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TEACHING OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES IN THE V4 COUNTRIES

Marek Pieniążek & Stanislav Štěpáník (Eds.)

Charles University in Prague
Faculty of Education

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This book is one of the results of the project Teaching National Languages in V4 Countries, which was supported by the Visegrad Fund.

Information on the project can be found e.g. in *Konspekt*, the magazine of the Pedagogical University of Cracow, in *Berliner Beiträge Zur Hungarologie* (<https://www.slawistik.hu-berlin.de/de/fachgebiete/ungarlit/publ/BBH/BBH19>), or on the website of the project: <http://www.filologia.up.krakow.pl/projektwyszehradzki.html>.

Contents

About the authors	7
Introduction	13
About the book	16
About the project	18
Teaching Czech language and literature in the Czech Republic	31
1 Politics—school policy influencing the school system and national language education	31
2 History—historical milestones influencing national language education	34
3 Current state of teaching Czech	43
3.1 Curriculum	43
3.2 Textbooks	47
3.3 Practice in schools	48
3.4 Standardised tests and examinations	50
4 Teacher training	52
5 Czech as L2 / foreign language	54
6 Discussion and conclusion	57
7 Literature	57
Teaching Hungarian language and literature in Hungary	65
1 Politics—school policy influencing the school system and national language education	65
2 History—historical milestones influencing national language education	68
3 Current state of teaching Hungarian	71
3.1 Curriculum	71
3.2 Textbooks	76
3.3. Practice in schools	80

3.4 Standardised tests and examinations	83
4 Teacher training	88
5 Hungarian in foreign language teaching—society, culture, and communicative competence in the Framework Curriculum for learners of Hungarian as a foreign language	91
6 Discussion and conclusion	94
7 Literature	97
Teaching Polish language and literature in Poland	103
1 Politics—school policy influencing the school system and national language education	103
2 Recent historical milestones / changes influencing the national language education	105
3 Current state of teaching Polish	107
3.1 Curriculum	109
3.2 Textbooks	113
3.3 Practice in schools	116
3.4 Standardised tests and examinations	118
4 Teacher training	122
5 Teaching of national language in the context of a foreign language	124
6 Discussion and conclusion	127
7 Literature	130
Teaching Slovak language and literature in Slovakia	135
1 Politics—school policy influencing the school system and national language education	135
2 History—historical milestones influencing national language education	136
3 Current state of teaching Slovak—Slovakia’s contemporary language policy	138

3.1 Curriculum	140
3.2 Textbooks	147
3.3 Practice in schools	150
3.4 Standardised tests and examinations	151
4 Teaching / learning Slovak as L2 for minority learners coming from ethnic minorities	155
5 Discussion and conclusion	162
6 Literature	164
Discussion and conclusion	171
Literature	180
Resumé	180
Key words	181

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Professor at University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia and Kazimierz Pulaski University of Technology and Humanities in Radom, Poland. In 1992/1993 he was a Fulbright Fellow in the Department of American Studies at Yale University. His works include essays on postmodern critical theories entitled *Literatúra a bytie* (Literature and Being, 1997), on some nineteenth and early twentieth century American poets (Emily Dickinson, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens), fiction writers (Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville) as well as transcendentalists (R. W. Emerson, H. D. Thoreau) published as *Americká imaginácia* (American Imagination) in 2005. In 2006 he co-authored a book (together with Silvia Pokrivčáková) entitled *Understanding Literature*. He is the editor of the collection of essays *Literature and Culture* published in 2010. He has also published several articles in the field of literary education—Quality of Education and ICT Resources, Multimedia and the Teaching of Literature (with Silvia Pokrivčáková), Literature as Problem, Ambiguities in Modern Education (with Silvia Pokrivčáková), etc.

Introduction

The monograph is a result of the common research of a team composed of four university workplaces in the V4 countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The original purpose of the V4 was to establish “forms of political, economic and cultural cooperation of these countries in the altered situation in Central Europe”¹, as the Visegrad Declaration of 1991 states. Like many other aspects of life in the V4 countries, also schooling has been going through transformation, and L1 / mother tongue / national language² teaching does not stand aside. As we will see later, it is not only didactics (or methodology in a narrower sense) of the subject that has been changing. There have been periods when mother tongue teaching was loaded with political ideology—clearly the period before 1989 was one of them; therefore the political changes that came after the collapse of the Iron Curtain influenced the content of mother tongue teaching greatly. Many teachers might not be aware of the political and social contexts of the educational systems they work in. But, in fact, they are a crucial part in them.

The aim of this monograph (and the V4 project that the participating universities were working on) is to create a platform that would give the opportunity to see the profiles of the national educational systems and their specific contemporary conditions in countries that share common history and face very similar issues, giving special attention to the role of national languages and their teaching in the process of creating and maintaining cultural identity of the young generation in Central Europe.

1 <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/visegrad-declarations/visegrad-declaration-110412>; cit. 23. 9. 2016

2 Under the terms *national language*, *mother tongue*, *L1* or *first language* and *native language* the authors of the individual chapters understand the same phenomenon—in the Czech Republic it is Czech, in Hungary it is Hungarian, in Poland it is Polish and in Slovakia it is Slovak; however, more on the terminology see Heltai’s elaboration of the issue in the chapter on teaching L1 in Hungary.

The Visegrad Group may prove to be a strong actor in creating the new humanistic ideas that would be able to compete with the Anglo-Saxon concepts, often imposed without reflection to Central European cultures and systems of education.

The results of the research could be reached only through gathering the key resources (publications, documents, websites, etc.) and thorough analyses and discussions. In the process of exchanging and comparing the views of the research teams on the main topics of the project, we had to delimitate common methods of research. The important goal was not an easy one: the attempt to analyse and compare the materials, esp. the curricula, and the teaching practice in order to improve and correct the current models of teaching. Observations in schools therefore played a very important role in the research.

The next step is the implementation of the conclusions of the analyses into teacher training—to generate new awareness of the problem among the future teachers of Polish, Czech, Hungarian and Slovak, and to design a model of mother tongue education linking the geopolitical conditions of our countries to the needs of global cooperation.

Certain risks can be seen in this very ambitious project, because it will initiate a new direction of research and also many questions. It is worth noting that such studies are rather unique. This book represents a synthesis of the research and shows conclusions which have been gathered in the project.

International continuation of the project

Between 20th–21st October 2016 an international conference *Didactics of national languages in Central Europe. Methodology and comparative studies* was held at the Pedagogical University of Cracow. The aim of the conference was to compare the goals and ways of teaching national languages in Central Europe. It is worth emphasising that within the conference a session of the *Commission for Didactics at The International*

Committee of Slavists was held. The conference was based on the key speeches of the four teams from Prague, Nitra, Budapest and Cracow. The presentations were the basis for extensive scientific work on the status of national languages in education of the V4 countries and Central Europe. Speakers even from outside the V4 participated: e.g. from Russia (Moscow) or Serbia (Belgrade). Thus, this project (initiated in the V4 states) could be of fundamental importance for further research on teaching national languages in Central Europe. The research papers from the conference will be published in the *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia ad Didacticam Litterarum Polonarum et Linguae Polonae* in 2017.

About the Book

Marek Pieniążek

The project entitled *Teaching of National Languages in V4 Countries* was submitted to the Visegrad Fund in May 2015. The main topics of this research were described by Marek Pieniążek as the project manager in cooperation with the three scientific partner teams from universities in Budapest, Nitra and Prague. The whole team was composed of the following:

- the Department of Teaching of Polish Language and Literature at the Pedagogical University of Cracow,
- the Department of Hungarian Linguistics at the Faculty of Humanities of Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Budapest,
- the Czech Language Department at the Faculty of Education of Charles University in Prague,
- the Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies at the Faculty of Education of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra.

The main aim of the research was to focus on the role of national languages in maintaining the cultural identity in the V4 countries. The reason for the study is the alarming lowering of the rank of national language teaching in general education in Poland, and the growing dominance of English in the cultural environment. We thought that a comparative study, conducted in a Polish-Czech-Hungarian-Slovak team, could come up with an optimal model of L1 teaching in our region. This model would take the globalization processes into account, and would be connected with the need of the immunization of identity discourses.

During the realization of the project, cooperation among the involved institutions was established and developed. Our team has compared the

way national languages are taught in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland. As research methods we used

- document analysis,
- historical analysis,
- textbook analysis,
- curriculum analysis,
- observations in class,
- interviews,
- analysis of resources and specialized literature in the four languages (Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Slovak) on the topic of this project.

The project included a series of four workshops: in Prague, Nitra and Budapest in autumn of 2015, and summary of the project in Cracow in January 2016 in a form of the final workshop.

Gatherings that have been carried out during the realization of the project:

- workshop in Budapest (21st October 2015–23rd October 2015)
- workshop in Prague (11th November 2015–14th November 2015)
- workshop in Nitra (9th December 2015–12th December 2015)
- conference and workshop in Cracow (11th January 2016–14th January 2016)

The aim of the seminars and workshops was to evaluate the current forms of L1 teaching in the V4 countries. The research was based on methodological identification of the contemporary problems and needs of national methodologies of education. The comparative analysis was subjected to:

- current language and literature educational theories,
- the theory of literature in school,
- literary history in school,
- theory of language in school,
- curriculum of language and literature in school,
- place of anthropology and performativity in school (from language to action and to creation of culture), and the structure of the final examinations.

About the Project

Marek Pieniążek

As already mentioned, this book is the outcome of a half-year collective research project entitled *Teaching of National Languages in V4 Countries*, which was carried out with the support of the Visegrad Fund.

The comparative study presented here was created thanks to special commitment and effective cooperation of seven linguists and literature educators from Central Europe. From October 2015 to February 2016 our team was carrying out research and discussing the results at the meetings in Budapest, Prague, Nitra and Cracow. The research team from Prague has made crucial effort to the creation of the book, which is financed by the Faculty of Education at Charles University in Prague.

The main aim of our research project was to compare the systems of teaching national languages in the four countries of the Visegrad Group. The idea for such a research project was born in the process of my own research on modern ways of teaching Polish language. I have been analyzing the system of teaching Polish language in Poland for several years. Looking into the effects of successively introduced educational reforms, I noticed the dangers for the survival of Polish culture, deterioration of the Polish language status at schools and in common social awareness. While looking for more beneficial solutions, I decided to use the contexts of educational systems of the post-transformational neighbouring countries. Due to our specific Central European geopolitical conditions, I was not looking at the Anglo-Saxon humanistic tradition to find the inspiration to stop negative changes. I have not taken into account systems of teaching in countries which are totally different from Poland both in cultural and historical aspects. Anglo-Saxon culture is transmitted differently due to the global mediatization sphere mastered by English language.

During many conferences and discussions I also found out that the need to measure the results of teaching, and the European norms is one of the main ways of thinking about the role of education for the authors of the core curricula and examination systems, and so these then shape the education system. Such a concept does not have to establish the only path of thinking about the reforms of Polish language education. Therefore, while struggling to overcome the results of these reforms and their mediation, I had to refer to related teaching systems, and then I could define what should be permanent in the system and what should undergo other reforms. That is to say, after several years of reforms and adjustments of the Polish education system to the European norms, the evaluation of these actions turned out to be impossible without the reference to the achievements of national language education in the neighbouring countries.

I have made an assumption that research in England where English language does not collide with English domination in the media and pop culture, or looking for inspiration derived from the teaching systems in Germany or France would not be fruitful due to the fact that multiculturalism has become a norm in these countries. Similarly, the patterns of the Scandinavian countries seemed to be too distant at this stage of research. I wanted to take benefit from consultations and knowledge of didactic researchers from the countries which are culturally and geopolitically closest, to notice potential similarities or differences in our systems and choose the best solutions which can help to increase the effects of teaching national languages in our part of Europe. It was also important to find legal, political and institutional solutions which can keep the high and central status of national languages in culture and education of the Visegrad Group.

My research showed that as a result of many reforms, Polish language in educational practice in our country (against the Core curriculum declarations) has become a school subject which is marginalized and has become

less important than other subjects “more useful” in the future career or requiring more attention (for example due to more difficult exams). In this sense, I was looking for the support of my theses and prompts of how the problems are solved in the neighbouring countries in which the problem might be observed in a similar way.

The first exchange of research ideas with the foreign teams was initiated in 2014, while applying to the Visegrad Fund for the first time (the application was not successful, however). After a year, after applying again, I put forward the idea entitled *Teaching of national languages in Slavic Europe—comparative approach* and sent the invitation to the cooperating colleagues from Prague, Budapest and Nitra. After corresponding to each other for several months, we discussed the main aims and modified the foundations of the project, which received the following name: *Teaching of national languages in V4 countries*. Next, in a few months of the academic year of 2014/2015 we formed a team. I became the manager of the project and the person responsible for coordinating the research.

As the main plan and research structure, requiring financial support, I planned a cycle of lectures and study visits and a final scientific seminar in January 2016. After gathering suitable contracts and documents, the rectors of our universities accepted the proposed research aims and signed the application for financial support to the Visegrad Fund. We sent the official application in January 2015.

The positive results of the contest were announced in June 2015. Just before holidays I informed the three teams that we were going to start our mutual cooperation in September. In October 2015, the first meeting of the research teams was supposed to take place in Budapest. The whole cooperation was based on the idea of constant contact of the scientists from Budapest, Cracow, Nitra and Prague, and their final meeting in Cracow.

The first international meeting of the project participants took place in Hungary at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. The symposium and workshops lasted from 21st to 23rd October 2015. After the conference we also took part in the workshop devoted to forms of education and textbooks used in Hungary.

During the symposium we introduced the main problems connected with teaching national languages in our countries and teaching Hungarian as a foreign language. My lecture about the need of immunization of national languages was very well received. With linguists and Hungarian language educators we exchanged the opinions about the system conditions which have an impact on the position of national languages in the educational systems of our countries. The problem of teaching Hungarian as a foreign language was an important subject of the seminar. Réka Sólyom presented the problem in the lecture *Language, society, and related exercises in language books for students of Hungarian as a foreign language*, Tibor M. Pintér described the *Standard varieties of Hungarian in the shade of textbooks used in the education process outside Hungary*.

Both surprising and fascinating were the conclusions concerning the differences in the systems of teaching national languages in our countries. The matter of introducing one obligatory free textbook in state education in Hungary, different visions on teacher training, or the list of set texts showed considerable differences in our educational systems. The conclusions also revealed similar problems in the sphere of functionalized knowledge about language or the matter of politically driven choice of set books.

The next research seminar took place in Prague from 11th to 14th November 2015. Discussions during the symposium at the Czech Language Department of the Faculty of Education of Charles University in Prague were dominated by methodology, language theory and language policy changes in education observed in Czech throughout last years. The scientific session at Charles University was extraordinarily inspiring for

further researches. In the presentation *Traditions and Current State of Czech Language Teaching with Respect to the Development of Czech Linguistics* Martina Šmejkalová opened the perspectives for theory analyses of national languages in didactics. In my presentation *Immunization of Didactics of National Languages in Central Europe* I faced the subject of national language protection in relation to global and economic culture changes and media influences on the status of national language. In the paper *Changes in Teaching Pragmalinguistic Aspects of Communication* Pavla Chejnová pointed at multilevel communication in modern society and the necessity to make communication situations at schools real. In the paper *Comparative Didactics as a Source for First Language Teaching* Stanislav Štěpáník excellently showed the similarities and dependence between teaching systems in Great Britain, the USA, the Czech Republic and Poland. Stanislav Štěpáník's presentation clearly showed the circulation of ideas which control educational policies, and the dependence of educational reforms implied by the Anglo-Saxon education system in Central Europe. Debaters who were present during the discussions put forward new elements, pointing among other things at the necessity of changes in the methodological application of the didactics systems, and they also referred to their own experiences—e.g. a student from Great Britain said she did not feel any care about her national language back in Britain.

Joint class visits to Gymnázium Přípotoční in Prague 10 showed the practical dimension of Czech language lessons. I clearly noticed different and stronger authority of the teachers than in Poland, but also one lesson which was determined by reading set texts in literary historical order, which is also different from Polish. The construction of Czech secondary school textbooks encourages teachers to use such set texts, which I could notice during the following days while studying several series of the most popular literature textbooks used in secondary schools in the Czech Republic.

My four-day research stay in Slovakia, lasting from 9th to 12th December 2015, started with school visits in Nitra. The Slovak lower general secondary school was shown as a place of a serious dialogue about language and literature between the teachers and the students. And again—similarly to the Czech school—it was impossible not to notice the authentic dialogue and mutual respect between the teachers and the students. The lesson about Slovak vowels and consonants was full of humour and students' active participation. I also found it interesting that in one of the Slovak textbooks I noticed not the usual de Saussure's dual pattern of the language sign, but the Pierce's triangle. The literature lesson in lower general secondary school revealed the habit of literary historical way of discussing texts. The extracts from the textbooks used in the lesson from the so-called readers (which were books written almost twenty years ago) showed stability of the teaching system as the textbooks have been used for many years. However, the introductory interpretation was given and formulated by the teacher.

The scientific symposium took place at the Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies of the Faculty of Education of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. The papers showed differences between the Polish and Slovak systems of education, especially in the aspect of multicultural problems, or the necessity to teach Slovak language in larger concentration of Roma.

The discussion on the role of national language in Slovakia that came after my opening lecture about immunization of didactics of national languages in education was a rather heated one. Especially interesting opinions were expressed by the students of comparative studies of culture, for whom English language plays the central role in the recognition of cultures, and is vital in the process of studying and further career. This way of thinking made it difficult to establish one view in the aspect of competitiveness and functionalism of Slovak language. Strong emotions were evoked by Silvia Pokrivčáková's talk on the subject of *Teaching Slovak as*

a Mother, Second and Foreign Language in which matters of the position and status of Slovak language in education were analysed in the context of foreign language teaching and numbers of lessons in the educational cycles. Zdena Kráľová presented the paper entitled *Contrastive Linguistics as a Source for Teaching First, Second and Foreign Languages*, and Zuzana Šimková described *Developing Bilingualism and Plurilinguism in the Context of Slovak Education System*. In her lecture, Eva Farkašová introduced the main problems connected with the organisation of language teaching of Roma children. Conclusions led us to the extensive political and social contexts connected with retaining the key role of national language in education. We also discussed the most effective methodologies.

The final four-day symposium, finishing the Visegrad project, took place in Cracow at the Pedagogical University of Cracow. It lasted from 11th to 14th January 2016. For the first time our international team of scientists met in person as the whole group, together we could exchange the ideas about the ways of performing the profession of the teacher in our countries. We also had many occasions to discuss and notice the results of the different education policies in our countries.

On the first day of the symposium we discussed topics related to the systems of teaching national languages in the Visegrad Group. On the second day, on 12th January 2016, we took part in a scientific conference together. We started it with a short discussion about our three previous meetings in Budapest, Prague and Nitra, and recalled our main conclusions deriving from our discussions and school visits. In their papers, Réka Sólyom and János Imre Heltai described the main assumptions connected with the organisation and language theory in the process of teaching Hungarian language in Hungary. Next, Martina Šmejkalová and Stanislav Štěpáník presented the outlines of the organization and structure of teaching Czech language in the Czech Republic.

The discussion after the first part of the seminar was fascinating. Many questions by the symposium participants and listeners addressed the

matter of the reappraisal examination during the studies of the candidates for becoming future teachers in Hungary. New pragmatic and performative language theories as the suggestions for a new perspective in effective education were welcomed with great interest. The description of the structure of the Czech education system showed the possibility of correct school functioning without point rankings and teacher's depersonalized and burdensome evaluation of educational effects. Many questions were also connected with the fact that in the Czech Republic there is not one obligatory list of set texts for reading, but only a recommended set of books. Intensive discussions showed a great need to exchange these observations and could last for the whole day if there had been no time restrictions.

After the break we went on to Silvia Pokrivčáková and Beata Menzlová's presentation. The researchers from Slovakia presented the *Organization and Structure of Teaching Slovak Language in Slovakia*. Apart from many interesting details about the Slovak school, we also discussed the matter of stability of the core curriculum in Slovakia which has not been changed since 1997. The pass rate of Slovak language at the final exams was also very interesting for the participants as it is approximately 70%. We noticed that this examination requires special effort and respect both to the subject and the teachers, because final exams in Slovak language are relatively difficult.

Next, I introduced the presentation entitled *Organization and Structure of Teaching Polish Language in Poland*. I described basic features of teaching Polish language and its central position in the newest core curriculum. The most interesting pieces of information for the symposium participants were connected with the fact that the structure of the final exams in Polish has been changed several times within the last ten years, and observations about the construction of the Polish core curriculum as the only document which directs the educational content. Obviously, writing a list of set books into the Polish core curriculum, for example with

13 obligatory positions for upper general secondary education, is not a solution—in comparison with the three earlier presented systems. I recalled the research revealing the low rate of reading at school. I also indicated other system problems which cause further deterioration of the social status of Polish language at school and modern Polish culture. These matters concern the fact that the final exam in Polish is too easy and that the oral part of the final exam is not taken into consideration while applying to humanistic studies at university. A serious problem is also connected with omitting regional contents at the level of primary school education.

The review of the four education systems was also inspiring for further work. It turned out that we as scientists have relatively similar theoretical and pragmatic view on teaching national languages. All four teams refer to the communicative dimension of language teaching, and want to combine literary and language teaching, stay open to the support of language competence throughout mediatization of language experience. However, despite similar attitudes to the language and respect towards transmitting it through values, we noticed different positioning of national languages in our countries, resulting from different education policies and different methods of education management and different legal regulations.

Legal regulations for didactics of the national language are different in our countries. Those differences are best observed at the level of system realization in each of the V4 countries. Therefore, we formulated the view about the need of comparative studies about our systems, in order to increase the role of scientific afterthought in forming effective education policies for national languages. During our final discussion we agreed that the issue of teaching national languages should be an important part of the policy of each country. However, the emphasis must be put on responsible policy, aware of its long-term aims. We also paid attention to the fact that politicians should not use this subtle and most common social issue for their own particular and current aims. Short-sighted manipulation of

the final exams criteria, the list of set books and the marking systems may lead to dangerous social results. The consequences of these manipulations can be currently observed in Poland, and as a result, they may be dangerous for the survival of the national culture and its vitality. Submitting to market and economic lobbying and the European Union's political programmes or the World Bank's prognoses are becoming self-fulfilling prophecies about the foresight process of distinctive features of national languages dying out, and about the loss of social cohesion.

The third day of our meeting in Cracow was marked by the comparison of the textbooks used for teaching national languages in our countries. We noticed considerable differences in the policy towards textbooks within the V4 countries. In Hungary there will be one obligatory textbook, in Poland the programme of free textbooks for all students is being introduced, in the Czech Republic the choice of the textbook has little influence on teaching style, in Slovakia the stability of the core curriculum enables teachers to use older textbooks for many years. It turned out that textbooks in our countries are often written at the bidding of the market and publishing needs. In most cases neither methodologists nor scientists decide about the form, contents, questions and the structure of the textbooks but publishers and their marketing departments, who know the solutions that are going to be sold best, and whose solutions are treated by teachers as the easiest or minimizing their didactic effort.

A multi-perspective look at the textbooks let us also notice that for many years textbooks promote still the same, generally the Enlightenment vision of teaching grammar and knowledge about language, despite the fact that cultural habits and social practice have changed several times. As a result of that, we agreed that a shift from the structural recognition of knowledge about language towards communicative teaching is necessary, although not easy. In each set of textbooks from our countries we indicated exercises which clearly put emphasis on knowledge about language and not on developing language competence. Combining literature didactics with

language pragmatics turned out to be the agreed consensus, especially after the emotional discussion about the assumptions and realization of Cracow curriculum for teaching Polish language called *I Like It!*.

The fourth day of our meeting in Cracow was characterized by visits to the Polish primary school and upper general secondary school where we observed lessons of Polish language. The participants of the project had the chance to observe lessons led according to the curriculum for teaching Polish language *I Like It!*, and also the effects of using my own original teaching method *A Student as a Cultural Actor* in upper general secondary school.

From the participants' point of view our four workshops were very successful and scientifically inspiring. They helped us see how teaching national languages in our countries is positioned in social practice and the country's policy.

During our research we have found out that despite the fact that as scientists we represent similar views on methodological issues, our educational systems offer different system solutions. The education policies, which are presented in the chapters of this book, are different in our neighboring countries. It was especially interesting that during our meetings we learned completely new things about our systems, with interest we learned about totally different attitudes and ideas on how education systems can function. Both final examinations and final secondary education examinations, the number of textbooks, curricula, the function of the core curriculum, educational requirements, or lack of them, showed how different our systems are.

The synthetic opinions about educational systems in the Visegrad Group given below will help us notice similarities and differences of conditions in which schools function. They will help us answer the question how we can teach better and more effectively, how to react on the challenges of multiculturalism and multilingualism of the modern world, which make our national and cultural locality disappear.

I kindly invite you to read the following publication and I also wish to express my sincere thanks to my Colleagues who decided to take part in this research project and prepare the following texts.

