis away from traditional topics like grammar and literature and towards a practical command of the modern spoken language"* (Howatt, Smith, 2014, p. 82). It was inspired by Viëtor´s suggestions for classroom methodology. This non-native speaking teacher in Germany argued for exposure to the foreign language through a connected text that provides the basis for work on pronunciation, intensive question-and-answer oral work, and inductive grammar learning. The other story began in private language schools in the USA through the need to make language learning accessible to all adults, focusing on the teaching of conversation. It was based on the belief that the best way to learn a foreign language is by imitating the process of learning ones mother tongue in childhood. Berlitz adopted the Natural Method with some modifications in his school and called it the "Berlitz´s Method" (Howatt, Smith, 2014). He strictly refused any translation in FLT, considering it time-consuming, and being a source of interference between L1 and L2 and not effective concerning linguistic specificities, idioms and other fixed expressions (Němec, 2013). When he brought his ideas to Europe, rival schools copied his methodology and covered it under "the Direct Method".

Howatt and Smith (2014, p. 84) point to an interesting aspect of the Reform Period:

"…teachers… were quite happy to use the mother-tongue judiciously, for example to explain new vocabulary. However, translation into the language being learnt was, in general, firmly rejected within the Reform Movement as well as by Berlitz". Moreover, Němec (2013) claims that translation was even recommended on a higher level of proficiency to enhance learners' awareness of differences between L1 and L2 and deepen their acquisition of a foreign language. Nevertheless, Howatt and Smith (2014) explain that ideas developed for native speaker teachers working in private language schools where (for example, in the Berlitz schools) use of the students' mother tongue was proscribed, prevailed over the (mainly non-native speaker teacher) school reformers' ideas admitting translation in various degrees which was reflected in their teaching techniques and procedures. Němec (2013) concludes that, considering three pillars of the reform movement (focus on the spoken language, the inductive approach to grammar and rejection of pedagogical translation), only the last one has remained controversial until now.

Throughout the subsequent 'Scientific Period' (1920– 70), theorists dealt with foreign language teaching from a scientific point of view in compliance with insights from the new social sciences, particularly linguistics, and, increasingly, learning theory derived from psychology. Howatt and Smith (2014, p. 85) characterize this period as follows: *"…key features of all good teaching practice were considered to be the use of drills and exercises aimed explicitly at the formation of correct habits in the production of grammatical structures which had themselves been scientifically selected."*

The pioneer of the scientific approach was Harold Palmer, who believed it to create a unified practical methodology. He tried to synthesize and systematize the ideas of the Direct Method on the teaching of conversation independently of texts. He called this "the Oral Method". However, Palmer did not succeed in establishing it as a school language teaching method. Only when his colleague A.S. Hornby connected Palmer´s ideas with the situational approach, did Palmer's thinking get an opportunity to contribute to further language teaching development. Hornby's Situational Approach presented language in real-life situations in which learners acquire the meaning and form of these phenomena. Howatt and Smith (2014, p. 87) expressed it simply: *"More generally, and much more usefully from a language teaching point of view, you simply describe an imaginary situation and hope the students get the point."* The question could be raised if translation could not serve here as a tool to enhance learners' comprehension in such situations.

In the Scientific Period, science also boosted technological development, which enriched the package of language teaching tools with the invention of the language laboratory. The laboratory served for teaching through the Audiolingual Method invented in the U.S. by Charles Fries as the result of demand for fast learning of

English when the U.S. took part in the Second World War and there was a need for communication in English with army staff. The key feature of the Audiolingual Method is the drill through which, it was believed, learners get into the habit of using the language (Němec, 2013).

The focus on structuring a language and conveying this structure in FLT made linguistics technical (Němec, 2013). Instead of refusing such structuring, foreign language teaching was enriched by the cognitive theory of the learning process, which brought the innovative idea of communication not as a goal but as a means of language learning. Beginning in the 1970s, the Communicative Period - as called by Howatt and Smith (2014) - was rich in innovation. As the name of the period indicates, it was the era of the Communicative Approach. In addition, during this period, four humanistic methods were developed and focused on the process of learning - suggestopedia, total physical response (TPR), the silent way, and community language learning (CLL). Němec (2013) explores the potential role of pedagogical translation in these methods. However, he concludes that translation does not comply with their principles, and they do not even provide the opportunity to apply it.

The Communicational Approach itself did not strictly forbid translation; it allowed judicious use of L1, but did not include any translation tasks, and highlighted the importance of using L2 during communicative activities and as a medium of interaction between the teacher and the learners (Artar, 2017). Communicative competence is even more strengthened in Task-based Language Teaching through activities like role-playing, improvisation, simulation, and cooperative problem-solving or task-based work, which also develop other competencies useful in learners' private and professional lives. As in the case of Communicative Language Teaching, Task-based Language Teaching tolerantly accepts the use of L1. Nevertheless, translation is not expected.

Němec (2013) also talks about the post-communicative period beginning in the 1990s when teachers used a combination of different approaches, L1 started to be used in L2 teaching, emphasis was put on teachers' professional skills, theoretical knowledge was connected with its practical use, teachers used technical tools, and teaching required more planning of lessons, group work, plays, role plays and simulation activities. Along with developing learners' communication skills, critical thinking, social skills, work competencies, and learning competencies, L1 considered part of teaching. Fluency is more important than accuracy. Methodological manuals do not deal enough with pedagogical translation. Combining methods raises, as Brown (2000, p. 28) states, the awareness that *"methods, as they were conceived of 40 or 50 years ago or so, are too narrow and too constrictive to apply to a wide range of learners in an enormous number of situational contexts. There are no instant recipes. No quick and easy method is guaranteed to provide success."*

In 1997, Robert Weschler designed the Functional-Translation Method combining the best of traditional "grammar-translation" with the best of modern "direct, communicative" methods. It emphasizes conveying the meaning of ideas most useful to learners. Only then do they learn the appropriate grammar in which to express that idea. It is a "translation" method because translation serves in accomplishing that goal. Weschler believes that it is not the translation that caused the failure of the Grammar-Translation Method but its focus on "referential" meaning rather than the "functional" meaning of a phrase. His method keeps translation as a natural process going on mentally in learners' brains when exposed to foreign language structures. Weschler also states particular bilingual activities that language teachers generally know, for example, Bilingual Dialogs, Lost in Translation and the Dumb Interpreter. These activities are mentioned in the chapter on particular translation activities used in language teaching.

Contemporary attitudes to translation in EFL teaching

Although the Communicative Approach is the mainstream methodology nowadays, and teachers see the need to eliminate the use of translation as a feature of the undesirable Grammar-Translation Method in their classes, modern researchers tend to recognize a certain value of translation in EFL teaching. Some of them, like Topolska-Pado (2010), perceive translation as a natural process in language learning and try to assign a place for purposeful translation in communicative language teaching. The idea of what is natural in the language learning process is at the core of the communicative approach. At the birth of this approach, as mentioned above, its aim was to make learning a foreign language as natural as a child's mother tongue acquisition and thus assimilate the FL learning process. However, as Topolska-Pado (2010, p. 14) states, *"a new standpoint seems to be evolving that the most natural activity for language learners is to assimilate L2 information via their L1 processing… They are adding to their existing knowledge of language".* There is evident relation to essentials of pedagogy, specifically to the notion of learner's pre-concepts. In other words, it can be said that FL learners build their FL knowledge on their pre-concepts of L1. This process is natural, and teachers should not aim to completely exclude L1 from FL teaching. Moreover, *"…new approaches and conceptualisations of translation in the language classroom are being explored. Translation is emerging as a communicative activity abandoning the much-debated traditional notion of translation as an FL teaching method*" (Gutiérrez, 2018, p. 1). This is how Gutiérrez alludes to the Grammar-Translation Method, today mostly rejected by teachers and scholars, cementing disapproval of any translation in EFL teaching. However, the effective use of translation needs to be explored because it has many advantages, as shown below. Leonardi (2011, p. 22) offers a valuable opinion on the issue:

"Translation can be a successful bilingual teaching tool based upon the assumption that since it is not possible to force students not to use their L1, then they should learn from early stages how to control it in terms of interference and how to make the best out of it." Therefore, it is necessary to release any discussion about the use of translation in EFL teaching from its strict connection with the grammar-translation method and to take a detached view in order to see appropriate ways in which translation can help develop learners' communicative skills.

