4th International Conference on Literature and Language in Education and Research


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- **VEGA 1/0637/16**: Developing diagnostic tools for evaluating phonematic awareness of pre-school pupils
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INTRODUCTION

The main intention of the series of international conferences entitled *Language and Literature in Education and Research (CLEaR)* is to create a working platform for academics, researchers, scholars, teacher trainers and teachers to discuss, exchange and share their research results, projects, experiences, and new ideas about all aspects of studies in language, literature, culture and related areas in an effective international atmosphere. The series itself follows and enriches the tradition of the conferences Foreign Languages and Cultures at School (2002-2013).

The international dimension of the conference is every year ensured by personal or virtual engagement of participants from various institutions from all continents. The conference **CLEaR 2017** was held on 03 – 05 December 2017 in Dresden, Germany, and was organised as part of the project 055UKF-4/2016 funded by the Ministry of Education, Research, Science and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

This Conference Proceedings consists of selected papers which have been submitted for the conference Language and Literature in Education and Research (CLEAR) 2017, later evaluated through a double-blind reviewing process and consequently recommended for publishing. Besides the Conference Proceedings the papers were published in the following international research journals:

- the conference issues of CLEaR (ISSN 2453-7128, published by De Gruyter Open, http://www.slovakedu.com/publications/clear/)
- the conference issues of LLCE (ISSN 2453-7101, published by De Gruyter Open, http://www.slovakedu.com/publications/llce/)
- the conference issues of JoLaCE: Journal of Language and Cultural Education (ISSN: 1339-4584, http://www.slovakedu.com/journal/)

CLEaR 2017 Scientific Committee & SlovakEdu Team, n.o.
The Possible Use of Electronic Mind Mapping in Teacher Training Education

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Abstract

Divergent thinking can be very important for creative teaching. Usually free-flowing spontaneous collection of ideas is usually analysed and organised, what means convergent thinking is applied following the process of divergent thinking. Mind mapping as a tool to represent individual’s ideas, to organise topics and themes in non-linear way to illustrate relations between them have been used in education for decades. The study focusses on the possible effects of mind mapping in teacher training. It specially investigated the possibility of its use in virtual learning environment where it can be used as a collaborative tool what enables teacher to create shared activities. Mind mapping is one of the brainstorming ways, and what more it can be effectively used in the process of planning writing but also visualising the process of teaching planning and its realisation. Well organised and well planned lesson is an important presumptions of effective teaching/learning process.

Key words: Mind mapping. Collaboration. Convergent thinking. Divergent thinking. Creativity.

Introduction

E-learning and mind mapping are the terms that have been present in education for decades. However, many times they are still presented as the new ones. Naturally, both, e-learning and mind mapping, are continuously developed and their positive impacts are the subject of numerous studies. The article discusses the possibility of using mind maps in the virtual learning environment (VLE) and students’ attitudes towards its use.
Mapping as a tool of visualisation

Mind mapping, knowledge mapping, concept mapping are the terms connected with the graphic illustration or graphic representation of ideas and relations. They are not rarely used as a brainstorming tool in decision making processes, activity planning and we often use them also in the teaching and learning processes. Mind maps, concept and knowledge maps, flow charts are used to enhance learning, to force learners to look for the relations between and among the items.

The terms are often discussed along with the terms reflection, metacognition (Silver, 2013), critical thinking (Kosturková, 2016; Yue, et al., 2017), creativity (Anderson, 1993; Buzan, 2012) and constructivist learning theory (Dhindsa, Makarimi-Kasim & Anderson, 2010; Şeyihoğlu & Kartal, 2010; Muirhead, 2006).

New knowledge is built, constructed using prior experience and knowledge. Learners are challenged to rethink and to interconnect old and new knowledge applying different strategies and techniques. Dhindsa, Kasim & Anderson summarise that “In the process of construction of new information, previous knowledge structures may undergo transformations including (a) conceptual growth (structures will be partly supplemented or broadened) or (b) conceptual change (rearrangement of existing and/or development of new cognitive structures) as the learner actively searches for ways to merge new knowledge within existing frameworks” (2011, p.187). Here, different forms of visualising the structure can be helpful to fully realise the structures, interconnections and remember them.

Benyahia (2005, p. 235) claims that “those educators who really monitor closely their students' progress find that they often overload themselves with superficial, irrelevant, or even confusing information”. He suggests it is necessary to regularly revise new material over a period of
time, he particularly mentions organizing information in a way compatible with how our brain seems to work. Concerning language learning, mind maps can help “organize thoughts and ideas as well as new vocabulary taught within the given context. Following the rules of multisensory approach, by using colors within mind maps (e.g. for nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) may enforce structuring, organizing and memorizing the language systems” (Kováčiková, In: Pokrivčáková, et al., 2015, p. 35). Michalko (2001, p.47) describes a mind map as „a whole-brain alternative to linear thinking”; Buzan (1993) describes it as “a universal key to unlocking the potential of the brain”. Petrasová (2009) stresses that concept mapping is a form of meaningful learning. Meaningful learning opposed to rotten learning od one of the main principles of learning. Benyahia recommends using mind mapping that “also addresses the issue of varying learning styles” (2005, p. 239). Mind mapping allows also a high level of personalisation, as well as application of not only cognitive but also metacognitive and affective strategies. Silver (2013, p. 9) stresses that “metacognition depends on knowledge of cognition, and it involves the monitoring and regulation or control of this knowledge”. Involving different types of strategies long with revision of material, creating the schemes and structures of relations lead to deeper learning rather than superficial surface learning and supports knowledge retention.

Michalko (2002, p. 59) enumerates several benefits of system mapping:

- the map tells a story
- it helps to see and keep “the big picture”
- it helps to see the relationships and connections between major facts, rather than linear cause-effect chains
- it helps us to identify processes of change rather than a series of unrelated static snapshots
- it allows us to see the details.
Depending on the aim the teacher can decide what to use; mind map (e.g. brainstorming), word map (e.g. vocabulary building, word-formation), flow diagram (e.g. decision making, record of the activities – reading comprehension activities). The maps can be done in various ways – individual work/ group work; pen and paper version/electronic version, with/without pictures, symbols, icons. In electronic versions the video, sound can be added but individual branches or 2nd level branches can be linked also to the websites and further information. Numerous studies prove the positive benefits of mapping on creativity, topic understanding, quality of products, etc. Similarly, concerning educational environment, benefits were observed in students’ attitudes and their involvement. Jones et al (2012, p. 17) examined „whether different types of socially mediated mind mapping activities would have different effects on factors related to students’ motivation and effort”. As a result of their research claimed that “Students reported that they were actively interacting with their group members, but not all of them believed that they learned as much from this type of active interaction process as when they actively constructed the maps on their own” (ibid).

**Collaboration and e-learning**

Virtual learning environment (VLE), blended learning, online learning, e-learning, learning management system (LMS) are the buzz words. Those words are slowly substituting the words as computer assisted learning, technology enhanced learning from our dictionaries. E-learning has become a part not only of informal education but also a part of formal education.

Probably, most of the Slovak universities have already started to use content and learning management systems (see e.g. Burgerová, 2005; Sepešiová, 2014; Straková, 2014; Straková 2016; Medárová, 2015;
Hvorecký, 2015 and others). The most common system that is being used is Moodle that if free but still, there are universities that use also commercial systems. It has to be mentioned that most universities use systems as a support to in-class lessons. E-learning in its real and authentic form is not used in formal education, but rather in life-long education. The tradition of in-class teaching in formal education is very strong but the changes of this philosophy can be observed, the transformation of the courses is supported by institutions. Even though VLEs are often used as a space for sharing documents and data. Even though communication and collaboration tools are used only occasionally, the progress has been recorded (Burgerová, Cimermanová, 2014; Piskura, et al, 2017).

Chickering and Gamson (1987) illustrate the importance of interaction in learning and postulated seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education, out of which five are directly connected to interaction:

- encourages student-faculty contact (learner-to-instructor interaction)
- encourages cooperation (learner-to-learner interaction, learner-to-instructor interaction)
- encourages active learning
- gives prompt feedback (learner-to-content interaction)
- emphasizes time on task (learner-to-content interaction)
- communicates high expectations (learner-to-instructor interaction, learner-to-learner interaction)
- respects diverse talents and ways of learning

Watts (2010) defined three main types of interaction in an online distance learning course:
• learner-to-content interaction
• learner-to-learner interaction
• learner-to-instructor interaction.

To support learner-to-learner interaction, as well as learner-to-instructor interaction course designer can use different tools as wiki, forum, chat, different forms of voting, but also mindmapping as a form of brainstorming, form of knowledge structuring, planning the activities.

**Electronic mapping in VLE**

Different types of software are available for mind mapping, creating flow charts. There are open source software as well as the paid platforms. Most of them also offer the trial versions. We have already mentioned that mapping can be done as individual work but also as a group work what enables users to cooperate and collaborate.

Probably the best known is Tony Buzan’s iMindMap software. We can also mention Mindomo, Mindjet, Xmind. The web application Coggle is a free web application that is focused on collaboration. Thus, even students who do not use special virtual environment (and have gmail account) can easily use it to create their simple maps. To access additional tools, one has to pay fee.
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Fig. 1 Mind map created in Coggle web application

It is easy to share, one can comment it, but it is quite limited concerning graphics, colours, fonts, icons, etc.. If one wants extra colours, fonts or graphics it has to be paid extra.

It might be important to select the colours, types of branches, fonts, size as it is the way of presenting its importance, significance, characteristics. The following figure was created in the iMindmap software. The software has wider variety of branches, there is a possibility to write the texts on the lines, change fonts. There is a possibility to save the document and send it via email, one may also export it to an image or for real-time team collaboration one may export the task management app droptask, they even plan export to Microsoft project.
Learning management system (LMS) Moodle has implemented the mindmap tool directly to its system. Moodle is the system that is open-source and most of the Slovak universities that apply e-learning (or rather blended learning, or computer supported learning) use Moodle.

The advantage is that teacher can allow students to edit the mindmap. Again the tool is very simple (see figure 3) and its biggest advantage is its integration into Moodle and possibility to use it for collaborative work. It also helps to develop the communication skills in authentic situation of problem solving (see Homolová, 2003).
The Moodle tool was used by the university students (teacher training programme, English language majors) in the Research methods seminar. Students were asked to create the visualisation of different methods applied in the educational research. They already had experience with iMindMap tool and classical pen and paper group mind mapping. Surprisingly, they all agreed (n=12) they prefer pen and paper version for group mind mapping or iMindmap for individual work. They explained they missed direct, face to face contact, vis-à-vis communication and argumentation during building the map. Comparing the two types of software they argued that the possibility to select the type of branch, colour, possibility to add sound or other media is important for them. They confirmed they completed the task in Moodle, however, they talked about it together first and only then work in the Moodle. Generally, they could see the positives and benefits of mind mapping in learning and planning and they understand how useful it can be even in everyday life and solving
any problem and questions in their life. They all plan to use it in their teaching, however they stress that it is very important to select the most appropriate software for particular tasks as this might significantly influence students’ attitudes towards map creation and its effect.

**Conclusion**

Living in the period of rapid changes in economy, technological development, territorial development, social development is also reflected in education. In the effort to be “in” we try to get as many information as possible, to see as much as possible to go wherever possible. Frequently, it needs time to think about the problem, to slow down and possibly to visualise it along with possible solutions. Mind mapping is a tool, is a technique that reflects the way we think, the way we see the world. The article presents mind mapping as a tool that can be used for developing creativity, developing cooperation, deepening understanding of the problem. To be objective we have to mention that it is time consuming, students who are pragmatic and prefer direct and logical solutions might be difficult and redundant from their perspective. Still, there is a number of students who claim positive impacts of using mind maps in learning. Mahasneh (2017, p. 302) highlights that “the mind map teaching technique, which involves students’ active participation in the learning process, is … more student-centered and supports the hypothesis that the mind map technique can improve students’ ability to enhance their knowledge-structure organization, and consequently improve their learning outcomes”.

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Literature


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On the Nature of the Implementation Steps Towards Blended Learning in Teacher Training Programmes

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Abstract
The past thirty years have seen increasingly rapid advances in the field of information and communication technology. Technology as such has become an inseparable part of teaching and learning. E-learning has been a major area of interest within the field of education for a longer period of time. However, in recent years, there has been an increasing interest in so-called blended learning which is a combination of both physical and electronic environments. A considerable amount of literature has been published on this matter. This study aims to address the question of the implementation process of blended learning in higher education. Furthermore, it offers some important insights into the issue of blended learning and blending tools which can be used for blended learning implementation. This paper provides an opportunity to advance the understanding of the implementation process from the perspective of student teachers through in-depth analysis of data collected in the pre-research phase. Moreover, the paper attempts to present certain steps which need to be taken for the proper implementation of blended learning in higher education. Taken together, this paper investigates electronic portfolio as a possible tool for blended learning implementation in higher education, especially with regard to student teachers of teacher training programmes.

Key words: Blended learning. Implementation. Portfolio. Student teacher.

Introduction
The past thirty years have seen rapid advances in technology. These developments have led to an increased interest in e-learning and integration of technology which are at the heart of our understanding of
modern education. According to Hall (2011), “the challenge with perhaps the greatest potential to impact our understanding of language and culture learning is the almost daily inclusion of new digital technologies into our social worlds” (p. 65). However, previous studies (Macdonald, 2008; Watson, 2008) have shown that face-to-face contact plays an important role not only in English language teaching, but also in teaching and learning in general. Therefore, the face-to-face element is an important component in blended learning, and can be thought of as a key factor in the process of blended learning implementation. A considerable amount of literature (Macdonald, 2008; Garrison – Vaughan, 2008; Sharma – Barrett, 2007) has been published on blended learning. These studies show that blended learning as such can serve as a golden mean to get the best out of traditional way of learning and online or e-learning.

Questions have been raised about the steps to be taken towards the implementation of blended learning in teacher training programmes. Moreover, there has been an increasing concern over the possible “blending” tools which can be used in blended learning. Debate continues about the factors which have a great impact on the successful implementation of blended learning. This paper examines the emerging role of blended learning in the context of teacher training programmes. The aim of this study is to investigate the steps to follow when implementing blended learning in teacher training programmes. Moreover, the purpose of this paper is also to explore the factors affecting the successful implementation of blended learning. The study also provides partial results of the pre-research phase.

In general, there are a number of tools which can be used in blended learning. In this study, we will speak about electronic portfolio as a “blending” tool for student teachers of teacher training programmes.
Traditionally, portfolios have been used in teacher training programmes, especially with the intention to reflect on the lessons taught by the teacher trainees themselves (e.g. EPOSTL, i.e. European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages). However, recent developments in the field of technology call for an increased interest in electronic portfolios which have a number of advantages in comparison to traditional paper portfolios. Nowadays, a number of electronic portfolios can be found. What is important, however, is to select the appropriate portfolio platform which could be beneficial for student teachers as well as for supervising teachers. Therefore, if it is intended to implement such electronic portfolios for the purpose of teaching practice in teacher training programmes, it is crucial to put an emphasis on the implementation process, especially the initial phase, for it has a great influence on the success of the whole implementation process. That is why this paper seeks to examine the steps which are to be taken in the implementation of electronic portfolio as a “blending” tool in teacher training programmes.

This paper is divided into two parts. The paper first gives a brief overview of blended learning, blended learning implementation and electronic portfolio as a possible tool for blended learning implementation. It will then lay out the research aims and methodology as well as data analysis with research findings.

1 Blended learning

In the field of education, various definitions of blended learning can be found. According to Sharma and Barrett (2007), “blended learning refers to a language course which combines a face-to-face (F2F) classroom component with an appropriate use of technology” (p. 7), where technology refers to different kinds of recent technologies. As Maxwell
claims (2016), “blended learning is any formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and / or pace. The student learns at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home. The modalities along each student’s learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.” As Bersin (2004) notes, “the term “blended” means that traditional instructor-led training is being supplemented with other electronic formats. Blended learning is the combination of different training “media” (technologies, activities, and types of events) to create an optimum training program for a specific audience … blended learning programs use many different forms of e-learning, perhaps complemented with instructor-led training and other live formats” (p. 15).

Taken together, blended learning as such can be understood as a combination of both physical and virtual environments, i.e. it can be considered as something in-between.

Figure 1: Wentworth, D. (2015): Our recent blended learning research shows that many still don’t “get it”.
1.1 Implementation of blended learning

As we already mentioned, face-to-face contact makes blended learning truly “blended”. Therefore, during the implementation process, face-to-face component or physical environment cannot be omitted since they are an inseparable part of blended learning. Janet McDonald (2008) points out the contribution of face-to-face support, based on data collected from the survey as part of the SOLACE project (Supporting Open Learners in a Changing Environment). According to the participants, “face-to-face sessions were valuable for the focusing on content, or the targeting of advice, particularly where the subject matter was particularly complex or difficult to understand... Others referred to the pacing of studies, where face-to-face contact provided an introduction or conclusion to the course, and an occasion for final coursework presentations; or otherwise a goal towards which the student might concentrate their efforts.” (Macdonald, 2008, p. 48). One of the advantages of blended learning is that it can cover areas which online instruction cannot while emphasising the ways of supporting learners’ satisfaction and accomplishing expanded learning outcomes (Lim, Morris, Kupritz, 2007). It may be assumed that face-to-face sessions may fill the gaps which technology cannot.

The initial phase of the implementation process of blended learning is crucial, therefore, it is essential to be aware of the steps towards blended learning that need to be taken before we decide to apply blended learning method in teacher training programme.

As Sharma and Barrett mention (2007, pp. 13-14), there are four key principles to be followed in a blended learning approach, which are the following:
1. Separate the role of the teacher and the role of the technology, i.e. what is essential is to understand that both the teacher and technology have their own roles to play.

2. Teach in a principled way, i.e. learners´ needs are what matters most and teaching should be led by pedagogy and only backed by technology.

3. Use technology to complement and enhance F2F teaching, i.e. a classroom activity can be supported by using technology, which may increase the motivation of students.

4. “It’s not so much the program, more what you do with it” (Jones, 1986), i.e. it may be said that using a program properly is the key.