Teaching Czech Language and Literature in the Czech Republic

Martina Šmejkalová—Stanislav Štěpáník

1 Politics—school policy influencing the school system and national language education³

The influence of the political situation on mother tongue teaching in the Czech lands has always been enormous. This was caused by two main factors: for a long phase in Czech national history, Czech was in the position of a minority language, or education developed in the environment of totalitarian systems.

The conception of teaching Czech language and literature was most clearly affected by these aspects:

1. general historical factors out of the school,
2. following that educational systems and the position of Czech language in the subject framework,
3. dominating linguistic and educational streams.

Some other mediating factors linked to these were:

4. the profile of the Czech language teacher, teaching methods and organisational forms of work,
5. school normative frameworks and textbooks that didactically transform the cognitive, competency and formative teaching aims.

Since the beginning of teaching the subject, the curricular and educational materials governing Czech language instruction have been guided by the then socio-political context. They were reflected in a great deal of educational aims whose structure developed dynamically (Průcha, 1978, p. 50) and which were grounded in the curriculum and textbooks.

3 A great part of this subchapter has been taken from Šmejkalová (2010; shortened).

From the historical perspective, educational aims can be divided into two big blocs. The first one is timeless because it is independent of the changes in the society: it mainly aims on developing intellectual abilities or the relationship to language and literature, also ethic and aesthetic aims and aims of national and patriotic education are included—nevertheless, these are gradually modified and often contaminated by “state” patriotism.

While timeless educational aims are relatively stable, extra educational aims have always been connected with the current establishment and its cultural-political intentions. The historical periods also differ in the extent to which the state ideology and the character of indoctrination diffuses into instruction.

Following the line of history, in the 19th century we can see the persuasive influence towards promoting love for the Emperor and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy (e.g. Binder et al., 2003). After the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, enhanced demands on patriotic education occurred. These were developed in the notion of so-called national humanism and incorporated the idea (which unfortunately occurs until now) that the school subject Czech language is able to take over the task of several other more or less disjointed scientific disciplines. The demands were the demonstration of the belief in the boundless concentration character of the national language, i.e. Czech as a school subject. The idea of national humanism was also connected with cultivation of Slavic awareness, which was supposed to be another important role of Czech language teaching.

Another key topic in the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938) was education towards civic attitudes, democratic ideals and symbols of the Republic (Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Milan Rastislav Štěpáník). Civic pride and consciousness were to be supported by texts about volunteers who fought against the Austro-Hungarian army in WWI, i.e. about the members of the Czechoslovak Legion. Later, in connection

with the deteriorating domestic and international situation, elements of national defence education were introduced in the majority of the school subjects.

A major part of the interwar period was also greatly shaped by the official ideology of Czechoslovakism. Instruction was based on the Act No. 122/1920 Coll. (the so-called Language Act; Prokop, 1926) that coined the term “Czechoslovak language”, which was the reflection of the official idea of existence of the common nation and language of Czechs and Slovaks (formed artificially as counterbalance to strong non-Slavic minorities living in the border regions of the new Republic; John, 1994). This notion was reflected not only in the name of the school subject, but it also influenced its overall conception. This school question later resulted into a politicum with unfortunate consequences in the collision of Czech and Slovak language relations at the end of the 30s of the 20th century.

During WWII (1939–1945) the extra aims were augmented by education towards positive relations to the German nation, the “Großdeutsches Reich” and the “Führer”; in the era of socialism (1948–1989) by e.g. strengthening and intensifying the proper world view and emotional education of the pupil as a socialist personality.

Textbooks are the most tangible evidence of this opinion fluctuation. Right after 1918, textbooks that celebrated the old Empire were abolished, after 1939 this was the case of the textbooks that were tied with Czechoslovak unity and the democratic ideals of the Republic. Similarly, after 1945 this happened to the textbooks that adored the fatal union of the Czech nation with the German nation and that showed any elements of national socialism. A new period came after 1948 when the main criterion of the ideo-educational aspect was the sense for building socialism and the cultural and political orientation towards the Soviet Union (see further).

Of course we cannot compare today’s democratic society to the turmoil of the last century or to the practices of the totalitarian regimes at the

time. Still, Czech language instruction has been repeatedly contaminated by certain attempts to implement extra educational elements that come outside of didactics or the academic disciplines. At present, there is a requirement to implement cross-curricular subjects like Multicultural Education, Environmental Education, Education towards Thinking in European and Global Contexts, an emphasis is put on the issue of minorities, integration of foreigners or gender equality. As a result, the curricular documents and textbooks are framed by these demands (Šmejkalová, 2011).

2 History—historical milestones influencing national language education

Svobodová et al. state that “beginnings of teaching Czech fall into the 13th century”, when “the town school, divided into two grades, came into existence: the elementary level teaching reading and writing was Czech, and the following secondary level was Latin” (Svobodová et al., 2003, p. 13). In humanism and renaissance, the foundation of the reformed church had a great impact—Jednota bratrská, founded in 1457, gradually opened its high-quality schools (bratrská škola).

Jednota bratrská and its schools are mainly connected with the name of Jan Amos Komenský (John Amos Comenius, 1592–1670), a Czech and Moravian educationalist and leader of the pansophic movement. This outstanding personality known worldwide not only put the grounds of modern language didactics, but also was the author of the principle, revolutionary in the context of Latin schools at the time, that “learning Latin is most suitable on the basis of knowledge of the mother tongue” (ibid., p. 13).

After the battle of Bílá hora (the White Mountain) in 1620 (in the area of today’s Prague), i.e. after the victory of Catholic armies, non-Catholic

intelligence was evicted from the country and forced re-catholicization of Bohemia and Moravia started. This period used to be improperly called as the “Dark Ages”; however, in reality it was the period of Czech language instruction development in the frame of Baroque-oriented educational work of educated Jesuits (e.g. Matěj Václav Šteyer; 1630–1692). Quite a significant number of Czech grammar books and dictionaries came into existence, which made it possible to base instruction on theory. Also Jesuit secondary grammar schools were of excellent quality—besides Latin (and later German) they also taught in Czech—as we know from e.g. the chronicles of the grammar school in Klatovy: “(...) throughout the existence of the Secondary Grammar School in Klatovy, Czech was used as an adequate language of instruction. Therefore Jesuits raised a great number of scholars who were at the head of the Czech National Revival” (Valeš, s.d., online). For instance, Bohuslav Balbín (1621–1688), a significant Jesuit patriotic historian, taught at Jesuit schools in Prague and Jindřichův Hradec. Jesuit grammar schools were closed down after the abolishment of the Society of Jesus after 1773.

The year that always must be mentioned in connection with Czech language instruction is 1774 as it brought the so-called Theresian school reform proclaimed by the Austrian Empress and Czech Queen Maria Theresia (ruled 1740–1780). According to František Morkes, a contemporary specialist on history of education, this reform “remains the most significant and most distinctive reform of our school system. (...) The school system, which up to then was highly selective and was based on universities, grammar schools and particular town schools, was supposed to be built on a system of public schools that would give education to the whole population. In the realisation of the reform, the overall demand for general education, which would secure further economic development of the country, intertwined with the philosophy of Enlightenment and the political interests of the state, which was already aiming to influence the thinking and way of life of all subordinates” (Morkes, 2006, online; in

wider sociolinguistic and school-political perspectives see Velčovský, 2014). Education was organised in stages according to the size and importance of the domicile. As Morkes states, in all smaller towns and all villages with a parsonage *trivial* schools (according to the three basic subjects—the so-called trivium: reading, writing and counting) were established, in bigger towns *main* schools with three classes (which extended the knowledge from trivial schools), and in Prague and Brno *normal* schools that completed the education were founded. Textbooks started to be published in a centralized way and first *praeparandas* for teacher training came into existence. This was a very important step because, as Morkes argues, until then teaching jobs were held by various unqualified individuals. As a result, the reform started the process of gradual professionalization of the teaching profession, which culminated with the establishment of separate faculties of education as parts of universities in 1946 (Morkes, 2006; also Jelínek, 1972).

Common school attendance was a revolutionary innovation that also required methodical solutions: e.g. the so-called *Methodenbuch—Methodní kniha* written by the co-author of the school reform and the Augustinian abbot Ignác Felbiger (1724–1788).

The issue of the language of instruction in schools was a sensitive problem, however. Bohemia and Moravia were part of a multinational monarchy and also the national composition of the population in the area of what today is the Czech Republic was very vivid. The usual case was that instruction was led in the language of the majority in the area (i.e. mainly in Czech or German), but due to purely pragmatic reasons (comp. the similar sociolinguistic situation e.g. in today's Belarus) instruction in German was also demanded by parents in Czech-speaking regions (see Morkes, 2006, or Velčovský, 2014).

We have already suggested that one of the reasons for introducing “compulsory” school attendance was the need to increase the population's education in connection with the political, military and econom-

ical questions. Czech language teaching was therefore soon introduced at universities and academies: in 1751 at the Military Academy in the monarchy's capital Vienna, in 1773 at the Theresian Knight Academy in Vienna, since 1785 Czech had been taught at the Viennese Engineer and Sapper Academy, and since 1775 at the Czech Language Department at the University of Vienna (Pířová, 1997). In 1791 a Czech Language Department was founded at the "more provincial" university in Prague as well.

The inspiration by the idea of liberalism (France), the influence of Enlightenment together with Maria Theresia's and her son Joseph II's reforms lead to the ideological movement that is traditionally called the National Revival. What is typical for this period is the development of national patriotism, literal Czech language, high-quality literature written in Czech, Czech culture, schools, not to forget Czech language instruction. The division of the school into lower and higher school remained, but many textbooks and teacher's books for both types of schools were written.

At higher levels of the school system, i.e. at grammar schools, the position of Czech was more complicated.⁴ Two aspects were concerned: the position and function of Czech language as a school subject in the system of subjects, and the designation of the language of instruction. Optional teaching of Czech and in Czech was possible to a certain extent. At the early beginning of the 19th century it usually had the character of private initiatives (Josef Jungmann taught in Czech at the grammar school in Litoměřice, Karel Ignác Thám at the academic grammar school in Prague, and others). In 1816 and 1818 these individual activities were supported by decrees that secured positive discrimination when searching for a job for those who knew Czech well. The legislative impact of these decrees was gradually specified until the (revolutionary) school year 1848–1849 when Czech language was declared an obligatory subject at certain Czech grammar schools, and the language of instruction in Religion, Geography,

4 The following part is cited according to Šmejkalová (2010; shortened).

History and Science. Finally, the “Exner-Bonitz” *Entwurf der Organization der Gymnasien und Realschulen in Österreich* of 16th September 1849 acknowledged the right to each nationality in the Empire for their own secondary school with their own language of instruction. In this context we need to realize that until 1848 there was no living language taught as a separate subject at secondary schools in the monarchy. What was taught was Latin (after 1819 even 11 lessons a week), Greek, Geography and History, Maths, Natural Sciences and Religion. That was in compliance with the tradition of Latin education and a residuum of the secondary schools’ sole orientation towards classic language education (e.g. Šafránek, 1913). Requests for the mother tongue to become a school subject were not therefore typical only for the Czech national emancipatory movement, but also for e.g. German intellectuals (Šmejkalová, 2010, see also secondary literature for the topic *ibid.*).

From the perspective of the field definition of the subject, it has been already claimed many times before that the didactic discourse of Czech language instruction had been a pendant to the development of international and Czech linguistics. At the beginning of the 19th century, teaching of Karl Ferdinand Becker (1775–1849) had a very strong impact. He advocated the logic-grammatical approach to language teaching stressing parsing and grammar analyses (Jelínek, 1972). Despite several more or less ephemeral anti-reactions (from the most significant let us mention e.g. the so-called agrammatical movement at the turn of the 19th and 20th century), Becker and his followers established a long-lasting tradition of language instruction. This tradition based on language analytical methods prevails until now and is so strong that schools have been struggling to get rid of it for decades. From the historical perspective, Czech language instruction in this period was under the influence of historical-comparative positivism.

Other heritage of this period is the fact that even though the subject had always been defined as unitary, in reality (in the curriculum or text-

books and in school practice) it has always been divided into two parts: language and literature (sometimes even three parts: knowledge about language, communication and style, and literature; see further). At first, literature used to be taught according to “reading books” by significant Czech writers, e.g. František Ladislav Čelakovský, or according to Josef Jungmann’s *Slovesnost*; for the current situation in textbooks see further.

After the fall of Bach’s absolutism and especially in the period of rather relaxed Belle Époque atmosphere, literary Czech and its instruction underwent a vigorous development. A new impulse for Czech language instruction then comes in 1918 when the new country is established and the whole public administration becomes entirely Czech. Not only competent mastering of mother tongue is required, but also the subject Czech language moves into the very centre of educational and research activities.

The strongest stimulus, however, came at the turn of the 20s and 30s with Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913, *Cours de linguistique générale* 1916), structuralism, Saussure’s division into the layers of the language system (*langue*) and the speech realisation (*parole*), and the thought that language is a structurally organised system of elements interlinked together. All these concepts became crucial for Czech language instruction, esp. through the work of Prague Linguistic School which set the principles of functional-structural linguistics (Šmejkalová, 2015, p. 20).

Since the beginning, teaching literature was mainly based on the historical chronological principle. It was substituted by reading texts of predominantly national authors taken from reading books or included as extra-curricular reading. As early as in the 20s and 30s, the dominating historical and bibliographical character of teaching literature was criticized by major philologists, including e.g. the Czech structuralist Jan Mukařovský (Mukařovský, 1924–1925; Cenek, 1966; or Podhajský, 2009 and others). As Podhajský states, Mukařovský required to switch the relation between literature history and reading of which the second was

subordinate to the first. He wanted literature history to be driven by the needs of reading—as a result, reading would not be fragmentary and only illustrative, but continuous and based on complete works of literature. Mukařovský was aware of the fact that such a change would lead to the reduction of literature history matter, but he was convinced that teaching would gain by that “instead of shallow guessing about the majority of authors who ever wrote in Czech, the pupils would get thorough knowledge of those who created Czech literature in the real sense of the words” (according to Podhajský, 2009, p. 101).

Yet, in 1939 comes an unprecedented historical attack—the creation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren) and the outbreak of WWII. This is a period clouded by many myths, which came into existence quite naturally immediately after the war (in detail in Šmejkalová, 2010, p. 177f.). In fact, the national-socialist ideology did not attempt to reach its aims in teaching only through simple prohibitions, but through much more sophisticated furtive indoctrination. The school system did not deviate from the general conception of creating the illusion of the cultural autonomy of the Protectorate (Červinka, 2002). This was supposed to be secured, among other things, by the fact that supervision over the schools was left in the hands of the Protectorate administration, which, however, was of course controlled by the administration of the Reich. Relative stability played in favour of the occupation power’s objectives, therefore it tolerated reduced manifestations of Czech culture and therefore Czech national sentiment was cultivated in Czech language teaching, although adapted to the concept of “the Czech nation in the scope of the Reich” (Bosák, 1969; Doležal, 1996). In connection with that, thanks to war curriculum documents (1940/41) under German supremacy, Czech had the highest lesson allocation in history.

While language instruction derived from its earlier traditions and suffered smaller regression, teaching literature history (as a “subject creating

the opinion”) was abolished by a ministerial act of 17th November 1941. Existing literature textbooks were substituted by an ideologically loaded textbook (*Nová čítanka*—the *New Reading Book*) so the subject represented a potential re-education danger as it was ingeniously elaborated in the intentions of very dangerous manipulation and hidden indoctrination (also Čeňková, 2011).

After 1945 came a complete U-turn (Kusák, 1998). The ideological basis for the new school had been put before the end of the war by the *Košice Government Programme* (*Košický vládní program*) which declared the vision of close cooperation with the Soviet Union and the Slavic orientation of Czechoslovakia. This was also supposed to be articulated in the school teaching plans.

After the communist coup in 1948, all educational successes of the interwar school were violently refuted, the unified school was established and Czech language instruction got under massive ideologization (most significantly after the so-called Stalin’s essays on language were published—Stalin, 1950). All older types of schools were eradicated, the structuralist view of teaching Czech (and linguistics) was cast aside. As a result of egalitarianism in language teaching and unified requirements for all pupils, results in Czech language teaching started to worsen distressingly. Certain resurgence of the atmosphere in the school system accompanied by a debate came in the 60s, but the promising progress was stopped in August 1968 by the invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies, which resulted into the dull period of the so-called normalisation (*Lessons from the Crisis Development*, 1971).

Table 1 (see appendix of this chapter) shows the comparison of historical L1 curricula for children of the age group 10–15 at the turn of the 60s and 70s in the following countries: the USSR (1972), East Germany (1969), Poland (1971), France (1973), Austria (1965), Switzerland (1961) and Czechoslovakia (according to Čechová, 1982). It is perfectly clear that Czech has one of the lowest lesson allocations of all the compared countries and

that the curriculum does stress knowledge about language—which is the case neither in the West-European countries nor in Poland. Surely it is here where we see the cause for the current problems Czech language teaching is facing (see further), and the cause of the division of the effect of mother tongue education in the Czech Republic and Poland, which is clearly reflected in the international surveys like PISA (Palečková et al., 2010, 2013). The table also very well illustrates how strong the tradition, which we have already mentioned several times, is. Obviously the Czech social and culturally-historical ties to Austria influenced the conception of teaching and its aims significantly.

Nevertheless, a certain benefit of this period has remained until today: in 1968, secondary grammar schools (*gymnázium*), whose curriculum is considered one of the best in history, were established again. The systemization of the subject's content was based on stylistic principles, and language culture became the determining term. Caring for language culture embodied developing stylistic skills and the ability to evaluate and choose language phenomena according to the communicative function.

The communication-pragmatic turn in linguistics that came at the turn of the 60s and 70s was of crucial importance for Czech language instruction: instead of analysing the abstract system of the language phenomena, teaching started to focus on functioning of the language in concrete communication situations, and pragmatic aspects that these situations are accompanied by. Also in textbooks we could observe new approaches towards certain parts of the content, esp. in syntax and stylistics. The emphasis on communicative understanding of language education intensified, which prevails until now.

After the liberation of 1945, literature teaching got back to its usual character based on literature history and bibliography. Even though modern literature didactics stresses the experience of the text in literature teaching, and shifts teaching towards the literature work itself—its recep-

tion and interpretation (Lederbuchová, 1995, 1997, 2010)—it has been only recently when understanding literature teaching as an expressive and aesthetic field has got into teachers' and specialists' awareness (Hník, 2014).

The Velvet Revolution of 1989 represents another important milestone, yet, we would end our explications here as the subsequent period is the topic of the following chapter.

3 Current state of teaching Czech

3.1 Curriculum

The beginning of the new millennium meant a significant change for the school system in the Czech Republic and led to the school reform that resulted in complete reorganisation of the curriculum. The centralized syllabi (*osnovy*) were eradicated and since 2007 the basic curricular document in the Czech Republic is the *Framework Education Programme* (further referred to as FEP; in Czech *Rámcový vzdělávací program*), which was implemented by the Act No. 561/2004 Coll. (the School Act). The FEPs define the binding scope of education for the individual stages (FEP for preschool education, FEP for elementary education, and FEP for secondary education—for grammar schools and individual fields of vocational education). The FEPs state the overall educational conception and objectives, the expected outcomes in individual educational areas, cross-curricular subjects and key competencies, and also provide the framework curriculum timetable. The FEPs are only a general framework that all schools must adhere to, but the concrete shape of the curriculum is formed by each school in the country in the *School Education Programmes* (SEP). While the FEPs represent the state level of the curriculum, the SEPs represent

the school level. This means that schools have quite high autonomy when it comes to selection of the matter and the manner of its delivery to the pupils.

What this meant in practice when the reform was being executed has been described particularly thoroughly (e.g. Rysová, 2006/07; Janík et al., 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Straková et al., 2013; Procházka & Žlábková, 2013; Dvořák et al., 2010, 2015, and many others; even special volumes of scientific journals were published—e.g. *Pedagogická orientace*, 2013, vol. 23, no. 5)—of anything let us just mention that the frameworks are so general that many teachers were not prepared for such a huge change, naturally they were (and still are) not prepared for being in the role of curriculum developers, and while preparing the SEPs they got so confused that many of them just rewrote the original syllabi. To avoid misperceptions, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic later issued the so-called standards (*standardy*; for the fundamental subjects, i.e. Czech, Maths and English) that were supposed to precise the expected outcomes in the FEP. Unfortunately, the puzzlement at the beginning led to the situation that the curricular reform did not mean much alteration in the reality of the educational process in schools (comp. Janík et al., 2010a) and did not really meet the expected results. However, it is necessary to note that the opportunities for the schools to change even the fundamentals they stand on still exist, the decisions are only in the hands of the teachers and school headmasters.

Even though it is nowhere declared officially, Czech is one of the core subjects—in official documents (the curriculum, final pupil reports, class registers, etc.), we can always find it on the first place. In the FEP, Czech Language and Literature, as the subject is officially called, together with Foreign Language and Second Foreign Language is part of the educational area Language and Language Communication. The curriculum respects the historical division of the subject into language, communication and style, and literature. Before the FEP was implemented, quite a lively dis-

cussion about this division occurred (comp. the discussion in *Český jazyk a literatura* or *Učitelské noviny* between 2001–2003). There were certain teachers and academics who said the subject should separate into two. They argued that literature is a discipline of aesthetic character and therefore it should be placed among Music and Art. On the other hand, the opponents claimed that literature is aesthetic work with language, which binds the two components together. In general, we can say that the philosophy of the FEP (following the modern trends in education) was rather to integrate than divide. Finally, the latter opinion prevailed and the subject has been left as one—*Czech Language and Literature*—still with the autonomy given to the schools if they feel the subject should be restructured.

As we have said, the FEP defines the framework curriculum timetable—Table 2 shows the minimal number of lessons for Mother Tongue and Foreign Language teaching on the primary, lower- and upper-secondary level. Schools also have dispensable lessons that they can devote to any of the subjects in the timetable—this means that if they decide to increase the number of lessons for Czech, the number of lessons might be even higher.

Table 2 Minimal number of lessons for Czech language and foreign language teaching at primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary level (according to FEP for elementary education and FEP for grammar schools—RVP ZV, 2013, and RVP G, 2007)

Educational Areas	Educational Fields	Primary	Lower-secondary	Upper-secondary
		Grades 1–5	Grades 6–9	Grades 10–13
		Minimum average number of teaching hours		
Language and Language Communication	Czech Language and Literature	35	15	12
	Foreign Language	9	12	12
	Second Foreign Language	-	6	12

At the lower-secondary level, Czech Language and Literature is usually taught in 4 lessons a week, two are devoted to language, 1 to literature and 1 to style / communication; at the upper-secondary school, the subject usually has 3 lessons, 2 are for literature and 1 for language and style / communication. The low number of lessons and the amount of (literature) matter at the upper-secondary school often leads to the situation when language and style / communication teaching is neglected. This ignorance or skipping of language and communication education leads to unsatisfactory communication skills of the upper-school leavers, which is reflected in the results of the essays at the *maturita* (school-leaving examination—see further).

In all branches the curriculum notably stresses the communicative approach. In teaching language and communication / style it keeps the traditional presumption that the basic condition of effective communication is thorough understanding of the language system in all layers of its description—in phonetics, morphology, word formation, lexicology and syntax: “knowledge of morphology, principles of Czech word formation and syntax, knowledge of clause elements (...), functional sentence perspective, communicative sentence types” etc. (FEP for grammar schools, p. 14, 15). In literature, the FEP quite widely accents knowledge about literature—literature history and literature theory: “extensive knowledge of the structure of literary texts, literary genres, critical theory terminology, vital features of the basic periods in the development of Czech as well as world literature, important artistic movements, name their main representatives, characterise and interpret their contribution to the development of literature and literary thought” etc. (*ibid.*). In general, we can say that the Czech curriculum concentrates on knowledge about language and literature quite extensively.

Yet, at the same time stress is put on the fact that all acquired knowledge must have clear overlap into pupils’ communication practice—for the first time the curriculum speaks about the development of communi-

cation competency. Especially FEP for lower-secondary education specifically states very concrete aims in the area of reading, writing, listening and speaking; as the curriculum says: “Language instruction provides the pupil with such knowledge and skills that make it possible for him/her to perceive various kinds of messages, understand them, express himself/herself appropriately as well as utilise the results of his/her learning effectively” (FEP for elementary education, p. 17), or that the pupil shall “apply his/her knowledge of the language norm when creating language expression *adequate to the communication situation*” (ibid., p. 22, italics by S. Š.), which reflects principles of Czech functional linguistics postulated in the 30s of the 20th century (see above). In literature, interpretation of texts is seen as a communicative process between the author, the text and the reader, which reflects modern theories in field didactics of literature. Still, the Czech curriculum does not focus enough on the development in the area of emotions and attitudes as for instance the curriculum in England does: “love of literature, reading for enjoyment” (NCE, p. 2).