Translation in EFL teaching is often stigmatized by looking at it through the prism of the Grammar-Translation Method and associating it with L1 in ELT in general. However, *"...translation is only one of several possible ways of using the first language in the classroom"* (Carreres, 2014). Cook (2010, in Carreres, 2014, p. 8) suggests *"to deal with translation as a distinct activity as well as being part of the general revival of bilingual teaching"*. It means that it is convenient to view translation in ELT as a specific activity distinct from other ways of using of L1 and, at the same time, to perceive it as a part of all aspects of bilingual teaching, including the use of L1 too.

Returning to the advantages of translation in ELT, many scholars see a few other benefits of translation in ELT besides the fact that it is a natural part of the EFL learning process, as Topolska-Pado (2010) noted. Artar (2017) distinguishes five types of reasons – humanistic, practical, technical, political and cognitive. Humanistic reasons take into account psychological and sociological aspects of the learning process. If a teacher imposes the rule of not using L1, learners will probably not feel comfortable in some situations. From a humanistic point of view, learners can benefit significantly from translation activities in pairs or groups when they develop their communicative abilities. To use translation in ELT is sometimes practical too, for example, when a quick and accurate translation of an English word can substitute a teacher's lengthy explanation in English (also Topolska-Pado, 2010). Technically, learners have free online translation tools at their disposal, and the teacher should teach learners how to use them and also point out their limits. As a political reason, Artar (2017) perceives the function of the English language as a lingua franca in international business and travel. Since translators are needed in many sectors, he assumes that having experience in translation during foreign-language education could be an advantage in a learner's future professional life. Cognitive reasons for the use of translation in ELT are well-accepted among scholars. First, learners often translate unconsciously in their heads while reading or speaking (also Pintado Gutiérrez, 2018, Musawi, 2014, Weschler, 1997). Second, as mentioned above, learners are highly likely to connect their FL learning to their L1 linguistic knowledge (similarly, Weschler, 1997, Topolska-Pado, 2010, Calis, Dikilitas, 2012). In this respect, Duff (1989), as Topolska-Pado (2010, p. 16) state, adds that *"translation can help learners become aware of and reflect on similarities and differences between L1 and L2".* Topolska-

Pado (2010) have also borrowed the words of Gabrielatos (1998, p. 24): *"Translation teaches students that there is not always a one-to-one correspondence between items in the two cultures/languages and that ways of thinking and expression are influenced (or even constrained) by culture."* Furthermore, translation can be very creative because it involves transformation to avoid unnatural word-for-word translation (Topolska-Pado, 2010).

On the other hand, Artar (2017) also deals with arguments against translation in ELT. These arguments have roots in methods used in the past, as described in the previous chapter. Much disapproval comes from the negative associations of translation with the Grammar-Translation Method, and they are common to both theorists and teachers. One of the counter-arguments is that translation decreases learners' exposure to L2, and teachers must not lapse into overuse of L1. Some opponents of translation in ELT believe it to be boring, time-consuming, non-communicative, slowing down learners' production, negatively affecting fluency, causing interference from L1, allowing only restricted development of communicative skills, and feasible only in monolingual classes (Artar, 2017). These arguments are legitimate in the case that the teacher is not critical in his decision-making. Topolska-Pado (2010) conclude that teachers should balance these seemingly opposing arguments in their particular teaching context. According to Adil (2020, s. 5), *"…translation could be used to comprehend but not to learn a language"*. It means that it facilitates learners' understanding, grasping structural differences between L1 and L2 and acquiring vocabulary, but it prevents learners from thinking in the target language. Moreover, it can cause excessive dependence on L1 in learning a foreign language. Thus, teachers should use translation carefully and thoughtfully. At the same time, learners must be adequately exposed to real-life English (Adil, 2020).

Calis and Dikilitas (2012, p. 5080) offer a conclusion: *"…translation as a practice in EFL setting should be carefully designed and performed if effective results are expected."* Nolasco and Arthur (1995, p. 59, in Calis, Dikilitas, 2012, p. 5080) state the following criteria of translation activities: *"1. language is used for a purpose, 2. they create a desire for communication, 3. they encourage students to be creative and contribute their ideas, 4. students are focused on what they are saying rather than how they are saying it, 5. students work independently of the teacher and 6. students determine what they want to say or write."*

Types of translation in EFL teaching

This study is concerned not with translation in ELT in general but specifically with the use and effectiveness of translation activities. To clarify the nature of these activities, it is appropriate to show their place among other types of translation applicable in ELT. Gutiérrez (2018) sets up a map of terms under the umbrella term of *translation in language teaching and learning*, which she

borrowed from Cook (2010), who uses the term *translation in language teaching (TILT).* Gutiérrez (2018) added the word *learning* to point out that translation can happen outside of the teacher's control as a learner's strategy or sometimes even unconsciously just in the learner's head. She aimed to eliminate conceptual and terminological inconsistencies in scholars' works. She distinguishes different ways in which it is possible to use translation in ELT but also includes such practices that are associated with translation due to the involvement of L1 use.

Gutiérrez´s (2018) term *translation in language teaching and learning* covers *pedagogical translation, code-switching and interior translation.* At this point, Gutiérrez is cited to show how exactly she defines these concepts. She explains *pedagogical translation* as having the nature of translation tasks which *"enhance the development of specific language and translating skills and are based on various aspects of translation and other pragmatic issues central to the FL classroom: language awareness, accuracy, pragmatic and intercultural competence, creativity, problem solving, and autonomy and collaboration… These translation based activities help the language learner to have a better command of the language and translation as a key skill for language users. It involves not only written activities but also multimodal material, including texts that reproduce oral features"* (Gutiérrez, 2018, p. 16). Such translation tasks, being referred to as pedagogical translation, are the focus of our study.

In discussing their advantages and disadvantages, it is important to distinguish translation tasks from the code-switching mentioned above and interior translation. Gutiérrez (2018) describes code-switching as having the nature of classroom interaction and involving "*different forms of alternation between the learners and the teachers' languages (L1, L2, etc.). That is, it refers to the interaction between the teacher and the students or among the students. Usually employed in an oral context, it applies to various situations, be it addressing problematic sources such as a lack of understanding (for instance, clarifying linguistic or socio-cultural matters that the students find difficult to interpret), discussing certain communicative nuances by raising the student's awareness, maintaining the student's attention with the introduction of humour, etc."* (Gutiérrez, 2018, p. 16). Indeed, in code-switching no translation happens; the speaker decides to express something in one language and some fragments of the utterance in the other language without translating it. This is a case of practices that are taken into account in debates about the use of translation in EFL although they do not involve translation.

Finally, interior translation is a learner's cognitive strategy. It means that the student relies on his/her L1/ALL to build, develop or structure the knowledge of the foreign langua*ge (FL). This strategy usually happens instinctively and the learners are often unaware of it. Most research attributes this process to the earliest stages of learning a FL"* (Gutiérrez, 2018, p. 16). In other words, while interior

translation is not initiated and required by the teacher, pedagogical translation, in the form of translation tasks, is assigned by the teacher to make learners practice English.

Some scholars go even further in thinking about the place of translation in EFL teaching and set it as the fifth skill which should be developed along with reading, writing, listening and speaking. They argue that the realities of contemporary life – the development of new communication technologies (especially the Internet) and changes in world tourism and the political situation (the European Union, migration, globalization) and the growth of the globalized business – make language learners members of a multi-national community in which they have to be able to function as translators and/or interpreters. Such a real-life activity of translating is communicative and interactive and uses all four skills in contrast to the Grammar-Translation Method rejected by the Communicative Approach (Topolska-Pado, 2010).