In addition, Brooke (2017) lists four factors which should be taken under consideration when choosing a program for blended learning implementation. These are the following factors: when deciding about the tool which we are about to use in blended learning, the selected tool should be able to adapt to our students´ skills; the tool has to monitor and capture our students´ data as well as provide or recommend the teacher next steps; the factor number four concerns resources that should be provided by the tool for teacher-led instruction.

1.2 Electronic portfolio as a “blending tool”

Portfolio as such has become an effective tool which does not have to be used solely in the field of education or pedagogy. Paulson and Paulson (1996) describe portfolio as follows: “A portfolio tells a story. It is the story of knowing. Knowing about things... Knowing oneself ... Knowing an audience... Portfolios are students´ own stories of what they know, why they believe they know it, and why others should be of the same opinion. A portfolio is opinion backed by fact... Students prove what they know with samples of their work” (p. 2). Thus, portfolio can be used in teaching
practice as a tool for reflecting on the lesson taught by a teacher trainee. This way student teachers can write their self-reflections and include them in their portfolio as well as the lesson plans, supplementary materials used during the lessons, characteristics of the training school etc., depending on the requirements of the university.

Over the past decade, there has been an increasing interest in the incorporation of technology in foreign language teaching and learning. Traditional paper-based portfolio is being replaced by electronic (digital) portfolio. This e-portfolio can be used as a possible tool for blended learning implementation. E-portfolio is fast becoming a key instrument in teacher training programmes, for it allows student teachers not only to present themselves, their skills, abilities or various artefacts with regard to their teaching, but also to see the process of their development. Not only can electronic portfolios be used in courses taught in teacher training programmes, but also as a tool for reflecting on teaching of teacher trainees during their teaching practice. Moreover, e-portfolios can provide student teachers with instant feedback (from their supervising teacher as well as their classmates) which supports the interactivity of the whole process. In electronic portfolios, student teachers can write and upload their self-reflections immediately after the lesson they taught, i.e. when all the details remain in the “fresh memory”. Moreover, the interactivity already mentioned provides space for collaboration, cooperation and peer-to-peer learning. The online platform can also serve as a storage for all the activities (regarding reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, vocabulary etc.) which can student teachers use during their teaching practice.

For the purpose of teaching practice, there are a number of the electronic portfolio platforms which can be used in the process. What can
seem as a challenge is choosing an appropriate platform which would include all the components needed for uploading different artifacts (lesson plans, materials used in the lessons, self-reflections etc.) and support interaction between a student teacher and a supervising teacher as well as interaction among the student teachers themselves. This interactivity of the electronic portfolio platform can be supported by the option to write or receive comments, feedback or to share some of the artifacts included in the electronic portfolio with the selected audience.

2 Research aims and methodology

The aim of the pre-research phase was to present electronic portfolio as a possible “blending tool” which can be used for the implementation of blended learning in teacher training programmes. The paper presents partial results of the pre-research phase and provides the implementation steps towards blended learning. The paper focuses on the effective use of electronic portfolio from the perspective of student teachers. In order to obtain qualitative data, a qualitative research method was used in this investigation. As Hendl (2016) mentions, qualitative research allows to study local causation, interconnections, and it helps especially in the initial exploration of the phenomena. Moreover, qualitative research provides the detailed description as well as the insights when investigating the individuals, groups, events and phenomena.

The qualitative research method which was used is a focus group method. The research was conducted on the sample of five participants (marked as speaker 1-5). This method was chosen to obtain qualitative data through in-depth analysis of what the participants had discussed. It is the topic that lies at the heart of a focus group. However, the focus of a discussion is usually not defined strictly so that it can develop in a number
of ways (Švaříček – Šeďová et al, 2017). According to Miovský (2006, p. 183), the principles of a successful focus group are the following: only one person speaks, all the participants are involved, no one has a dominant role, everyone has the right to speak their mind, everyone has the right to comment on someone else’s opinion, but does not have the right to judge them or show disrespect, everyone has the right not to answer, everyone has the right to stop their speech, if not desired to continue.

In general, the structure of a focus group consists of several phases, which are the introduction of a focus group, motivational phase, the main topic (“the focus”) and the final phase. However, it is essential to put the emphasis on the preparation phase which proceeds all the other phases (Švaříček – Šeďová et al, 2017).

As we already mentioned, the focus group was conducted on the sample of five participants, one moderator and one assistant moderator. During the focus group, the students were asked a variety of questions referring to the electronic portfolio which can be used as one of the tools for blended learning implementation. These questions addressed both advantages and disadvantages of electronic portfolios, differences in comparison to traditional paper-based portfolios and preferences from the perspective of the student teachers based on which it is possible to reach a conclusion with regard to implementation steps towards blended learning. This focus group provided us with deep insights into the nature of blended learning and its aspects in connection to teacher training programmes. The content of the focus group was transcribed and thus analysed.

2.1 Data analysis and research findings

After the analysis, the following categories were recognised:
electronic portfolio platform, subject matter of electronic portfolio, digital skills, reliability of information, privacy issue. The next section presents the findings of the research, focusing on the five categories mentioned.

- **Electronic portfolio platform**

  As to the electronic portfolio platform, the student teachers understand it in a way that it is a system which allows for the e-portfolio to be systematic, easy to follow and well-organised (S3, S4). Another aspect which students find essential with regard to the electronic portfolio platform is interactivity as well as accessibility, i.e. the option to share the content with selected audience, give comments and provide / receive feedback and being able to access the program anytime and anywhere (S2, S3, S4, S5). What needs to be mentioned is also that e-portfolio cannot get lost as it could happen in the case of the traditional paper portfolio (S1, S3, S5). The selection of the electronic portfolio platform is closely related to its purpose. Student teachers understand the purpose of such portfolio as a collection of works and results achieved in the process whereas the portfolio does not concern solely the person itself, but also the people involved in the teaching practice or the study program (S1, S2, S5).

  The student teachers consider electronic portfolios to be economical (S4, S5) and show interest in the question of money, i.e. whether it is required to pay for the program. On the other hand, it is not expected to be an expensive item (S5).

- **Subject matter of electronic portfolio**

  As to the subject matter of the electronic portfolio, or the content, the student teachers suggest different types of items / artifacts which may be included, such as lesson plans, works of students (S4), self-reflection
(S2, S3, S5), evaluation of the supervising teacher (S3, S4, S5), feedback from the children which have been taught by the teacher trainee (S3). Furthermore, the student teachers suggest that overall evaluation given by the supervising teacher should be included in the portfolio in the form of written text (S3, S4) whereas the framework for possible questions could be provided (S1).

What can also be included are intended goals, teaching philosophy (S1) and materials used in the lessons (S2, S4). The student teachers find the content important for it allows them (especially self-reflection) to think about the lesson which was taught, what was done right or wrong, what could be improved (S2, S3, S4, S5). Moreover, it provides space to compare the flow of the same lesson taught in different classes (S3).

- **Digital skills**

When speaking of digital skills or competencies, readiness is a key element, especially when it comes to electronic portfolio. What is considered as a key are digital skills or competencies (S3). The student teachers think that it might be problematic for the school stuff to work with electronic portfolio if they see it for the first time with no background knowledge of the system and its operation. This may cause problems when giving evaluation by the supervising teacher, for instance. (S1).

Another aspect of acceptance of electronic portfolios might be willingness, which can be affected by a great number of electronic portfolio platforms. The student teachers note that working with a certain type of the e-portfolio system might become problematic if a student teacher comes across the school which has been using a different e-portfolio platform (S3, S4). Furthermore, the student teachers point out that proper training is necessary, i.e. to see and try out the system (S2, S3, S5).
- Reliability of information

The student teachers show concern about manipulation of the information included in the electronic portfolio with the intention to appear professional and present oneself in a more representative way (S2, S5). The content of the e-portfolio with the information included might be manipulated in order to get a job even though nothing mentioned was implemented in the classroom (S2).

However, the student teachers expect that all the information included in the electronic portfolio, not only by teacher trainees during their teaching practice, but also by professional teachers, is supported by the evidence included (S3). It is, therefore, suggested to support the reliability of the information by documents, evidence, stamps, materials tracing the progress, etc. (S1, S3).

- Privacy issue

What the student teachers perceive as a threat is the possibility of misuse of the information (S2). On the other hand, they expect the system to be secured against this threat (S3). The security of the information plays an important role for the student teachers (S3, S5), especially, when speaking of personal or confidential information (S2), or the unauthorized use of the content or part of the content (S2, S5). Therefore, what the student teachers consider to be necessary is registration with login and password as well as the settings allowing to edit access, to be able to know who has seen the portfolio, who has written a comment, etc. (S3).

What is also perceived as a drawback from the perspective of the student teachers is the possibility of accessing tests, exams (including the key) by the students who are digitally competent (S3, S4, S5). This could be a problem depending on the extent to which documents are secured by the
system (S4). Therefore, document security is considered as crucial and essential.

Based on the in-depth analysis of data obtained from the focus group, it can be concluded that the initial phase of the implementation of electronic portfolios or blended learning as such is crucial. Therefore, preparation and planning ahead are necessary in order to implement blended learning properly and successfully. Choosing the right e-portfolioplatform plays an important role in the process for it should allow the student teachers to upload, share and write / receive feedback from both the supervising teacher as well as the classmates.

There are several aspects which are determinant when choosing the appropriate electronic portfolio platform (e.g. the basis on which portfolio works, the question of money, interactivity, purpose of such portfolio, accessibility). Speaking of purpose of electronic portfolio, this aspect deeply affects the subject matter, i.e. the content of electronic portfolio / what artifacts will be included (e.g. lesson plans, feedback, self-reflection, goals, achievements, teaching materials, teaching philosophy etc.).

As to the digital skills or readiness, a proper training as well as IT support from the university administration are inseparable parts of the successful implementation of blended learning. Moreover, such readiness is also, of course, a matter of willingness on the side of student teachers, supervising teachers and IT workers.

There are two aspects which can be problematic, these are the reliability of information and privacy issue. There might be a tendency to manipulate the content of a teaching e-portfolio with the intention to be presented in a more representative way. However, what can be done in order to prevent from manipulating the information is the evidence
required in the form of lesson plans (stamped), teaching materials used in the lessons, pictures, photos, recordings, videos etc. As to the privacy issue, the risk of misuse of the confidential information has to be taken into consideration. Possible solutions suggested by the student teachers include registration with password as well as the privacy settings which would allow the student teachers to edit access to specific artefacts.

**Conclusion**

To recap, blended learning combines both physical and virtual environment, therefore, face-to-face component is an inseparable part of the whole process. The study has discussed the steps towards blended learning implementation in teacher training programmes. Returning to the aim of the paper, the investigation of the implementation of electronic portfolios as a “blending” tool has pointed out different factors which may affect the successful implementation of blended learning. The results of this study suggest possible steps towards the implementation of electronic portfolio from the perspective of student teachers. These steps are related to selection of the appropriate electronic portfolio platform; choosing the subject matter, i.e. the required artefacts included in the electronic portfolio; digital skills which are connected with readiness and proper training in advance; the question of reliability of the information included in the electronic portfolio and privacy issue of student teachers, i.e. personal or confidential information which has to be secured.

Taken together, the student teachers provided the framework of the implementation steps towards blended learning in teacher training programmes. Firstly, it is crucial to choose the appropriate electronic portfolio platform. Then, the subject matter of the e-portfolio (i.e. what will be included based on the purpose of the e-portfolio) has to be decided. In the process of implementing, it is important to take into
consideration readiness of both student teachers and supervising teachers. When implementing blended learning, the privacy issue cannot be omitted, but has to be dealt with in advance. In addition, it is preferable to think about possible ways of increasing the reliability of the information included in the electronic portfolio.

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Literature


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Book-Talk: An Activity to Motivate Learners to Read Autonomously in a Foreign Language

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Abstract

In the last decade, extensive reading (ER) had been incorporated into English as a foreign language (EFL) education in various Japanese institutions. It restored the once broken balance of accuracy and fluency in traditional English education, and assisted reluctant EFL learners to start reading. However, ER required rather longer term for elementary learners to enjoy its benefits and the learners needed an extra encouragement to continue ER for the longer term. Book-talk was such an activity to encourage learners to read voluntarily and to improve their language skills additionally. In a book-talk, several learners sat around a table, introduced the books they had read during the week, and accepted questions and comments from the others in turn. It also fitted well in lessons because 3-minute talks and 2-minute Q&A of six members took only 30 minutes. We will report how the activity motivated elder students, who had three or more years’ experience of ER, to continue their reading outside the class, and how it encouraged autonomous ER of adult EFL learners, who were reading English books borrowing from the college library. A combination of few talks and many readings worked well in EFL settings.

Key words: Book-talk. Extensive reading. Encouragement. Longer term. English as a foreign language.

1 ER in Japanese EFL settings

Japanese people learned English for six years or more in school but as a foreign language without using it daily outside their English lessons, and English education in Japan long dedicated to educate students preparing
for entrance examination to colleges, which required grammatical knowledge of English and translation skill of English texts into Japanese but not much communicating skills. Because English was a far distant language grammatically and phonetically from their mother language, and also because they had almost no opportunity to actually use it in life, many lacked the fluency to use the language including receptive skills such as reading and listening even if they had enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. The institutional program of the TOEIC showed that 62% of the test-takers belonged to the score zone of beginner or elementary levels (10-490) (IIBC, 2017).

A major reason of Japanese students’ lower TOEIC scores was their lower fluency in reading and listening, which prevented them from using their knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary in any language activities. Because Japanese learners did not use English in daily life, they had little experience of actually reading English texts without translation or of listening English narrations with instant comprehension. Their reading often meant translating English texts into Japanese ones word by word, and they did not believe it possible that they were able to comprehend English texts without translation. Conversation in English was often disturbed because they hardly comprehended what they were told. When they needed to speak in English conversation classes, they simply repeated the known patterns or struggled to translate their idea from Japanese into English on the spot, resulting mostly in uttering a few words but not a sentence. Stephens (2015) had observed the mental struggle of her students when responding to her in English, and speculated that this was because of the preponderance of the yakudoku (grammar-translation) method in their formative years of learning English. Lower fluency of typical Japanese EFL learners is caused by their lack of actual reading and
listening experiences. Because translating while reading was a demanding activity that needed concentration to handle two languages simultaneously and consumed a large part of reader’s mental resources, it was not easy to relax doing it or enjoy it. Only few Japanese read English books for joy and many books were kept in major public libraries without being read for a long time.

ER employed by some adult EFL learners and educational institutions has been changing the situation gradually after Sakai (2002) proposed to start ER from very easy-to-read picture books according to his three golden rules of ER for EFL learners: dispose dictionaries when you read, skip unknown words, and stop reading the texts you cannot enjoy. Sakai’s golden rules encouraged adult learners to transform their reading style from translating every English word into Japanese counter part, to trying to comprehend the English texts for grasping the main idea directory. The rules also helped EFL learners of elementary language skills to start their ER from picture books with short and easy-to-read sentences, so the learners did not need to translate the texts to comprehend the stories.

ER itself was not a new approach then (Day & Bamford, 1998), as it had decades of history among European learners, and graded readers (GR) had been well organized as reading material. Studies in EFL settings showed various benefits of ER, such as higher reading comprehension (Robb & Susser, 1989), improving attitude to reading (Yamashita, 2013), and improving reading fluency (Beglar, Hunt & Kite, 2012). However, the bigger obstacle for Japanese EFL learners was that even the easiest GR were not easy for them to read without English-Japanese translation because of larger linguistic distance of English and Japanese than the ones of English and European languages. Sakai’s proposal and the practice of Starting with Simple Stories (SSS) method (Furukawa and et al., 2005)
paved the road to ER for Japanese EFL learners. Japanese practitioners of ER also pointed out the importance of periodical Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) in regular lessons for elementary EFL learners, who did not have the habit to read English books continuously (Takase & Nishizawa, 2010).

ER in public libraries also became a trend in Japan (Nishizawa, 2015). More than 20 public libraries in Tokai region installed special bookshelves of easy-to-read English books for ER, and the number of such libraries was still increasing. Majority users of the books were adult EFL learners who had long graduated from schools and did not have professional need to use English but wished to enjoy reading English novels or using English for various purposes. This trend had a potential to reform lifelong learning of foreign languages in Japan in the long run.

2 How EFL learners were guided to read extensively

Typical books collected in those libraries for adult EFL learners were graded readers (GR) from major English publishers, leveled readers (LR) for English speaking children, and easiest-to-read picture book series such as Oxford Reading Tree (ORT) series or Foundations Reading Library (FRL) series. GR of starter and beginner levels were found to be more important than the ones of intermediate or advanced levels, and ORT or FRL were the indispensable series for most Japanese EFL learners to start their ER. Without reading these easiest-to-read picture books, many EFL learners could not stop their translating habit from school days, and thus could not continue their ER for a long enough time to improve their reading skills.

ORT was the most popular series even for adult EFL learners who had graduated from schools or colleges a long time in the past and had not believed that they could really read English texts without translation. With the help of pictures, very few unknown words, and a whole new world
told by more than 200 books, the EFL learners could transform their reading style gradually from word-for-word translation to direct comprehension of the stories.

When there were not any guidance how to start ER at first, typical adult learners tended to ignore the pictures, and tried to translate the English texts word-for-word into Japanese sentences. Then they usually found a few unknown words, started to consult with a dictionary, and sometimes stacked in the middle of the story wondering what a certain word or expression really meant. It was not easy to enjoy the stories with this traditional “reading” style, so they were required to be guided to focus more on the story instead on the expressions.

In an introductory lesson to ER, for example, we usually asked ER beginners to look at the pictures closely, sometimes by hiding the English texts at the first round, and to try to have a visual image of the story. With this visual image in their mind, they were guided back to the first page, and to read the whole book again by paying more attention on the text this time to understand the story more in detail. After this introduction, many of them understood that the method was quite different from the “reading” they had learned in their old school days, started to read picture books with interest, and tried to avoid English to Japanese translation.

For this transformation of the reading style, a large number of picture books, hopefully sharing the same background such as ORT or FRL, were necessary. We usually recommended elementary EFL learners to read about 100,000 words from 200 to 300 picture books when they started ER. Such a large number of picture books was not feasible for most learners to purchase by themselves, but recommended to be shared as the common assets in public libraries.
When an EFL learner felt it easy to read ORT (stage 8) or FRL (level 4), it was usually the right time for her to start reading GR of starter level along with more picture books, where each of those books told an independent story in a short text of 1,000 words with easy English of YL 0.8. Because of this independence, the reader must redefine the whole world of the story every time without the background knowledge supplied by the previous books in the same series.