3.2 Textbooks

The year 1989 meant a complete change on the textbook market. From the situation before the Velvet Revolution when only one textbook line from a single publishing house was used in schools, we have got into the situation when for Czech language there are 9 textbook lines for primary, 6 for lower-secondary and 4 for upper-secondary school⁵. At the primary and lower-secondary level, textbooks are provided for the pupils by the schools (i.e. for free by the state) and it only depends on the schools (the teachers) which textbook they decide for. The state still has control over the textbook market through the system of endorsements (*doložka*) which are given by the Ministry of Education. Provided the textbook gets

5 <http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/schvalovaci-dolozky-ucebnic-2013>; cit. 25. 2. 2016.

the endorsement from the Ministry, it is put on the list of textbooks for the given school level and it becomes officially approved for usage in the school for a certain period of time.

On the one hand, this system again gives a great deal of autonomy to the schools, on the other hand, the textbooks are of different quality, which brings certain problems especially in the area of current didactic approaches to working with the matter—even though some of the textbooks are written by teachers, all of them follow the deductive approach. This means that the analytical tradition in teaching Czech that we have already described is being petrified even more.

For literature teaching there are reading books and various reference books that resemble lists of authors and their works with a short characterization of the period they wrote in. Teachers very often substitute these with their own texts and materials as the quality of the books varies quite significantly.

While textbook research has a strong tradition in Czech educational science (comp. Průcha, 1987; 1998; Maňák & Knecht, 2007; Knecht & Janík, 2008; and many others), currently it is not a topical issue anymore—because of the high autonomy of schools partly in terms of choice of the textbook they want, and partly in terms of choice of the matter and its structure they can decide for—in other words, in terms of creating their own school curriculum.

3.3 Practice in schools

Czech language is considered a central subject; it concentrates all other subjects and has a considerable impact on pupils' achievement in other subjects and real life.

As we have already said, the tradition is very strong in the Czech school. Therefore the logic-grammatical approach to language teaching still sustains and utility in communication is not properly reflected (comp.

Štěpáník, 2014, 2016; Šalamounová, 2013). In literature, literature history and literature theory plays a big role.

The current topics of Czech language didactics can be summarized in the following points:

- role of grammar, approaches to grammar teaching;
- psychodidactic and ontodidactic approaches;
- selection of the content;
- developing reading literacy;
- approaches to working with text—text interpretation;
- communication—developing skills;
- (self-)evaluation in teaching;
- standardized testing (maturita), PISA results;
- motivation;
- Czech in a multicultural class—Czech as L2;
- “New literacies”—ICT, media, social networks;
- gender differences in achievement, etc.

Even though the current Czech language didactics is focused on re-searching the educational reality, still a complex study that would describe and analyse the school practice of teaching Czech is missing. What we know from partial studies is that Czech language teaching does not bring satisfactory outcomes. Language knowledge and stylistic / communication skills of upper-secondary-school leavers are not good (Kostečka, 2012a, 2012b; Čechová, 2013; our own teaching experience), pupils in general have basic expression problems (Rysová, 2006/07; our own teaching experience), the PISA results show that reading literacy of pupils at the lower-secondary level have the tendency to fall under the average (Palečková et al., 2010, 2013). The content and structure of the subject is so rigid that the traditional teaching model, which we have already described and whose content is derived from grammar theory, still prevails and is rather resistant to any kind of change (about that not only for Czech see Janík et al., 2010a).

Czech language practice still prioritizes the cognitive aim to the communication aim (comp. Rysová, 2007/08; Kostečka, 2012b, etc.), the matter is improperly structured (esp. in terms of the pupils' level of cognitive development and competency at individual levels) and strategies for its delivery to the pupils are mostly based on transmission (comp. Šalamounová, 2013; Štěpáník, 2016). Czech language is one of the least popular subjects at lower-secondary school, which is a long-lasting phenomenon (comp. Pavelková et al., 2010). Therefore the topic of a complete revision of the conception of teaching Czech is highly relevant (comp. Štěpáník & Chvál, 2016, or Hájková et al., 2013, 2014, 2015).

3.4 Standardised tests and examinations

Unlike many other countries, the Czech Republic has only one standardized examination guaranteed by the state throughout primary and secondary education, and that is the final examination at the end of upper-secondary school—the *maturita*. Even though there have been attempts to introduce unified comprehensive tests in the course of lower-secondary school, (luckily) these plans have not been completed. Except the *maturita*, common entrance examinations for upper-secondary schools are being promoted; in principle, these substitute the control of the final outcomes at the end of compulsory education, i.e. the end of lower-secondary school—however, they are taken only by pupils that continue their education at upper-secondary schools.

The Czech Language and Literature *maturita* examination is compulsory for all pupils at the end of upper-secondary school, and is characterized as a complex examination—it consists of three parts: (i) didactic test, (ii) essay, and (iii) oral part. Ad i) The didactic test has the form of a test comprising various types of closed and open tasks, the time limit for the test is 60 minutes. Ad ii) The essay's aim is to check the pupils'

ability to create a coherent meaningful text in their mother tongue. The pupil chooses one out of 10 assignments which cover up various topics and genres. The task of the pupil is to create a text of approximately 250 words in 90 minutes. At the moment of writing this chapter, the essays are assessed at the schools and there are three main criteria for their assessment: creating a text according to the task, language accuracy and text composition.

There has been a long discussion about assessment of the essays—in 2012 a centralized system of assessment was introduced for which a panel of specially trained examiners was set up. On the one hand, this meant transparent and objective assessment of the pupils' works, on the other hand, it meant high failure rate—only about 70% candidates passed. Protests of the unsuccessful pupils and their parents occurred immediately, which was followed by an unsystematic political decision—the then Minister of Education decided to transfer the assessment back to the schools. This obviously means that comparability of the results is problematic, even though the teachers who assess the essays have special training. However, in March 2016 the Parliament passed a bill that centralizes the assessment of the essays again.

Ad iii) The oral part tests practical skills in the area of communication and text analysis. The pupils are asked to comment on and interpret an artistic and non-artistic text. The pupil submits a list of 20 literary works that he / she had selected from the school canon approximately two months before the examination. There is no central list of literary works that pupils must select from, no set reading list of works that pupils would be obliged to read during their upper-secondary-school studies. Each school creates its own canon, i.e. recommended reading list. At the examination itself, the pupils select a text by lot, first, they characterize the literary text with an abstract from the book, including the literature history context, and then analyse the non-artistic text.

The requirements for the maturita are defined by the *Catalogue of*

*Requirements for the Common Part of the Maturita Examination*⁶; the information is updated on the maturita website⁷, where past papers are also available. The tests are prepared by Cermat, an institution that is directly subjected to the Ministry of Education.

No tables that would order the schools according to the maturita results are created, which can be considered enormous positive. The maturita does not serve as an entrance examination for universities either—the law, however, states that each university applicant must have passed the maturita examination.

There is a single examination for all pupils in the maturita year, which means that secondary grammar schools and vocational schools have the same final examination. This is heavily criticized especially by secondary grammar schools that would prefer the requirements to heighten. On the other hand, it is necessary to say that this form of the maturita (introduced in 2011) can be praised for stressing work with texts and through that interpretation of texts at school.

4 Teacher training

Since the period of praeparandas at the end of the 18th century, Czech language teacher training has covered a long distance. In the half of the 19th century, the so-called *teacher institutes* were established. While they were for training teachers of lower education levels, upper-secondary school teachers were trained at universities. Teacher institutes were four-year upper-secondary schools that trained future primary and lower-secondary school teachers (*obecná* and *měšťanská škola*), and they were very popular. While in 1869 there were only two Czech institutes (in Prague and Hradec Králové), in 1934 there were 45 of them all over Czecho-

6 Available online at <http://www.novamaturita.cz/katalogy-pozadavku-1404033138.html>; cit. 25. 2. 2016.

7 www.novamaturita.cz

slovakia. As the graduates were expected to teach at lower school levels, in Czech students were trained especially for the language part. Therefore education in Czech had one of the highest numbers of lessons and was on a very high level (Šmejkalová, 2010, p. 145n.).

After 1946 when *faculties of education* (*pedagogická fakulta*) were founded, teacher institutes were closed down. Faculties of education have gone through many reorganisations, and the situation settled down only after 1976 when they were granted the right to confer qualifications also on upper-secondary school teachers.

At present, the situation differs according to the accreditation of each concrete faculty: according to the latest statistics there are at least 9 universities that train Czech language teachers (in total 14 faculties—5 faculties of arts, 9 faculties of education). All 9 faculties of education train lower-secondary school teachers, 4 of them upper-secondary school teachers as well. All faculties of arts train teachers for upper-secondary schools with automatic inclusion of the qualification for lower-secondary schools (Šmejkalová, 2015, p. 26).

To become a fully qualified teacher in the Czech Republic one must have a Master's degree, i.e. four or five years of university studies depending on the particular programme. The implementation of the Bologna system meant a change in the teacher training programmes in the Czech Republic—instead of the five-year undivided programmes, three-year Bachelor's degree and two-year follow-on Master's degree programmes were introduced. This seems to have brought more drawbacks than benefits (e.g. Mareš & Beneš, 2013) and therefore there has been an on-going discussion about shifting back to what the teacher training programmes had been before (e.g. the University of Hradec Králové has returned to the long-cycle programmes in the new accreditation). Teacher training programmes are usually offered in two-subject combinations (Czech is most often combined with History, Foreign languages or Social studies).

5 Czech as L2 / foreign language

It is again due to the above mentioned historical influences that teaching Czech as L2 has had a long tradition in Czech lands, which are located in the very intersection point of Central Europe.

With no doubt the most important segment of this area were the Czech-German and German-Czech relations (Velčovský, 2014). Mainly the question of the proportion of Czech and German as land languages was concerned. Already the provincial act of 1866 tried to establish equal representation of both languages. The act said that “both provincial languages in the Czech Kingdom have equal right in schools as languages of instruction” (“at secondary schools ... where the language of instruction is Czech, German is a compulsory subject, and likewise in German schools shall it be Czech”; Šmejkalová, 2010, p. 18). However, this arrangement did not last long and already in 1868 the second provincial language was declared optional (*ibid.*).

After 1918 the language practice was regulated by the above mentioned Language Act, which also specified the rights of minority languages. For school communication it declared that “instruction in all schools that are set up by members of minority groups is conducted in their language” (*ibid.*, p. 44).

The unsteady language situation was consolidated by the act of 8th June 1923 about teaching the state language and languages of minority groups that proclaimed the state language (i.e. Czechoslovak) compulsory at all upper-secondary schools in Czechoslovakia with no difference in language of instruction (i.e. also at German, Hungarian and other schools).

According to the data, in 1934 there were all together 33 classical upper-secondary grammar schools (*klasické gymnázium*; 19 Czechoslovak, 13 German and 1 Hungarian), 147 general upper-secondary grammar schools (*reálné gymnázium*; 108 Czechoslovak, 28 German, 6 Hungarian,

1 Polish, 4 Subcarpathian), 56 reformed upper-secondary grammar schools (*reformní gymnázium*; 38 Czechoslovak, 17 German and 1 Hungarian), and 59 science upper-secondary schools (*reálka*; 40 Czechoslovak and 19 German; *ibid.*, p. 44). It is clear that the biggest group of schools with a different language of instruction than Czech was German (there even were towns that had German schools only—e.g. Jablonec nad Nisou, Mariánské Lázně or Vrchlabí). Special curriculum was designed and also several textbook lines for teaching Czech were written. The didactic issues connected with teaching Czech as L2 disappeared after WWII when the German population was expatriated from Czechoslovakia and German schools were shut down (*ibid.*, p. 231).

Social changes after 1989 have brought the issue in a different context, esp. in connection with migrant waves affecting Europe. The main aim of teaching Czech as L2 has been to integrate pupils-foreigners into the Czech educational system. The first task was to develop the description for each level of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, until now it is a problem widely elaborated including incorporation of corpus linguistics (acquisition corpuses). There are several researches on didactics and sociolinguistics, new textbooks of Czech for foreigners come into existence, teaching aids and didactic strategies helping the integration of the pupil into the educational process are being developed.

There are 14 officially recognized national minorities in the Czech Republic: Belarussians, Bulgarians, Croats, Hungarians, Germans, Poles, Slovaks, Serbs, Roma, Rusyns, Russians, Greeks, Ukrainians, and the Vietnamese. Unlike foreigners, members of the national minorities are citizens of the Czech Republic. The law grants them certain rights if certain conditions are fulfilled, e.g. the right for education in their language—in the school year of 2013/2014, this was the case for about 30 municipalities in the Karviná and Frýdek-Místek districts in the north-east of the country, where there are schools whose language of instruction is Polish

(Velčovský, 2014/15, p. 228); these schools are entitled to the matura examination in Polish as well.

Focusing on migrants, i.e. citizens of other countries than the Czech Republic, the number of foreigners living in the Czech Republic is about 4%. Children of foreigners attend Czech schools, in the school year of 2013/2014, there were about 1.8% pupils-foreigners (i.e. 15,109 pupils). Most of them were Ukrainians, Slovaks, the Vietnamese and Russians (according to official statistics cited in Velčovský, 2014/15, p. 228).

As Velčovský (ibid.) states, it is important to note that the Czech Republic does not operate with the concept of nationality, but citizenship—“We are not “the state of the Czech nation”, but “the state of the citizens of the Czech Republic” (ibid., p. 229), which is an important factor for the integration policy.

It is also worth mentioning that the Czech Republic has a very well developed support system for the Czech communities living abroad and a full programme for promoting Czech language and culture in abroad. The *Programme to support the Czech cultural heritage* has three main parts: first, the government sends lecturers of Czech language and literature to universities in foreign countries all around the world, second, it sends teachers to compatriot communities abroad⁸, third, it provides Czech language courses to compatriots in the Czech Republic (Czech language summer school that is almost completely paid for by the government).

The topic of Czech as the L2 and foreign language is so wide and deep that it would suffice a whole monograph—from the newest on this issue see e.g. Hájková (2014).

8 Currently (August 2016) there are 40 Czech language lectorates in 25 countries of 4 continents (Europe, Asia, Africa, America), and 14 teachers at the compatriot communities (in Europe, South and North America and Australia; according to <http://www.dzs.cz/cz/program-podpory-ceskeho-kulturniho-dedictvi-v-zahranici/>, cit. 5. 8. 2016).

6 Discussion and conclusion

The Czech Republic is a part of the globalized society and so is the Czech school. Modern trends in education influence the way of language and literature teaching to a similar extent as in the other V4 countries. From the explications above it is clear that traditions are very strong in Czech schools, but we can see that many teachers realize the need for certain changes—in terms of the content (which must reflect pupils' communication needs in the society of the 21st century) and in terms of the methods and forms of work (which stress the activity of the pupil and respect his / her personality).

To make these transformations happen, the education system needs stability (esp. independence on the political situation at the time), and a systematic approach which would exclude unconsidered experiments. But this, we believe, is common for all V4 countries.

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Table 1 The comparison of historical L1 curricula for children of the age group 10–15 at the turn of the 60s and 70s (according to Čechová, 1982)

	Objective for L1 teaching (desired outcomes): grammar	Subject structure	Number of weekly lessons per study cycle (together/ language/ literature)	Number of lessons devoted to syntax / morphology / word formation / phonetics / orthography / semantics
USSR	YES (similar to the Czechoslovak curriculum)	Language and literature teaching are designed as two separate subjects.	32 / 21 / 11	148 / 271 / 48 / 10 / 20
East Germany	YES (grammar as the means of improving communication skills, semantic insight)	Language and literature teaching are bound together in one subject.	29 / 16 / 13	83 / 28 / 5 / - / 6
Poland	YES (emphasis on semantics and functions in the language + (lektura!))	ditto	24 / 13 / 11	lessons not differentiated
France	YES, an integrated approach to language teaching and literature	ditto	22–23 (lessons not differentiated)	lessons not differentiated
Austria	YES (overall, very similar to the Czechoslovak curriculum)	ditto	21–25 (lessons not differentiated)	lessons not differentiated
Switzerland	YES (similar to the Czechoslovak curriculum)	ditto	30 (lessons not differentiated)	lessons not differentiated
Czechoslovakia	YES	ditto	21 / 13 / 8	77 / 123 / 27 / 6 / 10

Teaching Hungarian Language and Literature in Hungary

Réka Sólyom—János Imre Heltai—Tibor M. Pintér

1 Politics—school policy influencing the school system and national language education

János Imre Heltai

In Hungary, just like in the rest of Europe, the concept of language has been developing together with the birth of the modern nation states. In parallel with standardization, language appeared as an entity: we started to think of it as an abstracted autonomous unit which can be interpreted without the agency of the speakers (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011, p. 4). In this way, linguistics played an important role, too, in the processes of the development of the nation states (ibid.). This standardized language, which is interpreted without speakers and before its use (Pennycook, 2010), was able to appear as a structure—as something that has variations and layers. The central variation constructed as the result of standardization is the one that can be called *national language*.

This term, however, is quite rarely used in present-day Hungary both in a public-political context and in linguistic texts. This derives from the linguistic discourse of the past forty years. Published in 1968, the so-called “academic” descriptive grammar, on which the majority of today’s teachers “grew up”, mentions the concept of national language (ed. Rácz, 1968, p. 464), and it places it in opposition with the other main “type” of Hungarian language: *vernaculars*, that is, the dialects. Twenty years later, this opposition became the reason why the term

became faded: it seemed to be insupportable that (regional) variations spoken by people were not parts of the “national language”. The revised *model of language stratification* has thus removed the term: it talks about (written and spoken) standard besides regional and social variations (Benkő, 1988, cf. all this Tolcsvai Nagy, 2004, p. 75–76.). Since the 90s, *sociolinguistic discourse* has been examining the standard from a different ideological point; it pointed out its elitism (Kontra, 1992), and both in public life and education it argued for linguistic patience (Sándor, 2002) and an *additive language pedagogy* that acknowledges other language variations than standard in schools (Kontra, 2010, p. 55–87).

So, national language as a term was de-emphasized, but the ideology of *standard* still has a defining role in Hungary: even sociolinguistic researches interpret the variations of language use and speaking methods in the context of one single variation that is institutionally highlighted and is supposed to be homogeneous (Bodó, 2014).

The situation regarding the terminology is similar in the areas of education and public policy. It is typical, for example, that the *Fundamental Law of Hungary* (the constitution) accepted in 2011 does not mention the concept of national language (Fundamental Law of Hungary, 25th April 2011). The introduction of the Fundamental Law, the so-called *National Avowal* includes the following sentence: “We commit to promoting and safeguarding our heritage, our unique language, Hungarian culture, the languages and cultures of nationalities living in Hungary (...)” (The Fundamental Law of Hungary, National Avowal, p. 2). Further on, the Fundamental Law proclaims that “in Hungary the official language shall be Hungarian”. (Article H (1), p. 5).

The documents that determine educational policy show a similar picture. The curricula in Hungary are three-levelled. The principles and main directions of education are defined by the Hungarian *National Curriculum*, while the also central *Framework Curricula* contain the aims of education and training, the system of subjects, the topics and contents

broken down to school types. Schools can prepare their local curricula on the basis of the above. Based on the recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council from 18th December 2006 (2006/962/EK), the National Curriculum defines key competences and, correspondingly, areas of literacy. One of these is “mother tongue”, in this case Hungarian language and literature. These documents consequently refer to Hungarian language as mother tongue, and not as national language, and they do not separate the teaching of language from that of literature. However, these documents are characterized by the view which does not think of language as an action and interaction between people, but imagines it as a system, a structure abstracted from reality.

For example, the National Curriculum, corresponding to the recommendations of the European Parliament and the European Council (18th December 2006, 2006/962/EK), uses the key competences, for example mother tongue communication, as the basic principle of the curriculum. Mother tongue communication in its interpretation is “the process and result of the acquisition of the mother tongue” (Magyar Közlöny, 2012, p. 10652). In the further parts, the National Curriculum determines areas of literacy and education, among which Hungarian language and literature is the first one. The basis of the general definition of requirements is the concept of language being a system: “the safe knowledge of the mother tongue as a system and the possession of mother tongue competences foster active participation in the communities of society...” “The basic task of mother tongue education is learning the language as a changing system” (ibid., p. 10660).

2 History—historical milestones influencing the national language education

Tibor M. Pintér

The historical milestones of the Hungarian language are influenced by history: the main pillars were laid by the acts defining the history of Central Europe. This section tries to catch those main issues which helped in forming the education of the national language(s)—with special emphasis on the Hungarian language⁹.

The early beginnings of the systematic education of Hungarian in this area go back to the era of Maria Theresia and her son Joseph II and Franz I, who facilitated the education of national languages (Ratio Educationis in 1777 and Ratio Educationis II in 1806 by Franz I). The teaching of Hungarian started to be widely spread at the turn of 18th–19th century. In March 1789 a bill on Obligatory education of Hungarian language was presented (in Trefort, 1998; Kemény G., 1952), which aimed the support of education of the national languages from the highest ranked politicians (although it is not relevant from the point of view of the study, it should be mentioned that Hungarian was taught also outside the Carpathian Basin in diasporic societies, but mainly in weekend schools or in forms of language courses).

Notions for systematic education were strengthened in the aftermath of the above cited bill written by Ágoston Trefort. The first academic background, the first department of Hungarian language was established in 1806 in Vienna. The years of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy meant progress in the education in lower grade schools. Deeper structured changes could be made only in the second Hungarian Monarchy (1919–1945) with the help of ministers Kuno Klebelsberg (Minister of Public Education and Religion, 1922–1931) and Bálint Hóman (Minister of Public Education and Religion, 1932–1942).

9 The following paragraphs are prepared upon Nádor, 2002, p. 105–165.

The first comprehensive and royally sanctioned code of Hungarian education under the title *The System of Education and Complete Instruction in Hungary and Incorporated Provinces* (Ratio Educationis Totiusque Rei Literariae per Regnum Hungariae et Provincias Eidem Adnexas) came out in 1777 (cf. Kornis, 1932, p. 18). It should be taken as the first grade in the modern educational era of teaching of Hungarian; but the education of vernacular Hungarian could only be widely spread after the Ratio Educationis II (1806). Although the two decrees started a new era with the legal background, the *de facto* situation was not as easy as the act officially allowed (e.g. there was a lack of teachers teaching Hungarian)—and one should bear in mind that the official language in Hungary until 1844 was Latin, although Hungarian has been the official language since 1836. Hungarian language became the only official language in 1844, which gave a new chance for education: new materials and methodologies could be prepared.

After the Trianon Treaty all national languages were endorsed, but this meant a slight backsliding in education—all national languages were strengthened: e.g. teachers in the area inhabited by certain nationalities were obliged to know and teach the national languages, not Hungarian (this was followed by the acts and decrees in 1923, with forcing the knowledge of smaller national languages).

Tensions in education cumulated after World War II, where nations and nationalities were pushed into the background. As the regulations were to minimize the national and ethnic relations in education, education of the state language (as Hungarian) could rise.

The latest changes in education came after the fall of the communist regime in the early 1990s. The status of Hungarian, as well as its teaching were strengthened: although nations and ethnics were given wider rights in education, the position of Hungarian was remarkably established. The nationalistic notions of the governments helped the education (not the system, rather the position of the Hungarian language), which led to

publishing new textbooks and to the possibility of the open market. New publishing houses could be established and textbooks with cutting-edge methodology could be published.

The education of the Hungarian nation (and language) is regulated by several laws and acts (the main ones are listed in the *Textbooks* part). The importance of Hungarian and the education of Hungarian language are outlined in the most important act of Hungary, *The New Fundamental Law of Hungary*. It states that “in Hungary the official language shall be Hungarian” (Article H, p. 1). The Article XI is about the possibilities of Hungarian education in Hungarian language, which gives a strong basis for education for the upcoming years:

Article XI

(1) Every Hungarian citizen shall have the right to education.

(2) Hungary shall ensure this right by extending and generalising public education, by providing free and compulsory primary education, free and generally accessible secondary education, and higher education accessible to everyone according to his or her abilities, and by providing financial support as provided for by an Act to those receiving education.

(3) An Act may provide that financial support of higher education studies shall be subject to participation for a definite period in employment and/or to exercising for a definite period of entrepreneurial activities, regulated by Hungarian law.

3 Current state of teaching Hungarian

3.1 Curriculum

Réka Sólyom

This chapter focuses on the basic concepts of the National Core Curriculum (*Nemzeti Alaptanterv* in Hungarian) concerning teaching Hungarian language for pupils and students with Hungarian mother tongue.

Among the *Principles and Goals* (p. 28–29) of teaching Hungarian language and literature, the National Core Curriculum highlights the importance of the mother tongue: “Language forms, preserves and conveys culture; it is the medium, prerequisite and primary tool of human communication, thinking, learning and self-knowledge. The mother tongue plays a key role in the formation of the sense of national and cultural identity, of awareness and expressive ability and of ethical, aesthetic, historical and critical thinking. (...) The adequate knowledge of one’s mother tongue promotes the acquisition of foreign languages” (National Core Curriculum, p. 28).

At first, the National Core Curriculum summarises the most important Principles and Goals of teaching Hungarian language and literature. The following summary focuses on these principles and goals.

“The mastery of the mother tongue as a system and skills related to the mother tongue promote active participation in the communities of the society and play a decisive role in the creation, discussion and sharing of the values of the society as well as in their creative dissemination. The adequate knowledge of one’s mother tongue promotes the acquisition of foreign languages.