The notion of pedagogical translation and translation as the fifth skill gives translation a substantial place in EFL teaching compared to the minor role of translation as part of communication between the teacher and learners and learner's interior translation. These two important notions of pedagogical translation as a means and the fifth skill of translation as an end often stand on opposite sides, as if they have little in common. Nevertheless, Carreres (2014) tries to find rapprochement of these two and refutes the assumption *"that learning a language and learning to translate are activities as far removed from each other as learning to build a car and learning to drive"* (Carreres, 2014, p. 123). He shows the alternative when translation as a means and translation as an end overlap in language teaching; both developing the learner's communicative competencies – bilingual and monolingual. This view is supported by the fact that translation is often required from individuals working in international business and living in a globalized society. According to Carreres (2014), the competent translator and the competent L2 user have the same competencies, i.e. the ability to understand and produce L2 utterances, sensitivity to the pragmatic constraints of the L2 and a good level of intercultural knowledge. He sees a similar argument being put forward with regard to trainee translators and language learners who use the same learning and information processing strategies. In language teaching, translation tasks can serve as a means for learners to acquire translation skills for bilingual use in the real world and, vice versa, translation training can serve as a means for learners to develop comparative linguistic competence. Carreres (2014, p. 130) concludes that *"translation as a means is at its most effective and stimulating when learning objectives and pedagogical design are brought as close as possible to the realities of professional translation – that is, to translation as an end in itself*".

Similarly, Topolska-Pado (2010) sees a possibility in use of translation as a means (to raise language awareness, promote language learning, develop

students' autonomy and teaching strategies of different types) in parallel with its use as an end *"which is so vital to learners in the modern global society"* (Topolska-Pado, 2010, p. 23). She concludes her reflections on translation in ELT in the following statement: *"Finally, any critically reflective teacher will try to be eclectic, bearing in mind that, just as there is no one learning style among our students, so no one method in language teaching is perfect. Methods, approaches, training-course guidelines and techniques are not fixed dogma. Teachers should have the freedom to explore the many and various aspects of their role in the L2 classroom"* (Topolska-Pado, 2010, p. 24). It means that teachers should use various methods, including translation, regarding learners' needs and other circumstances in the class.

Translation activities in EFL teaching

Here I consider translation in EFL teaching within the concept of "the pedagogical translation", which, as mentioned above, Gutiérrez specified as translation tasks representing a particular teaching technique. Instead of the term *translation tasks* implying the attribute of duty, I have adopted the term *translation activities* promising something enjoyable that will be shown below.

Proponents of translation activities point out their other merits more than enjoyability, which is natural when assessing their effectiveness. Topolska-Pado (2010, p. 23) states that *"teachers can use translation activities in the EFL classroom to raise language awareness, promote language learning, develop students' autonomy and teaching strategies of different types, as well as provide invaluable practice of this skill, which is so vital to learners in the modern global society."* Dagilienė (2012, p. 124) observed in her long-term teaching practice that *"translation as a method applied to language teaching practice induces deeper insight into the meaningful contents of the material to be taught*". She claims that translation activities *"should be included in an inherent part of the language learning course"*. According to Leonadri (2011), translation activities are appropriate at any level of proficiency and in any educational context. She holds the view that, as learners process information in L2 involving translation into L1 and this mental translation cannot be avoided, in translation activities, learners can learn how to control it in terms of interference and how to make the best out of it.

Leonardi (2011) and also Dagilienė (2012) emphasize that translation activities should be well-prepared, preceded by introductory pre-translation activities followed by post-translation activities. Leonardi (2011) proposes brainstorming, vocabulary preview, and anticipation guides as pre-translation activities. These activities aim to introduce new words and revise previously taught vocabulary, possibly including pictures or clustering of the vocabulary. As translation activities she enumerates, for example, literal translation, summary translation, parallel texts or retranslation. A text can include a few gaps to fill in by

using new words presented in a pretranslation activity. As for post-translation activities, Leonardi (2012) proposes a written or an oral translation commentary, a written or an oral summary of the ST, a written composition about ST-related topics or creating a bilingual glossary.

According to Dagilienė (2012), pre-translation activities are based on pre-reading, grammar, vocabulary practical tasks, and post-translating activities focus on rewarding, rewriting, revising, and evaluating. She maintains that it is important to encourage a discussion among learners based on the linguistic perception of the text to be translated. In her text, she describes several proceedings in translation activities. First, she offers an activity based on pairing keywords in L1 with their English equivalents. Learners are handed out an English text and a list of the keywords in L1. The teacher explains the English text's keywords, and learners match them with their equivalents from the list. They read, translate and analyze the most complicated parts of the text. They then do comprehension exercises, such as answering questions, identifying true or false statements, forming general questions on the contents of the text and writing a summary of the text.

The core of Dagilienė's activities is a discussion among learners, which can be encouraged, for example, when one learner summarises a text and others add details or produce their translations. A discussion is also expected in the activity of comparing a simplified translation of a text with a seemingly precise translation (with the use of a dictionary). The dangers of word for word translation and the differences between the two languages can be discussed in the activity of correcting mistakes in translations or carrying out back translation (Dagilienė, 2012).

Topolska-Pado (2010) mentions that many various and creative ready-made activities can be found in Alan Duff's *Translation* (1989). Apart from this, she presents 22 translation activities proposed by different authors. Some examples are: Clanfield and Foord (2000) – so-called Conversation Starters (a text in L1, e. g. an article in a newspaper serves to stimulate ideas for conversation), Dubbing (potentially working in teams), False Friends Wordsearch/Crossword Puzzle, Shadow and Doubt (communicative activity in learners' mother tongue before attempting it in English and then comparing), Sight Translation (learners write in L1 what they understood from a series of interesting quotations or they imagine who said them), Reverse Translations, Interpreters (interpreting during simulated interviews). Weschler proposes a similar activity called The Dumb Interpreter in which Student A receives half of the dialogue in L1, Student B the English half, Student C ("The Dumb Interpreter") nothing at all, and Student D ("The Know-it - all Computer") receives both halves and corrects the interpreter. Clanfield and Foord (2000, in Topolska-Pado, 2010) also offer the Restaurant Roleplay (students have to explain the dishes on a mother tongue menu to English-speaking guests),

Translating Pop Songs, the Broken Telephone/Telegram (students whisper a sentence to one another while translating to the other language, then comparing the final sentence with the original) and Codeswitching.

Leonardi (2011, p. 25) concludes that *"it is wrong to think of translation as an exclusive exercise aimed at teaching learners how to translate…. but rather as a means to help learners acquire, develop and further strengthen their knowledge and competence in a foreign language… and, at the same time, it encourages analytical and problem-solving skills".* Such activities can also be important for motivating students with their playful and fun nature, providing real-life use of language and awakening learners' passion for a language.

The theorists advocating translation activities, similar to those dealing with translation in ELT in general, are aware that translation activities should not be overused and *"should be integrated into language teaching at the right time and with the right students"* (Leonardi, 2011, p. 128).

Analytical part

The research aims to find out what are teachers' attitudes toward translation activities (TA) and if they consider them an effective technique in EFL teaching. It is intended to create a source of information about teachers' experience with translation activities (TA) in teaching for future and novice teachers. Other in-service teachers can get, through the research results, some impulses to reflect on and revise their own teaching process.

Research questions

1. What is the role of translation activities in EFL classes?
2. What are teachers' attitudes to the Communicative Approach?
3. What advantages and disadvantages do teachers see in using translation activities?

Research method

To find answers to the research questions, I chose a questionnaire as a research method. *"A questionnaire is any written instrument that presents participants with a series of questions or statements to which they should react either by selecting from existing possibilities or writing out their answers. Questionnaires are particularly efficient for gathering information on a large scale."* (Brown, 1997, p. 111). The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms and self-administered by respondents. This type of questionnaire is comfortable, saves time, and is flexible as respondents can decide when to fill it in. However, Brown (1997, p. 111) warns that *"self-administered questionnaires have three potential problems: (a) they often have a very low return rate, (b) they must be completely self-explanatory because*

further clarification is not possible, and (c) they are administered under conditions that are unknown to the survey designers."