For this second stage of ER, short and easy-to-read English texts were indispensable, and beginner and elementary levels of GR were suited for the purpose. We usually recommended EFL learners to read additional 100,000 – 200,000 words from GR of YL0.8 – 1.5. Starting ER from higher readability levels of GR by bypassing these two steps often caused typical failure of adult EFL learners. They could not unlearn their translating habit, tried to tackle with very difficult stories to understand, hardly enjoyed reading, and finally gave up reading any English books. The libraries that have GR but fewer easy-to-read books have the unintentional but large risk of inviting such failures.

In the third stage of ER, text length exceeded 6,000 words. It was longer than the texts read in the first two stages, where text length was from several hundred to 4,000 words, with the majority from 1,000 to 2,000 words per book, and could be read easily in an ER lesson of 45 minutes. Because longer texts read in the third stage took more than an hour to complete, they were likely to be read not in one occasion but in plural separate occasions. Reading a book in separate occasions was naturally achieved in the mother tongue, but an EFL learner had to remember the former stories when he started to read the continuation, which required deeper understanding of the story and thus more difficult to achieve. We usually recommended EFL learners to read a million total
words of texts of YL 3.0 or easier before graduating from this stage, which meant the end of ER beginners.

The third stage was the most difficult stage to overcome (Furukawa et al., 2007), and even the earnest EFL learners took slower average reading pace (40,000 words/month) than the first stage (136,000 words/month) or after reading a million words (134,000 or more words/month). One possible cause of difficulty in the third stage was expressed as “easy-to-read books become rather boring, but interesting books are still difficult to read”. Finding favorite series, authors, or genres might be a general suggestion to the learners in this stage, but actual advice for each learner must differ from person to person. The reading history of a veteran learner of similar taste often helped, and thus periodical meetings of EFL learners and exchange of experience and information were found to be valuable.

3 Promoting ER for lifelong learning

ER books were complex mixture of English books from various types, genres, and publishers. At least two groups of books were widely used by EFL learners in Japan. One group was the books for English speaking children including picture books, chapter books, and literature for young adults. There were popular books for English speaking children, famous books and awarded books, and even classical stories for children. They were popular and interesting books for children, but they did not always attract adult readers. They sometimes included expressions common to English speaking children but hard to understand for EFL learners. The other group was graded readers (GR) published for ESL/EFL learners. Their readability was controlled by the vocabulary and grammar restrictions and they sometimes included rather artificial or monotonous expressions, but
the topics such as murder mysteries or romance were selected to attract adult learners.

Because the ER books were so different in readability and genre, users needed some guide to select appropriate books for each of them. Aligning the books, for example, by the readability was one method but rather difficult for a librarian to manage because each must have certain knowledge of ER books to maintain the condition. Alternative method was putting an information sticker, which displayed readability level and text length, on the front or back page of each book to aid the book-selection of the users. Gathering the books in the same group was easier than aligning them by readability.

Collecting ER books might be the first step for libraries but they also had to promote ER books in their second step because ER was rather new and not-well-known approach in Japanese schools, in where not ER but grammar-translation had been and still was the major approach. For most Japanese people from children to senior citizens, “reading” English texts meant word-for-word translation, and even most English teachers did not expect that their students could read English texts without translating them into Japanese sentences.

Introductory lessons were necessary to promote ER books in the library. Two types of guidance, telling how to read and how to select books, were also necessary in the introduction. Monthly circulation of Tahara central library clearly showed that such annual introductory lessons increased the number of checked-out books for the following three months (NIT, Toyota College, 2015). The lessons invited new users to ER books and also activated ER of veteran users. Several libraries hold such lessons several times a year for the promotion.
How to motivate elementary EFL learners for the several years’ duration needed for them to get significantly higher scores at standardized tests was another serious issue for an ER program in Japanese settings if it were to be employed as a major educational practice. Furukawa’s (2011) students increased their ACE scores after they joined the ER program for three to five years, and Nishizawa, Yoshioka and Fukada’s (2010) students needed four years to increase their TOEIC scores significantly, and another group of the students in the same ER program increased their TOEIC scores after they stopped English-to-Japanese translation and had read a million total words (Nishizawa & Yoshioka, 2015). The students who stayed in the ER program longer years from six to seven years scored distinctively higher average scores in TOEIC than the students who stayed in the same ER program only from 1.5 to 3.5 years even if both groups of students had read the same amount of a million total words (Nishizawa, Yoshioka & Ichikawa, 2017). As they could not expect instant effect from ER, they would need an effective encouragement to continue ER for the necessary duration.

Setting up the periodical meetings of library users was a method of encouraging ER users (Nishizawa, 2015). The meetings did not need instructors but the participants talked their experience of reading easy-to-read books and exchanged information related to ER books to each other. In these book-talks, a novice user often found a role model among the veteran readers and followed her reading record as the guide. Veteran readers also enjoyed sharing their reading experience with other users. They were sometimes lightly pushed to start reading new books since they wanted to introduce the books in their next book-talks.
4 Book-talk in English

Book-talk is an oral activity in a small group of students (Nishizawa, Ho, Yoshioka & Ichikawa, 2016). They try to introduce to each other one of the stories from the books they have read in the recent weeks. Because of the topic, all the participants are required to read at least a book beforehand and to be ready to tell their reading experience. Successful book-talk in EFL settings is the opportunity to use the target language (L2) productively without the interference of their mother language (L1), as successful ER in EFL settings avoids translation from the L2 texts into L1.

Book-talk in English at NIT, Toyota college had started as a kind of stimulus for veteran users of the library. After reading more than a million words of English texts in several years, the veteran library users were ready to use their English skills productively without having such opportunities in their daily lives. Starting English book-talk among them was easier than expected possibly because they had already been talking about the books they had read in Japanese at monthly meetings of library users, and the only change was the language used in the talks from Japanese to English. Book-talk was also found to be easier activity than other English conversations maybe because the topic was what they had great interest and could share the joy.

Looking at the apparent success in the book-talks of veteran library users, we also started book-talks in regular English lessons (Table 1). If the activity could encourage veteran users to read continuously, it would also become an effective encouragement for other EFL learners who needed to stay in an ER program for a long time, we thought. We started to include book-talks in regular ER lessons, where the students’ English skills were from elementary to intermediate levels.
Table 1 Procedure of Book-talk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>Participant writes a memo for the talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(optional activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>3〜5 min. / session</td>
<td>The talker is not interrupted until the time limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q &amp; A</td>
<td>2〜5 min. / session</td>
<td>The other members ask questions about the talk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One session consists of a three-minute talk of one member and the following Q&As among all the members, typically in three minutes. If a group has three members, one round needs 20 minutes or fewer. Typical EFL learner feels three minutes a long time to speak English sentences continuously at first, but he gradually starts to feel it too short to present a meaningful story. Anyway a talk is interrupted by the limited time, so the students are advised to start talking from conclusion and then to move towards the detail or circumstance for minimizing the damage from the interruption.

In the ER program, book-talk was tried in the lessons of from third to seventh year students in 2013. It was welcomed by the sixth and seventh year students, admitted by many of the fourth and fifth year students, but disliked by most of the third year students. For the third year students, whose TOEIC scores were lower than 450, it was too hard to utter a meaningful sentence in a limited time as a talker, and the listeners were frustrated for the long waiting time. According to the responses of the students in the former year, we adjusted the frequency of the book-talk to
none for the third year students, once in a few months for the fourth and fifth year students, and every week for the sixth and seventh year students in 2014.

A feature of the book-talks was to try to talk without preparation or with as less preparation as possible because preparation meant for many Japanese EFL learners to write translated scripts from Japanese. We wanted the talkers to avoid Japanese-to-English translation at their book-talks, as avoiding translation was a major key to success for ER in EFL settings. Without preparation the talks became messy, but we sacrificed accuracy instead of fluency in our book-talks in a sense.

In a book-talk session, keeping equal session time for each participant had a vital importance for involving users of varied English fluency, because it stopped veteran readers who tended to forget their time limit and tried to keep talking, and because it also allowed novice readers to take their time struggling to pronounce just a few sentences. For that, we needed a timekeeper with a stopwatch to organize the sessions in control. In a book-talk session, a participant talked about the book he had recently read in a limited time, typically from three to five minutes, and answered questions from the other participants or received friendly comments. If a session used six minutes in total, ten participants could talk and answer in turn during an hour.

In regular lessons of 40 students, the students were divided into several groups so that every student had the opportunity to talk at least once in every lesson.
5 Temporary results

Veteran users of the college library were enjoying book-talks. The monthly meetings of library users in 2017 had more than ten regular members who wanted to talk in English. Many of them continued to read new books partly because they wanted to talk about the book in book-talks.

The sixth or seventh year students liked book-talks because they felt more reality than other conversation lessons as a talker. The talking content was more meaningful than just exchanging greetings or patterned sentences but their genuine ideas or unknown information to the listeners. They tended to recognize the limit of translation, and to start selecting easier books for deeper comprehension or searching more interesting books in their ER. Book-talk became a good motivator of ER.

They were reading at least a book for their book-talk at weekly ER lessons, and their anxiety for using English seemed to evaporate on the way. In such a way, book-talks allowed intermediate EFL learners to transform their in-class activity from receptive activity such as reading silently to productive one such as talking with each other without decreasing their amount of reading, because the students had to read books outside the lessons for their book-talks at the next lesson, even if they did not have time to read in the lessons anymore.

However, book-talks by younger students had a smaller impact on the learners. Elementary EFL learners could not compose meaningful talks in the limited time as long as they translated their ideas from Japanese to English on the spot. Book-talks did not promote much out-of-class reading and invaded their reading time in class because they needed to read only short texts out of the lessons for their next talks. Book-talk let them
recognize the fact that they needed to read more to use English fluently. Occasional book-talk might be enough for that purpose. They only seemed to accept the fact that book-talk was a relatively painless transient activity from their ER to conversation in their future.

Since book-talk was confirmed to be a hard task for elementary learners, we have removed book-talk from mandatory work in regular lessons for the third year students, and have set it up as an elective out-of-class activity since the autumn semester of 2015. For this activity, we invited the students who had read more than a million total words of English texts in their ER and were ready to book-talks. Thus conducted book-talk confirmed that the students could enjoy and be benefitted from the activity as their elder students did. As they proceeded into the fourth year in 2016, they still continued to attend the book-talk activity in every Friday evening and started to invite their classmates to join the group. Book-talk is planned to be a main activity in the Student Exchange Program, too.

We also used book-talk in a students’ exchange in 2017. The students in two ER programs in Japan and Vietnam did book-talks in groups of mixed students, with three Japanese and three Vietnamese students in each group (Ichikawa & Ho, 2017). The procedure was the same, and the only difference was the diversity of the participants. English was the common language to communicate with each other, and English books they had read were the common topic. These common features paved the road to fresh and meaningful conversations among the students in different cultures. Book-talk made a good introductory activity for the exchange of both groups.

As students’ exchange could not be a regular activity, we invited
instead several adult learners, who had rich experience of ER and read English books continuously, into the book-talks in the regular lessons of elder students. The students and adult learners were different in age, experience, and learning history of English but had common interest in reading English books. Book-talk with such different learners became fresh experience for both groups, and it activated heated discussions after each talk. All participants were happy because fluent talkers found earnest listeners and less-fluent talkers found kind atmosphere that accepted their slow talk and did not mind mistakes. Book-talk of mixed groups or divergent participants has two advantages: unexpectedly fresh experience and confidence upon the method, especially the long-term effect of ER.

As a productive activity by language learners, successful book-talk seemed to have the following features:

1) Learners of different reading skill in L2 were able to participate and enjoy the activity because they shared the interest in books written in the language or to the others’ reading experiences. Because of the common interest, it also served the opportunity to meet divergent people.

2) Book-talk in L2 was easier than other conversational activities because talkers were able to use pictures and sentences in the books for the support.

3) Book-talk might guide the talkers to fluent speaking in L2 by their avoiding simultaneous translation from the mother language if they could already read the books without translation.

4) Regular book-talks nudged the participants to read beforehand as a material of the next talks.

5) Book-talk guided novice learners to read easier-to-read books with higher comprehension rather than to challenge harder-to-read books
with lower comprehension, thus showing the appropriate readability levels for the learners.

6 Discussion

The authors asserted that successful book-talks improved participants’ speaking fluency because the participants could avoid Japanese-to-English translation when they spoke. However, it is only supported by the participants’ subjective remarks and the authors’ observations. Further study is needed to confirm it.

The long-term effect of book-talk on ER, especially if book-talks keep motivating lifelong learners of English to read continuously for a long term also needs to be confirmed, as the book-talk practices reported in this article only lasted a few years even if the participants had read extensively for longer years.

Conclusion

Book-talk was introduced as an activity to encourage EFL learners to continue their ER for a long term so they could improve their language skills and enjoy the benefits. In a book-talk session, several learners sat around a table, talk about the books they had read during the week, and accepted questions and comments from the others in turn. It also fitted well in lessons because 3-minute talks and 2-minute Q&A of six members took only 30 minutes.

Book-talk motivated elder students, who had three or more years’ experience of ER, to continue their reading outside the class, and veteran users of the college library, who had been reading English books for many years. However, its impact on younger students was limited because elementary EFL learners with less fluency could not compose meaningful
talks in a short time. Book-talk was also used well in exchanges of different cultures and multi-generations. A combination of few talks and many readings worked well in EFL settings.

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On the Major Challenges in the Early Training of Slovak Pre-service Teachers

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Abstract

Interaction in the classroom has found a profound interest in the works of many scholars in recent years. Given the dynamic nature of all activities carried out in language classrooms, there is an assumption that teacher’s talk promotes interaction. Moreover, what raises questions for researchers is the beginning of pre-service teachers’. Their teaching path reflects a unique challenge with regard to communication in the classroom. The aim of presented article is to introduce the current views on Slovak students of EFL teaching programs in their final year at the second level of university in asking questions during the educational process. The article aims to compare and elaborate sufficient (or insufficient) readiness of pre-service teachers in linking theory with practice based on the observation and self-reflection before teaching practice, during teaching practice and after teaching practice. The research methods used consist of Flander’s observation tool that was adjusted aiming at the teacher’s talk. A significant factor for research process was to get self-reflection of pre-service teachers that enabled to gain the insights of their perception of the main challenges and sufficient/insufficient readiness in terms of communication in the EFL classrooms. The article presents current findings and brings the possibilities for improving pedagogical communication of pre-service teachers.


Introduction

Classroom communication has become a vital ingredient in the educational process in the school environment. It is as necessary as the basic needs are a prerequisite for healthy development. The quality and
quantity of teacher-student interaction represents a critical dimension of effective classroom teaching.

One of the most important sources that have been used in this article for exploring classroom discourse is represented by Walsh’s publication *Investigating classroom discourse* (2006). Beginning by the features of classroom discourse, through the learning in second language classroom, there is a detailed description of the approaches to analysis of classroom discourse. In addition, a framework for analysis of classroom interaction could be found as a major source for the in-depth analysis of classroom interaction. Factors thought to be influencing college English classroom discourse have been explored in several studies. For instance, Jiang, 2012 depicted the discourse patterns and features that were made clear through a detailed description and analysis of the collected data by referring to Sinclair and Coulthard’s classroom discourse analysis model and Nina Spada, Maria Fröhlich, Patrick Allen’s COLT scheme. On the basis of the explored patterns a few strategies for college English teachers have been put forward by the author, especially those related to the improvement of college English teaching and learning.

Dewey, as well as other theorists (Schön and Kolb) played a crucial role in terms of the influence in the development of the concept of reflection. Looking at Walsh, (2017, p. 6) “reflection is a highly complex process, in which thinking, interaction, knowledge and learning have a reflexive relationship.” All of the aspects depend on one another and when used appropriately, a teacher can gain a detailed reflection. Dewey emphasized particular values (open-mindedness, responsibility and whole-heartedness) as pre-requisites for successful reflection.

The aim of presented article is to introduce the current views on Slovak students of EFL teaching programs in their final year at the second level of university in asking questions during the educational process. The
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Article aims to compare and elaborate sufficient (or insufficient) readiness of pre-service teachers in linking theory with practice based on the observation and self-reflection before teaching practice, during teaching practice and after teaching practice. The research methods consist of the observations while using Flander’s observation tool that was adjusted aiming at the teacher’s talk. A significant factor for research process was to get self-reflection of pre-service teachers that enabled to gain the insights of their perception of the main challenges and sufficient/insufficient readiness in terms of communication in the EFL classrooms. The article presents current findings and brings the possibilities for improving pedagogical communication of pre-service teachers.

1 Self-efficacy

A large and growing body of literature (Bandura, 1977-2012; Gavora, 2008, 2010; Gavora, Majerčíková, 2012; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, A. W., Hoy, W. K., 2011; Fenyvesiová-Kollárová, 2013) has investigated the concept of self-efficacy. This concept is interconnected with the heterogeneity of human knowledge, skills, self-esteem and prior experience. Self-efficacy theory admits the diversity of human capabilities. As to the nature of self-efficacy, Bandura (1997) notes that efficacy beliefs operate as a key factor in a generative system of human competence. Therefore, he Bandura (1997) highlights that different people, even though they might have similar skills, might perform either poorly or extraordinarily, depending on their beliefs in personal efficacy.

Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include...
cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes (Bandura, 1994, p. 1). In the same vein, Gavora (2011, p. 80) asserts that “self-efficacy is a self-system that controls most personal activity, including appropriate use of professional knowledge and skills.”

As Bandura (1997) maintains: self-efficacy is an important contributor to performance accomplishments, whatever the underlying skill might be. “The value of the theory is ultimately judged by the power of the methods it yields to effect changes. Self-efficacy theory provides explicit guidelines on how to enable people to exercise some influence over how they live their lives” (Bandura, 1997, p. 10).