Education in the mother tongue affects and supports the acquisition of the other subject areas; consequently, the development of the mother

tongue competence is a task for all subject areas” (National Core Curriculum, p. 28).

These goals harmonise with the opinion of McGroarty, who emphasises: “Raising the language awareness of all participants is a place to start, but increased awareness must be coupled with increased opportunity for the practice and development of valued forms and functions of language” (McGroarty, 1996, p. 36).

The National Core Curriculum lists seven *Development Tasks* (p. 29–38), among which linguistic and literary competences can be found (National Core Curriculum, p. 29):

1. Speech Skills; the comprehension, interpretation and creation of oral texts.
2. Reading; the comprehension of written texts.
3. Writing; text creation.
4. The development of learning ability.
5. General mother tongue skills; knowledge of the mother tongue.
6. Literary culture; the interpretation of works of literature.
7. The development of judgement and the sense of ethics, aesthetics and history.

The National Core Curriculum lists the development tasks in charts, which refer to the different age-groups and grades. As for the most important basic tasks concerning teaching Hungarian, the following prerequisites are listed in points 1–5:

Concerning the topic of Speech Skills; the comprehension, interpretation and creation of oral texts, in Grades 1–4, the development of proper sound production, speech breathing and articulation is important (p. 29), while in Grades 5–12, producing well-formed, linguistically high-quality speech and proper articulation as well as observing and using the appropriate communicative tools (e.g. stress, intonation, pitch etc.) are to be learnt (p. 29). In Grades 7–8, argumentation techniques (e.g. rephrasing one’s own opinion and reproducing others’ opinion in given situation)

are to be practiced, and they are to be developed during Grades 9–12 by defending and correcting one's own opinion, recognising manipulative intentions, and cooperating in group discussions and debates (p. 30). Concerning the topic of discussion and debate, a group of exercises can be found in Sólyom (2011b), where cooperative and communicative exercises (e.g. brainstorming, writing applications, dispute etc.) for the topic *Rhetoric in Practice* are listed.

The second field, Reading; the comprehension of written texts, consists of the following competences concerning Hungarian language: in Grades 1–4, learning the symbols of the writing system as well as text comprehension with vocabulary enrichment is the main task. Recognizing relatively simple images and figures in literary texts (simile, repetition, climax) is important, too, just like phrasing one's own opinion in written and oral form (the latter is listed for Grades 5–6 as well) (p. 31). For Grades 5–12, independent reading and comprehension of printed and electronic literary texts and interpreting figures and illustrations are crucial competences (p. 31). Recognising different genres, styles, motivations and behavioural patterns in literary and non-literary texts is an important task to reach for each age group (p. 31).

The field of Writing; text creation features plenty of linguistic skills: writing compositions; pronunciation exercises, writing words whose orthography and pronunciation are similar or different; syllable practice; analysis of word forms are required from Grades 1–4 (p. 32). For Grades 5–6, improvement of writing skills (e.g. writing short texts; basic knowledge of orthography); for Grades 7–8, note-taking; preparing presentations and opinions; norm-based use of existing knowledge of language and orthography; for Grades 9–12, highlighting the gist of a text during note-taking; text creation in all major fields of social (community) life in paper-based and electronic genres; conscious use of the experience gained about the different stylistic value of linguistic elements in compositions and text creation are the most important requirements (p. 32). Concerning the

system of various texts and sources, the crucial tasks for Grades 1–4, learning about and applying the basics of material collection and systematization, for Grades 5–6, collecting and organizing the material of short reports with the use of various printed (and electronic) sources, for Grades 9–12, preparation for the writing of texts that require independent work and the collection of a large amount of material (p. 32).

Taking a look at the field of General mother tongue skills; knowledge of the mother tongue, essential tasks for teaching and learning Hungarian as a mother tongue are revealed.

According to the different age groups, these are the following: within the topic of linguistic units, for Grades 1–4, recognizing linguistic and grammatical phenomena on the basis of practical experience (sounds, letters, syllables, words, word stems, affixes, sentences, texts) is important (p. 34). For Grades 5–6, detecting simple systemic links between linguistic elements, for Grades 7–8, observing structural and semantic links between linguistic units, and observing the role of linguistic units in texts in communication are crucial tasks (p. 34). From Grades 9–12, application of grammatical knowledge, and a multi-faceted approach to language (language as a system of signs, language and thinking, language and action, language and creativity, language types) is required. (Exercises for linguistic change and creativity are offered e.g. in Sólyom, 2011a).

Within the field of semantics, the main requirements are the following: from Grades 1–4, interpreting and using word meanings, phrases and idioms in oral and written compositions, from Grades 5–6, the mastery of mapping the relations between the meanings of words (e.g. polysemy), from Grades 7–8, creative exercises related to the meaning of words, from Grades 9–12, mapping of the meanings and meaning relations that arise from the meanings of the linguistic units and structures of the text or are created with non-verbal tools of communication; independent use of basic semantic and pragmatic concepts in the critical approach of various text types are important tasks (p. 34).

In the case of sociolinguistics, the following tasks are required from the different age groups: from Grades 1–4, recognizing different language use in texts of various genres and registers; from Grades 5–8, recognizing the layered nature of language and language use with concrete examples of language variations (especially in the field of vocabulary); from Grades 9–12, interpreting language use as a social phenomenon (p. 34).

Turning our attention to the field of the topic of orthography, for Grades 1–4, the most important fields are learning about and using some basic rules of orthography (marking the beginning and end of sentences; writing proper names; the rules of the division of simple words); for Grades 5–8 are learning about and using other basic rules of orthography; recognizing of the fact that the orthographical system is determined by grammar; expanding existing knowledge; and using manuals of orthography; for Grades 9–12, independent solution of problems of standard language use (orally and in writing); efforts made at writing with proper orthography with the independent use of manuals are crucial tasks (p. 34).

Concerning the topic of linguistic history and linguistic change, examination of texts from different eras is important from Grade 5. For Grades 5–6, examination of texts created in previous centuries; recognition of the differences of the present and previous states of the language; for Grades 7–8, observing linguistic constancy and change on the basis of examples (old texts, parts of texts) with a comparison with the present state, mainly at the level of vocabulary and learnt grammatical phenomena; for Grades 9–12, orientation in the major periods of the history of the language community and the linguistic system; familiarization with the origins of the Hungarian language and with the major procedures demonstrating relations within a language family; detecting contemporary linguistic changes (for exercises in the field of linguistic change cf. e.g. Sólyom, 2011a) (p. 34).

The task of comparing the mother tongue and foreign languages gets an emphasis in this part of the National Core Curriculum: for Grades 1–4, recognising the differences between one's mother tongue and foreign lan-

guages; for Grades 5–8, comparing knowledge of the mother tongue and foreign languages; for Grades 9–12, comparison of characteristic features of the mother tongue and a foreign language relying on general linguistic knowledge are the required tasks (p. 34).

In the last chapter, *General Competences* are listed (p. 38–47), among which the most important linguistic notions are the general mother tongue skills and the basic receptive and productive skills.

3.2 Textbooks

Tibor M. Pintér

Hungarian language is a strong and widespread language being taught at all levels of the educational system not only in Hungary, but also in several neighbouring countries (having strong educational background in Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine—students can use and learn Hungarian in all levels, in Croatia, Slovenia the highest level in the educational system is teacher training, in Austria students can use Hungarian in secondary education).

The language situation of Hungarian being the national language not only in Hungary leads us to the examination of the societal status of Hungarian, which has several aspects in education too. Being a widespread language it has several characteristics of small languages in the speech communities living outside Hungary. Speech communities can use Hungarian mainly in informal situations—which raises the question of existence of the standard (or standards) variety / varieties in these countries. Thus Hungarian is the language of education in the above mentioned countries too, the domains of use and native speakers are, however, constantly decreasing. One may assume that language communities of Hungarians living abroad speak not the standard variety (as it is spoken in

certain situations in Hungary), but *regional standards* at certain levels of acceptance. This has caused inner diversity, variability, which has outcomes in status and in corpus planning. The diversity is supported by all levels, which leads to the legitimisation of state varieties of Hungarian (differentiation in standard varieties or regional standards / state varieties). The non-standard varieties of certain level characterize the speech communities also in Hungary (strengthen by the dialectal variability of Hungarian). Different language situations (in Hungary and in the neighbouring countries too) bring different methods in mother tongue teaching. The vernacular brought into the educational process mostly remains in the higher grades, which does not mean the lack of the presence of the standard(s)—supported by the textbooks.

The educational system and the textbooks used to depend on the structuralist principles of Hungarian grammar mostly without any discussion of functions of languages—both in the Hungarian textbooks and in abroad. This causes a situation leading to a language without any knowledge (or discussion) of functions of languages. The static view of the language in the education process leads to no discussion about the functional differences of the varieties, and not enough reference to the bilingual aspect of differences of the varieties.

Stratification (neither vertical, nor horizontal) of the Hungarian language is not really stressed or acknowledged in the society of students. Even though the lexicon is acquired before the grammar, more effort is made to learn and acquire the aspects of grammar. While differences in the varieties of Hungarian (or language diversity) are being seen mostly in the lexicon.

The textbooks of Hungarian language prepared for pupils of Hungarian minority living in the neighbouring countries are useful to learn basic grammatical categories of the standard language (as do the textbooks prepared for the language users living in Hungary). They do not focus on the special language needs of the minority, which can be derived from the

fact that they focus on the structuralistic approaches to language, but are not aware of the special dialect and sociolinguistic aspects of language or even the language society using it (the horizontal or vertical stratification of the language is not stressed enough even in the textbooks in Hungary).

The market

In Hungary there are several big publishing houses (Apáczai Kiadó, Nemzedékek Tudása Tankönyvkiadó [these two publishing houses were recently linked and now work under the flag of Oktatáskutató és Fejlesztő Intézet], Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, Mozaik Kiadó and Műszaki Kiadó) that provide schools with textbooks. This means that teachers can choose from textbooks at all levels of education, which is supported by several financial sources from the government (but the given support is not always enough to purchase the best books).

Producing useful textbooks has always been a profitable venture: if a textbook is good or has a good background, it can be spread in a broad network—which produces benefits to the publishing house. To avoid producing new textbooks, the process of developing a textbook and its later distribution is led by several acts, from which the main ones are (cf. Tá-jékoztató, 2013):

- Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education,
- Act XXXVII of 2001 on the Market of Schoolbooks,
- Ministerial Decree 16/2013 (II.28.) on textbook adoption.

This means that there is an official list of textbooks published by the government from which schools (and teachers) can choose—books listed here are officially supported—i.e. since the academic year 2013/2014 the state purchases them and their owner is the school—and can be used in the educational process (other books cannot be officially used).

Since 2015 the government tries to centralise the publishing of textbooks (the venture and renaming of the main publishing houses), there is a notion of renewal of all schoolbooks.

The series of new schoolbooks were done and published (both in paper and electronic format) with the aim to implement new methodological features into the educational aids (this was done in the graphical and in the textual parts). As the publishing house states, the basic principle of the renewal was to establish a strong base for ICT-based learning, which could be introduced and implemented from the very early grades. This methodology also encourages personal and collective work. The books are formed in order to rely on the realistic features of the task and bringing the up-to-date language. This can be emphasised with showing real language situations and texts about the modern era, including texts about the living authors. The overall knowledge is captured through an interactive based material, whose aim is to make students think rather than give them finished materials. The keywords of the edition are child-centered education and well-structured knowledge. This is followed by trendy pictures and thought-provoking questions. The books were written in a three-year process where in several parts of preparation teachers and collectives of teachers were also involved (Kojanitz nd.; Kojanitz, 2003).

The other publishing houses are trying to call the attention of teachers (as well as of parents and students) with publishing several kinds of on-line materials that help users in better usage of textbooks (e.g. Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó: <http://flipbook.ntk.hu/>; Mozaik Kiadó: <http://www.mozaik.info.hu/Homepage/Mozaportal/MPdigitalis.php>; and Műszaki Kiadó: <http://www.muszakikiado.hu/>—which is rather a publishing house of books in natural sciences, where it has obtained better position against the others) or with organizing competitions. The materials published on the internet are supplemented with several curricula and syllabi (either intra- or extra-curricular).

A short conclusion

There are several publishing houses on the textbook market in Hungary, but the one driven by the government seems to be the most

successful, which, however, does not mean the other ones are not necessary. Although the ‘backwind’ of the central publishing house is tangible, the high quality of the books is obvious.

3.3 Practice in schools

János Imre Heltai

In this chapter, I will point out two basic problems related to teaching Hungarian language that cause difficulties and anomalies throughout the country. They seem to be of totally different nature, however, they have the same origin. The first one: according to students, Hungarian language classes in schools are boring. The second one: according to linguists, Hungarian language teaching in Hungary does not contribute to vertical social mobility to a sufficient extent (Réger, 1990; Bartha, 2002, 2015). I argue that both problems can only be managed if our education and scientific system abandons the very strong, and thus invisible and for the society imperceptible ideology (Laihonen, 2011, p. 21) according to which language is a definable, describable, standardizable entity separated from the speaker.

In Hungary, it is students’ common and general experience that mother tongue classes—which in school speech are traditionally and meaningfully called *grammar classes*—are so boring and troublesome that they are very often cancelled due to—literary—lack of interest: because teachers hold “literature classes” instead of “grammar classes” prescribed in the curriculum. In the teaching units called grammar classes students “must learn the language”: they must learn its “system”, and “use” it “well” and “correctly”. Thus, language appears in an objectivized way: as a school subject, as “something”, an “object” that can be used, a structure, and working of which can be known or not known, and applied more or less

skillfully. And this is inharmonious with natural attitudes related to language. A person who was not socialized in a national state education system does not regard language as an object but something that is part of him or her, that is inseparable from himself or herself. The influential Hungarian pedagogue of the 20th century, Sándor Karácsony (basically advancing one of the principal thesis of deconstructivist sociolinguistics about the linguistic repertoire interpreted as part of human psyche and formed in intercorporeal relationships, that means in the intercorporeality—Busch, 2012) worded it in this way: “People do not perceive their own language as healthy people do not perceive their teeth or head, and it is not a problem to move back and forth their hands, legs, waist or neck” (1939 [2009], p. 102, translation J. I. H.).

Thus, the boredom of grammar classes is encoded in the system because the basis of these classes is linguistic ideology—which is “not in line with real life” as it contradicts children’s life experience. It abstracts and alienates: the ideology of standard separates language from the speaker, and grammar as a school subject is subordinated by this ideology. It is not themselves or a part of themselves that students can discover and learn, but a system that is foreign to them and that is otherwise complicated, and can only be described in a way full of contradictions due to its idealized character.

After all, it is also the consequence of standardization that the participants of mother tongue education in Hungary suppose is self-evident that there are correct and incorrect language variations. And this basically encodes that mother tongue education is unable to create such a situation in which all the speakers of the country could have the same chances to become socially successful: speakers who do not (only) use *language resources* acknowledged as “correct” are automatically put at a *language disadvantage*. Mother tongue education is unable to decrease, let alone abolish, the differences between students coming from the middle-class and those from disadvantaged social groups.

The reason for the above is that in schools students must speak in a way that is different to the one they can speak at home; as a typical result of modernist processes, the European mass education system was born in parallel to standardization (Deumert, 2010), regarding it natural that the language of education can only be the standard. What is more, the school expects the students to have the standard competence right at the beginning, independently from the social environment they come from. Students whose speaking at home is closer to the ideal way of speaking that is connected to standard and considered correct are at advantage in school.

Thus, mother tongue classes do not help students in the *seamless fluxing among language resources*, but, on the one hand, they put certain language resources on a pedestal, and, on the other hand, they wish to claim and convey information on the “mother tongue”, the use of which information is desirable and fortunate according to the social elite. “Mother tongue education” may have not been reshaped to such an extent by the communicative turn, which in “foreign language teaching” functionalizes the form, and considers that language resources are important because of their communication functions and not as the objects of grammatical description (Feld-Knapp, 2009, p. 61). In the case of vernacular language use, it is natural that everyone is able to use language resources in their functions. This situation changes if we consider such a constructed something as “mother tongue” that is very different from many people’s vernacular, and that prescribes the use of certain language resources besides stigmatizing others.

This construction—the standard—is a double-faced phenomenon. It is, on the one hand, the basis of the competitiveness of the state (or another power unit) against external powers and at the same time a tool for creating and sustaining the national state’s stability, on the other hand, it is also a tool for symbolic violence and power (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 45–49, 170), which means that the standard does not strengthen every speaker

to the same extent. Those who get closer to the unreachable and idealized way of speaking constructed during continuous standardization (Tolcsvai Nagy, 2004, p. 136) get a social advantage. Standard, in this way, hierarchizes and it stigmatizes speakers who do not access certain language resources, and it puts the interpretation of language use in the dichotomy of correct / not correct, which does not tolerate diversity.

3.4 Standardised tests and examinations

Tibor M. Pintér

The final examination in secondary school, better known as matura or school leaving exam (*érettségi vizsga* in Hungarian) is a complex examination taken in the last year of secondary school, usually after 12 years of schooling. Students have to take examinations in Hungarian literature and grammar, mathematics, history, one foreign language and a subject they can choose from (which he/she has previously learnt).

Final exams stand as the closing examinations at this grade of study and since the two-level exams substitute the usual entrance examinations for universities, they function as the opening act to the higher level of education.

We can presume that the matura has three main roles according to the school type and aims of the pupil. The exams can stand as

- a closing examination of studies;
- an examination to qualify for a social or work position (although this can be viewed rather from a historical perspective, there are still technical schools that use this function);
- a type of entrance examination.

The social position or social ranking of the matura amongst the Hungarian society has varied according to relevant political and social

governance. It has been used in Hungary since 1851 and the last changes in its system were made in 2005 with the establishing of the two-level examination system. Since then, this type of examination has been coordinated by the state, which is to guarantee its uniformity and raise up its certification to a notarial document.

Final exams can be taken in two terms in a year: in spring during the period from May to June and in autumn from October to November. In the spring term, all schools and government offices organize exams, while during the autumn term only the chosen schools and government offices do that. In the first month of the period, writing exams are held. In the second month, oral exams take place; first at the higher level, then at the lower level. In most of the schools there is a tradition to start the exams with Hungarian language and literature, which is followed by mathematics the next day and history on the third day (in schools for national and ethnic minorities the first exam is the national language and literature).

Legal background

Since the matura is coordinated and governed by the state, it is regulated at several levels of the legal hierarchy (from acts to decrees), but its main regulations are stated in three basic documents:

- Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education: states the basic rules of school leaving examinations (e.g. the form, the participants and the subjects of examination);
- Government Decree 100/1997 (VI. 13.) as the rules of the examination: states the rules of the organisation of the examination and the basic requirements of the subjects to be used in the examination process;
- Ministerial (Ministry of Education) Decree 40/2002 (V. 24.) on the specific requirements of upper secondary school leaving examinations.

The legal background mentioned above gives the basic legal background to run the examination, but there are other acts and decrees dealing with

other, mostly special features and requirements of the examination itself (e.g. Government Decree 237/2006 (XI.27.) about the subjects to be chosen at the higher level of the examination).

Hence the examination is governed by the government, in the examination process there are several types of institutions (at several levels of governance) involved. The requirements for the final exams divided per subjects are listed in the Government Decree 100/1997 (VI. 13.), while the detailed descriptions can be found in the Ministerial (Ministry of Education) Decree 40/2002 (V. 24.)—for that reason this document is more useful for the students. This decree includes a list of educational aids to be used during the exam, the aspects of assessment, the parts of the written and oral exams and their time limits, the contextual fields to be found in each task and topics as well as other useful practical and technical information about the exams. The decree also states what kind of documents should be publicized by the schools. To fulfil the requirements written in this decree, schools announce the topics and titles of the subjects to be examined at least 60 days before the spring term. If one takes the matura in the autumn term after a failed exam *in the same institution*, the requirements announced in the spring term are to be followed. If one decides to take an exam after a failed exam *in a different institution*, the requirements announced by the other institution during the spring term are to be followed. There might be differences in the oral part—within the topics—and in the written part as well.

The matura exams are taken in the language of instruction—that means in Hungarian, in case of the national minority and bilingual schools in the language of instruction in certain subjects.

Levels and subjects of the final exam

Since the major reforms in the Hungarian matriculation system in 2005 there have been two levels of the final exams: two levels with outputs that lead to two different possible ways of further education. The exam at lower level (*középszintű érettségi* in Hungarian) ends with a certificate

which declares the ending of the secondary education but does not allow the candidate to enter higher education without taking an entrance examination. The exam at higher level (*emelt szintű érettségi* in Hungarian) means higher points, which allows the student to enter universities without taking the usual entrance examination (in Hungary one gets and collects points with and after the matriculation exams—one can get extra points for language exams or other achievements—and can apply for admission to university according to the points collected).

An exam at higher level can be taken only in those subjects that are concerned in higher education. This means that this type of examination can be taken only in those subjects that are listed on the annual list issued by the Educational Authority. From one subject one can take only one exam at a time—this is a legal and a practical commitment to the exams because in most subjects exams are taken on both levels at the same time. The level of the exam does not correlate with the level of education that was gained during the preparatory / educational phase. Students are allowed to decide from which subjects they want to take an exam at higher level (to take a higher level exam does not mean taking a higher level exam from all of the subjects, just from the chosen one / ones). Students can also choose the fifth subject; they must not be swayed by the school either into choosing the level or choosing the fifth subject.

The certification of the school leaving exam can be issued if the exam was passed from at least five subjects that basically are the following:

- Hungarian language and literature
- history
- mathematics
- a foreign language (for the students attending national, ethnical education system, this is the language of the system)
- one subject that was learnt.

Most of the exams are taken in oral and written form (only mathematics, informatics and partially psychical education and drama have certain

restrictions: from mathematics at lower level there is no oral exam if the written part is done at least at 25%, the practical part of the informatics exam stands for the written part—and is regulated upon that—, psychological education and drama have practical parts that are done as part of the oral exam). The exams are run by a committee whose members are nominated by the director of the school, and its chair is nominated by the assigned government offices.

The process and assessment of the final examination

The sets of tests for the written part (as well as the keys and assessment sheets) are prepared by a committee set up by the Educational Authority and the National Office of Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning.

The written exams usually last four hours in case of the higher exams and Hungarian and other national and ethnic languages and literature at lower level, and three hours in case of the other subjects at lower level. During the exams only certain types of—strictly regulated—aids can be used (e.g. a calculator, dictionary or atlas). Students can write only on the sheets of paper specially prepared for the exam. After finishing the exam, all sheets (the exam sheets and draft sheets) are sealed in an envelope.

Students are allowed to take the oral part of the exam if they do the written part at least for 10% (in mathematics the threshold is 20%). During the oral part students get a minimum of 30 minutes for preparation after which they have to speak about a previously drawn topic. The main task of the student is to talk fluently about the topic, therefore questions can be raised only if the student stops or the given time—a maximum of 15 minutes—elapses. Only one student can be examined at a time and at least three members of the committee must be present on the exam. If the exam is divided into written and oral part, a maximum of 150 points can be reached. Exams having only written part are calibrated to 100 points, exams having only oral part are calibrated to

50 points. Students pass the exam if they reach the overall percentage of 25% and 12% in all subjects.

Remedy

Legal remedies can be sought to the Educational Authority only against law infringements, legal remedies cannot be sought against the assessment of the exam.

4. Teacher training

Réka Sólyom

Since 2013, there have been important changes concerning the structure of the teacher training system in tertiary education in Hungary. This chapter summarises the changes by analysing the differences between the past and the present systems.

Before 2013, the Bologna System used to be common in Hungary for some years in the case of teacher training (before the Bologna system, the integrated teacher training was typical). The Bologna system, as it used to consist of a BA, and then an MA period, could be called a miscellaneous type: at first, students had to pass the BA level, and then they had to pass a new entrance exam in order to step into the MA level. Although students at the BA level had the possibility to take more than one subject, they had a “major” subject, and another, which used to be called a “minor” subject (e.g. in the case of Hungarian language and literature, there were students who took on Hungarian as a “minor”, while they had a “major” in History, English, German, etc.). As a consequence of this situation, differences arose between the knowledge of students with different “major” subjects, however, if they wanted to become teachers, at the end of their studies they had to be able to teach both fields at primary and / or secondary school levels.

The experience of this miscellaneous situation has led to the present situation, when this “divided” teacher training does not exist anymore (however, there are students who had started their studies in this type, consequently, they have to finish them meeting the requirements of the BA+MA system). On the contrary, since 2013, students can have double main subjects (majors) within the “undivided” (integrated) teacher training system. E.g. according to the Curricula Samples at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, at the Faculty of Humanities, these main subjects can be the following: teacher of Hungarian language and literature, teacher of English language and literature, teacher of German language and literature, teacher of History and Civics, teacher of Media, Motion Picture, and Communication (and from the Faculty of Theology, students can choose teacher of Divinity as well)¹⁰.

Structure of the new teacher training system

In the case of today’s integrated teacher training system, there is an important distinction between primary and secondary school teacher training concerning the length of the studies: for those students who want to become primary school teachers 4 plus 1 years, while for those who want to teach at secondary schools 5 plus 1 years are compulsory¹¹.