According to Dornyei (2003), questionnaires can yield three types of data about the respondent: factual, behavioural, and attitudinal. Our questionnaire contains 20 items. The first one asks about the respondents' length of practice as EFL teachers, and aims to determine whether its length influences teachers' attitude towards translation activities (TA) and their use in class. Then, behavioural questions follow: How often do you use TA in class? How often do your learners translate from English to Slovak? How often do they translate from Slovak to English? How often do they use a dictionary? What types of TA do you use? Finally, parametric attitudinal questions follow with the option of a Likert scale in which respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the items. The items represent potential opinions, advantages and disadvantages of L2-only teaching and translation in EFL teaching in order to assess teachers' attitudes towards these two phenomena. I am aware that *"minor differences in how the question is formulated and framed can produce radically different levels of agreement or disagreement"* (Dornyei, 2003, p. 33). That is why I tried to formulate the statements carefully. The suggested arguments and counter-arguments correspond to the scope of opinions met while studying scholars' works concerning translation in EFL teaching.

Only 14 filled-in questionnaires were returned, confirming the need to assess the data qualitatively. It is not regular to create a questionnaire with mostly closed questions, typical for quantitative research, and evaluate it qualitatively. Traditionally, qualitative data can be provided by a questionnaire of open-ended items (Dornyei, 2012).

Otherwise, *"qualitative research relies on the understanding of pedagogical phenomena through direct observation, communication with participants, or analysis of texts"* (Pokrivčáková, 2012, p. 12). However, it is still possible to gain valuable information through such a procedure. From this point of view, the last question in the questionnaire is an opportunity to obtain some relevant qualitative data as it is open-ended and intends to leave free space for respondents to express their arguments on the core issue of the research that is "advantages and disadvantages of translation activities". However, it is clear that it would be appropriate to complement the respondents' answers with other information gained by another research method. Yet, it was impossible to contact the respondents as the questionnaire was anonymous.

Sampling

The questionnaire was addressed to teachers of lower secondary education to investigate if translation activities are an effective technique of teaching learners

of the corresponding ages (10-15) and proficiency (A2 level). It was shared online, which allowed a random selection of respondents.

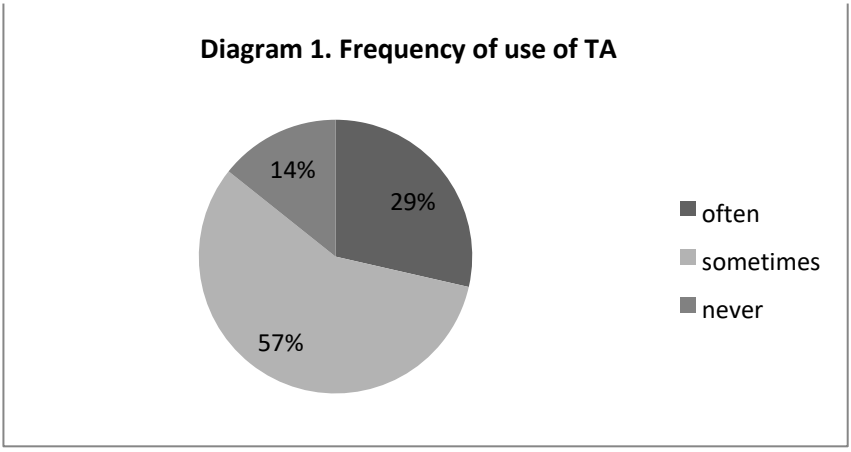
As was discovered from the received filled-in questionnaires, the length of practice of almost half of the respondents was only up to five years. Only one respondent had 6-10 years of experience as a teacher. 4 respondents had taught for 11-20 years. The teachers were not asked about other background information, which, therefore, remains unknown.

Data analysis

Quantitative analysis of the items

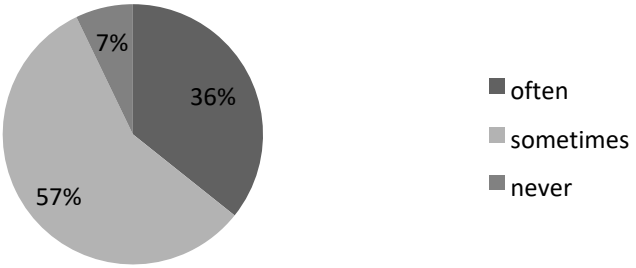
In the following sub-chapter, the data collected based on the individual questions in the questionnaire was analysed. First, the teachers' length of practice (which could influence their attitude toward translation activities in EFL teaching) was asked.

It was assumed that teachers' attitudes towards the use of translation in EFL teaching do not have to determine if and how they apply translation activities in their classes. If teachers agree with the use of translation in EFL teaching, it does not necessarily imply that they actually use it in their classes. That is why the questionnaire did not inquire only about teachers' opinions but also about the actual role of translation in their teaching. Therefore, the teachers were asked how often they apply translation activities in their classes, if their students use a dictionary in class, what competencies, in their opinion, can be developed in translation activities and what types of translation activities they use. In the sample, more than half of the respondents sometimes use translation activities, four of them use TA often, and only two never use TA (see Diagram 1).

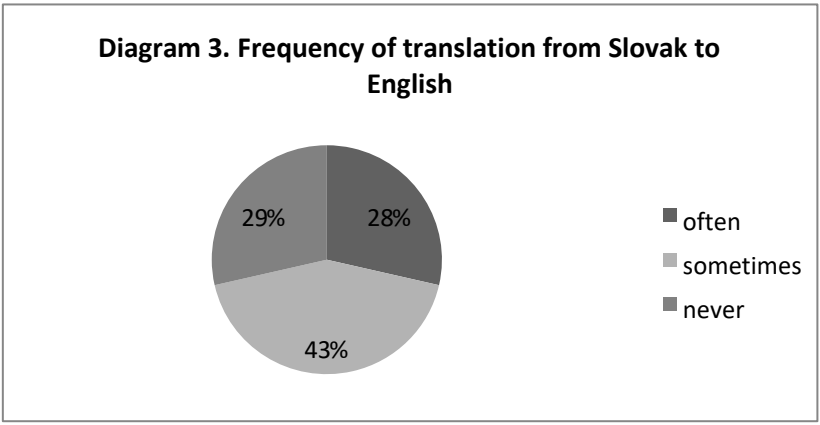


There were also questions on the frequency of translation from English to Slovak and from Slovak to English by learners within TA. The direction of translation can show if teachers use it for the development of learners' comprehension or their language production.

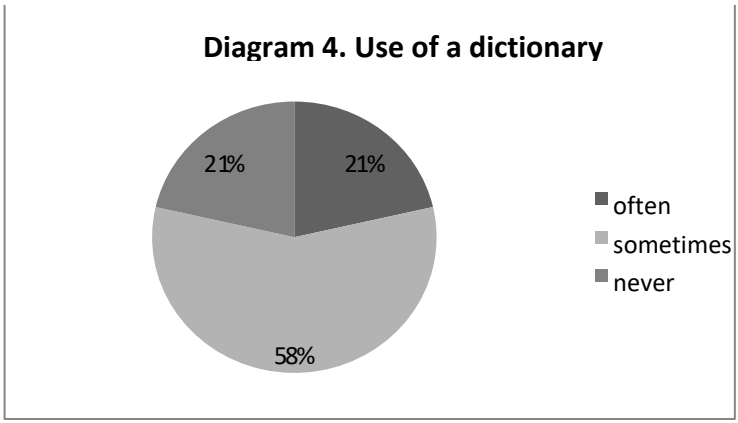
Diagram 2. Frequency of translation from English to Slovak



Only one respondent answered that his students are never asked to translate from English to Slovak (see Diagram 2.). I assume that, in general, teachers ask their students to translate in this direction in order to develop their comprehension and receptive skills. In the sample, 5 (36%) respondents ask their students to translate in this direction often, and 8 (57%) of them do it sometimes. Considering the opposite direction of translation, i. e. from Slovak to English (see Diagram 3.), there is higher proportion of the respondents, i. e. 4 of them (28%), who never ask students to translate in this direction. It means that fewer teachers use the translation for learners´ production. At the same time, the proportion of the respondents who ask their students to translate from Slovak to English is often lower than activities involving translation from English to Slovak. In addition, the proportion of the respondents who ask their students to translate from Slovak to English sometimes is lower too in comparison with activities involving translation in the opposite direction. All in all, translation activities used in the classes of respondents develop learners' receptive skills more than their productive skills. However, productive skills are developed to some extent too, as the frequency of translation from Slovak to English in EFL classes is not totally negligible.