Bandura (1997) supports the view that people’s beliefs about their personal efficacy embody a considerable aspect of their self-knowledge. Moreover, he discusses the main sources of self-efficacy beliefs:

- enactive mastery experiences – those serve as indicators of capability
- vicarious experiences – those alter efficacy beliefs through transmission of competencies and comparison with the attainments of others
- verbal persuasion including allied types of social influences – those demonstrate that one possesses certain capabilities
- psychological and affective states – people might partly judge their strength, capability or vulnerability to dysfunction (Bandura, 1997, p. 79)

The concept of self-efficacy, especially in the training of pre-service teachers is also outlined by Gavora (2010) in the article Slovak Pre-Service Teacher Self-Efficacy: Theoretical and Research Considerations. Gavora (2010, p. 2) considers as a highly important that teacher self-efficacy should be distinguished from teacher ‘competence’, which is
usually interpreted and/or applied to refer to (only) the teacher’s *professional* knowledge and skills. Teacher self-efficacy is a broader concept, and in fact high self-efficacy underlies and enables successful use of professional knowledge and skills, or conversely, low self-efficacy inhibits effective use of professional knowledge and skills. Thus, teacher self-efficacy is a strong self-regulatory characteristic that enables teachers to use their potentials to enhance pupils’ learning. It should be acknowledged that teacher self-efficacy is related to ‘perseverance’; the stronger the self-efficacy, the greater the perseverance – and the greater the perseverance, the greater the likelihood that the teaching behaviours will be successful.

2 Methods

This chapter describes and discusses the methods used in this investigation. The first section provides a precise characteristic of the research sample and refers to the other elements of data gathering such as the length of the observed lessons, number of participants etc. The second part moves on to describe in greater detail the Flander’s observation tool sheets adjusted to the teacher’s talk but it also provides a detailed insight to the categories evaluated in Flander’s observation tool.

The research methods used consist of the observation while using Flander’s observation tool (Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories) that was adjusted aiming at the teacher’s talk. A significant factor for research process was to get self-reflection of pre-service teachers that enabled to gain the insights of their perception of the main challenges and sufficient/insufficient readiness in terms of communication in the EFL classrooms. There were 18 participants in total divided into three groups, including 6 pre-service teachers observed during teaching practice. Each participant was observed once during one lesson (45 minutes). 15 pre-service teachers were observed during the term and research sample also
comprised 3 teacher training supervisors who evaluated the performance of pre-service teachers during their teaching practice. Data were gathered based on Flander’s observation tool sheets which covered teacher’s talk only; researcher’s observation sheets used during the seminars; teaching practice evaluation sheets filled by teacher training supervisors and self-evaluation sheets of pre-service teachers.

During teaching practice of pre-service teachers, Flander’s observation tool sheets were crucial for the observation itself. *Table 1* provides a detailed insight to the categories evaluated in Flander’s observation tool:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s talk</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Accepts feeling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Praises or encourages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Accepts ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Develops ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Asks questions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) amount</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) correctly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) answers at the same time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Explains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gives directions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Criticizes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Flander’s observation tool categories. Adapted from Gavora, 2003 and consequently adjusted*

With regard to adjusted Flander’s observation tool categories, another table was created where the researcher evaluated each of the categories. The following is *Table 2*, illustrating *Flander’s observation tool sheet*:
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Table 2: Flander’s observation tool sheet

The table consists of eight columns corresponding with the particular categories and each column provides two options: yes or no. What is more, the fifth category, investigating whether and how a pre-service teacher asks questions during the lesson, includes three sub-questions: a) amount – this refers to the appropriate/inappropriate amount of questions asked; b) correctly – this sub-question explores the issue of correct/incorrect asking questions during the lesson and the third sub-question, c) seeks the answer to the issue whether a pre-service teacher answers their own questions at the same time. Three sub-questions, which belong to the fifth question, were crucial for this research, as the issue of asking questions seems to be a burden for many pre-service teachers and the aim of the researcher was also to gain the background information from pre-service teachers about the causes and influences of inappropriate asking questions. The causes and influences will be described in detail in the section Interpretation of the results and discussion.

Exploring the area of the major challenges in the early training of Slovak pre-service teachers, it is vital to emphasize the importance of participant observation and our role in it, but also research design. Kathleen and Billie DeWalt (2011) clarify why a researcher should pay a particular attention to the design of the research: “Our position is that participant observation requires even more attention to the design of research so that the results of this relatively flexible method can be
ultimately analysed and interpreted” (DeWalt, K. – DeWalt, B., 2011, p. 109). Moreover, participant observation could be an excellent tool for improving classroom communication, especially between a teacher and a student but also among the students themselves. Having mentioned participant observation and rapport, the authors draw special attention to the creation of the relationship between participant observation and rapport: “The use of participant observation allows for the building of greater rapport, better access to informants and activities, and enhanced understanding of the phenomena investigated using other methods.” (DeWalt, K. & DeWalt, B., 2011, p. 110). After the careful analysis of Flander’s observation tool sheet, the researcher got a chance to join a group discussion to pre-service teachers and this might be one the first crucial points how to bridge any observation and improvement of the rapport. Apart from that, we have got Teaching Practice Evaluation sheets and Self-Evaluation sheets of the observed pre-service teachers. In terms of Self-Evaluation sheets, pre-service teachers offered their perceptions and overall feelings of teaching practice.

3 Interpretation of the results and discussion

This part of the article discusses the interpretation of the results which emerged from the gathered data. These results therefore need to be interpreted with caution. It also comprises a discussion highlighting similar research that has been conducted with pre-service teachers on self-efficacy, reflective practice and pre-service teacher training. Following is Figure 1 which illustrates the most challenging issues for pre-service teachers:
As can be seen from the *Figure 1*, there is a wide range of issues that challenge pre-service teachers. During the observations of seminars, observed students (pre-service teachers) brought up a list of challenging activities and issues that had made them feel uncomfortable when teaching at TP. The list of the challenging issues consisted of problems with *confidence*, problems to explain vocabulary in the target language, unequal *level of English* of students, problems with *discipline*, *time management*, cooperation between teacher training supervisors and pre-service teacher, appropriate approach to *eager beavers* (extremely clever students who always need more tasks to do), *time-consuming preparation* of the lesson plans and appropriate *error correction* at the lesson. The most challenging issues for the observed pre-service teachers were problems with *discipline* represented in 28%. From the observations of the
students during the term, the observed students stated that confidence caused them real problems, appearing in 20%. The third major problem was unequal level of English of students occurring in 17%, as there were weak and strong students in the same classroom. Another challenge for pre-service teachers, which was present in 11%, was reflected in time management during the lesson. Pre-service teachers would usually plan more activities than they were able to manage during one lesson. They would sometimes spend long time with homework and afterwards did not have appropriate amount of time on all prepared exercises, activities or short sum-up at the end of the lesson. Having mentioned time, there occurred another issue, time-consuming preparation of the lesson plans, which emerged in 7%. In 6%, pre-service teachers stated that the cooperation between teacher training supervisors and pre-service teacher was really difficult. This could have been caused by different expectations of teacher training supervisors but also of pre-service teachers, new and unknown environment, etc. Figure 2 below shows the easiest tasks for pre-service teachers:

![The easiest tasks for pre-service teachers](image-url)
Figure 2 reveals the categories of the easiest tasks for pre-service teachers during their TP. Pre-service teachers found four main categories of the tasks as the easiest. The tasks included individual work, warm-up activities, activities prepared by students and homework check. Individual work immersed in 38% of the pre-service teachers’ talks. Obviously, during students’ individual work, a teacher does not have to work and talk too much, the focus is put rather on monitoring of the students. Speaking of the second easiest task, activities prepared by students, those appeared in 27% of the responses. From the title of the task it is not difficult to deduce that these activities do not belong under the obligations of the (pre-service) teachers. As for the homework check, it constituted 19% and as pre-service teachers said: “It was great to do homework check. Even though we had to pay attention to what students say, still it was much better than explaining new vocabulary, for instance.” The last category consisted of warm-up activities, those occurred in 16% and pre-service teachers classified them as the easiest activities, as warm-up activities usually provide more fun than effort. Pre-service teachers considered them as motivating activities that woke up students and improved the rapport.

Turning now to the examples of the observed pre-service teachers’ evaluation, self-efficacy of pre-service teachers has been considered as one of the major challenges causing them a considerable amount of problems at the teaching practice. Looking in detail at their self-evaluation sheets, one of the six said: “I have to say that I did not change my opinion on teaching after the teaching practice. I want to teach but I prefer primary school. As for bad points, I have started the practice a little bit badly. There were more problems at the beginning of my teaching practice. I have a problem with confidence, especially in speaking English. But this is always my problem when I have to stand in front of the class, even if I have to teach adults. I have had a respect before the beginning of
my teaching practice. Maybe I was afraid of people who know English or speak English. For example, I have taught 1st graders and I have used less English and more Slovak. Then, my teacher training supervisor told me that I should use more English. After that I was using less mother tongue. I was using it only when it was needed (when students looked at me with their faces full of misunderstanding :-)). But I think that this problem can be solved only when I will teach this one class for a longer time. The net bad point was my fault in one class – 4. B. The lesson started good but then I had a problem with indirect questions – especially with the dictation of the definition. I was not prepared for the dictation and I was only explaining it without dictation. From that point, my lesson has turned bad. Although it was not good, I got the second chance for retaking the same lesson in another 4th class – 4. C and I taught it in a very good way there.

Regarding good points, the trainee teacher said: “As my teaching practice came closer to the end, I had better lessons. My lesson plans were also better and the same was my confidence. I love teaching, even though it is hard sometimes. I think that my ‘good point’ is in my attitude to students. I try to behave like their teacher and a colleague in one, but I must keep it like that. I must not be more their colleague than a teacher. My another good point is that I learn things quickly and this helped me during my teaching practice. I have learnt to work with student’s books and workbooks effectively. I have had the experience of giving and checking the test, but checking was not as easy as I thought. It was really hard to decide for what should be taken into consideration. For example, translating sentences from Slovak to English – instead of singular, students wrote plural.

With respect to overall summary of the teaching practice, the trainee teacher maintained: “I would say it was a very good experience again. Maybe we should have had more teaching practices because it can help us
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...to prepare for our future teacher’s profession. However, there were only two weeks for training. I can say that I am now better at my performances, better at speaking and also in other language skills. Except of language skills, I am better at personal skills. As I have mentioned before, I am confident now. Teaching practice helped me with public performances and I am thankful for that.”

It would be remiss not to highlight an opinion of another pre-service teacher who provided a different point of view on teaching practice itself and on self-efficacy. The other one noted that this teaching practice was the best for her. As this pre-service teacher “I felt more confident and relaxed. I also felt good and comfortable among other teachers; they were very nice, supportive and helpful. It is a shame that they do not need an English teacher for the next year because I could see myself teaching there. :-) I can see that I got better with my confidence and with the work with my voice (when I compare it to my second teaching practice in winter semester. During the second teaching practice almost every feedback that I got was either about talking louder or being more confident. Now, I got only one feedback about being more confident and one about speaking louder. Since I knew that I had problems with those two aspects, I was really trying to speak louder and to check if everyone could hear and understand what I was saying. Concerning the confidence, in my opinion I was more confident and I believed in my abilities more, but I still think that confidence is something that is built throughout the years of practice.”

There has been provided a number of other similar examples and statements from pre-service teachers struggling with similar issues and challenges during their teaching practice. From what has been said, it can be concluded that self-efficacy represents one of the major challenges for many of pre-service teachers. The additional value of their self-evaluation might be seen in their own perspective and creating a room for
improvement. Many of them acknowledged their (im)perfections and realized what should be improved in order to get higher self-efficacy and to enjoy teaching process more.

This section provides a brief overview of the current research works that have been conducted on pre-service teacher training, pre-service teachers’ education and the particular elements that might be seen as challenges or benefits for pre-service teachers’ training. Numerous studies have examined pre-service teachers in their initial training, for instance Walsh (2017) who pays particular attention on reflective practice in pre-service teaching and provides the ‘instructions’ on how to get the best of the lessons both for students and for teachers. Whereas Walsh’s work *Reflective Practice in English Language Teaching* (2017) seems as a book full of excellent ideas and tips for pre-service teachers, a number of authors have reported analyses of trends in pre-service initial training that demonstrated how crucial integrating of self-efficacy in pre-service teacher training is (Inceçay 2011; Ünal – Yamaç – Uzun, 2017; Okumura, 2017 and others. Another study by Turkoglu and Cansoy (2017) analysed *Perceptions of Pre-Service Teachers on Student Burnout, Occupational Anxiety and Faculty Life Quality*, as student burnout might cause another challenge especially for pre-service teachers. Exploring Slovak context, the most famous author investigating pre-service teacher and self-efficacy is represented by Gavora. In his study, *Slovak Pre-Service Teacher Self-Efficacy: Theoretical and Research Considerations*, “pre-service students’ scores on both teaching self-efficacy and general teaching efficacy exceeded the midpoint of the scales, indicating they had positive self-efficacy. Comparisons to other studies with similar samples in three countries showed surprisingly similar results” (Gavora, 2010, p. 1).
Conclusion

The aim of the presented article was to introduce current views on Slovak students of EFL teaching programs in their final year at the second level of university in asking questions during the educational process. The article aimed to compare and elaborate sufficient (or insufficient) readiness of pre-service teachers in linking theory with practice based on the observation and self-reflection before teaching practice, during teaching practice and after teaching practice.

The present results are significant in at least major two respects. The observed pre-service teachers realize how important self-efficacy is not only for their teaching practice but also for their future. This finding has important implications for developing and enhancing self-efficacy in pre-service teacher initial training. The more confident they are and the more they believe in themselves, the easier it is for them to perform at any lesson. On the one hand, they are aware of their weaknesses and acknowledge them. However, on the other hand, they know their own qualities, they know exactly what they are good at and they use their strengths.

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Literature


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Training Non-native Teachers of English for Pre-school Education in the Czech Republic

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Abstract

A rapid increase in the number of nursery schools carrying out foreign language education in various form and extent testifies to a strong interest of our society in foreign languages and in their learning from a very young age. The increase in quantity, however, automatically provokes questions as to the quality and sense of this education. The requirements for quality in preschool foreign languages education has prompted the need for qualified teachers for this level of education. However, most recent studies report growing gaps in the supply of such teachers. The existing situation brings new tasks and challenges to teacher training universities and calls for innovations in existing initial and in-service teacher-training study programmes. The paper presents one model (provided at the Tomas Bata University in Zlín, the Czech Republic) of such an initial training of preschool teachers who are expected to teach English as a foreign language at nursery schools and daycare centres.

Keywords: pre-school education, foreign language learning, preschool teacher training.

1 Very early start of foreign language education

Although the first arguments (both pedagogical and psychological) for an early start in language learning had occurred as early as the 1960s, it was only in 1990s when first complex and systematic innitiatives and conceptions of introduction of foreign language learning in primary
schools were proposed. These days, led mostly by the myth (Scovel, 1999) widely accepted in public that “the younger you start the better you will get”, teaching foreign languages in European countries has been continually spreading into the classrooms with increasingly younger learners. The trend has been effectively promoted and in some cases even provoked by the official language education policy of the EU which underlines the need of “teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age” (European Commission, 2002, p. 44).

The very early age start policy recommendations and guidelines were summarized in the paper named European Strategic Framework for Education and Training (ET 2020): Language learning at pre-primary school level: Making it efficient and sustainable: A policy handbook (European Commission, 2011). Later, the European Commission published a paper named Examples of good practices (EC, n.d.-a), as well as paper called Countries summaries (EC, n.d.-b; the chapter in the Czech Republic is in pp. 27-35). More recent summaries, first-hand experiences and examples of good practice can be found in numerous publications (e.g. Edelenbos, Johnstone, Kubanek, 2006; Garton, Copland, & Burns, 2011; Mourão & Lourenço; 2015; Murphy & Evangelou, 2016; and others).

Nowadays, the number of pre-primary institutions providing organized foreign language education has been growing with English remaining the most popular foreign language taught in Europe. Pre-primary institutions are here understood in accordance with the definition of ISCED 0 as institutions providing “the initial stage of organised instruction“ which are “designed primarily to introduce very young children to a school-type environment, i.e. to provide a bridge between the home and a school-based atmosphere. Upon completion of these programmes, children continue their education at level 1 (primary education). Pre-primary
education is school-based or centre-based and is designed for children aged at least 3 years” (Eurydice Report, 2017, p. 144).

British Council Survey (Rixon, 2013) indicated that English (as a foreign language) is rapidly spreading into the pre-primary level of education (ISCED 0). However, the conclusion was not proved to be so obvious by the most recent Eurydice report (2017) which showed that only four countries (Cyprus, Belgium - partially, Poland, and Malta) officially implement teaching a second or foreign language before the start of primary education (see Appendix 1).

2 Directions in contemporary research

Internationally, very early and early start of foreign language education at nursery and elementary schools has been a rather widely discussed topic in contemporary pedagogical research, bringing a wide range of findings, conclusions and theories (see the overviews in Singleton & Lengyel, 1995; Birdsong, 2001; Nikolov, 2000; Nikolov & Curtain, 2000 and others). In this regard, Lojová (2006, p. 44) named three significant perspectives in contemporary research on the topic:

1) “the sooner the better”: represented by researchers who believe that a child should start learning the foreign language/foreign languages as early as possible (in alliance with the proponents of the Critical Period Hypothesis). They also claim that a natural potential of children is wasted if the start of foreign language learning is moved to later years (e.g. Birdsong, 2001; de Bot, 2014; Johnstone, 2002; Nikolov & Djigunovic, 2006; Nikolov, 2009; Singleton & Lengyel, 1995; Sun, Steinkrauss, & de Bot, 2014). They aim to prove that the inclusion of a foreign language into preschool education has numerous advantages, e.g. increased
performance in logical thinking, verbal communication, development of cultural awareness and positive attitude to other languages.

2) “later is enough”: gather experts whose studies did not prove the Critical Period Hypothesis and the importance of an early start. Instead, some of them claim that children can learn a foreign language faster, better and more effectively if they start later, once they have sufficiently developed language communicative competences in their mother language (Blondin et al., 1998; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Genelot, 1996; Hanušová & Najvar, 2005, 2006, 2007; Singleton & Ryan, 2004; Muñoz, 2006 and others).

1) “it depends”: this group of experts follows a belief that the age of a child cannot be considered the only decisive variable. (Burstal, 1975; Calabrese & Dawes, 2008; Enever & Lindgren, 2017; Johnstone, 1994; Murphy, 2017; Unsworth et al., 2014; van Ginkel, 2017). Instead, “they emphasise the importance of other variables, namely inner predispositions, the social environment, and educational conditions” (Lojová, 2006, p. 44).