Thanks to the structure of the new system, plenty of advantages have already arisen: first, it has to be emphasised that students can (and have to) start both of their main subjects at the same time, at the beginning of their university studies. They have to study both of their subjects equally intensively, consequently, at the output phase, they can have the same level of knowledge concerning both of their subjects. This fact will make

10 Link to the webpage of the undivided teacher training system at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, Faculty of Humanities (KRE BTK) in Hungarian: http://www.kre.hu/laura/index.php/egyetem-kepzesi-programja/cat_view/297-egyetem-kepzesi-programja/302-boelcseszettudomanyi-kar/342-osztatlan-kepzes; cit. 23. 9. 2016.

11 Link (in Hungarian) to the description of the system: http://www.felvi.hu/felveteli/szakok_kepzesek/szakleirasok/Szakleirasok/index.php/szakleirasok/szakleiras_konkret?szak_id=17923&kepzes=0; cit. 23. 9. 2016.

their future work as primary or secondary school teachers much easier, as the integrated system supports both fields equally.

An important consequence of the integrated teacher training system is that students can have well-balanced curricula samples during their studies, in the case of which both subjects as well as the subjects concerning pedagogical and psychological studies can gain enough importance.

As a consequence, it seems that based on their same (or approximately the same) interests, students in the new teacher training system will have the opportunity to gain the same level of knowledge and experience by the end of their studies.

*Criterion Exam of Mother Tongue*¹²

There is a type of exam that is important to mention in the case of undivided teacher training. It is called the *Criterion Exam of Mother Tongue*, and is compulsory for every student (with no regard to their subjects) during the first 6 semesters of their studies. The exam consists of four compulsory fields: Communication, Rhetoric, Orthography, and Linguistic Normativity.

The exam is organised by the Department of Hungarian Linguistics, and for students it is compulsory either to pass each part of the exam as written or oral exams during the examination term, or to pass the fields as compulsory subjects during the first 6 semesters of their studies. As a consequence, each student who wants to become a teacher has to learn and get experience in these important linguistic fields. If someone does not pass the exam, they cannot get a teachers' degree at the end of their studies.

¹² Link (in Hungarian) to the webpage of the exam at KRE BTK: <http://www.nyelveszet.kre.hu/index.php/anyanyelvi-kriteriumvizsga>; cit. 23. 9. 2016.

5 Hungarian in foreign language teaching—society, culture, and communicative competence in the Framework Curriculum for learners of Hungarian as a foreign language

Réka Sólyom

Teaching Hungarian as a foreign language has a long history, consequently, many types of related curricula, books, and targets can be listed (cf. Giay & Nádor, 1998).

In the present chapter, the manifestation and occurrence of three important fields, society, culture, and related skills concerning the communicative competence are going to be analysed, based on the Framework Curriculum. The importance of the topic is evident; that is why it is worth taking a look at present-day's Framework Curriculum in order to get a deeper insight into the manifestation of the above mentioned fields.

Taylor & Sobel emphasise: "(...) learners arrive at the classroom with prior knowledge and life experiences" (Taylor & Sobel, 2011, p. 189)—this statement is extremely true in the case of a group with students from different countries and with different mother tongues. Consequently, it sometimes can be difficult for the teacher to find out what students know about the target country, which is Hungary in the present case. There are fields of knowledge in the topics of culture and society in language books that belong to the so-called "big C" culture (e.g. holidays). On the other hand, there are other topics that rather belong to the "little C" culture (e.g. communication norms).

Entering a new culture, we become parts of a society with strange customs, history, language, etc. This situation, on the other hand, can give us the opportunity to be part of multilingual communities, and can lead to globalization in the present-day world: "Having two languages may bring

people into a different multilingual community. Or it may allow them to belong to a global virtual community in a possible social network unrelated to geographical proximity or to any common language identity in the usual terms” (Cook, 2009, p. 57).

It is important to adjust Curriculums to the changes of the society: as Nisbet (1991) points out: “The demand for a Thinking Curriculum arises partly because of rapid changes in modern society. It is also the result of recent developments in cognitive psychology: the constructivist theory of learning argues that learners create their own framework of interpretation in a search for meaning and understanding” (Nisbet, 1991, p. 27, cited in Coyle, 2000, p. 247–248).

Parallel with putting emphasis on the importance of linguistic knowledge, opportunity for practicing should be given to language learners: “Raising the language awareness of all participants is a place to start, but increased awareness must be coupled with increased opportunity for the practice and development of valued forms and functions of language” (McGroarty, 1996, p. 36). It is important for the language teacher to show new vocabulary to students in typical contexts, and in typical situations (Bárdos, 2000, p. 79, cited in Sólyom, 2012, p. 53).

According to the Framework Curriculum for Hungarian as a foreign language, in the case of Grades 1–8, the related topics of society and culture are the following¹³: one subgroup refers to traditions, customs, and holidays—here, important traditions and symbols of the Hungarian culture (including traditional cuisine); important celebrations, holidays (e.g. birthdays, Christmas, Easter), connected customs, symbols, and objects have to be taught.

Another field includes those places that play (or can play) crucial role in the language learners’ lives: the place of living, Budapest, typical places in Hungary (e.g. big rivers, Lake Balaton, Hortobágy).

The third big field consists of typical Hungarian literary works, including tales, songs, and cartoons adapted from Hungarian tales and legends

13 http://kerettanterv.ofi.hu/07_melleklet_miniszter/k1_07_egyeb/index_magyar_idegen.html

(e.g. the tales about King Matthias); poems and adapted parts of literary works written by Hungarian poets and writers.

The related linguistic skills and knowledge concerning communicative competence in the case of Grades 1–8 are the following: pupils have to make statements about everyday activities; describe people and objects; describe the places and movement of people and objects (with the help of suffixes, definite and indefinite objects) by using the definite and indefinite conjugation types of verbs; and refer to cause and reason.

Turning our attention to the question of grammar, the following skills are to be reached during these years: children have to be able to use: questions (*y-n* and *wh* types); verbal prefixes; moods: Imperative, Conditional; tenses: Present, Past.

According to the Framework Curriculum for Hungarian as a Foreign Language, by the end of Grade 12, students have to reach level B1 or B2. Additionally, they have to get the possibility to get to know the structure and requirements of the school-leaving exam, have experience in exercising, and learn the strategies that can be used during the exam.

The related topics for Grades 9–12 concerning the fields of society and culture are the following¹⁴: the first group consists of important holidays, customs, and cultural facts: students have to learn about the most important family and national holidays; Hungarian customs; Hungarian state symbols; current cultural facts; Hungarian cuisine.

The second group is about historical facts and people concerning the most important dates, buildings, and famous people of Hungarian history and culture.

The third field of knowledge refers to geography: students have to learn about the biggest geographical parts of Hungary.

The last group consists of samples from Hungarian literature; proverbs.

The most important topics and knowledge of linguistic skills and communicative competence for Grades 9–12 are the following: students have

14 http://kerettanterv.ofi.hu/07_melleklet_miniszter/k1_07_egyeb/index_magyar_idegen.html

to gain knowledge of phonology; different pronouns; definite and indefinite verb conjugation; verbal prefixes; trinity of direction; cases of nouns; comparative and superlative forms of adjectives; possession; infinitive; auxiliaries (*szeret, tud, akar* = ‘like’, ‘can/be able to’, ‘want’).

It is important to emphasise that there are many places and possibilities of teaching and learning Hungarian as a foreign language in Hungary. Hungarian is not only taught at primary and secondary schools, but at universities, and in big institutes (one of the most important is Balassi Institute in Budapest, cf. www.balassiintezet.hu), and in many language schools. Consequently, the above mentioned features and fields of the Curriculum have become important during the teaching and learning processes in smaller language schools as well as in big institutes, at each level.

6 Discussion and conclusion

János Imre Heltai

In Hungary, the learning unit (school subject) in which language is put in the foreground in a reflected way is called *Hungarian Language and Literature* in the National Curriculum. In the chapter relating to this literacy area, titled *Principles and Aims*, the Curriculum claims that “mother tongue and literary education create an inseparable unit, however, they develop different competence areas” (Magyar Közlöny, 2012, p. 10660—translation J. I. H.). The second half of the sentence, which remains unexplained, according to which mother tongue and literary education develop different competence areas, seems to be in a slight contradiction with the emphasis of the unity; anyhow, it does not answer the question how exactly the presumed “mother tongue” and “literary education” relate to each other. School practice rather emphasizes the division: both in the

four upper classes of elementary school and in secondary school students get separate markings for “mother tongue” and “literary education” at the end of the year, and the relating documents have separate regulations for the numbers of classes both for language and literature. So while the unity of the subject is mentioned at the level of the curriculum, practice reflects its opposite.

It is also an important condition that the introduction of the National Curriculum words the aims and tasks of mother tongue teaching only very briefly: “the basic task of mother tongue education is to make students learn language as a changing system and develop linguistic competence, so that they shall possess the tools of oral and written communication as appropriate at their age, and be able to functionally analyze and apply them in practice” (Magyar Közlöny, 2012, p. 10660).

The problems related to mother tongue education in Hungarian schools can be mostly led back to the fact that the school status, the tasks and aims of linguistic education in schools are rather uncertain. The curriculum wishes to relativize the monocracy of descriptive grammar studies, which derives from the structuralist language approach: it mentions communicating and use in practice. At the same time, it does not break away from the terms used in consequence of *structuralist language ideologies*: it considers language a system, and it thinks that the task of education is, on the one hand, the learning of this system (in practice it means descriptive grammar studies), on the other hand, the development of linguistic competence. However, even this latter case covers that the students need to “possess”, “analyze” and “apply” a “set of tools” that belongs to the “system”. It also misses to clarify theoretically how the “science” of the application of the system connects to literary studies. The result of the lack of this guidance in the National Curriculum is that tensions described above can be found on the levels of local curricula, textbooks and everyday practice, too. Practice chooses the more simple, “traditional” solution: it mainly teaches and asks knowledge of descriptive grammar.

Thus, a significant part of the problems relating to Hungarian students' mother tongue education can be led back to the circumstance that language is regarded as a system which can be described without reflecting on ourselves at the same time. So grammar and literature classes are separated in a false way: while self-reflection is continuous in the literature classes, which both teachers and students are aware of, it is missing in the so-called grammar classes where they only acquire contents or apply tools in other cases. This may change if new poststructuralist sociolinguistic language ideologies come to the foreground both in the theory and development of curricula and in tertiary education (teacher training), as well as in everyday school life. The starting point of this approach is that the ways of speaking of people living in Hungary and considering themselves part of the nation, are very diverse and complex, and this complexity can not be described with some kind of an abstract construction such as the concept about the standard, system-like language and the language variations (for example the national language). The Bakhtin-perception describes this complexity with the notion of heteroglossia, which does not only mean multilingualism but it also means multivoicedness, the diversity of speaking and applicable language resources, independently of the concept of certain languages (cf. Blackledge & Creese, 2015). This language perceived in complexity is not an object that we can possess, not a describable system, but it is rather action (García, 2014, p. 149), the tool of discovering and understanding our environment (García & Leiva, 2015, p. 201–203), the most basic developer and carrier of our social relations (Blackledge-Creese, 2015, p. 2–4), it is the part and organizer of not only the individual but of the intercorporeality, too: “Language is part of intersubjectivity, that is the projection from a Me to a You—from the first grammatical person to the second. It belongs to the area which Merleau-Ponty describes as the area of intercorporeality” (Busch, 2012, p. 23—translation J. I. H.).

Thus, instead of system-like languages and variations, the starting points of approaching language are the language resources located in the

intercorporeality and the *linguistic repertoire*, which can be related to the speakers but operated only in community and which is fluid and variable. The task of linguistic education is to develop this repertoire and support pupils in acquiring new ways of speaking by using all their language resources. It is an important aim to support students to flux seamlessly in the area of language resources linked to standardized speaking, but this aim can only be reached if we do not exclude other ways of speaking from schools either. In order to obtain that, we need to emancipate the other (so-called “non-standard”) language resources in education as a precondition for successful language teaching. This is how we may reach competitiveness within the constructed community (nation).

The recognition of complexity and supporting it, and the development of self-reflecting discursive ways of behaviour in schools increase linguistic competitiveness within the constructed community (nation). This language approach and the connected pedagogy might help speakers—liberating them from the burden of standard ideologies—relate to language more naturally, and apply human language in a more successful and versatile way, be it “mother tongue” or “foreign language” education. The linguistic education of speakers liberated from the paralyzing effect of standard ideologies might be our immunization against the homogenizing impacts of the larger environment, too.

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Teaching Polish Language and Literature in Poland

Marek Pieniążek

1 Politics—school policy influencing the school system and national language education

Teaching Polish language is one of the main tasks of Polish education. The position of the national language is described in the *Legal Regulation about Polish language* of 7th October 1999 in which we read that “Polish language is a basic element of national identity and goodness of national culture (...) Polish culture gives the input into building common, culturally various Europe (...)” (DU, 1999).

In the Polish educational system children and teenagers study the national language through the whole period of school education. In the grades from 1 to 3 of primary school teaching is integrated, whereas since the fourth grade of primary school until the last grades of secondary school, teaching of the national language takes place in the subject called *Polish language*. Despite the fact that the name of the subject puts an emphasis on the study about language, the course also includes development of language competence, knowledge about literature, culture, and development of interpretation skills. Knowledge and language skills are defined in the core curriculum, which underlines the central role of the Polish language in education: “One of the most important school tasks is teaching the use of Polish language, including the care for enriching students’ vocabulary. All teachers must fulfil this task, not only teachers of Polish language” (PP, 2008).

It might seem that reforms and changes in the Polish educational system which have been carried out since the 90s, the new legal regulations

about teacher training, changes of the core curriculum and corrections of the obligatory school texts serve to strengthen the position and liveliness of Polish language in our society. But is it really so? Continuous reforms destroying also positive aspects of the previous system show that in Poland we rather deal with the use of national language and the secondary school final examinations status for current political aims. Among several system changes, it is difficult to notice real care of the educational policy to improve the national language's position, we can rather observe the sum of decisions submitting Polish language teaching to abstract systems typical for late modernity. The policy is not stable and created for distant aims, serving Polish language and Polish culture.

In the *Legal regulation about Polish language* it is strongly underlined that Polish speech is of crucial position for culture and social life of Poles. But are these indications realized in the key educational acts of the state? New reforms of the educational system are still unsatisfactory. The reform which in 1999 introduced the 6-year primary school, 3-year lower general secondary school and 3-year upper general secondary school has not brought the best results. Discussions about positive and negative aspects of the reform have already been taking place for a decade. The current new government (2015) promote new solutions, for example liquidation of the lower general secondary school and return to a 4-year upper general secondary school. Another example of a partly ineffective reform is the so called new secondary school final examination formula of 2005. Soon after this exam became a standard, and just two years later, the method of oral secondary school final examination points awarding was changed due to the fact that many students started buying presentations for oral secondary school final exams on the internet and then learnt them by heart. Point awarding correction and change towards stronger dialogue appreciation and individual work has not changed much. The status of the exam is still low, oral exam results are not taken into consideration in any university recruitment procedures.

The policy towards Polish language realized via the use of secondary school final exams as a cross-country objective (in assumption) entrance exam is not optimistic. This exam is very easy, the rate for passing this exam in the whole country is 98%. Thus, as university rectors say, taking this examination into consideration during the recruitment procedure cannot be treated seriously as it does not show anything. This exam does not involve any obligations and does not motivate students to learn harder and read more.

We can admit that in recent years the Polish educational system is exceptionally unstable. It is over-regulated, working in the rhythm of current decisions, submitted to temporal political needs. These irresponsible decisions of politicians are mentioned by Krzysztof Konarzewski, the director of the Central Examination Board, and the well-known educator Bogusław Śliwerski (Osica & Zasada 2013).

There is no surprise that the effects of the newest educational policy are evaluated differently. Among others also Ryszard Legutko evaluates the state of Polish education critically—despite the satisfaction of the former Minister of Education Katarzyna Hall with the high results of Polish students in the PISA tests. In Professor Legutko's opinion, these tests are not appropriate to evaluate the way of thinking and analytical or pragmatic skills of lower general secondary school students (Nykiel, 2012).

2 Recent historical milestones / changes influencing the national language education

Political and economic transformation in Poland in 1989 started a phase of changes in the Polish system of education. In 1990 the new core curricula were introduced (PP, 1990), which abolished legal regulations of the Polish People's Republic, and freed teaching content from communist ideology. In 1991 the new legal regulation about the educational

system was announced, according to which for every type of school the programme minimum, frame teaching plan, marking rules, classification and students' promotion were established. One obligatory textbook used in the time of the Polish People's Republic was replaced with the possibility to create individual teaching programmes and textbooks by teachers and the possibility to choose from them. The legal regulation concerning the programme minimum of obligatory subjects in general education was published in 1992 (PP, 1992).

The programme minimum was abolished in 1997 when the Ministry of Education introduced the core curricula for obligatory subjects of general education (PP, 1997). The core curriculum of Polish language in this version respected the foundations of personalism and anthropocentrism. In this core curriculum subjectivity and multi-dimensional personality of the student were underlined, also his / her right to comprehensive development, self-existence and freedom of values. The core curriculum achieved the form of general requirements, leaving teachers and creators of teaching programmes freedom to choose ways of realizing them. Unfortunately, it functioned for a very short period of time, like most described here (in shortened version only). It is enough to say that from 1990 to 2015 several times the Ministers of Education responsible for the introduction of educational reforms were changed.

In July 1998 a new document introducing considerable changes into the educational system was published. This change shortened education in primary schools to six years, in secondary schools to three years and in profiled upper secondary schools and technical schools to four years. As a result of this reform, lower general secondary schools started to function.

The core curriculum functioning now was introduced on 23rd December 2008 (PP, 2008). In comparison with the former one, the basic change lies in the fact that it is written in the language of requirements. The newest core curriculum consists of formulas precisely specifying knowledge and skills which students must possess after finishing the specified stages

of education. At the level of upper general secondary school, there are only thirteen obligatory reading texts (signed with a star); it is worth noticing that the construction of the core curriculum suggests that reading texts should be discussed in history and literature context. In the range of Polish language, regional content was almost totally reduced.

In 2015, a new model of the secondary school final examinations was introduced. The assessment criteria for writing opened, liquidating the old answer key. The oral examination has a new form, the student draws a question and does not prepare a presentation.

3 Current state of teaching Polish

The number of Polish language lessons at each level of education is specified in the legal regulation of the Minister of Education concerning the frame teaching programmes in state schools of 7th February 2012 (DU, 2012). This document specifies minimal numbers of lessons at each level of education to be realized in obligatory classes and their division in the cycle of teaching obligatory subjects and subjects at extended level.

Educational stage I: early-school education

In classes 1 to 3 of primary school, teaching Polish language takes place in the so-called integrated classes, the frame teaching programme gives the total number of 1150 lessons for all classes in a 3-year period of teaching. The teacher divides the lessons for specific subjects.

Educational stage II: classes 4–6 of primary school

Since this stage Polish language teaching takes place in autonomous lessons of Polish language. For this 3-year period, the education frame programme includes 510 lessons of Polish language.

Educational stage III: lower general secondary school

For this 3-year period, the education frame programme includes 450 lessons of Polish language.

Educational stage number IV: upper general secondary school

Education in upper general secondary school is divided into two levels: basic and extended. The education frame programme includes 360 lessons of Polish at basic level and additional 240 lessons at extended level.

Technical schools

For a 4-year period, the education frame programme includes 360 lessons of teaching Polish at basic level and additional 240 hours at extended level.

Vocational schools

For a 3-year period, the education frame programme includes 160 lessons of Polish language.

The headmaster has a small number of additional lessons which can be used to increase the number of chosen obligatory classes, including Polish language.

How do teachers deal with lesson organization in such developed and still reforming stages of education? A few conclusions of extensive research, done by the Educational Research Institute (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych—IBE) in Warsaw in 2013, are worth mentioning. The data concerning preparations for classes teachers of Polish language do are worrying. It can be clearly noticed that when preparing for classes teachers of lower general secondary schools take into account mainly the core curriculum, the perspective of the examination after lower general secondary school and suggestions formulated by publishers of the textbooks

that they use. More than a half of the respondents (56%) implemented a programme (or a ready-made programme) constructed by the publishers and did not modify it in any way, approximately 40% use the publishers' teaching programme and modify it (p. 52 of the cited report). None of the responding teachers used proprietary programmes, which shows massive lack of the use of didactic individualization. The report also indicates that individual educational students' needs are not taken into account, and shows the lack of the impact of specific teachers' competences and predispositions on their teaching style (RSE, 2014). In the light of the report, we can also see that teachers do not sufficiently use the potential of multimedia technology for literary lessons. These technologies, however, might become an effective form of encouraging students to read books and take part in culture.

In upper general secondary schools we can see the domination of teaching "for an exam", we can observe a lot of non-functional knowledge about language in the lessons. Another problem is the easy final exams: they do not require hard learning and reading; in Poland, there is the highest pass rate of the matura: 98%. The low position of spoken Polish in school generates the low rank of the oral matura, because this exam is irrelevant for universities.

3.1 Curriculum

The current obligatory core curriculum (PP, 2008) was introduced to schools on 1st September 2009. As authors of the reform explain, it is the result of the educational process adjustment to social changes in education ambitions: increasing the percentage of students choosing schools finishing with a secondary school final examination from 50% to 80%. The new core curriculum was necessary due to shortening education stages to 3 years and the need to give coherence to the whole education

process. It was supposed to prevent students from repeating the same content in lower general secondary school and then in upper general secondary school. The new core curriculum was also supposed to put emphasis on education results in the language of requirements, which made other examination standards redundant. The final version of the new core curriculum is the result of the work of a large group of scientists, educators, teachers, examination experts, and also public consultations which lasted a few months.

The task of schools and the examination system is to check students' achievements in accordance with the core curriculum requirements. It is written in the core curriculum that teaching the ability to use Polish language is one of the most important tasks of the school—the fulfilment of this task belongs not only to teachers of Polish language but to all teachers.

The core curriculum for Polish language is divided into three fields at each education stage: reception of expressions, using information embedded in them, creation of expressions, and analysing and interpreting texts on culture. It includes a compulsory reading list and a recommended list, that is, books to be chosen from by the teachers. The authors of the core curriculum declare that it underlines the special position of the Polish language at school, integrates the issues in teaching language, literature, culture and communication, balances between knowledge of the language and communication skills, and demonstrates functional approach to grammar. The authors declare that the structure of the core curriculum is textocentric.

The introduction of the new core curriculum evoked a long lasting discussion in the press and at many scientific conferences. The main allegations towards the new document were connected with the fact that it was written in the language of educational requirements, that is, shifting the emphasis from the didactic process to educational effects. This is a short example of the language which is used in the core curriculum: „A student:

receives written and oral messages (...), finds needed information in an expression and cites relevant extracts of the text, organizes information depending on its function in the message, can see the difference between information on facts from opinion". (PP, 2008, p. 35)

In the newest core curriculum, we see separation of text reception from its analysis and interpretation, and also an obligatory literary historical model of teaching. The structural analysis and interpretation model of the literary work, immanently written in the core curriculum, was indicated as dangerous and powerful confirmation of the regulation to introduce only one obligatory model of interpretation. The limitation of the obligatory reading list to only 13 positions in upper general secondary school evoked serious controversy.

Polish language education researchers indicate that as a result of such structure of requirements in the core curriculum, teachers take care mainly about measurable results of education. Students solve trial tests, analyze pieces of writing, but in the course of education, it is not the students who are the most important—it is the final examinations and the school ranking based on the results of the examinations. On the other hand, publishers that create teaching programmes and school textbooks use this situation to create books which are easy to use and whose content is listed with the accordance to the literature epoch. The whole process closes the way for educational innovation. The obligatory core curriculum programmes the process of knowledge transfer and skills development in such a way that it is to be checked during final secondary school examinations, and does not put emphasis on formative character of education.

Answering the question about philosophy or methodology of teaching of Polish language is simple. Analysis of the so-called "hidden curriculum" of the core curriculum of Polish language shows that the document is an example of structural and text-centric educational discourse whose main aim is the creation of a system with the possibility of the objective

measure and evaluation of teaching Polish language in all Poland. Despite the declaration in the core curriculum, in practice communicative teaching of language in school is very rare, because the low rank of the oral final secondary school examination reduces the rank of spoken language in Polish schools.

Also it is worth emphasizing that among the crucial activities for reaching the educational aims that are, however, not included in the core curriculum, is watching theatrical performances (only at extended level it says that students can watch performances in theatre or on TV). The new core curriculum does not contain regional issues either (only two small signals). In the previous core curriculum there were more than 50 indications on the role of language and culture of the region in shaping the identity of a young person.