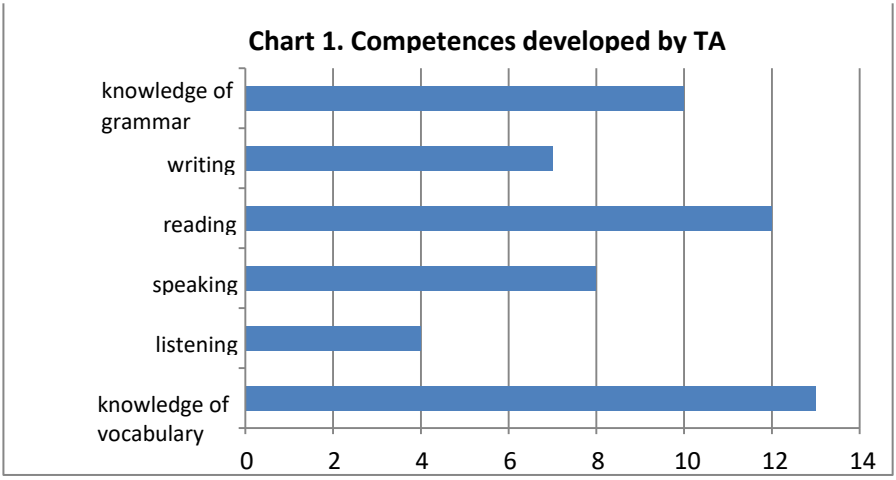


As for the use of a dictionary (see Diagram 4.), there is an equal proportion of respondents whose students use a dictionary often and whose students never use a dictionary in class. More than half of the respondents answered that their students use a dictionary sometimes.



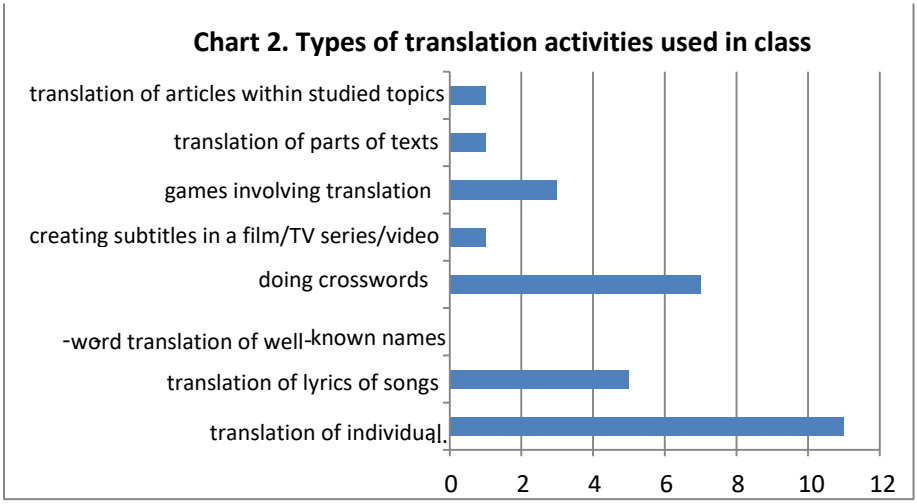
The next question inquired about the competences of learners that teachers intend to develop by applying translation activities (see Diagram 5.). According to almost all respondents, translation activities develop learners' knowledge of vocabulary (13 out of 14) and reading comprehension (12 out of 14). A significant proportion of the respondents agreed that translation activities can also develop

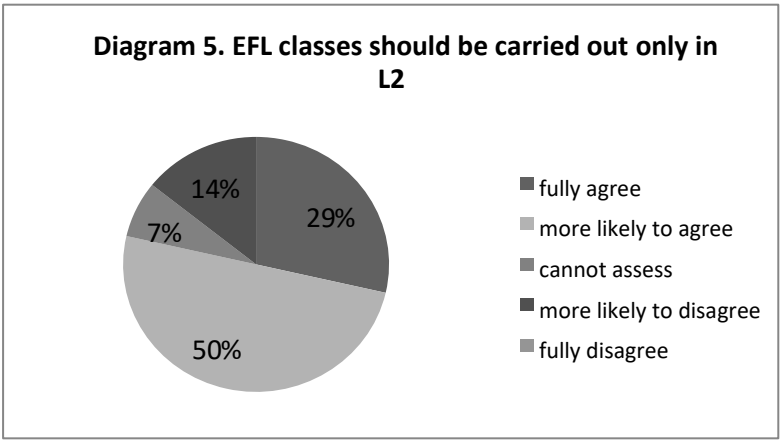
knowledge of grammar. A complete representation of respondents' answers is shown in Chart 1.



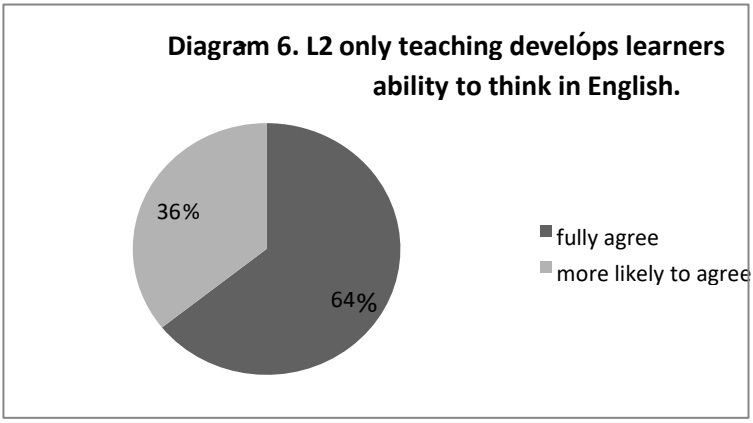
Another question which can indicate the actual classroom practice in relation to the use of translation is what types of translation activities teachers use (see Chart 2.). Most of the respondents use the activity of translating individual words, expressions or idioms. Doing crosswords and the translation of song lyrics are quite common. Three teachers in the sample also use games involving translation. Two respondents stated activities that we did not include in the options – translating parts of texts from English to Slovak and vice-versa, and translating articles within studied topics. As mentioned in the theoretical part, Šamalová (2017) distinguishes two types of translation activities – traditional and modern. As we can see, traditional TA prevail in the teaching of our respondents.

All other items of the questionnaire inquire about teachers' attitudes toward the arguments for and against L2-only teaching and the use of translation in EFL teaching. The first set of the parametric questions explores teachers' attitudes towards translation in EFL teaching in relation to L2-only teaching. First, we asked teachers if EFL classes should be carried out only in L2, i. e. in English only (see Diagram 5.). 50% (7 out of 14) of the respondents fully agree with this opinion and 4 respondents are more likely to agree. Only 2 respondents are more likely not to agree. There was no respondent in our sample who would fully deny the idea that EFL classes should be carried out only in L2.