3 The situation in the Czech Republic

The first thing to be noted when discussing pre-school foreign language education and its early start in the Czech Republic is that by “pre-school” are meant children at the age of three to six, and that it is English which is a dominantly taught foreign language. Although several works have been published on the issue of pre-primary foreign language education (Černá, 2015; Dvořáková, 2006; Faklová, 2000; Fenclová, M. 2004.; Hanušová & Najvar, 2005; Hanušová & Najvar, 2007; Ježková, 2006; Jílková, 2005; Kovařovicová, Miňovská, & Smolíková, 1994; Minaříková, Cardová, & Švandová, 1987; Najvar, 2008; Opravilová, 2006; Smolíková, n. d.; Šára, n.
d.; Šulová & Bartanusz, 2003; Šulová & Zaouche-Gaudron, 2003; Šulová, n. d.; Těthalová, 2010, 2012; Vojtková, 2006; Zapletalová, 2006; Zbranková, 2005 and others), no reliable and valid data on the national situation in foreign language education offered by pre-primary institutions in the Czech Republic have been provided yet (e.g. number and types of pre-school institutions providing foreign language education, methodologies used, number of qualified/unqualified teachers, number of learners, measurements of learning outcomes, etc.).

The document entitled *Countries summaries* (EC, n.d.-b; p. 27) characterizes the status quo in the Czech Republic as follows: “Although language learning is not a compulsory part of the Framework education programme, on the basis of interest, and very often under pressure of parents, the number of pre-primary school establishments (usually for children between 3-6 years of age) offering teaching of foreign languages has increased dramatically. Nowadays, more than 50 % of all pre-primary schools offer a type of introduction into foreign language learning, some in a very intensive way. (...) About 60% of these schools ask for extra charges for introducing foreign language into the education programme. (...) There is no recommended methodological approach which would define what is considered a regular foreign language course at that level (pre-primary). The type, level and intensity of teaching languages in these schools vary”. To change and, more importantly, improve the situation described above, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic issued in 2005 the document called *National Plan for the Teaching of Foreign Languages* (*Národní plán výuky cizích jazyků*, MŠMT, 2005) with the *Action plan for the period 2005-2008* (to be discussed later on).
4 Training teachers for pre-primary English classes

Cascading foreign languages into early childhood education brought a growing need for qualified teachers of languages for pre-primary education which resulted in the chronic lack of qualified pre-primary L2 teachers. The issue seems to be of a global scope since it has been proved by numerous reports published all around the world (Butler, 2004, 2007; Cameron, 2003; Chen & Tsai, 2012; Cimermanová, 2016; Copland et al., 2013; Dagarin Fojkar & Skubic, 2017; Ellis, 2016; Emery, 2012; Enever, 2011; Enever & Moon, 2009; Garton, 2014; Garton, Copland, & Burns, 2011; Hayes, 2014; Jeong, 2004; Leung et al., 2013; Machida and Walsh, 2014; Murphy, 2014; Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2011; Nunan, 2003; Rixon, 2013; Shankar & Gunashekar, 2016; Sepešiová, 2016; Straková, 2016; Murphy, Evangelou, Goff & Tracz, 2016; Wang and Gao, 2008; Zhou, 2004 and others). So far, no research proving the sufficient number of qualified teachers in any area/country/region has been published. The same situation was identified in the ELLiE study (Early Language Learning in Europe; see Enever, 2011).

The lack of qualified teachers is associated with the lack of opportunities to get an appropriate teacher education (both pre-service and in-service training). As Hidasi, (2009, online) who explained the situation in Hungary, has it: “The traditional system of training language teachers has not been concerned with the methodology of language education in the lowest age groups and its unique challenges. A specific university program needs to be developed to address this issue - this is a task for the coming years.”

In the Czech Republic, nearly twenty years ago Faklová (2000) noted that more than three quarters of the language teachers at primary schools
were unqualified. One can only assume that the status quo at nursery schools and other pre-school institutions was even worse. Moreover, there is only little evidence that the state has improved significantly.

With the qualified pre-school L2 teachers unavailable, school managements had to reach for various alternatives. Many pre-primary foreign language classes were taught either by native speakers or people who could speak a foreign language fluently, even though they lacked any methodological training (c.f. Jeon & Lee, 2006). The second group consisted of teacher trainees (still studying at a university) who were proficient in a foreign language and went through at least a partial methodological preparation. Some nursery schools were hiring professional free-lance teachers whose training, competences and methodological expertise may have varied individually (ranging from excellent to very poor).

It is clear that none of these “alternative” solutions has been ideal and could fully substitute for the teachers with full qualification in pre-school pedagogy and good FL language proficiency. This knowledge – that the first and foremost condition for success in pre-primary foreign language education (and, in fact, on any other level of education) is a competent teacher – has been reflected in the National Plan for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (MŠMT, 2005, p. 4): “The advantages of foreign language education at an early age, including also better skills in mother tongue, will show only when teachers are specifically trained for teaching languages to very small children. The adequate devices and aids as well as sufficient space for language education in the curriculum are necessary conditions. The initiatives leading to an easier availability of language education for the ever-younger learners must be supported by adequate resources, including resources for teacher training.”
In the document, the Ministry pledged to set measures to ensure:

- a satisfactory number of qualified foreign language teachers,
- support and facilitation of further educational possibilities in the given area,
- introduction of new study programmes for foreign language teachers,
- increase in the number of applicants accepted for combined forms of study,
- elevation of “didactics of foreign languages” to the status of scientific discipline.

The document also included the following “Action plan for foreign language teaching in the period of 2005 – 2008 for pre-school education“:

1. To provide more information to teachers and parents regarding language education at an early age as well as conditions necessary to ensure good results.

2. To prepare a methodological material for the teaching of English (or another foreign language) to pre-school children and provide it free of charge to the nursery schools which would be interested in getting it. (The plan has been fulfilled in 2008 when Průvodce metodikou výuky angličtiny v mateřské škole I. [The Guide to the Methodology of Teaching English in Nursery Schools I] was published.)

3. To include English to the programme of training nursery school teachers at pedagogical schools and pedagogical faculties.

4. To include the foreign language teaching propaedeutics into the Framework Programme for Pre-School Education [Rámcový vzdělávací program předškolního vzdělávání].
5. To include the subject “language propaedeutics” to the study programme for the training of future nursery school teachers.

5 Qualification requirements for non-native pre-primary teachers of English

The previous observations lead to a fundamental question: What characteristics and attributes are crucial for a qualified and effective teacher of English at nursery schools and other pre-primary institutions?

As in other countries, qualification requirements for pre-primary teachers of English in the Czech Republic remain unspecified (c.f. Černá, 2015, p. 174; Portiková, 2012, 2015). To substitute for them, the descriptive models by various experts may prove a helpful guidance.

According to Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2011), teachers of young learners need: a) to be proficient in both the children’s first language and the foreign language; b) to know the content and curriculum well; c) to be qualified in teaching young learners; and d) to be trained in teaching languages.

Vos (2008) offers the following quite lengthy list: knowledge of the foreign language; knowledge of how to analyse and interpret language; knowledge of principles of foreign languages learning; pedagogical capacities for teaching foreign languages; ability to create possibilities for all students/children; knowledge of suitable methodologies for all age groups; understanding language diversity; skills to coordinate research and available resources, skills to plan pedagogical processes.

Vojtková (2006, p. 93-95) discusses a much shorter and more practical list of required teacher’s abilities, skills and competences:
a) the teacher’s own command of the language (B2 or C1 according to CEFR),

b) the teacher’s teaching competence,

c) the teacher’s attitude to the language.

For the purposes of the planned research, the following classification is applied:

**Areas of required competences of non-native teachers of pre-primary English**

a) sufficient proficiency in a foreign language,

b) sufficient teaching competence for pre-primary education,

c) sufficient understanding of the processes related to the development of bilingualism at a very early age (developing foreign language literacy in contact with mother language literacy, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of foreign language education, etc.).

In this particular paper, the research topic will be limited to the requirements related to sufficient proficiency in a foreign language.

**6 Focus on pre-primary teachers’ foreign language proficiency**

“The quality of the teacher’s own command of the foreign language can make a difference in the effectiveness of early language learning projects. In the Czech Republic there are still quite a lot of people who think that the teacher’s language proficiency does not have to be very high if they are to teach young learners. People who are more informed in the field say that it is the pronunciation that has to be good but generally the teacher will be using the basic language structures in their lessons which
does not require high proficiency” (Vojtková, 2006, p. 91). This statement corresponds with a rather general assumption that teachers of very young children at nursery schools do not need to know a lot, including a high proficiency in a foreign language. Such presumptions are not only arrogant regarding the profession, but they also ignore the importance of the correct models (proved by latest research in neurolinguistics and psycholinguistics) at the beginning stages of foreign language acquisition. The quality of foreign language input provided to very young learners is as significant if not more significant as at later stages of foreign language education (Hanušová & Najvar, 2006). Smolíková (2006) has also emphasised that the command of language is very important. The teacher is a model for the child, and if his/her competences are not satisfactory, especially excellent pronunciation, children catch and take on “accurately” also the defects. They will create wrong pronunciation habits which are almost impossible to remove at a later age. The teachers should therefore be aware of the importance of their work with regard to the further development of the foreign language for a child and approach their teaching as well as their own preparation with utmost responsibility.

According to the Czech School Inspection a teacher teaching a foreign language at a nursery school should have the language knowledge at the C1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, due to the necessity of perfect pronunciation and a natural command of language (c.f. Těthalová, 2012). Considering current situation at nursery schools, this is a non-realistic assumption. The reality is such that the teaching is done by those from the teaching staff who can at least speak the language, since the level of their language knowledge is not susceptible to any inspections.
More realistic are the requirements for a minimum level of the teacher’s language command, which are implicitly coded in the textbooks and teachers’ manuals of the English courses intended for nursery schools, though even here one can find great differences: from the beginner’s level A2 (napr. Wattsenglish), through intermediate levels of B1 and B2 (e.g. Angličtina pro předškoláky [English for Pre-School Learners], Mouse and Me, Playtime, Průvodce metodikou..., Show and Tell) up to the advanced level C1 to C2 (e.g. Little Friends, Cookie and Friends, KIKUS).

Gradually a consensus has been reached regarding the requirement for B2 level according to CEFR. This is also a logical result of the development in the country, since it is currently expected that each nursery school teacher must have finished her study at a secondary school with school leaving exams part of which is the exam in English at B2 level. It is assumed, so far without support of research results, that together with a good preparation in language pedagogy and methodology (acquired within the development of the mother tongue), such preparation should prove adequate.

7 Research project proposal

Based on all the above-mentioned circumstances, it must be verified to what extent this model of training the future non-native teachers of pre-primary English (school leaving exam at B2 + language pedagogy training in the development of mother tongue) is functional. Nowadays such research is being prepared at the Institute of School Pedagogy FHS UTB in Zlín, counting on potential cooperation of other faculties providing the training of pre-school teachers.
7.1 Research objectives

The research will focus on the following:

a) verification of the preparation of students to transform their knowledge in the didactics of mother tongue to the area of foreign language teaching,

b) verification of students’ foreign language competence,

c) analysis and evaluation of the quality of student outcomes in foreign language from the aspect of their language correctness and methodological adequacy,

d) application of the results into the innovation and betterment of the courses in language pedagogy in a foreign language.

7.2 Research respondents and context

In the research, selected pedagogical language competences of the students from the study fields Teacher Training for Nursery Schools (Učitelství pro mateřské školy, study branch code: 7531R001, study programme: Pedagogy Major [Specializace v pedagogice] (B7507), Bc. (both in full-time and part-time form) and Pre-School Age Pedagogy [Pedagogika předškolního věku] (7501T010; 7501T010), study programme: Pedagogy Major (B7507), Mgr. 5 years; (both in full-time and part-time form) at FHS UTB in Zlín will be analysed and evaluated. The research is planned for the period of 3 years (2018-2020).

7.3 Research methods

- analysis of the pre-service and in-service pre-primary teachers products, (authentic recordings, written tasks, original methodological materials created by students, microteaching),
diagnostic language competence tests,
linguistic analysis of student language utterances.

7.4 Structure and extent of the analysed materials:
The following will be analysed and evaluated:

- standardized placement diagnostic language tests,
- qualitative analysis of pre-service and in-service teachers´ portfolios including:
- authentic recordings of respondents´ oral performance,
- written assignments (essays),
- sets of original teaching materials designed by respondents (they will be evaluated both from a linguistic and methodological perspective, as an example see Attachment No. 2).

7.5 Pilot results
In 2015-2017 there was a pilot verification of whether the university students in study fields Teacher Training for Nursery Schools and Pedagogy of Pre-School Age, having done basic training in language pedagogy (2-semester course in the didactics of English language), which is a continuation of their didactic training in mother tongue development, are prepared to efficiently plan and carry out the initial teaching of a foreign language. The research also contained the verification of the real language level of future pre-school teachers, and whether it allows them to fulfil the educational objectives in a foreign language. Detailed results of the pilot analyses will be published in scholarly periodicals in 2018.

The pilot results were acquired from the probe analyses carried out in 2015 – 2017 at the Faculty of Humanities of the Tomas Bata University in
Zlín from the students of both study programmes. They may be summarised as follows:

**A) Students´ methodological preparation**

Drawing on the content analysis and qualitative evaluation of student products, it was observed that:

- The students in study fields *Teacher Training for Nursery Schools* and Pre_School Age Pedagogy [*Pedagogika předškolního věku*] proved that they are prepared to transform their knowledge in the didactics of mother tongue to the area of foreign language teaching.
- The didactic materials prepared by students were methodologically suitable, showing a sufficient measure of pedagogical creativity.

**B) Students´ foreign language competence**

The content analysis of student products made it possible to state the following:

- The students´ English language level fluctuated from A1 to C1.
- A considerable majority of students does not reach the expected B2 level.
- Only a small part of students (3.8%) produced language outcomes at B2 and higher levels.
- Based on diagnostic tests, a considerable majority of students was included to A2.
- Better results were acquired in written than in oral skills.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

Starting ages at which the first and second foreign languages are compulsory subjects for all students in pre-primary, primary and/or general secondary education, 2015/16

Source: Eurydice, 2017, p. 31
Appendix 2: Examples of students’ texts from completed portfolio tasks

Task: Prepare and record the mascot’s speech. Send the recording in MP3 format.
5. Mascot speech

„Hello, my name is Pedro. I came from a small planet. I came here because I want to learn English. I like you very much! Could I stay here and learn English with you?”

Mascot.mp4
The Advantages of Using Modern Teaching Methods over Traditional Teaching Methods in EFL

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Abstract

Teaching and learning English has become a global interest for everyone. A lot of factors influence learning EFL. People can learn in different ways - some can be visual learners, some audio and some tactile learners. However, the role of teaching methods is one of the main factors in teaching EFL and our research will mainly focus on a deeper analysis of which methods to use and how to apply them so the learners can consider learning the language as fun as it can be. The aim of this paper is to investigate the role of the past, present and future ways of teaching ESL, as a bridge of overcoming any possible difficulties or unpleasant situations while teaching EFL takes place. The paper will share which methods to apply or how we can combine the traditional and modern teaching methods since this is still something that takes place in schools in Macedonia and the region. First, it will state how people learn and their ways of learning; what is traditional teaching and what is modern teaching; the advantages and disadvantages of each way of learning, etc. As the objective of this paper is clearly captured once you read the title, we want to inform, compare and bring innovation in our educational institutions and encourage the application of these methods as we provide some facts and truths about the product of these strategies in studying. The referred methods are well known in many countries, and as such, we will try to compare these experiences with our context.

Key words: Traditional methods. Modern methods. EFL. ESL.

Introduction & background of the study

Today, English is spoken all around the world. According to British Council Website www.studyenglishtoday.net, today English as a first
language is spoken by 375 million and as a foreign language by 750 million. English language has its official or special status in at least 70 countries and is being learned by about a billion people. These numbers alone make English important to learn.

So, learning and developing the English language has become a global interest as one of the first and importance steps to be taken by each individual.

In Macedonia, English language is considered as an official language after Macedonia and Albanian. At this period, we can see that without the English language there is no future in Macedonia and elsewhere too. So, by this fact, learning the English language is considered to be one of the most important things to do if you live in any of the Western Balkans countries.

In order to learn English as a foreign language, many factors play an important role. The role of teaching methods is one of the main factors in teaching a foreign language and this research mainly will focus on deeper analyses of which methods to use and how to apply them so the learners can consider learning the English language as fun as it can be.

Within methodology, there are methods and approaches, which are considered as fixed techniques in teaching. Situational Language Teaching evolved in the United Kingdom between 1930-1960, which had an impact on language courses and later emerged the Audio - Lingual Teaching by Professor Nelson Brooks and this method is based on behaviorist theory which describes that human can be trained through a system of reinforcement. While traditional teaching methods were focused more on teacher - centered, where the teacher is active but at the same time this method is proved to create passive learners and it is proved also to be less effective learning strategy.
The period after the Second World War between the years from 1950s to 1980s is known as "The Age of Methods" and this is the time when different language teaching methods came forth.

Actually, in the middle-methods period, a variety of methods were proclaimed and other alternatives were promoted under such titles as Grammar Based and Translation Based, Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Direct Approach, Community Language Learning, and Total Physical Response.

In the 1980s, with the growth of more interactive views of language teaching, these methods got covered by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. Together with Communicative Language Approach another technical advancement that further helped in the language classroom was the use of Internet or Computer Assisted Language (CALL), Lexical Approach, Task-Based Approach, Blended Learning Approach, PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) etc.

The basis of new teaching methods was a broad set of principles, which advocated that:

Students learn through communication and they are responsible for their learning. The goal of classroom activities should be to encourage authentic and meaningful communication where students control their own pace of learning. Support fluency as an important dimension in speaking the language and makes students navigate for their learning while engaging them in different information sources and help them build strong views, free expression, intellectual openness etc. Encourage the communication, which integrates different language skills although learning is a creative construction process and involves trials and errors.

Therefore, the paper seeks to compare the traditional teaching methods vs. modern teaching methods so that the strengths and
limitations of the two groups could be brought forth as a blended methodology and could be suggested for effective language learning.