What is the realization of the concepts of the core curriculum in school practice? We observe that still the norm is teaching history of literature (at this moment 100% of the methodological proposals and textbooks in upper general secondary schools). In literary lessons we can often see disintegration of the interpretation model with only the first, introductory parts being carried out: only the step of analysis is mostly realized. Only thirteen compulsory books in upper general secondary schools does not inspire students to read—students do not read the books (only 5–7 % of students in class read the novels in all). Maybe these problems are also generated by the way the final outcomes are formulated in the core curriculum. The core curriculum is a set of specific requirements for a student formulated as a description of skills so in a certain way it resembles a set of examination requirements. It is the sum of knowledge that the student must have to pass exams and so many teacher treat the formulas of the core curriculum as the main guide and table of content of their teaching.

3.2 Textbooks

In Polish research tradition we have an extended tradition to comment on the function of school textbooks. In the last ten years, textbooks as tools for teaching Polish language were described in collective monographs by Zenon Uryga and Helena Synowiec. Jolanta Nocoń also deals with textbooks for language teaching. In Polish research tradition, we can observe several models of language education (from the grammar model to the communicative one). The afterthought about school textbooks as tools for teaching is led in the frame of Polish teacher training studies.

Literary and cultural education in school textbooks used in upper general secondary schools is dominated by historical and literary order. Certainly in the materials for classes I and II (usually from ancient history to the early 20th century) the so-called modern contexts appear, which are used to consider modern liveliness of the given literary and cultural motif, but do not damage the historical and literary order of the educational content. Textbooks which are permitted for use in the school year of 2015/2016 by the Ministry of National Education at the level of upper general secondary school realize this pattern of content. These textbooks are used both for basic and extended level. They can be used in technical schools and upper general secondary schools. The most popular textbooks are: *The Key to the World (Klucz do świata)*, *Above Words (Ponad słowami)* and *Past Is Today (Przeszłość to dziś)*.

The textbook *Past Is Today* (of Jacek Kopciński, Aleksander Nawarecki, Krzysztof Mrowcewicz, Ewa Paczoska, Dorota Siwicka) is one of the most popular series in upper general secondary schools, which does not, however, mean that it is the best. At upper general secondary school, the content in the first year includes epochs from ancient times to Romanticism, in the second year from Positivism to 1945, and in the third year literature after 1945. The content is ordered according to the historical and literary process. The cultural background, main features and the so-called

foundations are part of the introduction to each epoch. In the tables next to the text we have important notions and dates. The texts are enriched with paintings connected with the literary subject. Ready-made suggestions (often criticized by methodologists) for obligatory book analyses and interpretations are easily noticeable. The textbooks ought to help students to read the whole book. It becomes a kind of help, including short information about the author, origins of the piece of writing, the characters and the composition. *Lower general secondary school obligatory books reminder* is also helpful. *Knowledge about language* is an essential part of the book, that is, the chapter which functionally describes material of knowledge about language. The chapter *Step by Step towards Final Secondary School Examination* is a novelty and is included in the textbooks from class 1 to 3. The aim of this chapter is to help students prepare for the new, final secondary examination, evaluated according to 2015 criteria. The oral exam hints are noticeable, for example how we can effectively communicate, make a good impression, master body language, etc. Different types of writing are also described, for example speeches, summaries, presentations. The series of textbooks is accompanied by the teaching programme and methodological materials for teachers, which include lesson plans, work cards, tests and year programmes. The multi-media part is extended. The teacher gets multi-media presentations which can be used with interactive boards or a projector, CDs with music and multi-media lessons, games and exercises. Numerated additional materials can be bought on the internet.

Although we will not find *I Like It! (To lubię!)* textbook series (by Maria Jędrychowska, Agnieszka Z. Kłakówna, Piotr Kołodziej, Ewa Łubieniewska, Waldemar Martyniuk, Iwona Steczko, Marta Szymańska, Janusz Waligóra) in the newest Ministry's list of Polish language textbooks for secondary schools (it is present in the Ministry's list for primary schools and lower general secondary schools), it is worth paying attention to it. This teaching programme is particularly interesting as the concept of this textbook

is totally different from the standard ones described earlier, such as *Past Is Today*. The special difference of *I Like It!* is its anthropocentrist attitude and integral connection of language education with literature and culture. The concept of education with “the student in the middle” found perfect realization in this series of textbooks. At the level of upper general secondary education, the textbooks resigned from the literary historical order: a 3-year course is organized around themes, such as identity, which shapes the student strongly during the period of becoming mature (for example home, identity, fashion, language and manipulation, advertising and life ethics). Methodologists from the Pedagogical University of Cracow (then Higher Pedagogy School) were creators of this teaching programme. “It was all about creating a new concept for teaching Polish at school which could be considerably different from only one official teaching programme, which was commonly accepted and which did not have any alternative and had to be implemented unconditionally by teachers and students and was supposed to decide about the shape and quality of education,” wrote Maria Jędrychowska (Jędrychowska, 1999), one of the authors of the textbooks. The innovation of *I Like It!* series lies in the fact that the authors resigned from the chronological and schematic course of education and from teaching ready notions.

The role and function of the new textbook have been discussed in Poland for many years, e.g. multi-media textbooks or e-textbooks (this issue was largely discussed during the conference of the 1st Congress of Polish Language Didactics in Cracow in 2013 and 2nd Congress of Polish Language Didactics in Katowice in 2015). Researchers are wondering if e-textbooks have become a new didactical quality or a new package of the old content. The Ministry of National Education has recently implemented a programme titled *Digital School*—from the Scholaris website it is possible to download educational resources for free.

Free textbooks at schools for all students considerably change educational policy. All students of primary and secondary schools will be

using free textbooks since the school year 2017/2018. Parents will not have to pay for textbooks any more, schools will receive subsidies to buy the books.

3.3 Practice in schools

Constant changes in the system and structure of school examinations influence the way classes are conducted considerably. Teacher training at universities of future Polish teachers has little influence on school didactics. For instance within the last 10 years when the Bologna process started, the number of hours for teacher training practice run under supervision of university methodologists has been reduced considerably (two times less than before).

It is not surprising that schools are dominated by vocational pragmatism imposed by headmasters, examination rankings and parents' expectations. Methodology is generally replaced by the publishers' ready-to-use teaching programmes (as mentioned above). This has bad impact on the course of teaching and makes work on / in Polish language lessons automatic. It is not without a reason that most teachers' speech acts are directive (extended researches indicate that), which shows the lack of anthropocentric attitude, lack of dialogue and attention to the students' needs and opinions.

Focusing on ready knowledge transfer switches the lessons led by Polish language teachers into the sphere of a one-way apparent dialogue. Common knowledge is not often exposed, there is no sub-directive thought steering for example by persuading, proposing, requesting or advising. That is why during literature lessons students acquire knowledge about a book or epoch without any discussions or opinion exchanges and without thorough interpretation.

Lessons on language training are unfortunately often realized against basic methodological rules. During class visits we can observe concen-

tration on teaching grammar rules and definitions, which is usually done by finding verbs and adverbs. When parts of speech are put in the centre of students' attention, the students are required to put them into the correct tables. This is a didactic action derived from incorrect methodological preparation, but also from literal treatment of the core curriculum which states that "the student: recognises the main syntax functions of words used in expressions (subject, verb, object, attributive, adverbial) (...), recognises in expressions the main parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, numeral, preposition, conjunction) and indicates the differences between them" (PP, 2008, p. 30). Students frequently only adjust new definitions to the sentences, find indicated parts of speech and underline them. Grammar lessons are seldom combined with creative construction of sentences, ready sentence constructions are usually mechanically transformed. Students' acts of speech are usually forced by teachers in a directive way. Moreover, these are rather subject acts, concentrating on information reproduction, counting sentence elements or analysing inter-word relations. The attempt to use knowledge about the language in a range of one's own sentence constructions or style corrections do not appear at such lessons at all. Polish language teachers are being considerably influenced by easily measurable didactics—during language lessons they teach mainly grammar and knowledge about language.

Shown earlier, the Educational Research Institute indicates that teachers, especially those with longer employment history, rarely use multi-media during the lessons. Half of the respondents use multimedia technology only a few times a year. Only 1% takes the advantage of new technologies in every lesson. Half of the teachers admit dictating notes to their students. While choosing reading texts to talk about, in 63% teachers choose in accordance with the core curriculum, while students' preferences and choices are taken into account only by 6–7% of teachers who took part in the research. Homework is evaluated 4–5 times a week. Students'

responses during the lesson, writing compositions or project work are rare (from 2–10%).

We can say that despite high competence of teachers who effectively meet the system requirements, Polish schools still need changes and reforms in terms of didactic anthropocentrism and education process empowerment, and taking into account the needs of the young generation in the field of language competence and culture.

3.4 Standardised tests and examinations

Currently every stage of education in the Polish school finishes with an exam. However, only two examinations are obligatory: after the sixth grade and after lower general secondary school. The final secondary school examination is not compulsory. At the beginning, examinations after primary school and lower general secondary school were designed to play an informative role and they were not designed to influence the students' educational path. After some time, good results became a pass to better schools, and average results of students in different schools became the basis for comparing the results of different schools: not only on a local scale but also across the whole country. Because of this, strong competition among schools has appeared; so far this process has only been known in the sphere of marketing and economics, not education.

Examinations at particular stages of education:

1. K3—competence evaluation of third-grade pupils prepared by IBE, participation is not obligatory, but the programme is joined by 70% of schools every year. The examination is divided into two parts: Polish language, and mathematics and science.
2. K5—competence evaluation of fifth grade pupils prepared by IBE, participation is not obligatory.

3. Examination in the sixth grade—an obligatory examination prepared by the Central Examination Board (CKE—Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna). It consists of two parts: the first part includes Polish language and mathematics tasks (80 minutes), the second part of the examination includes foreign language (SPE).
4. Lower general secondary school examination—after the third grade of lower general secondary school; consists of three parts: humanities, mathematics and science, and foreign language at basic or extended level (GE). The examination is obligatory, the result is given in points and with final marks in particular subjects, and additional achievements decide about the possibility to be admitted to secondary school. Its minimal result is not given and it does not decide about final marks of the student.
5. Upper general secondary school examination—checks the level of fulfilling the core curriculum requirements and replaces university entrance examination (LOE).

In 2005, the form and function of the final secondary school examination were changed, due to this fact university entrance examinations were abolished. The written final secondary school examination, thematically different in particular regions and evaluated by teachers at the schools was replaced by a country-wide final secondary school examination at two levels: basic and extended. It is obligatory in the whole of Poland and checked by the Central Examination Board. The students' papers are coded so that the examinees remain anonymous. Before 2005, before radical changes had been introduced, the written final secondary school examinations were evaluated at schools on the basis of the country-wide evaluation criteria. The so-called answer key, which helped to make results objective thanks to a set of anticipated answers, was not as rigid as the guidelines introduced in 2005.

These criteria have been obligatory for ten years now, and, as a result, schools have been teaching how to write schematic compositions which

will suit the answer key, and in this way they limit students' creativity. Since 2005 at basic level students have been doing reading comprehension exercises. The oral examination has also been changed. From 2005 to 2015 the oral exam in Polish language was based on a presentation prepared by the student during his studies in the third year, and next on the discussion about the presentation with the examination committee. Since 2015 the oral examination has a different structure, the student draws a question and has fifteen minutes to prepare the answers.

Here is a description of the basic rules:

Structure of the obligatory written examination at basic level

Duration time: 170 minutes. Type of tasks: reading comprehension, knowledge about language task, composition (essay or interpretation: a student chooses one out of two given topics; a piece of writing should include at least 250 words). Maximum number of points to obtain: 70.

Structure of the obligatory written examination at extended level

Duration time: 170 minutes. Type of tasks: a student chooses one out of two topics and writes a composition, his work should count at least 300 words. Maximum number of points to obtain: 40.

Structure of the obligatory oral examination

Duration time: approximately 30 minutes (15 minutes—oral presentation preparation time; 10 minutes—monologue speech; 5 minutes—discussion with the examiner). Type of tasks: speaking on a particular topic inspired by a culture text. The examinee chooses a literal, iconic or popular-science text within the scope of language knowledge and the instruction referring to it.

Number of points possible to gain: maximum 40 points, including: the monologue speech 40% (16 points), the organisation of the monologue speech 20% (8 points), for language and style in the monologue and the presentation 20% (8 points), for the dialogue presentation and following conversation rules 20% (8 points).

Final secondary school examination evaluation

A teacher with at least six-year experience may become an examiner after finishing an appropriate course led by the Regional Examination Board. One day before correcting the final secondary school examination papers, examiners have to go through a one-day course which describes the rules of correcting a concrete paper, and they also become familiar with the answer key.

The examiners' work lasts three weekends, during this time they usually correct about 60 final secondary school examination papers. While correcting papers, teachers are not allowed to leave the place they work at, they are not allowed to take anything from the place where the examination papers are corrected. Every examination paper which has been evaluated is re-evaluated by a verifier.

Results of the final secondary school examination

To pass it, the student has to obtain at least 30% of points in the written and oral part of the final secondary school examination in Polish language. Students can also take a written examination at extended level (there is no point limit to pass it).

Students receive the results at the end of June. In Poland, the final secondary school examination is also a university entrance examination—the result in competitive mode is announced by the universities and decides about the possibility to be admitted to the chosen faculty.

The results of the final secondary school examination are analyzed by the Educational Research Institute, and are developed by means of the Educational Added Value. Everyone can look at the results placed on the IBE website. Web comparison portals can be used to compare results from different schools. It is also possible to check the results in districts, powiats and provinces.

In 2015, the final secondary school examination in Polish language according to the new regulations was passed by 98% of the students, in

previous form (before 2015) by 99% (IM, 2015). Despite such a high pass rate, university teachers complain that the first year students' preparation for studying is getting worse and worse (Sławiński & Woźnicki, 2014).

4 Teacher training

Polish language university teacher training is organised in accordance with the Bologna system. At full-time studies of the first cycle, the amount of hours is not less than 1800 (180 ECTS points), at full-time studies of the second cycle the amount of hours is not less than 1200 hours (120 ECTS points). The first-cycle studies last three years and end with a Bachelor's Degree in Polish philology with a chosen specialization. The Master's degree studies last two years.

It is worth mentioning that after the changes connected with teacher training standards in 2012, the first-cycle studies entitle to teach only at primary schools. Becoming a teacher of Polish language in lower and upper general secondary school is connected with completing the second-cycle studies and obtaining a Master's degree. In 2015 the Ministry of National Education accepted a legal regulation which says that since 2020 the Master's degree studies will have become obligatory also for teachers working in primary schools.

Universities use different organizational solutions as far as obligatory numbers of hours are concerned, however, these are always based on legal regulations. There are various possibilities, e.g. there are faculties which train only teachers of Polish language, but there are also Polish language teacher training faculties which are combined with such specializations as speech therapy or oligophrenopedagogy (Pedagogical University of Cracow), in Poznań, the Polish language teacher training faculty is combined with philosophy which enables to teach ethics. Within the first-cycle studies, the University of Wrocław offers teacher specialization

in the following profiles: Polish language and history or Polish language and library science.

In Polish language teacher training a great emphasis is put on traditionally presented knowledge about literature, knowledge about language and courses within the area of analysis and literary work interpretation. Various educational innovations, practice and laboratory classes are also important. Specific differences in the study programmes show that modern Polish language teacher training goes beyond the traditional competences of classic philological knowledge. Within the frame of legal requirements for Polish language teacher training, didactic departments can construct their study profiles according to their own ideas and needs. Due to this fact, obligatory and optional subjects at Polish language studies realize the content with the accordance to projected issues. At the Pedagogical University of Cracow the concern for regional issues and e-didactics can be seen, the Jagiellonian University maintains a strong emphasis on solid course in the history of Polish literature, but it also includes issues of literature for children, information technology or pragmatics for teachers of Polish language. The Silesian University additionally offers subjects which provide future teachers with the knowledge about ordinary and specific difficulties in learning, including developmental dyslexia, ADD, ADHD and the Asperger syndrome. Students are also introduced to the specifics of working with talented students.

Such a short description cannot show many differences and similarities in teacher training programmes at particular universities. However, it is worth stating that the way teaching practice is organized (one semester of practical classes at school and two or three weeks of continuous teaching practice) has serious influence on the graduates' further work style at school. The teaching practice programme, assessment or lesson visits evaluation, practice documentation evaluation and practice location in the studies programme is vital when it comes to final effectiveness of the teacher and his / her attitude to the profession. Polish universities strongly

differ in terms of the number of obligatory practice hours and the way practice is credited. For example, continuous practice in primary school at first-cycle studies at the Jagiellonian University starts in the middle of September and lasts for 4 weeks, the student has to teach 20 lessons; at the Pedagogical University of Cracow practice starts in October and lasts for 3 weeks, and the student teaches 15 lessons.

5 Teaching of national language in the context of a foreign language

Constant globalization and culture mediatization and free movement within the borders of the European Union have changed the accents in the field of Polish culture. It has also seriously re-configured the relations between the national language and foreign languages taught in schools, especially strengthening the status of English.

The increasing status of English shifts the attention from developing Polish language competences into the language of global community. Parents taking care of a good life start of their children send them to additional courses and private lessons (Gajewska-Dyszkiewicz et al., 2014). Recent researches show that 20% of the students learn English outside of the school. Good final examination results in foreign languages statistically have greater influence on further university career than Polish language. The foreign language is taken into consideration in every recruitment procedure, Polish language has great significance only at humanistic studies. The ability to use a foreign language, even authorized by a certificate, enables a student to choose the place of work freely. Polish language has no such great significance. It can be seen that Polish language private lessons are cheaper than private lessons of English language. What is more, researches show that students are aware of the fact that a foreign language is much more useful.

But teachers indicate that only 30% of lower general secondary school students communicate in English eagerly. The IBE researchers notice that preparing for the examinations is the main aim of most teachers of English (above 80%), not the competency to speak and react in a proper linguistic way (BUNJO, 2014). So also in this situation the market dimension is more important than humanistic competences.

Bilingual schools are becoming more and more popular. In 2008, there were 123 bilingual schools in Poland. In these upper general secondary schools, the so-called zero grade functions, its aim is to equalize the students' level of language competence and skills. At least two educational classes are taught bilingually apart from Polish, part of history concerning Poland and part of geography concerning Poland. It can be admitted that bilingual classes and schools are the answer to the modern ways of life, mobility and life conditions in the culture of liquid modernity.

When it comes to teaching Polish language as a foreign language in usual public schools in Poland, we can say that this does not exist because only 0.1% of the population are foreigners (the lowest rate in the European Union). Non-Polish nationality in Poland is declared only by 1.5% of the inhabitants of Poland (the largest numbers being of Germans, Ukrainians and Belarussians). The number of people reporting minority and regional languages as their native tongue is as follows: we have the largest number of Germans 58,170, Ukrainians 28,172 and Belarussians 17,480 (ERL, 2015). Children of national minorities study their national language in bilingual schools. There are certain legal regulations which say that foreigners who are in compulsory education and do not know Polish language or know it insufficiently have the right to additional free education in Polish language in the form of additional classes of Polish. Additional education in Polish language is organized by the commune at the place of residence (PF, 2011). The need to teach Polish language appears in the case of bigger cities where the amount of immigrants or people temporarily working in Poland is larger. On the other hand, in Lithuania (the Vilnius region, the

Grodno region) and in some parts of Ukraine and Belarus and Silesian Cieszyn, where Poles create minorities, the problem of maintaining Polish identity and education takes on a different character.

In 1999, the State Commission for the Certification of Proficiency in Polish as a Foreign Language was created. Since 2004, Poland has been a member of the Association of Language Testers in Europe, where it is represented by The Centre of Polish Language and Culture of the Jagiellonian University. At Polish universities, apart from the standard post-graduate courses of Polish as a foreign language, glottodidactic specializations function. For example, last year the Jagiellonian University provided studies in the field of Polish language in social communication with a specialization in teaching Polish language as a foreign and a second language.

While talking about the position of Polish language in education, it is worth noticing what value the final secondary school examination in Polish has in the recruitment process beyond humanistic studies. That position can be seen through the analysis of the point-counting pattern in the recruitment procedure at technical universities. For example, the pattern used at Gdańsk University of Technology looks as follows: $W = P + 0,1JP + a \cdot JO$. Polish language has JP value here, so it is less important than a foreign language if it is passed at bilingual level because then $a = 0,15$. At AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow the pattern is slightly different: $W = 4 \cdot G + J$, so at non-humanistic faculties Polish language does not count at all.

It is worth underlying that at schools teaching a foreign language is divided into smaller groups, which clearly and considerably makes teaching easier and increases its effectiveness. This division does not function in Polish language lessons, where there are large numbers of students (on average approximately 25–30 students); this makes it difficult to run classes and teach language skills of particular students.

The process of further deterioration of the Polish language status at schools is also determined by social changes—by becoming less impor-

tant in comparison to English language which opens the way to a career and which is also useful in contacts in the global world.

The Ministerial regulations do not offer any indications of how to prevent the market motivated reduction of the role of national language, which is treated as a secondary tool of social pragmatics.

Number of lessons of Polish in comparison to foreign languages

Primary school (grades 4 to 6): Polish language 510 / Modern foreign language 290 / (to compare: Mathematics 385)

Lower-secondary education—lower general secondary school (grades 1–3): Polish language 450 / Two modern foreign languages 450 / (to compare: Mathematics 385)

Technical upper-secondary school: Polish language 360 / Two modern foreign languages 450 / (to compare: History 60)

Upper-secondary education (upper general secondary school—lessons by subject in the 3-year period): Polish language 360 / Polish language at extended level and as extra subject 240 / Two modern foreign languages 450

The distribution of lessons between the two modern foreign languages is left to the school head's discretion.

6 Discussion and conclusion

Observing subsequent reforms of the Polish educational system, it can be stated that changes connected with teaching Polish language are generally not positive. Detailed programme requirements and the desire to measure all educational effects remove the teachers' subjectivity in the educational process. The pressure made by the examination formulas and school authorities leave teachers no choice: the examinations and results are of highest priority. The examination structure and its typical

features determine the methodology and choice of educational form. The current system lets us easily forget about the special dimension of Polish language teaching; until not so long ago, skills taught at school were more valuable than the current ones trivialized by tests and answer keys.

Several years ago, the core curricula took care of values especially important in social practice (ethics, a sense of aesthetics, regional, historical, patriotic awareness, creative thinking, intimate communication, family in the context of local culture, respect for others, dialoguing). Nowadays, the influence of the media and thinking styles taken from the market-oriented pop culture is so destructive for traditional values and local cultures that it requires more intensive actions to promote liveliness of national languages and strengthen their ethos in the public space.

Instead of such actions, examinations are becoming more and more important even at lower stages of education in Poland. Even primary school pupils are tested three times. Despite the fact that official tests are not important in the recruitment process, they are important while accepting students to a concrete class, school or group.

It is worth noticing that there are more and more tests: recently a K3 test has been introduced for primary school pupils at grade three and a K5 test for pupils in the fifth grade, adding it to the test after the sixth last grade of primary school. The lower general secondary school examination lasts for three days, six subjects are tested then. During the final secondary examination students have to pass 6 examinations (4 written examinations and 2 oral ones).

From early age students get used to writing external tests, which are easy to evaluate and measure. Creativity, creative thinking and the relation to the region and the local society are not important any more. Experts are creating new analysis systems of school results all the time.

After the last radical changes in 2015, the final secondary school examination is still an exam which can be passed without any previous effort, which lowers students motivation to study the national language. We can

say that there is a risk that the world in school will not take place and will not be realized in Polish language, but in its special formal type of requirements, making speech acts and communication fulfil the role of directive functions without subjectivity, subordinated to formulas and examinations.

Many experts and journalists not connected with the so-called political correctness commonly alarm that if you want to pass your secondary school final examination nowadays, you do not have to know Polish literature. What is more, expensive reforms based on big institutions (for example the Central Examination Board), which introduced objective evaluation of the students' results, does not increase quality of education.

Is it possible to escape from such a low status of Polish language in the structure and teaching practice? Some steps have been taken. There are slight but positive changes in the new model of the final secondary school examination of 2015 (ZZ, 2015). This exam takes into account the subjectivity of the student and his / her self-expression. Changes on the Polish political scene in 2015 might shape a new system of teaching (liquidation of the "gimnazjum" type of school).

Hope lies in independent university scientific thought about Polish language didactics. University methodologists provide many interesting and creative methodological solutions. However, the development of modern didactics is stopped by educational policies which are steered by the current political decisions, which do not take into account how important and serious humanistic dimension of Polish language education is.

When this book was put into print, the Ministry of Education announced a plan of further reforms of the Polish school system (PSE, 2016). These future changes in the Polish system were announced by the Ministry of Education at the end of June 2016. This reform will introduce a new structure of Polish education. Fully it will begin to run from the school year 2022/2023. Then it will be a system consisting of the 8-year primary

school, 4-year high school, 5-year technical school, and a two-stage vocational (a total of 5 years). The reform is to be implemented gradually. The first students will begin learning in the new system from 2017. Class I and VII will be conducted by the new Core curriculum. The Ministry of Education is trying to improve the state of reading in school and enhance students' interest in the history of their homeland.