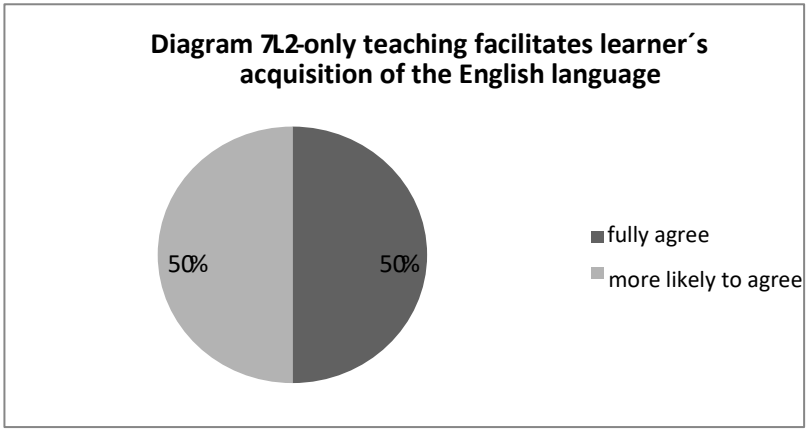




Secondly, teachers were asked to what extent they recognize the suggested advantages of L2-only teaching. In Diagrams 6. and 7., it can be observed that there is a unanimous tendency to recognize them. The teachers in our sample expressed even more decided agreement with the argument that L2-only teaching develops learners' ability to think in English.



The argument that L2-only teaching facilitates learners' acquisition of the English language is supported fully by half of the respondents and partially by the other half of the respondents (see Diagram 7.). It means that all teachers in our sample agree to some extent with the suggested advantages of L2-only teaching.



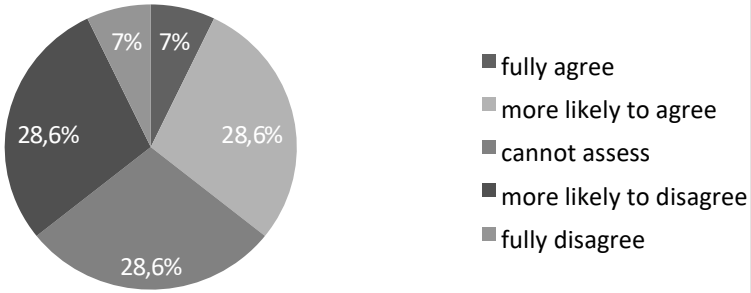
Most of the items in the questionnaire are focused on the advantages and disadvantages of translation activities. I included the following disadvantages, often perceived by theorists whose works were studied in the theoretical part of the paper:

1. Using translation in class develops bad habits of thinking in the mother tongue, and consequently, a mental translation from Slovak to English in language production.

2. Using translation in class limits the learners' ability to speak naturally and fluently.
3. Using translation in class makes learners think that each word and phrase has its exact and only equivalent.
4. For learners, translation is a lengthy and boring activity.

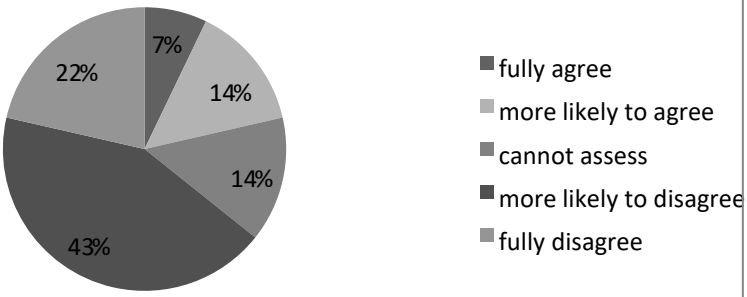
The distribution of possible degrees of the extent to which the respondents agree with the first stated disadvantage of translation in class is proportional (see Diagram 8.). Only one teacher in the sample fully agrees with it, and only one fully disagrees. There is also the same number (4) of respondents who are likely to agree with it and those who are more likely to disagree with the argument that using translation in class develops a learner's bad habit of thinking in the mother tongue and mental translation from Slovak to English in language production.

Diagram 8. Using translation in class develops the bad habit of learners thinking in the mother tongue and using mental translation from Slovak to English in language production



Teachers were also asked to express their attitude towards the counter-argument against the use of translation in class, that it limits learners' ability to speak naturally and fluently. Most of the respondents disagreed with this argument. Only one respondent fully agrees with it, and two are more likely to agree with it. This argument is closely related to the previous argument concerning mental translation and thinking in the mother tongue. Half of the respondents have correlative opinions on these two arguments. In other words, the respondents who agree with the first argument also agree with the second, and vice-versa.

Diagram 9. Translating limits learners´ ability to ´ speak naturally and fluently.

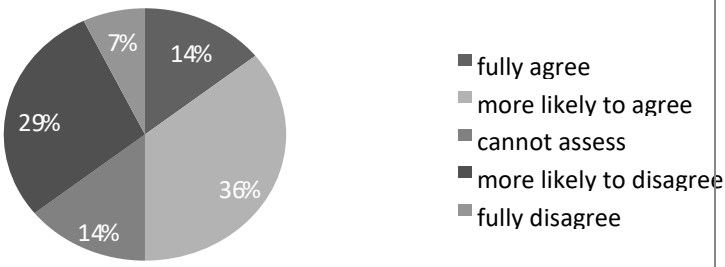


The third argument against the use of translation in was that using translation in class makes learners think that each word and phrase has its exact and only equivalent. Most of the respondents disagreed also with this argument. Only two respondents fully agreed with it, and the other two were more likely to agree.

Diagram 10.Translatign in class makes learners think that each word and phrase has its exact and only equivalent.

The last argument against the use of translation in class is that, for learners, translation is a lengthy and boring activity. Two respondents fully agreed with this, and five were more likely to agree. Only one respondent fully disagreed with the given argument, and four were more likely to disagree.

Diagram 11. Translation is, in learner's point of view, a lengthy and boring activity.

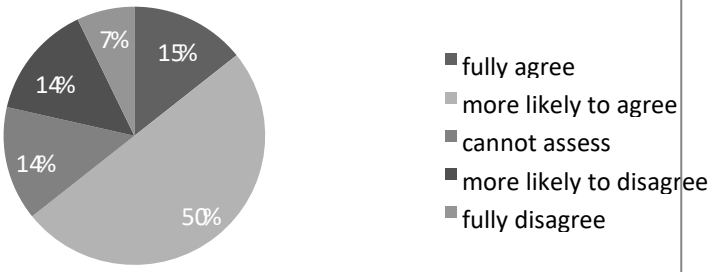


Concerning the stated arguments against the use of translation in EFL classes, the data gained from teachers' answers shows that they do not perceive any significant negative effect of translation in EFL classes. In opposition to the arguments against translation in class, alsoincluded in the questionnaire were the following arguments supporting the use of translation in EFL classes:

1. The teaching technique of translation can facilitate learners' acquisition of English.
2. The teaching technique of translation can facilitate learners' acquisition of particular language structures.
3. Translation activities enhance learners' understanding of differences between Slovak and English language systems.

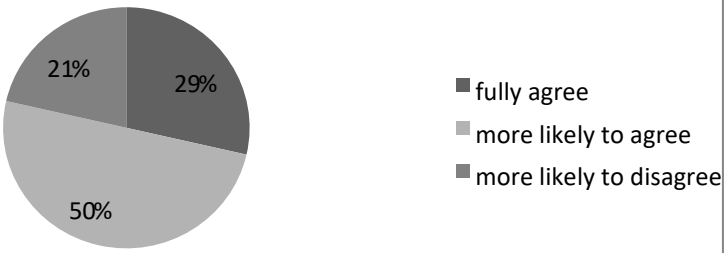
The first argument is largely supported by most of the respondents (see Diagram 12). Only one respondent fully disagrees with this argument, and two are more likely to disagree with it. The other two respondents cannot assess the effect of translation in classes in relation to learners' acquisition of English. This argument contradicts the argument that it is L2-only teaching that facilitates learners' acquisition of English. When we compare the data gained from the teachers' answers considering these two arguments, L2-only teaching has much more support among teachers. In our sample, there is no teacher who would disagree either entirely or partially with such teaching.

Diagram 12. The teaching technique of translation can facilitate learners acquisition of English



Similarly, teachers' attitudes towards the argument that the teaching technique of translation can facilitate learners' acquisition of particular language structures is, on average, positive. To be precise, 29% of the respondents fully agree with this argument, and 50% are more likely to agree with it. 21% of the respondents are more likely to disagree. No teacher in our sample would fully disagree with this argument.