1 Significance and purpose of the study

Taking into account that our role as teachers is to promote students language development in all aspects and in order to understand which methods to use when it comes to language learning, first we need to be aware that there are no specific methods or only one or two methods to use. One of the ways is by simplifying and modifying the language in order to facilitate comprehension where students who find it hard to comprehend the language can benefit from listening to the language from their peers and experiencing academic conversation. So listening to their classmates' questions and comments in English, learners can benefit to comprehend difficult texts.

2 Research aims

The research aims of this study are to present the benefits of traditional teaching methods vs. modern teaching methods starting from the time when English as a foreign language did its first steps in a life of a student. The results of the study found that there is no single best method but combining them and applying in the right way can bring many impacts.

3 The objectives of this study

The objectives of this thesis are clearly captured once you read the title. The desire to inform, to compare, to bring innovation in our educational institutions, and to encourage the application of these methods as some facts and truths are provided about the use of these strategies in a learning process.
The found methods are widely spread and well known among different countries, which are a way to apply, develop and compare within our country too.

4 Literature review

As teachers, in each of us, I believe there is a burning desire to help learners connect with a language in any way that comes to our mind. According to Saunders and Goldenberg (1998), Tharp and Gallimore (1991), Palinscar and Brown (1984) and Ruby (2003), instructional conversations, reciprocal teaching and literature circles are among approaches to conversation designed to help learners make such connections.

According to Krashen (1982), many English language learners go through a "silent" or pre-production period during which they listen and observe more than they speak. They may speak fluently when using other essential expressions in daily routine but speak haltingly when constructing English sentences to express unpredictable thoughts (Cummins, 2001; Tabors, 1997) or in settings where they feel shy and insecure (Krashen & Terrel, 1983). Small-group work, work with a partner, and one-on-one conferences or conversations with the teacher (Yedlin, 2003) may help English language learners feel more at ease speaking.

The procedure needs to be applied step by step till students come to the right comprehension. Researchers suggest that teachers should simplify less and less as students improve their understanding (Kliefgen, 1985; Snow, 1995; Yedlin, 2003, 2004).

Traditional teaching methodology of English Language and their application in a new modern society B. Kumaravadivelu (1993) states that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has turned into the dynamic
power that shapes the lesson plans, help in class arrangements, implement and evaluate students' needs.

Austin J Damiani (2003) in his paper "The Grammar Translation Method of Language Teaching" states "As a teacher, I enjoy utilizing the sentence structure through grammar because I can understand the potential of my students and I could converse with them like the savvy individuals that they are and at the same time discuss the language structure and vocabulary that I was instructing. In another method, I would have to apply uncomplicated language and usual phrases to communicate in the target language, and even then, I could not be sure if my students comprehended what they were saying." Wen Wu (2008) in one of the fundamental principles of CLT states that "Learners are required to be involved in significant communication to accomplish communicative fluency in ESL settings".

Grammar based and translation based - The grammar translation method instructs students in grammar, and provides the vocabulary with direct translations to memorize. It was the predominant method in Europe in the 19th century. However, it remains the most commonly practiced method of English teaching in Macedonia.

Audio-lingual method was developed in the USA around World War II when governments realized that they were in need for more people who could direct discussions easily in different languages while working as interpreters, code-room assistants, and translators. This "source of technique" had great success with its small class sizes and encouraged learners. The idea of this method was that by reinforcing 'correct' behaviors, students would make them into habits.

Direct Method – this was a complete departure from the grammar-translation method. This method dates back to 1884 when the German
scholar and psychologist F. Frankle provided a hypothetical support to the strategy by stating the direct association between forms and meaning in the target language. In this method, the essential objectives are for students to think and speak the language; thus, no use of the native language is allowed.

Suggestopedia - is one of the humanistic approaches, which was developed by the Bulgarian psychiatrist–educator Georgi Lozanov (1982), who wanted to eliminate the psychological barriers that students encounter while learning. It uses drama, art, physical exercise, and de-suggestive–suggestive communicative open-psychotherapy as well as the traditional methods of listening, speaking, reading, and writing to instruct and teach a second language. The goal is that students will assimilate the content of the lessons without feeling any kind of stress or difficulties.

The Silent Way - developed by Caleb Gattegno, requires that the teachers most of the time remain silent. In this technique, learners are in charge of their own learning. Based on the belief that students are initiators of learning and able to independently acquire the language, the Silent Way provides a classroom environment in which this can take place.

Total Physical Response (TPR) - was developed by psychologist James Asher (1974). This method is based on the principle that people learn better, when they are included in a physical and rational interaction. In TPR, students are required to react nonverbally (physically) to a series of commands. As the teacher gives a command and the students respond physically, the teacher ascertains students' comprehension of the command.

The Communicative Approach - is based on several metaphysical principles such as the communication principle, the task-principle, and the meaningful use of language so the main goal in this approach is for the
Computer Assisted Language - The use of CALL has helped to develop the communicative approach, for example, it made it possible to talk to different people and find out about their name, job, one interest etc. Some other modern methods that are being applicable in schools are such as:

Lexical approach is another method that is divided into grammar and vocabulary. With lexical approach teacher uses "chunks" and gives less attention to sentence grammar, talking in L2 for the sake of it.

Task - Based Approach focuses on students doing a task – fluency based for example students use language for a particular outcome, real life language, they generate the language, give feedback etc.

Blended Learning Approach – gives us two facets to learning; face-to-face with the teacher and computer-based program. In blended learning approach, these two facets support each other.

PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) – here language is presented in some way in context through a dialogue or reading and teacher shows form and meaning. When it comes to practice, students produce the language through controlled exercises and in order to see the production, they present free practice.

Montessori Method is a progressive technique that continually watches and supports the natural students' improvement. Montessori educational practice helps students develop inventiveness, problem solving, basic and critical thinking and motivate management skills, encourage the environment protection and equip and prepare students to contribute to the society and to become fulfilled individuals. The Montessori strategy in the classroom requires mixed age group (3 - 6 years
old in one class), individual choice of research and work, and uninterrupted concentration.

So looking at the traditional and modern methods in teaching the language will help us get the deep understanding of what this subject matters in order to construct meaningful learning activities for all students no matter in what developmental stages they are.

5 Methodology

From the methods mention above, we can see that there are different methods and strategies, we can use in the class to make learning more effective and the school a place where students find it fun. For example, with individuals, we can use CALL methods for the student research method– where students train themselves to search specific topics online while following a scientific method and build a topic through creative writing. Another method would be a cooperative project and it is group oriented. This will help students strengthen relationship while working together, discuss and evaluate their work and at the same time gain skills and experience while presenting it to the class. Another method, which is very useful, is through Total Physical Response and through Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) through socio-drama where students develop interactions among role players. They can write the drama on their own or teacher will give them the text and they can perform it or apply reflective learning methods. This method encourages students to blog's writing or keeping portfolios.

6 Research hypotheses

H1: The use of modern methods of teaching contributes to better communication skills and language development.

H2: The use of modern methods it is considered to achieve better
results on building vocabulary, developing creativity and overcome psychological barriers to learning.

H3: Stories, poems, interactive and independent activities are the key factors that help learners learn the second language.

Conclusion

Every teacher tends to bring the best knowledge to the students in any way in order to make them acquire basic knowledge of a foreign language as well as the communicative competence by means of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, all forms of purposeful language, spoken or written, we can give students a possibility and condition to gain the information of sentence structure. In addition, the grammar ability will help the students to understand and make spoken and written language correct. In conclusion, we can say that in order to move from the ideology, teachers need to apply all strategies and techniques into the practice while keeping students active all the time. They should think about each of the teaching methods, which can lead you into action and apply them so that students can become more active learners. Students are learner centered and with modern methods, the role of the teachers is that of a "learner focus", who facilitates language learning for all practical and communicative purposes by giving students control over their own learning.

Nowadays, this teaching method is gradually gaining reputation in the classrooms everywhere because it is being concluded that this approach is not only effective but is also preferred by both the teachers and the students alike. What English teachers need, however, is the affirmation from the department of education that supports the requirement of this method where the teacher's role is less dominant in the classroom and is not a sign of negligence or loss of control, but rather a sign of an informed
fact that students learn best by using language while communicating with each other and talking about different topics.

Although the modern methods of teaching may bring some challenge for the teachers, they have many advantages that far outweigh the difficulties encountered in its implementation.

**Literature**


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Carnival Image of Central Europe in Hašek’s Tales from Croatia and the Surroundings

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Abstract

Love in Međimurje: Tales from Croatia and the Surroundings is a collection of short stories, literary sketches, and humoresques written by Jaroslav Hašek in the period between 1904 and 1914, and inspired by his so-called ‘missionary’ travels to the north of Croatia, as well as to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Italy, Slovenia and Hungary in 1905. Hašek’s travelogue wandering is an anecdotal narrative about the people he met and the events he witnessed, read about or heard of by word of mouth in the ‘colonized’ areas of Central Europe. Furthermore, the narrative is a form of resistance using the narrator voice of a Central European author who opposes the externally imposed imperial bureaucracy, with direct experience and confirmed perception of the accentuated carnivalesque image of Central Europe. Accordingly, the individual elements of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque image of the world such as irony, hyperbole, repetition, enumeration, parody, grotesque, profanation of characters, travesty and deconstructuralization of ‘grand themes’ are identified and analysed.

Key words: Jaroslav Hašek. Carnivalization. Love in Međimurje. Central Europe.

Introduction

The Czech writer Jaroslav Hašek (1883–1923) left a literary heritage that, apart from the world-famous masterpiece The Good Soldier Švejk (1921–1923), consists of approximately 1.200 short or medium-length stories. Following his first collection of poetry Majski kliktaji [The
Cries of May] (1903) and a short career of a bank official, Hašek embarked on a long journey to Central Europe and the Balkans. The trips and wanderings served as an experiential basis for many of his comic-grotesque literary sketches, anecdotes, short stories, and humoresques, which he published in the then-current daily publications and popular journals such as Karikatury, Kopřivy, Humoristické listy. Writing came easily to Hašek; he usually wrote in cafés or taverns from where he sent the manuscripts directly to his editor or to printing without additional revision.

Hašek gained popularity as a prolific writer and high quality humourist. His texts depict traditional topics from the everyday life of ordinary people. He often directed his sarcasm toward politicians, the Church, and the military. He ridiculed bureaucracy, stereotypes, and all the social shortcomings he came across, by bringing situations to absurdity in using the provocative narrative style. In that period of Hašek’s life between 1904 and 1914, i.e. just before the First World War, his rich opus was created, which only partially became the content of the collection of short stories Love in Međimurje. Hašek’s works are well received in Croatia, primarily his most famous novel on the soldier Švejk, which has been published many times, and several other works. Nevertheless, except for the short stories “Today We Are, Tomorrow We Are Not,” “Serbian Priest Bogumirov and the Mufti Isrim’s Goat,” and “Municipality Scribe in Sveta Torna,” the Croatian readers did not have the opportunity to read the rest of the short stories from the collection Love in Međimurje until 2016.

It is worth noting that Hašek travelled to Bavaria, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Galicia, Italy, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and the Balkans during the pre-war period, yet the short story collection Love in
Međimurje features only the prose works set in today’s Croatia and the neighbouring countries, that is countries which are somewhat related to Croatia by mentality and historical specifics. In addition, there are unfounded speculations about Hašek’s stay in the northern parts of today’s Croatia, more precisely in Međimurje and towns such as Donja Dubrava, Varaždin, Štefanec, Šemovec, Zamlaka, Vrbanovec, and Sudovčina. This information has become an incentive to publish a collection whose title is inspired precisely by this geographic space. Namely, the Croatian journalist Ivo Lajtman’s research coincides with dilemmas and assumptions of the Czech literary historian Radko Pytlík who claims, after having reconstructed Hašek’s biography by using notes and description of the events in the manuscripts that Hašek left behind, that Hašek did indeed stay in Croatia until the disputed 1905. The dialogue between the two researchers and the result of the meeting in Prague in 1979, previously published in the Croatian newspaper Večernji list under the title Švejk Among the Kajkavians, is a valuable contribution, within the collection Love in Međimurje, to the writer’s biography, the localization of his legacy, and the popularization of the northern part of Croatia. It is therefore necessary to convey a part of the journalist’s conclusion:

As a young rebel and journalist, but still as a writer, Hašek, in his unique fashion, as a 22-year-old young man in 1905, organized a sort of study-missionary journey to Hungary and Croatia of an obvious political significance. He called it the Apostolic and Missionary Journey of Three Members of the Party of Peaceful Progress within the Law. He was joined by Jaroslav Kubin, a painter, and Vagner, a ballet dancer whose real name was Hnevsa. What this unusual trio experiencing on the journey – that is a quite another story. They ate and drank whatever someone would offer them, and they were often hungry. They slept, at times, in the parish courts, and if need be – in the countryside and by the hedges. Along the way, they collected information on the political and economic circumstances among the Austro-Hungarian peoples; they led pleasant conversations and discussions, or made jokes with their interlocutors. During the journey through
Hungary, Kubin and Vagner left the apostolic mission, therefore Hašek went from Nagykanisza to Croatia alone. He travelled on foot through Međimurje and Varaždin all the way to Istria, and he even visited Trieste and Venice. During that journey he wrote the short story “Today We Are Here, Tomorrow We Are Not.” In addition, Dr. Pytlík says, “During that journey, Hašek stayed relatively long in Međimurje, thereby writing the entire cycle of stories, among which I like to single out the special Međimurje Cycle. (...) I will openly state and can repeat it as many times as you would like, that the Međimurje Cycle can take part in the most prominent European fiction, and its peak is the short story “Love in Međimurje.” (Lajtman, p. 154-6)

Hašek’s stay in Croatia is yet to be confirmed since there are no testimonies concerning it, and since Lajtman’s findings do not rest on the historically credible facts and are thus not conclusive. However, Hašek’s writings from Međimurje still represent the only true confirmation of his journey to Međimurje, Podravina, and the area of Varaždin near the rivers Drava and Mura.

By researching available sources in the Czech Republic and Croatia, former newspapers and rich literature on Hašek, as well as numerous original and translated editions of his books, literary critic Matija Ivačić has compiled this unique selection of Hašek’s “literary travels” set to Croatia and the neighbouring countries with close geopolitical, social, and cultural circumstances within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Hence, Hašek’s short story collection Love in Međimurje consists of 18 short narratives that can be categorized according to two topics. The first part encompasses stories related to the concrete social-political context in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (namely, stories such as “How Irredentism in Zadar Cost Me My Career,” “Army Supply,” “The Great Treason Affair in Croatia,” “On the Events in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” and “Ahmed Pasha’s Sensational Escape that Caused the Austrian Government’ Intervention in Josef”). The second part includes stories focused on daily human issues
and matters. The emphasis on the universal is particularly noticeable in the stories that are related to the northern part of today’s Croatia (for instance, “Love in Međimurje,” “Today We Are Here, Tomorrow We Are Not,” “Miho Gama’s Oath,” “Municipal Scribe in Sveta Torna,” “The Old Way”).

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The historical and socio-political context of Central Europe that preceded the First World War presents the framework of the majority of Hašek’s stories from the collection Love in Međimurje. It is therefore necessary to explain several important events that took place there in the said period. Namely, immediately after the emergence of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, whose alliance consisted of the equal states of Austria and Hungary, the other peoples expressed their disapproval as they were left out of the settlement in the multi-nation state and were soon exposed to violence of the already reinforced dual hegemony. The Croatians in the Hungarian part of the monarchy were most afflicted by this, which caused constant tensions and resistance toward the Empire that were largely described in Hašek collection. In addition, the position of Croats in the monarchy was determined by the political situation towards Italy. Following its unification, irredentism emerged, aimed at joining the Italian territories, such as Istria, Rijeka and Dalmatia, where the Italian national minority lived. In this matter, the Croatians had the Austrian authorities’ support, but they never received independent administration and were characterized by the semi-colonial status of people who were to be Germanised. Furthermore, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy further aggravated the relationship between Serbia and Croatia. If one considers the war between the Ottoman Empire and Italy in this context, it can be concluded that the
historical turmoil of the time presented the peak of the conflict that resulted in the First World War. It was within those circumstances that Hašek’s critically satirical collection *Love in Međimurje* was created, as a kind of mimesis of the then-current situation in the Monarchy.

In the special cultural area that is Central Europe, described by the literary theoretician Nikola Petković in his book *Srednja Europa: zbilja - mit - utopija: postmodernizam, postkolonijalizam, postkomunizam i odsutnost autentičnosti* [A Central Europe of our Own], a conglomerate of different nations and cultures develops. Within it, the individual adjusts to a common system of changes that revise the survival conditions. Petković argues that, “from the general positions of East and West Europe, there is no such thing as ‘Central Europe.’ Rather, it is looked upon as a weird mixture of marginal countries, squashed in the gap between the West and the East that vegetate on the peripheries, or at best, the crossroads of civilizations and cultures that perceive dominance as an obligation” (Petković, 2003, p. 31-32). Considering this position, Central Europe has gathered a large amount of controversial texts, the contents of which largely coincide, regardless of the differences in the ethnic composition of the Central European community of small nations. Texts precisely like these are gathered in Hašek’s collection, and they speak in parallel of: the Croatian and Bosnian and Herzegovinian relations (“A Scouting Expedition,” or “On the Events in Bosnia and Herzegovina”), the Serbian and Bosnian and Herzegovinian relations (“Serbian Priest Bogumirov and the Mufti Isrim’s Goat”), the Croatian and Serbian relations “A Donkey’s Tale from Bosnia”), the Croatian and Austro-Hungarian relations (“The Great Treason Affair in Croatia” or “The Hungarian Sea”), the Croatian and Italian relations (“How Irredentism in Zadar Cost Me My Career”), the Czech and Montenegrin relations (“Letters Received by the Brave
Montenegrin Hero Jovan Plamenac from the Ladies from the So-Called ‘Better Prague Circles’), or the Austrian and Ottoman relations (“Ahmed Pasha’s Sensational Escape that Caused the Austrian Government’ Intervention in Josef”).