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Teaching Slovak Language and Literature in Slovakia

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1 Politics—school policy influencing the school system and national language education

The chapter introduces the system and organisation of the teaching of Slovak language and literature at both primary and secondary levels of education (ISCED 1–ISCED 3) in the Slovak Republic. Slovakia is a small post-communist country in Central Europe. Up to 31st December 1992, it was part of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (short form: Czechoslovakia). The population is over 5 million and comprises mostly Slovaks (80.7%) and several ethnic and national minorities—Hungarians (8.5%), Roma (2.0%), Czechs, Croats, Rusyns, Ukrainians, Germans, Poles, Serbs and Jews. Slovak, as its official or state language, belongs to the Slavic language family.

Since communicative competence in Slovak is one of the basic target requirements defined by the Slovak National Curriculum, the subject Slovak Language and Literature is a compulsory part of the curriculum for all learners (including the learners coming from minorities and foreigners) at all types and levels of schools.

Compulsory education in Slovakia lasts 10 years (starting usually at the age of 6) and is provided by various types of schools: *primary schools* (6–15 years of age), *secondary grammar schools* (with either 4-, 5- or 8-year study programmes), and *secondary vocational schools* (with 2-, 3- or 4-year study programmes). Most primary and secondary schools are public (up to 90%). The rest are private schools owned either by churches or private owners. Higher education is provided by public, state, and private universities or colleges.

The Slovak school system also includes *nursery schools* (3–6 years of age), *special schools* (for learners who, because of various reasons, cannot fulfil the final requirements stated in the national curriculum), *primary art schools*, and *language schools* (both state and private). These types of schools are not the subject of this study.

2 History—historical milestones influencing the national language education

Teaching Slovak as the state language has its traditional beginning with the first systematic development of education in its territory during the period of Great Moravia (8th–10th century). In monastery schools (for example, the monastery school under Zobor Hill at Nitra and at Devín near Bratislava, founded by Constantine and Methodius in the 9th century), in addition to canonical Latin also the Old Slavonic language was used (i.e. the Old Church Slavonic) in the form codified by Constantine's works (e.g. *Proglas*) and the translations of church texts, including the Bible.

The situation radically changed at the turn of the 9th and 10th century, when Great Moravia ceased to exist and the territory of present day Slovakia became part of the Hungarian State. From that moment, the use of the historical Slovaks' mother tongue in education was massively limited, always in direct dependence on the political situation. During the existence of the Hungarian State (up to 1918) the main languages of education for Slovaks were Latin and Hungarian. In the 1867–1918 period, when current day Slovakia was part of Austro-Hungary, German was added to the two official languages used in education. The Slovak language could be used only over a very limited territory (Upper Hungary), and only at the lowest levels (Sunday schools, village schools, folk schools). The first three grammar schools with Slovak as the language of instruction were founded only after 1862 (the lower 4-year secondary grammar schools in

Martin, Kláštor pod Znievom, and Revúca), but their existence was not long; all of them were closed in 1874.

The real turning point for Slovak as the language of instruction was the foundation of the first Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. Both the Czech and Slovak languages became languages of instruction at all types and levels of education. However, there was a problem due to the shortage of Slovak teachers, who had to be subsidised by their Czech colleagues sent to the Slovak territory. Moreover, the schools used mainly Czech textbooks. (For more see Bakke, 1999). It was not an ideal situation, but still it was a significant progress. Czech teachers were only gradually replaced by the Slovak ones.

A significant role in this “exchange” was played by the establishment of Comenius University in 1919, especially the beginning of the training of the teachers of Slovak at its Faculty of Arts in 1921. Among its first professors, appointed by President T. G. Masaryk, was the professor of Slovak Language and Literature Jozef Škultéty, but most of the courses at Comenius University were taught in Czech (out of the total number of 22 professors only three were Slovaks, others came to Bratislava from the universities in Prague or Brno). The ideology of “czechoslovakism” was very strong here, finally resulting in the departure of Professor Škultéty. However, despite certain complications and disagreements Comenius University produced a new generation of Slovak intelligentsia, including teachers of Slovak (“Czechoslovak”¹⁵) language for secondary schools, higher secondary schools and teachers’ institutes, which in turn provided education for the teachers of Slovak at lower levels (Gabzdilová, 2014).

After 1945, Slovak becomes a full-fledged state language of instruction.

15 The “Czechoslovak” language was an artificial political construct, which, in fact, never really existed. During the First Republic (1918–1938) the Czech language was exclusively used as a state language in Bohemia and Moravia, while in Slovakia the Czech and Slovak languages were officially used in parallel—especially depending on the personal constitution of state offices. The same applied for the area of education—while in Bohemia and Moravia the teaching was done exclusively in Czech, in Slovakia it was in Slovak as well as Czech, again depending on the teacher’s nationality (Gabzdilová, 2014, p. 46).

The ambiguity in using “Czechoslovak” language as an official language of instruction was solved only by the Constitution of 1st January 1969, when Czechoslovakia became a federation of two independent states—the Czech Socialist Republic and the Slovak Socialist Republic. Since 1969, the Slovak language was the only official language of instruction in the territory of the Slovak Socialist Republic. The tradition was also continued by the Slovak Republic, which originated on 1st January 1993 as one of two successor states of Czecho-Slovakia. Despite the split-up, the 75 years of existence in one state have left certain common features in the Czech and Slovak educational systems, visible even nowadays. Many of the features characterising the philosophy, objectives and organisation of education valid for the Czech Republic, hold true for the Slovak Republic as well.

3 Current state of teaching Slovak—Slovakia’s contemporary language policy

The complicated Slovak historical experience, i.e. the fact that they had to undergo a long and difficult struggle for their self-determination and language, has also been reflected in the attitude of contemporary Slovaks to their language and literature, as well as in the country’s official language policy.

In the Slovak Republic, the language policy is carried out as part of the government’s cultural policy whose aim is, among other things, to support the development and use of the state language as a significant spiritual part of the national cultural heritage; its protection is one of the priorities of the Slovak Republic’s cultural policy. The language policy was implemented in the adoption of the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic no. 270/1995 Coll. On the State Language of the Slovak Republic, amended by later regulations (henceforth as “Act on the State Language”),

which regulates the use of the state language in public—administration, education, mass media, cultural events and public gatherings, in the military, fire departments, judicial and administrative proceedings, economy, health and other services. This Act not only defines the extent of the use of the Slovak language in public communication, but, at the same time, guarantees its protection and care.

The use of the official language in education is defined by the Act on the State Language in its par. 4 as follows:

1. Teaching the state language is compulsory at all primary and secondary schools. The other language than the state language is the language of instruction and examination in the extent defined by specific regulation.
2. Pedagogical staff at all schools and school facilities in the territory of the Slovak Republic, except for foreign teachers and lecturers, are obliged to have command of and use the state language in both oral and written forms.
3. Entire pedagogical documentation and other documentation in schools and school facilities is carried out in the state language. In the schools and school facilities with education carried out in a language of national minorities, pedagogical documentation is done in two languages, the state language and the language of a national minority.
4. Textbooks and texts used in education in the Slovak Republic are published in the state language, except for the textbooks and texts intended for the instruction in a language of national minorities, ethnic groups and other foreign languages. Their publication and use is defined by specific regulation.
5. Provisions of sections 1, 2 and 4 do not apply for the use of the state language at higher educational institutions, for the teaching of other languages or for the instruction in other than state language, or for textbooks and texts used for instruction at HEIs.

In 2004, Slovakia became a member state of the EU, and as such it had to adopt its educational principles (e.g. “M+2” rule). This repeatedly led to numerous system changes in the Slovak educational system, and language education in particular, which were defined in the basic document entitled *The Conception of Teaching Foreign Languages at Primary and Secondary Schools* (MŠVVŠ SR, 2007a).

First, the Conception requires students to learn Slovak, as well as English as the first foreign language (starting from the 3rd grade of primary schools at the latest), and one more foreign language (starting from the 6th grade of primary schools). Learners can choose from five foreign languages as their second foreign language: German, French, Russian, Spanish and Italian. Learners coming from Hungarian or Rusyn minorities may study at schools where their minority language is used as a language of instruction. In addition to their mother tongue, these learners must study Slovak as a compulsory subject and two other foreign languages as well. Slovak is also taught compulsorily as a second language to the learners—attendees of either state or private primary and secondary schools—who live in Slovakia either permanently or temporarily, e.g. children of foreigners, refugees, etc.

3.1 Curriculum

The framework objectives, content of education and learners’ key competences are defined in the *Slovak National Curriculum* (ŠPÚ, 2015). The educational objectives are set in such way as to ensure the harmonious development of the learners’ personalities. The state educational programme also defines the framework content of education. It determines areas of education and cross-curricular topics. It is a starting point for the creation of the school educational programme in which specific conditions and needs of a region are taken into account. The state educational programme is published for individual educational levels by the

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. The National Curriculum, with the approved framework of subject content, has been in effect since 1st September 2015.

Table 1 Areas of Education as defined in the Slovak National Curriculum

Natural (understanding nature)	Humanistic (understanding man)
Man and nature	Individual
Man and technologies	Society
	Culture
Basic instruments for life	
Mathematical thinking and expression	
Language and communication	
Health and sport	

The sub-area of education called *Language and Communication* includes the following *academic subjects*:

- Slovak language and literature (for Slovak learners);
- Slovak language and Slovak literature (for members of minorities);
- Hungarian/Rusyn/Romani as a mother tongue (for members of minorities);
- first foreign language (English);
- second foreign language (one selected from French, Italian, German, Russian, Spanish);
- courses of Slovak as state language (for children of foreigners).

The objectives of language education in general and of Slovak language in particular are given in the *Slovak National Curriculum*. The framework curriculum for the Slovak language and literature as the school subject has been in effect since 1st September 2015 (ŠPÚ, 2015).

The subject “Slovak language and literature” integrates three content components:

- language and communication,
- composition,
- literary education.

As for the “language” component, language and communication are the determining objectives for the development of the communicative abilities of the learners, which may have been declared in the past as well, but they were in fact pushed away by a tendency to cover a relatively large amount of linguistic concepts at a high level of abstraction (the apparent heritage of a long-lasting tradition of a structuralist approach in the Slovak educational system). The new curriculum therefore put emphasis on the understanding of language as an instrument of thinking and communication among people, which in teaching should be projected into an intentional preference for the development of communicative competences, which in turn will become theoretical as well as practical starting points of further development in other subjects, respecting the subjects’ specific needs. **The communicative-experiential model of language teaching** was significantly strengthened (Kesselová, 2008; Liptáková, 2011; Liptáková et al., 2015), while, on the contrary, the tendency to cover the “school form” of scientific discipline—linguistics—was weakened. Content was reduced in favour of the learners’ activities; the learners are expected to work with language communications as much as possible, applying interpretive-evaluative skills. The greatest emphasis was put on learners’ own creation of language utterances (Klimovič, 2009), work with information, readers’ literacy, ability to argue, etc. (ŠPÚ, 2015).

In the “literature” component, primary attention is paid to the development of the learners’ abilities to understand the world through art and removal of the conviction that the cognitive approach to the world around them is the only one and cannot be substituted by other ways

of understanding, making them aware of the specificities which the aesthetic approach to reality represents (for more see Andričíková & Stanislavová, 2011). The Curriculum prioritised the development of reading competences, i.e. a set of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes aimed at the reception of a text of art (reading, declamation, listening), its analysis, interpretation and evaluation. The most important element in this conception of literary education is its focus on reading as a comprehensive acquisition of an artistic text, aimed at the development of reading skills which would far exceed the aspect of the technical understanding of text and thus lead to the acquisition of its content (ŠPÚ, 2015).

The literary part of the subject *Slovak Language and Literature* at secondary schools (ISCED 3) saw a change in the subject's thematic arrangement, leaving out the literary-historical structure. Instead of the orientation being on facts, the focus is on analytical and interpretive activities. In most general terms, content of literary education is focused on two activities: reception and creation. In all of the subject's components, the *constructivist approach to teaching* should be applied, changing students into autonomous learning subjects (ŠPÚ, 2015).

The educational area “language and communication” in the Slovak National Curriculum is divided according to key language competences (i.e. the processes they develop):

- listening comprehension;
- communication (speaking) comprehension;
- reading comprehension;
- writing comprehension (ŠPÚ, 2015).

According to the Slovak National Curriculum, the key competences developed by language education should lead, among other things, to:

- the development of skills necessary to express the learners' own attitudes and opinions;
- the ability to acquire education in a given language;

- understanding the language as a significant unifying factor of the national community in which the historical and cultural development of the nation is reflected;
- improvement of language culture and verbal oral and written utterances;
- cultivation of the awareness of the learners' own language belonging to a certain ethnic group, by means of mastering the standard form of language;
- acquiring positive attitude to verbal works of art, to one's own reading experience, to the development of one's own attitude to literature (ŠPÚ, 2015).

The framework curriculum is a document defining the number of lessons allocated to the subjects. The School Act requires that the extent be defined only for the entire educational level, the number of lessons expressing only the *necessary minimum*. The actual number of lessons may slightly change based on a type and orientation of the school. The allocation of lessons into individual grades is in the competence of a school, like the allocation of subjects into grades, taking into account the learners' age.

The original framework curricula from 2008 were updated in 2011 and further innovated in 2015 (see Tables 2–6 and 9–13), becoming officially effective from 1st September 2015. But nowadays schools may also proceed according to the 2008 framework curricula, provided that they do not cause conflict with the new innovations in the content area. What is more problematic, however, is that current textbooks prepared according to the original 2008 framework curricula are, in fact, based on teaching methods that slightly differ from the current ones.

Table 2 Framework curriculum for primary schools with Slovak as language of instruction—ISCED 1 (source: ŠPÚ, 2015b)

Educational area	Subject	Number of lessons for 1st–4th grade of primary schools
Language and communication	Slovak language and literature	31
	First foreign language	6
Total		37

Table 3 Framework curriculum for primary schools with Slovak as language of instruction—ISCED 2 (source: ŠPÚ, 2015b)

Educational area	Subject	Number of lessons for 5th–9th grade of primary schools
Language and communication	Slovak language and literature	24
	First foreign language	15
Total		39

Table 4 Framework curriculum for secondary grammar schools with 4-year and 8-year study with Slovak as language of instruction—ISCED 3 (source: MŠVVŠ SR, 2015c)

Educational area	Subject	Number of lessons for 1st–4th grade (5th–8th grade of 8-year secondary grammar schools)
Language and communication	Slovak language and literature	12
	First foreign language	14
	Second foreign language	12
Total		38

Table 5 Framework curriculum for secondary schools with two languages of instruction (bilingual secondary grammar schools) (source: ŠPÚ, 2015d)

Educational area	Subject	Number of lessons for 1st–5th grade
Language and communication	Slovak language and literature	12
	First foreign language	22
	Second foreign language	10
Total		44

Table 6 Framework curricula for secondary vocational schools—ISCED 3 (source: ŠIOV, 2013)

Educational area	Subject	Number of lessons for 1st–4th grade
Language and communication	Slovak language and literature	12
	First foreign language	12
	Second foreign language	10
Total		34

For better illustration, we provide a model of the overall framework curriculum for the subject Slovak language (as mother tongue), valid for the learners of primary and secondary vocational schools from the beginning of their school attendance to the end of secondary education completed by a school leaving exam (“maturita”) (Table 7).

Table 7 Summary model of framework curriculum for ISCED1–ISCED3

ISCED	Year of school	Min. number of lessons per week for Slovak as L1	Min. number of lessons per week for 1st foreign language (English)	Min. number of lessons per week for 2nd foreign language
1	1	9	0	0
	2	8	0	0
	3	7	3	0
	4	7	3	0
2	5	5	3	0
	6	5	3	0
	7	4	3	0
	8	5	3	0
	9	5	3	0
3	10	3	3	3
	11	3	3	3
	12	3	4	3
	13	3	4	3

3.2 Textbooks

The purchase and distribution of all textbooks for schools is done by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic based on § 13 of the Act no. 245/2008 Coll. on Education (the School Act). The approved textbooks, teaching texts and workbooks, including their transcriptions into the Braille alphabet, or other suitable forms of transcripts, are provided by the Ministry of Education to schools based on their orders free of charge, or the Ministry provides funds for their

purchase. The division of funds for the publication of textbooks is determined by the Ministry, according to a publishing scheme.

The electronic ordering of approved textbooks and workbooks is done through the Ministry's Publishing Portal (Edičný portál—<https://edicny-portal.iedu.sk/>). The Portal contains current information on the Ministry's textbook policy (effective regulation in the area of textbook production, information on the process of textbook production, publishing scheme for the current year and other documents related to the Ministry's publishing activities).

For the 2015/16 school year the Portal contains:

- 3 primers with reading books for the 1st grade of primary schools;
- 1 set of textbooks of Slovak language for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades;
- 1 set of reading books for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades;
- 1 set of textbooks of Slovak language for the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grades;
- 1 set of textbooks for literary education for the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grades;
- 1 textbook of Slovak language for the 1st–4th grades of secondary schools;
- 1 set of exercise books for Slovak language for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades of secondary schools;
- 1 set of textbooks of literature for the 1st–4th grades of secondary grammar schools and secondary vocational schools;
- 1 set of reading books for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades of secondary grammar schools and secondary vocational schools;
- 1 textbook for communication and composition for the 1st–4th grades of secondary school with 8-year study.

In summary, it is necessary in this regard to point to the fact that for the students of primary schools, secondary grammar schools and sec-

ondary schools (from the 2nd to the last year) in every year there is only one approved textbook of Slovak language and literary education. This is not a result of the Ministry's efforts to unify educational materials, but rather of economic reasons—small book market, small number of learners and a policy of lending books to learners (rather than selling them) lead to unprofitability and a consequent lack of interest among teachers and teacher trainers to create new textbooks. As a result, the subjects Slovak language and Slovak literature are taught at universities from the same set of textbooks, which ensures a very similar, if not the same, educational content at all schools. While this is comfortable, for example, in a situation when a student has to change his / her school, it may also prove a disadvantage, because of the lack of diversification of teaching sources and an impossibility to select an alternative textbook if a textbook approved by the Ministry does not meet specific needs of a school and its students. Therefore, teacher training courses are organised throughout the country to prepare teachers for innovative use and adaptation of textbooks to suit their specific pedagogical needs (c.f. Bačová & Lapitka, 2013; Hincová & Tomášková, 2014).

Some textbooks are made available for students and teachers of primary and secondary schools in a digital form at the portal eAktovka (<http://www.eaktovka.sk/>). Electronic versions of textbooks, whose number is constantly increasing, can be accessed free of charge for all registered users. The project's objective is to achieve a state when all the approved textbooks, which are now only in the print version, will be available in the digital form. In the 2015/16 school year there were only 4 electronic textbooks, 2 reading books and 2 literary works of the compulsory reading list made available for the subject Slovak language and literature.

3.3 Practice in schools

Traditionally, Slovak language as an academic subject is central in the national curricula. In their teaching practice, teachers of Slovak language and literature can make use of numerous academic works and methodological manuals (Bačová & Lapitka, 2013; Belášová, 2002, 2010; Cibáková, 2012; Hincová & Húsková, 2011; Hincová & Tomášková, 2014; Lapitka, 2009; Ligoš, 2009a, 2009b; Palenčárová, Kesselová & Kupcová, 2003; Palenčárová & Liptáková, 2004; Klimovič, 2009; Kovalčíková & Majzlanová et al., 2003; Liptáková et al., 2015; Liptáková, 2012; Pršová, 2010; Rusňák, 2009; Zápotočná, 2012, 2013, etc.).

However, empirical research sources mapping the existing situation at schools are rather scarce (a series of research studies on reading Čítanie 2002–2009; studies on children's speaking Štúdie o detskej reči edited by Slančová, 2008; Gavora & Šrajechová, 2009; Zajacová, 2012; etc.). The relatively less valid but still valuable sources—professional teachers' magazines and portals for teachers and parents (e.g. *Nové školstvo*, *Pedagogické rozhľady*, *Pedagogické spektrum*, *Rodina a škola*, *Slovenský jazyk a literatúra v škole*, *Učiteľské noviny*)—point to the prevalence of traditional academic-descriptive approaches to teaching Slovak language and a historical-biographical approach to teaching literature. Undoubtedly, one must say that here is an ever-growing and continual need for a conceptual change.

As in the Czech Republic, a complex analysis of the school practice in Slovakia is yet to be conducted. The real picture of practice at Slovak schools may be deduced from the results of standardised testing (Testovanie 9, external part of the Maturita, PIRLS and PISA—all analyses are issued by NÚCEM at their website). The outcomes of these measurements are far from satisfactory. They show that learners of Slovak in general struggle to express themselves verbally and, comparing to learners from other developed countries, their reading literacy at lower-secondary level

is worse than the average (c.f. Galádová et al., 2013; Ladányiová, 2006, final national reports from international measurements issued by NÚCEM at their website).

3.4 Standardised tests and examinations

Throughout their school attendance learners undergo three standardised tests and exams in Slovak language and literature: Testing 5, Testing 9 and school leaving exams (Maturita). All the tests are prepared and their quality is guaranteed by the *National Institute of Certified Measurements of Education* (NÚCEM).

Testing 5

The testing of the 5th graders is done regularly every autumn. Its aim is to acquire objective information on the learners' performance at the time of their transition from the ISCED1 to ISCED 2 and to provide feedback to schools, so that they can continually improve their pedagogical activity.

The testing has two forms: the paper and electronic form. According to the report by NÚCEM (2016a), the last test in 2015 was taken by 43,148 learners from 1,457 schools. Their average success rate was 66.6 %. Learners were tested in 2 segments ("Language" & "Literature") divided into 4 areas:

- language and communication (average successfulness = 60.0 %);
- communication and composition (average successfulness = 69.5 %);
- reading and literature (average successfulness = 62.8 %);
- and reading with comprehension (average successfulness = 77.3 %).

The average success rate for the segment "Language" was 62.7 %, for the segment "Literature" 70.0 %.

Further findings:

- Learners performed very well in the tasks focused on reading

comprehension, which required orientation in continuous as well as non-continuous texts. They were outstanding in search for simple information explicitly stated in the text. On average, there was less success in searching for the information that was only implicitly expressed in the text.

- The tasks in reading and literature were done to a required level. There was a problem with the application of concrete knowledge in practical tasks, e.g. identifying a comparison in the text.
- The tasks focusing on the language area communication and composition were done relatively well. There were difficulties in distinguishing between an artistic and non-artistic text. Learners also had problems with the processes of analysis and application.
- Performance in the area of language and communication was average. The level of factual knowledge is as required, with good performance in the elements focused on memory. Difficulties were observed when dealing with the tasks focused on the application of concrete knowledge in practice. Learners had problems to distinguish between parts of speech and determining their grammatical categories.
- In general, learners did better when performing tasks that required factual knowledge but worse with the tasks requiring conceptual knowledge and its application (based on NÚCEM, 2016a).

Testing 9

The 9th grade testing is done regularly every spring. Its objectives are the same as with the 5th grade testing. The test is supposed to provide information on the learners' performance at their transition from ISCED2 to ISCED 3 and feedback to schools, so they can continually improve their pedagogical activities.

The testing is done in two ways: on paper and electronically. According to the NÚCEM (2016b) report, the last test, carried out in April 2016,

included 38,356 learners from 1,444 schools. Their average success rate was 62.6 %. Learners were tested in 3 segments:

- Language (average success rate = 57.3 %);
- Literature (average success rate = 71.5 %);
- Reading comprehension (average success rate = 65.9 %).

The findings obtained through Testing 9 were very similar to those obtained in Testing 5 (e.g. significantly better performance in facts-based tasks than conceptual knowledge, better results in the tasks testing learners' memory than in the application tasks).

Final examination (maturita)

All students completing their higher secondary study (ISCED 3) must pass a school leaving exam in at least three subjects, both Slovak Language and Literature and English Language being on a compulsory basis. The target requirements for the school leaving exams in the subject Slovak language and literature are stated in the pedagogical document entitled *Cieľové požiadavky na vedomosti a zručnosti maturantov zo slovenského jazyka a literatúry* (Target Requirements; ŠPÚ, 2012; effective from 1st September, 2013). They define the content of knowledge and the scale of students' skills that are then measured in both internal and external parts of the exam (maturita). The "language" part of the document lists key terms (cognitive aims) and oral skills (communicative aims) required to be produced by the students.

The "literature" part introduces a list of key literary terms (cognitive aims), reading skills (communicative aims), as well as a compulsory reading list of classic Slovak literary works.

What is important is that the same target requirements, the content and performance standards, are valid for the learners who have Slovak language as their mother tongue as well as for learners from the schools with a language of minorities as language of instruction who study Slovak as second language.

The “maturita” exam in Slovak language and literature has two parts: the external (test) and internal part (composition + oral exam). The criteria for passing the exam are as follows (for more see www.nucem.sk/sk/maturita):

Table 8 The maturita criteria

Min. criteria for external part	Test Success rate of at least 33 %
Min. criteria for internal part	Composition Success rate of at least 25 %
	Evaluation of the oral exam Marks: 1 (excellent), 2 (very good) or 3 (good)

The internal part of the exam is carried out by secondary schools and their teachers, while the external part of the exam is evaluated by NÚCEM.