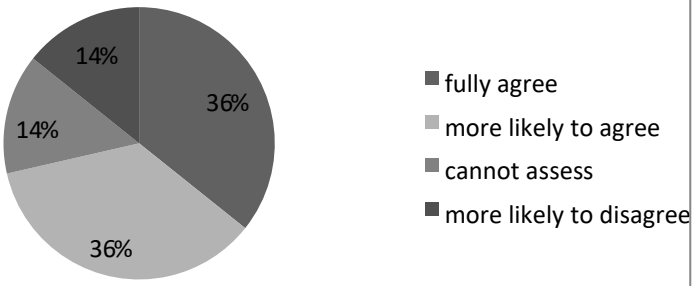
Diagram 13. The teaching technique of translation can facilitate learners' acquisition of particular language structures.



The next argument for using translation in EFL classes is that translation activities enhance learners' understanding of differences between the Slovak and

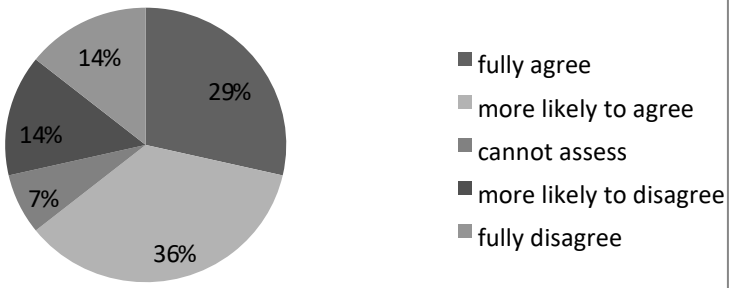
English language systems. Most of the respondents agree with this argument, and no teacher in our sample would fully disagree with it.

Diagram 14. TA enhance learnérs understanding of differences between Slovak and English language system



There was also a question asking if teachers consider translation to be an inevitable part of EFL teaching (see Diagram 15). Most of the respondents agree with this argument, but it also has its opponents; two of them fully disagree, and the other two are more likely to disagree.

Diagram 15. Translation is an inevitable part of EFL teaching



Finally, I inquired how teachers evaluate translation activities in general and asked them to express their attitude toward the statement that TA is an effective EFL teaching technique (see Diagram 16). Again, most of the respondents have a positive attitude to this statement.

At the end of the questionnaire, there was a space for teachers to express any other arguments for or against the use of translation in EFL teaching. As only four respondents used this opportunity, the data from their statements is analyzed in the following section.

As indicated above, the questionnaire contained three areas of teachers´ attitudes – attitude towards L2-only teaching, arguments for the use of translation in EFL teaching and arguments against the use of translation in EFL teaching. We can observe the following significant tendencies in these areas:

1. L2-only teaching is highly supported by EFL teachers.
2. Arguments against the use of translation in EFL classes are generally not supported by the teachers.
3. Arguments for the use of translation in EFL classes are highly supported by EFL teachers.

At first sight, these three areas seem to stand in opposition to each other. However, the findings show that it may not be the case from the teachers' point of view. Despite their strong agreement with the L2-only teaching method, it is assumed that they admit the judicious application of effective translation techniques. Therefore, individual teachers' answers are explored to assess them more deeply. Additionally, the fact that only 14 filled-in questionnaires were receivedenabled a more exhaustive analysis of the data.

Research results

To achieve the aim of this study, that is, to determine teachers' attitudes toward translation activities (TA), three research questions were set. The following are the answers based on the data analysis gained through the questionnaire.

What is the role of translation activities in teachers' classes?

Based on the data analysis, it is assumed that translation activities are not so frequent in EFL classes, but most of the respondents apply them more for the development of receptive skills than productive, and their students use dictionaries only sometimes. Translation serves for the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar, and the most often developed communication competence is reading. As for types of TA, teachers mainly apply translation of individual words, expressions or idioms. It means that they use translation in EFL classes in a rather traditional way.

What are teachers' attitudes towards the Communicative Approach?

There is only one respondent (no. 6) who is obviously strict in using only L2 in teaching and who can be classified as a proponent of the Communicative Approach. He agrees with all arguments for L2-only English teaching and all arguments against the use of translation.

The overwhelming majority of the teachers in the sample agree with L2-only teaching and recognize its advantages. To be precise, 78.6% of respondents are at least more likely to agree with L2-only English teaching, and even 100% of them are at least more likely to agree that L2-only English teaching facilitates its acquisition and 100% of them are at least more likely to agree that L2-only English teaching supports the ability to think in English. This attitude does not seem to depend on teachers' length of practice. Surprisingly, teachers mostly disagree with the suggested arguments against translation in EFL classes, which would further support the effectiveness of the Communicative Approach. This is addressed below after assessing translation activities in terms of their advantages and disadvantages.

What advantages and disadvantages do teachers see in using translation activities?

In summary, the suggested arguments for using translation activities prevail over the suggested counter-arguments against their use among teachers. It is the argument that translation can facilitate learners' acquisition of some structures the teachers share most. Additionally, they do not significantly share agreement on the disadvantages of translation activities. The only argument against them which teachers support is that learners consider translation to be a lengthy and boring activity.

Concerning the advantages of translation activities, teachers believe that translation activities facilitate the development of particular language structures and acquisition of L2 in general, and understanding structural differences between L1 and L2. Only a few of the respondents are more likely to disagree with the suggested advantages of translation activities. Most of the respondents assess them as an effective technique in EFL teaching. The belief that translation is an inevitable part of it has more supporters than opponents.

In conclusion, most of the teachers instructing students of A2-level proficiency at lower secondary schools apply translation activities in quite a traditional way. Despite this, they support the Communicative Approach and L2-only teaching. Therefore, we assume that they think that translation is necessary and effective in some situations of EFL classes with communicative features. Nevertheless, they have not discovered the potential of modern communicative learner-oriented translation activities that contemporary scholars present.

Discussion

The scope and content of this research are similar to Šamalová´s research in many ways. In 2017, she investigated the attitudes towards translation in EFL teaching held by teachers working at grammar schools in the Czech Republic who were teaching students of B1-B2 level proficiency. In addition, she explored the possibilities of translation activities. The comparison of the results of her research with this research can clarify differences between the use and effectiveness of translation in teaching at lower-secondary schools and its use and effectiveness in teaching at upper-secondary schools. However, her dissertation provided deeper and complex insight into the given issue. She also carried out a multi-case study including interviews with teachers and a quasi-experiment in several groups of learners.

Among other aspects of translation in EFL teaching, Šamalová (2017) asked teachers to evaluate the character of their classes in terms of the relation between the Communicative Approach and the traditional approach, which is formally oriented and tends to use translation. She found that they oscillate between these two approaches and often combine them. The same can be said about the teachers in the sample, as the conclusion was reached that they think that translation is necessary and effective in some situations of EFL classes which are communicatively oriented. It was also confirmed by the teachers' answers to another question in Šamalová´s questionnaire (focused on the role of translation in EFL teaching) that teachers agreed with the importance of translation to a large or certain extent.

Šamalová also inquired about the advantages and disadvantages of translation. The most accepted advantages among the teachers in Šamalová's sample are understanding differences between the two languages, development of grammar and development of vocabulary. The same question was asked in the research, but the respondents used the space for an answer to express their complex view of translation used in class. Apart from the potential advantages inquired about in other questions in the questionnaire, the teachers did not state any. However, the advantages that the teachers agree with most in Šamalová's research are considerably accepted also by the teachers in this research. Moreover, they are also confirmed in another question of Šamalová's questionnaire, i. e. what aims teachers intend to achieve by applying translation in class. The teachers state the same aspects here.

As with this study, Šamalová (2017) similarly concludes that teachers use mostly traditional types of translation activities – for example the translation of sentences, texts, and vocabulary. These largely prevail over modern communicative types of translation.

Comparing the results of this research with Šamalová's research allows us to compare the effectiveness of translation activities according to learners' levels of

proficiency, as we addressed teachers of A2 learners and Šamalová addressed teachers of B1-B2 learners. The results of these two research studies show many similarities in teachers' attitudes. In addition, Šamalová (2017) directly asked her respondents about their opinion on this issue. Most of them stated that translation could be applied without regard to learners' levels of proficiency. The second most common option was that translation is appropriate primarily for beginners (A1-A2 level), which legitimizes the attitudes of the teachers in this sample.