Since Hašek’s texts feature traditional topics from the everyday life of ordinary people, the short story collection *Love in Međimurje* connects the general and the individual, and characterizes almost all the events in Central Europe of that time. In relation to this, these interactions between historical discourses and individuals’ life stories inspire a carnivalistic image of the world that belongs to the interpretative space outside of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, while within it those same relations are interpreted as truly realistic and frightening. Despite already being bygone, even during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the history of the Habsburgs became obligatory for every individual whose status resembled that of the soldier Švejk. This means that the police and the army were involved in the private lives of ordinary people who were successfully subjugated by the system in favour of the global unsuccessful policy of the old emperor. The strict system of obligations and illogical actions destroyed the individual cultural and national identities and forced the individuals to adopt subversive or affirmative attitudes in the system’s imitation, whereby at times they became the metonymy for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Such performances of the protagonists of specific stories, such as the constable Božetić, Jan Fikar, or the unnamed apprentice concipist, undermine all their primary personality traits and transform them into nameless objects. As such, the characters can actively change their position since they are deprived of all and every vestige of personality. Constable Božetić becomes a bigger Austrian than the Austrians themselves, Jan Fikar descends into madness, while the
unnamed apprentice concipist receives a job termination notice instead of a uniform. The mimicry through which the subvert the foundations of the nevertheless large historical absurd affects the readers by making them see for themselves that in a closed-off world, the logic of which is based on limitless power, the values are in fact ridiculous. In other words, Petković concludes in his other book Identity and Border: Hybridity and Language, Culture and the Citizenship of the 21st Century that “the reality does not present itself as a description of the existing concepts, but as a literary and cultural product that is created within the framework of the book, often in the interspace of the directly communicated story and the fluctuating perspectives of various narrators whose authority, as well as that of the main narrator, is deliberately limited to their individual perspectives” (Petković, 2010, p. 68). Such a procedure in Hašek’s narratives, characterized by infiltration of various oral literature forms such as anecdotes, myths, or legends within the Bakhtinian carnivalistic image of the world, effectively points to the flow of the topic that in fact stands for the metonymy of the region itself.

* * *

Central Europe of the already mentioned protagonists, as described by Jaroslav Hašek in the short story collection Love in Međimurje, reflects their obscured identity, either by means of various ludic games or by means of the character of an obedient or even a disobedient bureaucrat. The procedures involved in such characterization and the choice of the main thematic preoccupation of the collection are characteristic of the carnival image of the world. In accordance with it, everything that is known is turned out and ironized, all the established values are parodied, the grotesqueness of the images and situations displayed is emphasized,
and the structure of the collection is complemented by the interpolation of various literary genres. Hence, it is necessary to describe the concept and the main features of carnival as developed by the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin.

In his work *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin analyses the carnival phenomenon as well as the medieval and Renaissance culture of laughter, and forms a theory concerning it. Thereby, he divides all the expressions and manifestations of folk culture, according to their character, into three forms (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 5). The first form includes the ritual spectacles that include the carnival. The second form presents the comic verbal compositions that include various written and oral works written in Latin or in the vernacular. Finally, in the third form, there are different forms and genres of free street language.

Under the notion of carnival Bakhtin does not refer to “only as carnival per se in its limited form but also as the varied popular-festive life of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance” (p. 242). In the narrow sense, for Bakhtin, carnival is a series of local feasts that are celebrated at a certain time, but which share the common features of the popular and festive merriment. The common denominator of all carnival features is the essential relationship between those feasts and “gay time” (p. 243). Primarily, it should be noted that the carnival dates back to the Greek and Roman rituals in honour of Saturn or Dionysius, i.e. the great feasts which have remained synonymous with salacious behaviour, sensuality, and drunkenness to this date. That is why the carnival came to literature as an addition to the two genres: a Socratic dialogue and Menippean satire.

However, due to its specificity, the carnivalization process has subordinated the genre of Menippea that stems directly from the
The concept of carnival provides a utopian image of the world in which even the regime, such as the one in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, is attributed with positive connotations in the short story collection precisely due to carnival that is in fact a two-fold process, since it contains both the concept of destruction and creation. In Hašek’s portrayals of megalomaniac feasts and the overall overindulgence in food and drink (for instance, in the stories “The Czech Cuisine” or “Miho Gama’s Oath”), Bakhtin sees the contact of the collective folk body with the Universe. In these moments, the borders are surpassed from the high to the low, and the triumph of the material, that is the bodily over the
spiritual. For Bakhtin, the material-bodily principle is very important because in the carnival the folk represents one body, a universal body that is not complete and feels all the unity in time, as well as continuity in its existence and growth (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 280).

The people that gather at carnivals are not just a random group of people, but a specifically organized unit. Bakhtin believes that carnival exhibits “the peculiar festive character without any piousness, complete liberation from seriousness, the atmosphere of equality, freedom, and familiarity, the symbolic meaning of the indecencies, the clownish crownings and uncrownings, the merry wars and beatings, the mock disputes, the knifings related to childbirth, the abuses that are affirmation” (p. 278). Therefore, it is subversive – the time in which the people, that is, the individual in Hašek’s work, comes to the fore and fights for his or her position and understanding of the world.

Since, according to Bakhtin, the carnival takes place only at a certain time of the year, Hašek was forced to confine the stories’ chronotope to the last century of the Empire’s existence, because his reality was especially based on the imitation of reality. Namely, as many historians claim, the rule of Francis Joseph I was just a reproduction of his ancestors’ legacy, and not an example of a decisive and excellent management of the Monarchy. The selected framework opens the path toward the fantastic, because the unusual situation in the Monarchy entails a different reality, where everything is possible, as in the story “The Hungarian Sea.” Bakhtin calls this category of consciousness “the theme of the maniac” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 116).

Almost all Hašek’s characters are eccentric and intoxicated with some kind of a predilection. Namely, a political idea (the deputy of the
Croatian Ban in the story “The Great Treason Affair in Croatia”), love (ladies from the distinguished Prague families in the story “Letters Received by the Brave Montenegrin Hero Jovan Plamenac from the Ladies from the So-Called ‘Better Prague Circles’”), duty (Zsigmond Kufala from the story “Municipality Scribe in Sveta Torna), or nationalism (the mayor Aladár from the story “The Hungarian Sea”), and other phenomena that develop into all-consuming passions, so strong that they drive the characters insane. The obsessive nature of Hašek’s characters in stories usually grows up until the point when it almost turns into a tragedy. For instance, the deputy of the Croatian Ban at the end of the story tells himself: “I’m afraid what will happen to me when the process is closer to Zagreb. Namely, I have a red handkerchief, my kitchen at home has a white cupboard, and in the spring, the sky above us will be blue. All this makes up the Slavic tricolor” (Hašek, p. 79) Of course, although this also serves as the comic climax, since the deputy of the Croatian Ban is no longer certain of itself, the resulting compassion points to the tragedy of the entire Monarchy.

Furthermore, the most explosive and effective feature of the carnival is most certainly a scandal. The scandal denotes a sensational event or behaviour, and often refers to a public, impolite or shameful incident. Its role is to shift the ridiculous toward the serious and vice versa, and Hašek often uses it to keep the reader on the edge between laughter and crying. This transformation presents an important element of carnivalization. The procedure initially had a ritual character, but due to the “abundance of material” in Hašek’s collection, it took great proportions. The characters’ ambivalence also represents a kind of transformation, not only in content development but also in characterization. Hašek’s characters are strictly determined by action –
their activities serve as the best illustrators (e.g., the apprentice concipist, the deputy of the Croatian Ban, the officer Vojović from the Political Police Department, Ahmed Pasha as the commander of a captured troop), while their weaknesses and human faults are strongly emphasized, often turning their characterization into caricature.

When considering the carnival phenomenon, it is also necessary to include the grotesque. The reason for this, according to Bakhtin, is because the carnival form, as well as grotesque, has similar functions. In other words, it serves “to consecrate inventive freedom, to permit the combination of a variety of different elements and their rapprochement, to liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths, from clichés, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted ... to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things” (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 34). The grotesque, just like the carnival, represents freedom from all established human patterns.

According to Bakhtin, the carnival represents a utopian view of the world assumed by Hašek in interpreting the historical and socio-political events in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. This world displays the equality of all characters, especially those who prevail in the stories, i.e. official representatives of the authorities. Methods that produce carnival, such as scandal, grotesque, irony, caricature etc., represent resistance in the form of victory over fear, and present a basis on which the “Other” reading of the same matter is shaped.

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Hašek’s fiction works undoubtedly belong to the rich tradition of various forms of the so-called Menippea, i.e. the resulting carnivalization.
According to the renowned Russian theoretician Mikhail Bakhtin, this refers to diverse forms of the serio-comical. Bakhtin characterizes them in the following way: “For all their motley external diversity, they are united by their deep bond with carnivalistic folklore. They are all – to a greater or lesser degree – saturated with a specific carnival sense of the world, and several of them are direct literary variants of oral carnival-folkloric genres. The carnival sense of the world, permeating these genres from top to bottom, determines their basic features and places image and word in them in a special relationship to reality. In all genres of the serio-comical, to be sure, there is a strong rhetorical element, but in the atmosphere of joyful relativity characteristic of a carnival sense of the world this element is fundamentally changed: there is a weakening of its one-sided rhetorical seriousness, its rationality, its singular meaning, its dogmatism” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 107).

The content of Hašek’s brief fiction texts from the collection of shorts stories Love in Međimurje belongs to the serio-comical realm. For instance, “Municipality Scribe in Sveta Torna” tells the story of the local scribe and an unpublished poet. In a comic scene where the scribe is reciting pathetic patriotic poetry, a runaway bull that belongs to the tight-fisted widow whom the scribe is desperately in love with attacks him and throws him on a roof. He is obliged to issue the widow a fine for putting the animal out to graze during a ceremony, after which she demands that he return her late husband’s clothes, thereby emphasizing the scribes’ unfulfilledness of life. The short description of Hašek’s satire is characterized by the connection to the carnival folklore because its form of expression is similar to humorous narratives due to its written and consequently fixed content. At the same time, the atmosphere of joyful relativity pervades the text because the scribe in the story borrows the majority of his patriotic recitation from other poets and, while exclaiming
“Go Hungarians!” he is hit by the bull in the back. Furthermore, the beautiful widow is smooth-spoken, but also tight-fisted and manipulative, and the inn Kod bradatog popa [Bearded Priest’s], city police guardhouse, municipality jail, and the local school are all located within the same building. Additionally, the rhetoric unseriousness dominates the text (the widow’s pink ears are compared to that of a piglet (Hašek, p. 132), the scribe’s heavenly flight surpasses that of St. Elijah (p. 131), together with narration/depiction of the irrational (the scribe dreams of his own funeral in which he thanks the widow for financing it), evasion of dogmatism (critical “softening” of the Hungarian nationalism in the form of a report on the jovial ceremony), and the potentiation of ambiguity (the disparity between the patriotic pathetic poetry and comic events).

Bakhtin emphasizes several common characteristics of the serio-comical genres. The first characteristic refers to their representational focus – the living present (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 108). All short stories in the collection Love in Međimurje were published in the first two decades of the twentieth century and contain descriptions of geographically localized events on the territory of, for instance, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria, and Croatia. The events and people that participated in these events on the said territories were interesting enough for Hašek to base his stories on them. In the story titled “A Private Hunting Ground: a Literary Sketch from Croatia,” the clash between the Varaždin County mayor and a municipality councillor over a leased hunting ground is in fact connected to the love story of their offspring, namely the councillor’s daughter and the mayor’s son. Hašek ends his description of happy events and misfortunes with the words of an oral narrator presenting the story of his life to a collector of short stories and an ever-interested listener of real-life events: “And you, sir – he turned to me – feel free to write down
in your notebook: ‘A private hunting ground...’” (Hašek, p. 61).

The second characteristic of the serio-comical genre forms is their conscious reliance on experience in combination with free invention, and a critical attitude toward legend (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 108). In the story titled “Miho Gama’s Oath,” the plot is based on the events surrounding the oath of a drunken and rich peasant Miho, who does not know to whom he promised to give his daughter’s hand in marriage during a drinking party at an inn. He promised it to a vagabond, but his daughter pleads with the innkeeper to testify that she was to be wedded to her beloved Vlasi Sočibabik. Throughout the story, instances of the local superstition in Međimurje are present. To illustrate, Miho recounts a “legend” of an old man whose cows allegedly transformed into devils and evil spirits and danced Csárdás around him, while the superstitious peasant Rastik lists water imps, dwarfs, and river whirlpools that twist the souls of deceased sinful people and the pure souls of children who drowned by accident. The peasants are so superstitious that, after the young couple inadvertently saves Miho Gama from drowning, they all become frightened by mysterious lights and sounds and spend the night in a mill. The mill also functions as the inn in which Sočibabik naively wonders how he could have been promised the girl’s hand in marriage despite the fact that he did not even attend the drinking party. The description of superstitious influences has the role of emphasizing the comic scenes caused by blind conviction in the legend that shapes the characters’ behaviour, causes fear, and introduces elements of the carnivalesque folklore and estrangement of that which is being narrated. Therefore, Sočibabik states: “Such strange things are happening, good Saviour of ours! Surely the mysterious forces haven’t chosen Međimurje for their place of action, have they?” (Hašek, p. 42)
The third characteristic of the serio-comical forms is the stylistic heteroglossia that does not exhibit the stylistic unity of the tragedy or the lyric, but rather the mixing of different tones, high and low, serious and comical, and the use of various genre forms – letters, found manuscripts, retold dialogues, parodies of the high genres, parodically reinterpreted quotations (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 108). The genre structure of Hašek’s collection *Love in Međimurje*, entirely in accordance with the process of carnivalization expressed at all levels, is based on the ambivalence of the narrative framework specific for each text. Granted, this is the case of genre diversity with the help of which, at the formal level of short fiction texts, the image of the world is expressed through relativization of all boundaries, combining of diverse contents and tones, and the expression of ambivalence of every human attitude, speech, and action. Hašek employs the following forms: a love letter (“Letters Received by the Brave Montenegrin Hero Jovan Plamenac from the Ladies from the So-Called ‘Better Prague Circles’”), a court report (“The Great Treason Affair in Croatia”), a polemic dialogue (“Serbian Priest Bogumirov and the Mufti Isrim’s Goat”), a news report (“On the Events in Bosnia and Herzegovina”), a romance (“Love in Međimurje”), a spy narrative (“A Scouting Expedition,” “How Irredentism in Zadar Cost Me My Career,” “A Donkey’s Tale from Bosnia”), a literary sketch (“A Private Hunting Ground,” “The Hungarian Sea”), a humoresque (“The Czech Cuisine,” “Tobacco”), and an anecdote (“The Old Way”). Consequently, the carnivalesque ambivalence is expressed through formal diversity and joyous playing with the genre framework, which allows Hašek to build an image of the world full of opposites, suitable for criticizing the corresponding social system of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and for parodying certain socio-political tendencies as well as class strata.
In addition to the inserted genres and the accentuated polyphonic structure, an intermediate or immediate polemic intonation is distinguished since the carnivalization of the literary text purposely seeks to parody the official “truth” and the proclaimed “rationalist” framework of thinking. Bakhtin defines the carnival as “syncretic pageantry of a ritualistic sort” (p. 122) through which consciousness was liberated from the officially imposed worldview. The carnivalization of literature thereby indicates the need to create, under the influence of the carnival phenomenon, a certain system of images connected to folk culture and life. Carnivalization leads to the thematization of everyday life and a specific turn to those spheres of life in which the “material bodily principle [is depicted], that is, images of the human body with its food, drink, defecation, and sexual life” (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 18). This results in ambivalence – the serio-comical image of life and its contents born out of the intertwining of opposite poles of the hierarchical system of a certain time. In the story “Today We Are Here, Tomorrow We Are Not,” the farmer Juraj Vručić, while returning from a fair, tipsy and thinking about girls, goes to the inn K veselom Antunu [Jolly Antun’s] with a sign above the door that contains the following verses:

Today we are here, tomorrow we are not,
That’s what the Holy Scripture taught.
God will ask you where you’ve been
If you haven’t Tonček’s wine seen.¹

¹ Danas jesmo, sutra nismo, / tako veli Sveto pismo. / Bog će pitat gdje ste bili / kad kod Tončeka niste pili.
The ambivalence that characterizes the carnivalesque worldview is evident in the peasant’s interpretation of the inscription featuring the inversion of the opposition between: sin and virtue, eternity and transience, goodness and weaknesses, God and the Devil, worldly and ethereal, pagan and Christian, hedonism and asceticism. “That is truly well-said,’ he thought to himself while drinking his second pint of wine, ‘he who does not drink this fine wine is committing a terrible crime. Indeed, our pastor say that those who drink give away their soul to the devil, but here it clearly says: ‘God will ask where you’ve been if you haven’t Tonček’s wine seen. He who does not drink here, commits a sin. Why should I sin, me, Juraj Vručić, when I have enough money and I got a nice sum for my foal? Therefore, I shall order an entire bottle. Today we are here, tomorrow we are not...’” (Hašek, p. 22) Another example of a carnivalesque, ambivalent character is the priest in the story “Miho Gama’s Oath,” portrayed as a phenomenon that unites the opposition between the religious and secular, spirit and body, and humility and promiscuity, because it is alluded that during the Mass he is thinking exclusively about gold, the wedding wine, and food.

In the same manner, the story “The Czech Cuisine” features a comical image of members of parliament who, instead of discussing the burning state issues in the Viennese Parliament, go to a wine restaurant and enjoy Dalmatian wines and the Czech cuisine specialties. Here, the material-bodily principle of life is especially emphasized, yet not with the aim of carnivalesque liberation, but rather in terms of ironizing the public servants’ work: “At that moment, before his eyes a portion of aromatic dumplings emerged, with bacon and, can you imagine it, black and invitingly greasy homemade smoked ribs, with a thin piece of meat underneath the soft skin, dappled with thin layers of bacon. In moments like these, it was easy for a man to forget about the adoption of the state
budget.” Ambivalence is highlighted by the disparity between what the members of parliament should be doing in the intellectual sense and what they are truly doing, namely, making sure that their stomachs are full. Consequently, the emphasis on the bodily and the carnivalesque image is intensified in listing the traditional Czech dishes and drinks: dumplings with bacon, homemade smoked meat, potato soup with mushrooms, green beans, and a roasted pig. Moreover, in “Miho Gama’s Oath,” all the wedding guests indulge in hedonistic fantasies while still at the wedding mass. The fantasies refer to the prematurely consumed food and drinks, and are realized through the description of the wedding feast in the form of a list in an almost carnivalesque atmosphere of liberation from everyday roles and class differences: “Two roasted bulls were waiting to be chopped. Dozens of chickens were eaten. Four deer legs from the game caught near the Drava River combined perfectly with the guests and the music band. The great bustard’s fried steaks and soft corn bread with apricot jam. Baked, fried, stewed meals... and red wine. Everyone is drinking wine; if you poured yourself an entire bottle, no one would even notice, there is wine to your heart’s content... The song is resounding, the music is playing, the grass is all trampled down, and everyone is dancing Csárdás. (...) Where are Kjelin, Opatrnik, Ljekov, Kašica, Rastik, Krumovik, and others, where is the pastor, the teacher Vovik, and notary Palim Vrašenj? All of them are eating and drinking, loosening their belts and chatting away, all of them equal (Hašek, p. 49).