According to the NÚCEM’s data (2016c), in the 2015/2016 school year the external part of the exam was taken by 44,906 students from 726 secondary schools with Slovak as language of instruction. Their average success rate reached 53.4 %. The exam was also taken by 1,820 learners from 63 secondary schools with Hungarian as language of instruction. Their success rate was 48.6 %.

The “maturita” test consists of 3 component parts:

- Language (average success rate = 52.2 %);
- Literature (average success rate = 56.2 %);
- Reading comprehension (average success rate = 53.7 %).

NÚCEM (2016c) summarized its basic findings as follows:

1. The greatest success rate in the language was achieved in the tasks focused on stylistics and the history of language.
2. Lower success rate was recorded in the areas of phonetics, orthography, and, above all, syntax.
3. As far as the literary part is concerned, students achieved better results in the application of factual knowledge from literary history and literary theory.
4. Worse results were recorded in the application of conceptual and higher knowledge from literary history and theory in their work with a concrete literary device or text.
5. As regards listening comprehension, students were more successful in the tasks focused on the identification of explicit and implicit information in the text, irrespective of the type or style of the text.
6. More problems were detected in the tasks focused on the interpretation and integration of ideas, especially in the work with lyrical and combined texts.

4 Teaching / learning Slovak as L2 for minority learners coming from ethnic minorities

The organisation of language education of national minorities in the Slovak Republic draws on the *Conception of Education of National Minorities* (MŠVVŠ, 2007b). The aim of the Conception is to create suitable conditions for equal education of all Slovak Republic's citizens, belonging to the majority as well as national minorities.

Together with general objectives of language education as stated in the National Curriculum, the specific objectives of learning/teaching Slovak

as a second language to learners from ethnic minorities can be summarised as follows:

- to know the Slovak language, its history and language systems (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation);
- to acquire communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) at least at the B2 level according to CEFR so that learners are able
 - to communicate in the state language effectively,
 - to express their opinions and attitudes in both private and public circumstances,
 - to gain further education at Slovak schools,
 - to be able to make use of the job market in Slovakia;
- to gain developed academic literacy in the state language;
- to develop a positive attitude to and respect of the Slovak language as state language.

Framework curricula for schools with the language of national minorities used as language of instruction

Teaching Slovak as L2 for learners coming from ethnic minorities is regulated by the adjusted framework syllabi (see Tables 9–13).

Table 9 Framework curriculum for primary schools with a language of national minorities as language of instruction—ISCED1 (source ŠPÚ, 2015e)

Educational area	Subject	Number of lessons for 1st–4th grades of primary schools
Language and communication	Language of instruction and literature	21
	Slovak language and Slovak literature	21
	First foreign language	5
Total		47

Table 10 Framework curriculum for primary schools with a language of national minorities as language of instruction—ISCED2 (source ŠPÚ, 2015e)

Educational area	Subject	Number of lessons for 5th–9th grades of primary schools
Language and communication	Language of instruction and literature	24
	Slovak language and Slovak literature	24
	First foreign language	15
Total		63

Table 12 Framework curriculum for secondary schools with a language of national minorities as language of instruction—ISCED3 (source: ŠPÚ, 2015f)

Educational area	Subject	Number of lessons for 1st–4th grade (5th–8th grade of 8-year secondary schools)
Language and communication	Language of instruction and literature	12
	Slovak language and Slovak literature	12
	First foreign language	14
	Second foreign language	10

Table 13 Framework curricula for secondary vocational schools with a language of national minority as language of instruction—ISCED 3 (source: ŠIOV, 2013)

Educational area	Subject	Number of lessons for 1st–4th grade
Language and communication	Slovak language and literature	12
	Language of national minority and literature	12
	First foreign language	12
	Second foreign language	10
Total		46

Table 14 Summary model of the framework curriculum for schools with a language of national minorities as language of instruction at levels ISCED1–ISCED3

ISCED	Year of school	Number of lessons per week for Slovak as L1	Number of lessons per week for Slovak as L2	Number of lessons per week for L1 (Hungarian, Rusyn)	Number of lessons per week for 1st foreign language (EN)	Number of lessons per week for 2nd foreign language
1	1	9	5	5	0	0
	2	8	6	6	0	0
	3	7	5	5	3	0
	4	7	5	5	3	0
2	5	5	5	5	3	0
	6	5	5	5	3	0
	7	4	4	4	3	0
	8	5	5	5	3	0
	9	5	5	5	3	0
3	10	3	3	3	3	3
	11	3	3	3	3	3
	12	3	3	3	4	2
	13	3	3	3	4	2

Comparing framework curricula, one can see that while at the first level (ISCED 1) the number of lessons for Slovak as L2 in comparison with Slovak as L1 is reduced (21 : 26), at the lower and higher secondary level (ISCED2 and ISCED3) the required minimal number of lessons is the same. At the same time, the recommended time allotment for the teaching of mother tongue and Slovak language as L2 is kept the same. What is also interesting is that according to the new framework curricula minority students do not have any concessions in foreign language education. The recommended number of lessons of the first as well as the second foreign language is not reduced in any way, as it was in the previous curricula. The framework curricula thus fully reflect the fact that there are the same requirements, content and performance standards for the educational area language and communication (Slovak language + foreign languages) for students from the schools with a language of minorities as language of instruction as for the students of Slovak nationality for whom Slovak is their mother tongue (for more see Benčatová, 2011).

*Textbooks for the subject Slovak language and literature
for learners from ethnic minorities*

Learners of Rusyn and Roma ethnic minorities do not have their own textbooks for Slovak language and literature. Therefore, they use current textbooks intended for the schools with Slovak as language of instruction (for the students for whom Slovak is L1).

At the ISCED1 level the Hungarian minority students have at their disposal: 2 different primers with reading books and a complete series of textbooks *Ypsilon* (from the 1st to 4th grades of primary school). In the 2014/2015 school year, the approved textbooks also included collections of tasks and exercises in Slovak language (for the 2nd–4th grades of primary schools) and the Pictorial Dictionary, which, however, are not in the Portal's offer this year.

At the second level of primary schools (ISCED 2), students from the Hungarian minority learn Slovak from a complete series of textbooks of Slovak language for the 5th–9th grades. They are accompanied by workbooks for the 5th–8th grades (the workbook for the 9th grade is not available). In the grades 5 to 8, Slovak literature is learned from textbooks and reading books in Slovak literature, in the 9th grade only a reading book is available. Also at this level the offer of textbooks, if compared with last year, has been reduced. While last year the publishing portal contained conversation books of Slovak language for the 5th and 6th grades of primary schools, in this school year they are not on offer.

Worth mentioning is also the fact that at the ISCED2 level a series of textbooks of Slovak language as L2 intended for special schools with Hungarian as language of instruction is available, while a similar edition of textbooks for students with specific educational needs is not available even for the students of Slovak as L1.

For the learners of Hungarian minority on ISCED 3 level, there is a complete set of textbooks of Slovak language and Slovak literature for secondary grammar schools and secondary schools, complemented by the anthology of Slovak literature.

Teaching Slovak as a foreign language

Teaching Slovak as a foreign language follows a long tradition of summer courses called *Studia Academica Slovaca* (since 1965) organised for adult learners who come to Slovakia for several weeks to learn Slovak because of their family roots or interest. The courses are organised by Comenius University (*Studia Academica Slovaca*, 2015). In 2006 the informal courses were transformed into a specialised centre named *Studia Academica Slovaca—The Centre for Slovak as a Foreign Language*. The Centre focuses on both educational and research activities related to the teaching of foreigners interested in Slovak language and culture. It also publishes textbooks of Slovak as a foreign language, as well as organis-

es teacher training courses and issues teaching manuals (Pekarovičová, 2004, 2006; Tibenská, 2005; Žigová, 2001, 2004, 2006, etc.).

Courses for children of foreigners

Changing social conditions (Slovakia's membership in the EU, free job market, immigration) are accompanied by a growing need for teaching Slovak as a foreign language for children of foreigners. The policy applicable to teaching children of foreigners was defined by the Ministry of Education (MŠVVŠ SR, 2005b) and its organisation is regulated by the School Act. The term "children of foreigners" covers the following categories of persons:

- children of people who are citizens of other countries and are living in Slovakia with a residence permit;
- children of refugees or applicants for the status of refugee in the Slovak Republic;
- children of Slovaks living abroad;
- children-foreigners who live in Slovakia without the accompaniment of a legal representative.

The Slovak Republic provides children of foreigners with education under the same conditions as for the children of Slovak citizens, i.e. they are entitled to education, textbooks and basic teaching materials free of charge. They immediately begin to attend school, following the regular curriculum, without having any command of Slovak. Therefore, after regular classes they take courses of Slovak language organised twice a week. They can choose from the following levels:

1. basic course
2. extended course
3. intermediate course.

The curriculum, teaching plans and methodological recommendations for both basic and extended courses of Slovak as a foreign language for

children of foreigners were issued by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (MŠVVŠ SR, 2005a, 2005c; ŠPÚ, 2014). The objectives, content, and methodological principles of the intermediate courses were defined by the document entitled *Kurikulum DC* (ŠPÚ, 2008). The basic course lasts 8 weeks, with 4 lessons a week (= 32 lessons in total). It is organised twice a week as a double lesson after the regular school schedule. In case of learning difficulties, the course can be prolonged up to 12 weeks (= 48 lessons in total). The extended course takes 12 weeks with 4 lessons per week (= 48 lessons in total). Upon the learners' request, the course can be prolonged up to 16 weeks (= 64 lessons). The intermediate courses take 132 lessons and include 2 components: "Slovak Language and Literature" and "Cultural Heritage of Slovakia".

Having finished the course, the learners should be able to:

- communicate fluently and correctly in Slovak in various situations (school, family, work, hobbies, etc.),
- understand characteristic features and rules of the contemporary Slovak society,
- fully integrate into Slovak society,
- establish a positive attitude to Slovak language, literature, history and culture,
- continue in their education at universities and other educational institutions in Slovakia, if they wish to.

5 Discussion and conclusion

Teaching Slovak as state language has always been and remains a fundamental part of the Slovak National Curriculum. Its somehow privileged position has been supported by the traditionally felt need to protect the national language, which is rooted in the difficult Slovak history, and acknowl-

edged by political decisions as well (see the Act on State Language). The subject Slovak language and literature is a compulsory subject at all types and levels of general and vocational schools existing in Slovakia. Its educational objectives emphasise not only the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for fluent and correct communication, but also learning about and developing positive attitude to both Slovak culture and Slovakia as a modern democratic state. This applies to all learners within the Slovak school system, including minorities and foreigners living in Slovakia.

The subject's curriculum is defined centrally by the Slovak Ministry of Education and organised by the National Institute of Education. The defined content is reflected in the textbooks that must also be approved by the Ministry of Education. Teaching Slovak is thus relatively unified throughout the whole country since there usually exists only one line of approved textbooks for each type and level of schools, with an exception of first textbooks, the "primers". Learning outcomes are repeatedly tested by national authorities (Testing 5, Testing 9 and "Maturita" exams) and the results used for continual improvement of pedagogical practice.

In spite of continual efforts to move from the traditional approach to language education, rooted in a strong structuralist tradition in Slovakia and reflected in the dominance of teaching methods based on the memorisation of facts, to more innovative approaches inspired, for example, by constructivist theories or cognitive-experiential approach (discussed in e.g. Palenčárová, Kesselová & Kupcová, 2003; Kesselová, 2008; Liptáková, 2005, 2010, 2011; Lapitka, 2009) and characterised by the application of active learning and discovery techniques aimed at developing learners' practical competences (Hincová & Húsková, 2011), the latest research results as well as the recent results of all the three standardised national tests have proved that a traditional content-oriented teaching approach still prevails. This situation calls for a renewal of efforts to reform the teaching processes in Slovakia in order to make language learning more competence-oriented.

6 Literature

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Discussion and Conclusion

Marek Pieniążek—Stanislav Štěpáník

The essential value of this book is that it gives the opportunity to compare the systems of teaching national languages and literature in the V4 countries. While reading, we can observe the main elements of the four systems and how our languages are positioned in social life, cultural practices and in education. Most importantly, it is the first collective monograph comparing the systems of teaching national languages in the V4 countries (and the authors hope that not the last one).

Just the first look at these issues shows that there are many similarities (e.g. in all countries the subject comprises of both language and literature), but also that there are different educational solutions and that the policies of education create different conditions of forming the young generation in the region of Central Europe within the European Union. Conclusions may be very surprising: despite the similar place and history of our societies, we program and establish various approaches to culture, language and traditions. It is worth analysing these structural elements at the basic levels and on particular examples. We pay attention to elements of theory and practice of language and literature teaching—the history, the policies, the curricula, the examination systems, teacher training, the social and political conditions, etc.; and of course the research is based on the newest theoretical research findings.

When we are talking about these basic solutions, it is worth underlining that especially in Hungary and Poland the process of deeper reorganization of humanistic education has been going on for several years. Moreover, in Poland, 2016 is full of new radical declarations by the new Polish Minister of Education about changes in the core curriculum, the organization of schools, the abolishment of the “gimnazjum” type of school and return to the four-year education in lyceums. Important innovations

should strengthen the role of the teacher in the classroom and minimize the role of the textbooks and ready-to-use methodical materials.

This element—**deeper personal authentication and authorization of the educational process is necessary in the era of total standardization and global universalization of knowledge and economization of information** (comp. Liessmann, 2006). The school should be a place of growing up and shaping the identity of young people, not only preparation for tests and information exchanges in the points of the entrance examinations (comp. Comenius's vision of the school as a *workshop of humanity*). In the Ministry's declaration we can therefore see more attention paid to teaching Polish history and local culture. Obviously, it is not resignation from the standards of the European Union, but a complement to the Polish literature programme and the sign of awareness of our situation in the global community.

We observe that in all V4 countries **the changes are done primarily on the governmental level**, i. e. regulations come from the highest positions—**which later poses problems in transferring them into the teaching practice of schools** (for instance compare the situation of the curriculum reform in the Czech Republic).

As we have seen above, history and the historical changes in the society have direct influence on the education systems, and **mother tongue teaching often stands in the very centre of these changes** (see Šmejkalová's elaboration of this issue above). As we can see, many aspects of the history of teaching our national languages are rather similar in all the V4 countries. The medieval times start with the Latin period, later we can see the development and gradual emancipation of the national languages and therefore their entry into the school system, which often resembled a serious struggle. The beginning of systematic education of Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and Polish come at the turn of the 18th and 19th century with the time of Enlightenment and the wave of National Revivals spread-

ing across Europe. Language was a tool of nationalization in general and also of nationalization of education in the school.

What is similar to all the systems is also strong ideologization in the period behind the Iron Curtain, we clearly observe strong political pressure on mother tongue and literature teaching as they represent subjects that “form opinion” or the “correct” view point.

The communication-pragmatic turn in linguistics in the 70s meant an important change in mother tongue teaching theory (as rather opposed to practice, unfortunately). We can see that the curricula take this into account and shift the main emphasis from grammar to communication, which is later reflected in textbooks as well. However, this is very often not transferred into teaching practice—which we can see in the case of Hungary, the Czech Republic or Slovakia and to a certain extent of Poland, too. In all curricula and standards we can also find similar formulas about the key role of the mother tongue in the formation of national and cultural identity and awareness, expressive ability and of ethical, aesthetic, historical and critical thinking. Mother tongue teaching is also often viewed as a tool for acquisition of foreign languages—as it is the case of the Hungarian or Czech curriculum. Consequently, in this perspective it is the mother tongue that functions as a tool for developing contacts with the whole world.

This is especially topical after the political changes in 1989 and also after the countries entered the European Union in 2004. Not only the systems of education have been changing (the content, the approach to teaching etc.), but the overall position of the national languages has changed—suddenly they have become part of the globalised world. As a result, some countries (e.g. Slovakia) are trying to protect the language by special laws and regulations (these are, unfortunately, often part of the language ideologies that go hand in hand with politics).

But also literature teaching has taken a different position—instead of literary history it focuses more on the aesthetic values of the literary text,

and on developing the reading competency, even though always certain opposing tendencies occur, esp. when measurable indicators are concerned (for instance see the situation in Poland).

As far as the curriculum for L1 is concerned, we can say that just after 1989 the word *competency* has become a sort of “buzzword” in language and literature teaching in the V4 countries. The curriculum reforms have stressed competency development (esp. in the area of skills—reading, listening, writing and speaking, but similarly also e.g. language competency), and have formulated the content in the language of expected outcomes or requirements. Not always, however, have the reforms met what had been expected.

In general, we can say that except the Slovak case, changes in the school systems imposed by politics can be rather turbulent—this is especially true for Poland. However, what is rather frightening is that not always are these changes systematic and properly thought through.

General frameworks that are offered by the political bodies and reforms that influence the whole system are often provided ad hoc without any scientific substantiation, without consultations with experts and without enough information given to those who are supposed to carry out the reforms, i.e. the schools, headmasters and individual teachers (as in the Czech case—the curriculum that goes down to the level of the *School Education Programmes* means that the curriculum programme can differ school from school). Not only in the V4 countries we notice that **educational reforms serve more the political aims than the educational ones.**

The discussion about the relation between language and literature has been a long-lasting one, not only in the V4 countries. Tendencies around the V4 are, however, similar—integration, not division. In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary it is *Language and Literature*, in Poland it is *Polish Language* (with synthesis between language and literature).

The curriculum of Hungarian language is compiled in a different order than the Polish one, it lists seven *Development Tasks*, among which linguistic and literary competences can be found, but we can notice more emphasis on the living language and comprehension than knowledge about language and history of literature. Obviously, the relation of language and literature remains an open issue in all the systems.

The Hungarian Core curriculum interestingly shows the differences between the mother tongue and foreign languages—pupils recognise the differences between one’s mother tongue and foreign languages, they also compare knowledge of the mother tongue and foreign languages. The Czech curriculum concentrates on knowledge about language and literature, it is also worth underlining that the new curriculum speaks about the development of the communication competency: for lower-secondary education the curriculum says that the pupil shall “apply his / her knowledge of the language norm when creating language expression adequate to the communication situation”. Interestingly, the Slovak curriculum stresses **constructivist approaches to teaching**; constructivism as such is a well- and long-known stream of educational thought. However, the research in implementations of constructivism in language teaching is rather at its beginnings (Štěpáník, 2015). In general, the official focus in all the countries is towards competency development and carrying out the expected outcomes.

In literature, interpretation of texts in Polish and Czech curricula reflect modern theories in the field of literature didactics, but still they do not focus enough on the development in the area of emotions and reading for pleasure.

Before 1989, in all the countries there was only one textbook line from a single publishing house. Now we are in the situation when for Czech, Polish and Hungarian there are many programmes of teaching and many textbooks created for these different programmes; this of course brings

a range of publishing houses and competition among them. Teachers often substitute textbooks with their own texts and materials (like in the Czech Republic), in Poland we can observe higher rate of applying ready-made lesson plans. Since 2015 there have been centralisation tendencies in Hungary as far as publishing textbooks is concerned.

Slovakia is an exception in this whole debate—the small market, a relatively small number of authors and the policy of sharing books rather than buying them determines the situation when there is only one official line of textbooks used (except for readers for primary school).

Not only in the Hungarian textbooks we observe the static view of language. Consequently, teaching competences in mother tongue are dominated by knowledge about language, basically in all the V4 countries. That is why the educational process does not lead to much discussion about the functional varieties of speaking or writing, and there are not enough references to the bilingual aspect of differences and varieties.

In all the four countries the **logic-grammatical approach to national language teaching still sustains, and the utility of language lessons in communication is not properly reflected**. The Czech language school practice still prioritises the cognitive aim over communication skills development, and we can observe the same attitude in the system of Slovak and Polish teaching, especially in the lyceum (despite the official intentions declared in the curriculum, and postulates given by modern language didactics).

Polish is a subject of low interest for pupils in schools, also Czech language is one of the least popular subjects at lower-secondary school, which is a long-lasting phenomenon. Unfortunately, the same tendency can be witnessed in Hungary. The common and general opinion on mother tongue classes is that they are boring and troublesome. Sometimes this leads to the case when they are either not taught at all (like in Poland) or they are not treated with proper respect (like in the Czech Republic or in Hungary). In the so-called grammar classes students learn the language

as a system. Thus, language appears in an objectivised way: as a school subject, as an “object” that can be used as a structure, as a logical system of rules which can be applied more or less skillfully. Yes, language is a system of certain elements that work according to certain rules—but these elements and rules serve certain communication purposes—and it is exactly this that should be taught in the language classes. Not only knowledge about language as such, but **knowledge about language for communication**—to convey a certain communication aim in a certain communication situation.

Therefore, **the idea of revision of the conception of teaching our languages is highly topical**. We can also see that there is an urge for general reforms of teaching national languages; what we need now is a functional and by research well substituted theoretical background for these reforms. In this respect, the Slovak primary school is probably the furthest thanks to the psycho- and onthodidactic research done at the Department of Communicative and Literary Education at the Faculty of Education at the University of Prešov (Ľudmila Liptáková et al.). This workplace is definitely in the lead of this kind of research not only in Central Europe.

The format and structure and the role of **examinations** also show important differences. What is especially interesting is the format and structure of the final school-leaving examination (*maturita* or *matura* or *matriculation exam*). In some cases the tests are assessed at the school, in other cases the tests are sent to an external assessment board. In Poland we can see serious changes of the *maturita* model since 2015.

As for the oral part of the final exams, in the Czech Republic pupils are asked to comment on and interpret an artistic and non-artistic text. The pupil submits a list of 20 literary works individually selected from the school canon two months before the examination. However, in Poland there is a central set list of literary works that pupils must select from,

and it is the same for each school in the country. In Polish high schools, students do not choose the reading topic during an oral exam, they only draw one question that they must answer.

The Hungarian matriculation exam, like in Poland, closes school examinations, and it is a type of an entrance examination for further education. There are two levels of the examination—higher and lower.

The Czech, Polish, Slovak and Hungarian sets of the written part of the *maturita* (as well as the system of assessment sheets belonging to them) are prepared by a committee or special organisations set up by the Ministry of Education.

Unfortunately, we can see that in many countries (most obviously in Poland) **more and more examinations are imposed on the education system** as there is an overall (political) assumption that this will improve the teaching process. Not only the authorities do not work with the data collected and so problematic results do not have any (well-thought) effect on school policies, but furthermore it leads to a situation when schools have to devote quite a lot of teaching time to examination preparation instead of real teaching. Moreover, it is not necessary to say that **competencies and soft skills are not measurable by tests and standardised examinations**.

As far as teacher training and teaching qualifications are concerned, in all four countries **the basic qualification requirement for the teacher is a university Master's degree**. This requirement has been questioned in waves by politicians, but luckily the academic world has so far managed to protect this basic education standard. The Bologna process has brought changes to the teacher training programmes in a way that the traditional four- or five-year-long Master's programmes were replaced by the Bachelor's and follow-on Master's programmes. As we can see in Hungary or in the Czech Republic, this change has not lead to satisfactory results and therefore there are attempts to shift the situation back to what it had been.

Our research shows that the tradition of the school as an institution that delivers knowledge is very strong in all the four countries of the Visegrad Group. But at the same time there are many teachers who realise the need for certain changes: they reflect the communication models popular in the society of the 21st century, stress the activity of the pupil and respect the personality of young people.

To implement the expected or planned transformations, the education systems in all the V4 countries need stability (independence on the temporary political situation) and a systematic scientifically substantiated approach without sudden and ill-considered experiments. The starting point for healthy changes in mother tongue teaching in our countries might be the appreciation of resources of language location in the intercorporeality of the linguistic practices of the communities. From this point of view, language can be related to the speakers (that is also the pupils) in particular communities, and will be fluid and variable—as Heltai writes in the Hungarian chapter above.

As common conclusions highlight, we need to programme the systems of education in order to emancipate “non-standard” language resources as a precondition for successful language teaching. It might be the way to better and more attractive humanistic education, which could create a strong, open and self-constructed community. The humanistic education liberated from the paralysing pressure of ideologies, which many years standardise methods of teaching language and interpretation, might be the form of immunisation of national languages. It might also become the modus of immunisation of local cultures in times of liquid homogenised modernity.

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Resumé

The monograph presents the results of a common research of four scientific teams from the Pedagogical University in Cracow, Poland, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Budapest, Hungary, and Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia. The main aim of the research was to analyze the role of national languages in maintaining the cultural identity in the V4 countries, and to compare and contrast the conceptions of teaching national language and literature in the V4 countries. As research methods we used document analysis, historical analysis, textbook analysis, curriculum analysis, observations in class, interviews, analysis of resources and specialized literature in the four languages (Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Slovak) on the topic of the project, which was supported by a grant by the Visegrad Fund.

The individual chapters look into the history and current practices of language and literature teaching in the individual countries, including the curricula, teacher training, standardised tests and examinations, textbooks, current school practices etc.

The results of the joint research show a lot of common points among the V4 countries, but also certain differences that deserve to be researched further.

Key words

education; teaching; language; mother tongue; L1; national language; L2; foreign language; communicative competency; grammar; curriculum; Bologna System; teacher training; model of language stratification; standard; language ideology; textbooks; examinations

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