Further explanation of the issue can be given in light of the research concerning the role of translation in teaching languages in the European Union carried out by the European Commission in ten countries. It concluded that translation can contribute to effective language teaching because non-use of translation is not a precondition to avoid mental translation and to provide high language competence. It seems that the respondents in this research are aware of this fact as they did not much support the related arguments against the use of translation in class. However, the authors of the EU research warn teachers against word-for-word translation, its use in primary education and its tendency to teach in compliance with the Grammar-Translation Method. The teachers in this research also avoid the pitfalls demonstrated by their statements at the end of the questionnaire (see 2.5. Data analysis), and their significant agreement with the Communicative Approach.

Recommendations for EFL teaching practice

Effective translation activities have greater potential than they are expected to have in relation to the Grammar-Translation Method. Teachers should choose translation activities that focus on developing the communicative competencies that will enable learners to participate in real-life communication. Such translation activities are presented in the theoretical part of the paper.

Translation activities are not an inevitable requirement of EFL teaching. They can serve as an effective technique together with many other effective techniques used in EFL teaching to achieve particular specific aims that are required. They can be applied to raise learners' awareness of differences between the two languages and thus avoid word-for-word translation.

Teachers should also take into account learners' needs. Translation activities can serve to enhance the diversification of the teaching and learning process. Moreover, some learners can appreciate them as corresponding with their preferred learning style and strategies, as being fun, and encouraging debates on differences between some structures in English and their equivalents in Slovak.

If the teacher creates enough opportunities in class for authentic communication in English, there is no reason to worry that translation activities would be detrimental to language learning.

Conclusions

For a long time, especially during the so-called Communicative Period, translation was considered an obstacle in acquiring a foreign language. However, today some teachers and scholars are trying to reestablish it in EFL teaching due to its advantages. This research aimed to determine what are teachers' attitudes towards translation activities (TA) and if they consider them an effective technique in EFL teaching. First, the aspects of translation activities that determined the focus of the research questions were defined. That is 1. their role in EFL classes, 2. teachers' attitudes towards the Communicative Approach which denies use of translation in class, and 3. advantages and disadvantages of translation activities.

These aspects were explored via a questionnaire, focusing on the attitudes of teachers at lower secondary schools where they teach A2 level learners. The questionnaire was constructed according to the above-mentioned aspects of translation activities and included several questions related to each aspect. The role of translation activities in EFL classes is defined by the frequency of their use, the types used in class, the direction of translation (from Slovak to English and vice-versa), the use of a dictionary, competencies developed in translation activities, and their advantages and disadvantages. In order to ensure the questionnaire was not too time-consuming, only inevitable items were included, which turned out to be insufficient. Other complementary questions would have been beneficial, but were not possible to ask as the questionnaire was anonymous.

It would have been appropriate to define the concept of translation activities in the questionnaire's introduction. It can be understood in different ways, particularly traditional translation activities that can be identified with explicatory translation, e.g., teaching grammar. Another drawback of the questionnaire is that the initial questions included only relative options of frequency that the respondents might evaluate differently. However, it was determined that translation does not often occur in class. Even if the range of the questions is not exhaustive, the respondents had an opportunity to express their opinion in a more complex way in the final item of the questionnaire. When evaluating the results, it became clear that more questions concerning L2-only teaching could have been included to obtain more precise information on teachers' attitudes towards the Communicative Approach.

Based on the data analysis, it was found that translation activities are not so frequent in EFL classes. Although teachers mostly agree with L2-only teaching, they also recognize the advantages of translation activities and largely do not perceive any disadvantages. According to them, translation serves mainly for the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar and for the development of reading skills. As for translation activities, teachers apply traditional activities involving the

translation of single words, expressions or idioms. Modern communicative types of translation activities do not often occur in EFL classes.

These findings could have been complemented by an interview with the respondents, which would have allowed additional questions to be asked about the use of translation in their classes. To evaluate the actual effectiveness of translation activities, it would be useful to carry out action research to observe how the systematic application of translation activities influences learners' progress in developing communicative skills.

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Appendix 1. The questionnaire

Vážení učitelia anglického jazyka na 2. stupni ZŠ,

obraciam sa na Vás s prosbou o vyplnenie nasledujúceho dotazníka, ktorého cieľom je zistiť Váš postoj k využívaniu prekladových aktivít vo výučbe na základe vašich skúseností z praxe na 2.

stupni ZŠ. Môj výskum vychádza zo skutočnosti, že sa vedú diskusie o tom, do akej miery je vhodné vo výučbe cudzích jazykov využívať materinský jazyk žiakov. Predmetom tohto dotazníka je preto vyhodnotiť význam prekladových aktivít vo výučbe, v ktorých je využitie materinského jazyka žiakov kľúčové. Vopred Vám ďakujem za účasť v tomto prieskume.

1. Dĺžka vašej pedagogickej praxe:
2. Ako často realizujete vo výučbe prekladové aktivity?

- často - občas - nikdy

3. Ako často v rámci prekladových aktivít uskutočňujú žiaci preklad z anglického jazyka do slovenského jazyka?

- často - občas - nikdy

4. Ako často v rámci prekladových aktivít uskutočňujú žiaci preklad zo slovenského jazyka do anglického jazyka?

- často - občas - nikdy

5. Ako často pracujú žiaci s prekladovým slovníkom?

- často - občas - nikdy

6. Ktoré jazykové kompetencie možno podľa vás rozvíjať prekladovými aktivitami? (možno označiť viaceré)

- znalosť slovnej zásoby
- počúvanie s porozumením
- ústny prejav
- čítanie s porozumením
- písomný prejav
- znalosť gramatiky

7. Ktoré z nasledujúcich prekladových aktivít využívate vo výučbe? (možno označiť viaceré)

- preklad súvislého textu
- preklad samostatných viet
- preklad samostatných slov/výrazov/idiomov
- preklad piesne
- doslovný preklad mien známych osôb
- riešenie krížoviek

- tvorba tituliek k filmu/seriálu/videu
- didaktické hry s využitím prekladu
- iné (konkretizujte)

8. Do akej miery súhlasíte s nasledujúcimi tvrdeniami?
(respondent vyberá z možností "úplne súhlasím", "skôr súhlasím", "neviem posúdiť", "skôr nesúhlasím", "úplne nesúhlasím")
výučba anglického jazyka by mala prebiehať výlučne v anglickom jazyka

- výučba výlučne v anglickom jazyku uľahčuje žiakom osvojovanie si anglického jazyka
- výučba výlučne v anglickom jazyku podporuje schopnosť žiakov myslieť v tomto jazyku
- využívaním prekladu vo výučbe si upevňujú žiaci nežiaduci návyk myslenia v materinskom jazyku a mentálneho prekladu zo slovenského jazyka do anglického pri jazykovej produkcii
- využívanie prekladu obmedzuje schopnosť žiaka prirodzene a plynulo sa v cudzom jazyku vyjadrovať
- využívanie prekladu vo výučbe vytvára u žiakov falošnú predstavu, že každé slovo či fráza má svoj presný a jediný ekvivalent v druhom jazyku
- preklad môže uľahčiť žiakom osvojovanie niektorých jazykových javov
- metóda prekladu do materinského jazyka uľahčuje žiakom osvojovanie si anglického jazyka
- prekladové cvičenia a aktivity sú efektívnymi metódami vo výučbe anglického jazyka
- preklad je nevyhnutnou súčasťou výučby anglického jazyka.
- prostredníctvom prekladových cvičení majú žiaci možnosť pochopiť rozdiely medzi systémom cudzieho jazyka a systémom ich materinského jazyka
- preklad je pre žiakov nudná a zdĺhavá činnosť

9. Aké ďalšie výhody a nevýhody vidíte vo využívaní prekladových aktivít vo výučbe anglického jazyka? (otvorená otázka)

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