By means of the carnivalization process, the so-called grotesque realism is activated, signifying the simultaneous insistence on the material-bodily principle of life and the transformation of the realist to grotesque. Such realization of the grotesque is contributed to by the popular laughter that, according to Bakhtin, reduces and materialises
(Bakhtin, 1968, p. 121), as well as allows for the intertwining of oppositions: comic and tragic, high and low, sacred and profane, life and death, etc. The basis for the creation of grotesque intonation in the text is “the process of assembling disparate elements in which the tragic (with eerie overtones) and the comical (with nonsensical overtones) elements intertwine, providing a new quality of the deformed” (Tamarin, p. 33). Thus, the opposites are merged to form an image that evokes an unexpected impression. In terms of the genre, Hašek’s “A Donkey’s Tale from Bosnia” can be defined as an anti-fable in which the representatives of the Austrian authorities at the border between Bosnia and Serbia attach human characteristics to animals. For example, a donkey is a militarist expressing hatred towards the Bosnians’ pants (Hašek, p. 91) that understands the German language well (pp. 98-99). In addition, the grotesque is manifested in the forced, artificially imposed black and white characterization, typical in a fable. Characters as the carriers of certain faults and virtues are labelled as such from the ideological perspective of the Austrian invaders, and their paranoia causes carnivalesque inversion as well as the mixing of animal and human traits. A goat that belongs to Branko Nušić, a former Bosnian delegate and therefore a suspicious entity, represents the culmination of the grotesquely imposed anthropomorphism. The goat is turned into the ultimate enemy of the state and accused of a “heinous crime” (Hašek, p. 94), serving as a means with the help of which the district judge reveals an entire band of alleged traitors. In addition, the story includes the merging of opposing elements by intertwining human and animal characteristics, therefore a goat can have a sweet tooth, it is literally subject to laws that apply to humans, and is consequently accused of treason and issued a warrant. The farce embodied by this court investigation culminates when the betrayal exhausts itself upon the discovery that it was in fact the donkey – not the
goat – that had eaten all the leaves off a tree, and it is justified by the last sentence in the story that functions as an anti-message: “Treason is a delicate thing” (p. 100).

Furthermore, it should be emphasized that the grotesque is a process of hyperbole that gives a character or an object a fantastic character and, due to this unusual merging, takes the character or an object out of the probability framework. There are two different viewpoints in this: the first one contains a basis on which everything rests, while the second one contains a transformed basis. The grotesque draws its effect from the unusual and unexpected scenes. In the story “The Hungarian Sea,” the mayor of the municipality near the Lake Balaton is a representative of the prevalent world image in which “the Hungarian sea, the greatest sea in the whole world, is the most terrible and deepest of all seas. You would not reach the end of it even if you paddled for three days and three nights; and if you drowned, you would not be washed up to the shore, for the sea is so extensive that the waves do not even reach the shore” (p. 141). The story constantly emphasizes the mayor’s monolithically serious, unconditional, and indisputable view of the Lake Balaton, which in reality is only a lake, while in the mayor’s projection it is grotesquely hyperbolized, as well as containing fantasy elements. Namely, its waves are so terrible that they can flood the entire Hungary (p. 142); once a catfish was caught in the “sea” in whose stomach there was a crib containing a baby (p. 146); in the evening, one can hear the singing souls of drowned people who have their own municipality, a mayor, a scribe, and a bellman (p. 146); and individuals who failed to measure the bottom of the Hungarian “sea” allegedly lost their minds (p. 143). In accordance with the carnivalistic inversion of the world, the mayor blindly believes in the megalomanic national “fairy tale” in relation to the Hungarian sea and
celestial language (p. 146) that is transformed into an anti-fairy tale. In other words, the mayor’s vision of the sea becomes fanatical, and its fantastically hyperbolic and at the same time comic articulation results in serious consequences – a physical altercation with those who do not share the mayor’s opinion. It should also be concluded that through the grotesque and comic transformation of reality, the social and political background is most profoundly illustrated.

According to Bakhtin, characteristic of the serio-comical forms “are scandal scenes, eccentric behavior, inappropriate speeches and performances, that is, all sorts of violations of the generally accepted and customary course of events and the established norms of behavior and etiquette, including manners of speech” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 117). In the story “Serbian Priest Bogumirov and the Mufti Isrim’s Goat,” the priest and the mufti behave themselves scandalously and their dialogue is comically intoned with humorous, ironic, as well as offensive punch lines. They represent two adjacent villages, one of which belongs to the Serbian side and the other to the Ottoman side, which “met at the waterfall separating the Ottoman Empire and the Serbian kingdom” (Hašek, p. 102). The story portrays the verbal contest between the priest and the mufti, revolving around the excellence of their goats in the moment of relaxation, when they reject all generally accepted rules and norms of behaviour. That is, a scandalous annihilation of rules and norms takes place through grotesque contrasts: pride – humility, prayer – profanity, spirit – body, Christianity – Islam, Allah – God. The grotesque intonation of the narrative intensifies with the grotesque emphasising of exceptional physical and spiritual qualities of the goat that, in Mufti’s interpretation, surpass the beauty of a girl. Even more so, because it holds “captive a houri from the escort of Gabriel, the Prophet” (p. 103). In the story of the
mufti and the priest, the potentiation of scandalous behaviour is disclosed through denial of religious truths in order to achieve the commodity exchange of goat breeders who are, once again from the grotesque point of view, simultaneously spiritual persons. In the end, the priest gets the mufti’s “Muslim” goat and drowns it in a well for its “inappropriate religious orientation.”

Almost every story from the collection Love in Međimurje exhibits a certain form of eccentric behaviour or inappropriate speech of certain characters. In this context, it is useful to return to “Miho Gama’s Oath” in which the drunken father makes a scandalous promise to a vagabond, i.e. that he will give him his daughter’s hand in marriage. “‘Let a boar dig out my body after I die and sniff it with its dirty snout, isn’t it right, Kašica? Let me find peace nowhere in this world, let the thunder burn down my yard, let the water flood my field, let the ravens pluck out my eyes, let me lose my limbs one by one, let the wolves bite off my ears, and let my bowels rot. Let me die without the final anointment and let the devil drag my soul across a purulent rampart all to way to hell where I shall burn for ever and ever’” (p. 28). It is also evident that the serio-comic literary forms, such as the story of the mufti and the priest, do not realize the realistic/naturalistic, stylized characterization through which people appear as carriers of ideas in a text that functions as an intellectual, imaginative play permeated with satire and a caricature depiction of characters.

In addition to the abovementioned story, the characters’ scandalous and inappropriate behaviour and speech are notable in the short story “Love in Međimurje.” There, a young man in love kidnaps a police officer loved by Hedviga, the girl whom the young man is desperately in love with. Next, the story “Today We Are Here, Tomorrow
We Are Not” focuses on the representation of a motto on the door of an inn, denoting the necessity of drinking alcohol despite the religious principle of renunciation of secular pleasures. In the story “How Irredentism in Zadar Cost Me My Career,” a former “concipist apprentice” of the imperial regency in Zadar, who does not react to scandalous insults of the government members in the eyes of his superiors, also behaves scandalously and is consequently fired. In the story “Army Supply,” it is unknown whether it is the main character who behaves scandalously or if the police officers act scandalously toward him, since he repeatedly attempts to obtain a certificate for supplying the state, albeit without success, because they eventually declare him insane. The story “The Great Treason Affair in Croatia” scandalously describes the process emphasized in the story’s subtitle as the “recipe for the mass production of traitors” (Hašek, p. 72), and displays the Croatian Ban Rauch’s government as construing fictional enemies in the rigged processes. In the story “A Scouting Expedition,” police officer Vojović, contrary to the expected insults and expressing dissatisfaction concerning the government, perceives as scandalous the fact that the opposition leader of a Bosnian municipality says that he has a good government. In “Letters Received by the Brave Montenegrin Hero Jovan Plamenac from the Ladies from the So-Called ‘Better Prague Circles,’” the scandalous is embodied by the content of letters in which women from the prominent circles of Prague indulge in adultery with the Montenegrin statesman. The described behaviours of characters are significant because “[s]candals and eccentricities destroy the epic and tragic wholeness of the world, they make a breach in the stable, normal (‘seemly’) course of human affairs and events, they free human behavior from the norms and motivations that predetermine it” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 117).
In this context, the epic story of a large and well-regulated state is deconstructed, in which there are no heroes who would sacrifice their lives for it. In contrast, we have the exact opposite; Hašek’s literary sketches and anecdotes offer a dispersed carnivalistic image of the world with a pronounced grotesque intonation in which antiheroes give active or passive resistance to the Austro-Hungarian government. Namely, the Austro-Hungarian authorities imposed their official identity by destroying individual cultural and geopolitical entities. “The police and the army were perfectly infiltrated into the reality of Central European families of small nations that the system has successfully crushed into an amorphous mass whose flesh was a suicidal global policy of the old Emperor and King” (Petković, 2003, p. 65). Just as Hašek’s soldier Švejk attempted to avoid such historical fate, so did the opposition leader in the abovementioned story “A Scouting Expedition” have to actively participate in emphasizing the absurdity of that same history. Hence, for both of them to survive and preserve their original national self-importance, they were forced to play a game in which they had to be larger Austrians than Austrians themselves.

When asked by a disguised police officer about the truthfulness of rumours concerning the government’s oppression of the people, the Švejk-like character embodied by the mayor responds: “I do not know anything about it, but that cannot be true. The Jerries are our brothers, and brothers do not oppress. They built schools for us so that we could pray for them in German. Is sitting in such a school a form of oppression? You fool, who told you that the government was oppressing the people?” (Hašek, p. 85-6) The mayor’s behaviour reveals a communicative inversion based on the absurdity and not so much the ridiculing of the apparatus and the monarchy, as its mirroring, i.e. the imitation of reality. Namely, both Švejk and the mayor reflect the bureaucracy as well as the Habsburgs themselves (Petković, 2003, p. 66). Finally, “in these circumstances, for an
individual who wishes to denounce the lies of the regime nothing else remains but to be absolutely obedient to the system and thus lay bare its absurd nature” (p. 67).

Lastly, in two Hašek’s stories, “Army Supply” and “How Irredentism in Zadar Cost Me My Career,” two experiential models were offered on the individuals’ dealing with the historical and political attacks, as well as with merging of the individual and the general. “Whenever Central Europeans meet the dominant historical discourse, they feel the so-called domino effect for themselves, within which their self-consciousness or their sense of historical truth necessarily fades away” (p. 61). Fikar, a merchant, has to prove his identity by proving that he is “first of all, solvent and an Austro-Hungarian citizen; thirdly, that he is of firm mental health; fourthly, that he was not punished for political crimes or an equally serious crime of self-interest. Additionally ... he must submit a certificate on his previous education” (pp. 69-70). In the end, they declare him mad because in the context of foreign political discourse, he is stripped of his civil identity by accepting the total hierarchy of his reality in order not to lose his humanity. Unlike Fikar, an unnamed representative of the imperial regency in Zadar fights against the official truths in an engaged and active manner, thereby embodying the Central European resistance to the external aspiration for assimilation. He does so by means of a subversive process of inaction, contrary to the expectations of superior colonizers. In order to avoid the bureaucratic procedure of writing official reports and requests, and being dissatisfied with his salary, the main character retains his freedom in deciding not to surrender to the system, in distancing himself from it by creating his own free space. Consequences of such behaviour result in the dismissal from his job position. In this light, “the Central Europeans confront surprises in a more
or less engaged and active way. They partly provide resistance in the form of historical ‘sense’ and ‘official’ truths. For them, Central Europe is very real, situated in a real space in which the illusion of its fictionality is created by a chronic lack of its own, free, indigenous forms of self-representation” (Petković, 2003, p. 101).

Such narrative technique in Hašek is connected to the use of irony as a semantic inversion, i.e. a reversal of the literal into the non-literal meaning following the contradiction principle. It should be noted that in Hašek’s collection of stories, the irony is directly present in certain parts of the collection, but it is also retained in the overall direction of his artistic thought. In his stories, irony is also present in the exceptionally sharp form of grotesque and the absurd, and in most cases it turns into a satire. In addition, it should be emphasized that in using irony, Hašek expresses a negative attitude in relation to individual events and people, and overturns the normal order in a particular system of values by warning of its contradictions. In “A Donkey’s Tale from Bosnia,” the irony is present in the title itself because the authorities have been duped by a deceitful donkey which, in the ironic twist of the story, turns out to be the culprit that is constantly being sought after as a traitor who damaged a tree planted in the commemoration of the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, a negative judgment on the situation in the state is expressed through the mystification of its composition, and the imperialist politics of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is ironized in such a way that it cannot be spoken about, yet the narrator does it constantly. This imperialist politics is so radicalized that it accuses of treason not only humans, but animals as well. The irony is thereby emphasized and its pronounced nature turns to satire: “Before I begin to tell about this treason affair, which curdles the blood in the veins of every virtuous
citizen, let me say a few words about Bosnia and Herzegovina and about occupied countries in general, and in a way that one of my friends once explained to a Frenchman: ‘The Austro-Hungarian monarchy is made up of Austria and Hungary, and of occupied countries, including Bosnia, which is not to be talked about, and Herzegovina, which is not to be talked about in particular. Then we have Novi Pazar, which we also cannot talk about.’ ‘And what else?’ the Frenchman asked. ‘About this, what else, we also cannot talk about,’ my friend ended his lecture.”

The recognizable Švejk-like and Kafkaian approach to ridiculing, that is of accepting institutions and the quasi irrefutable authorities is present in the selection of stories, literary sketches, and humoresques that comprise the collection *Love in Međimurje*.

**Conclusion**

Jaroslav Hašek’s presumed journey through Croatia and the neighbouring countries has resulted an anecdotal narratives about people and events he witnessed in the “colonized” area of Central Europe. Hašek used his narrative voice as a form of resistance toward the externally imposed imperialist politics, opposed by the direct representation of the emphasized carnival picture of Central European. In line with such authorial vision, Hašek systematically analysed the individual elements of the Bakhtinian carnival image of the world shaped by the following narrative elements: irony, hyperbole, enumeration, parody, grotesque, profanity of characters, their scandalous behaviour and speech, travesty and destructuralization of the “grand themes.” The recognizable Švejk-like, as well as Kafkaian approach to ridiculing/criticizing the institutions and the allegedly non-questionable authorities is also present in the selection of narratives, literary sketches, and humorous entries in the
collection *Love in Međimurje*.

The carnivalization process that originates in the carnivalistic folklore serves as Hašek’s fundamental means of structuring, thematizing, narrating, and stylizing the short story collection *Love in Međimurje*. The collection becomes a literary product in the form of resistance arising from the times of great historical events and social turbulences that endangered the Central European original culture and tradition. In this context, the epic story of a large and well-regulated state is deconstructed, in which there are heroes who would sacrifice their lives for it. On the contrary, Hašek’s literary sketches and anecdotes offer a dispersed carnivalistic image of the world with a pronounced grotesque intonation in which antiheroes give active or passive resistance to the Austro-Hungarian government.

All short stories from the short story collection *Love in Međimurje* were published in the first two decades of the twentieth century and describe the events of Hašek’s time set on the territory of, for instance, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria, and Croatia. Thereby, Hašek consciously relies on his observatory experience in combination with free invention and a critical attitude toward legend. The genre structure of Hašek’s collection *Love in Međimurje*, entirely in accordance with the process of carnivalization expressed at all levels, is based on the ambivalence of the narrative framework specific for each text. Such genre diversity at the formal level of short fiction texts helps to express the relativization of all boundaries by combining of diverse contents and tones, and by expressing of ambivalence of every human attitude, speech, and action. In conclusion, it should be noted that in Hašek’s stories irony is present in a very sharp form of the grotesque and the absurd, and that in most cases it turns to satire, simultaneously enriching the semantic and
linguistic multilayeredness of Hašek’s significant short story collection Love in Međimurje.

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E-learning as a Tool in Enhancing CLIL Competences of Pre-service Teachers

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Abstract

This article focuses on training of pre-service teachers of EFL who were taught and participated in a teacher training programme of methodology training. Due to the lack of CLIL teachers, a course in pre-service training has been prepared and run by the Institute of British and American studies in University of Presov. Integrating Moodle as an appropriate e-learning setting and management system, the course and training have been designed to prepare pre-service teachers for the challenges of teaching their subjects through English using a CLIL approach. This study was conceived to examine if and how the participants’ beliefs would develop and change over the course focusing on CLIL understanding. The author’s assumption was that their knowledge of CLIL would naturally increase, but would that influence their beliefs and if so, how?

Key words: Language teaching. Bilingual Education. CLIL. Pre service Training. E-learning. Teachers’ beliefs.

Introduction

A question of an effective language teaching and learning has always been an object of linguistic discussion but globalization of the world has made this issue even more urgent. An ability to communicate within any field has put mainly English into a position of a great expansion. Consequently, innovative approaches and methods were called for to ease acquiring of a foreign language. However, it was not until the mid-90s
when they realised that an innovative teaching method was needed, and several initiatives had been launched. Finally, CLIL has been chosen as the programme by which the European Commission could reach their goals in education. One of the crucial added-value of CLIL is that it stresses the integration of subject and language learning. Moreover, it links multiple intelligence teaching and cooperative learning, creating a unified learning experience within bilingual education. CLIL as a European adaptation of the immersion program shows similarities predominantly in an intensive language usage.

Marsh (2002, p.11) calls CLIL “a pragmatic European solution to a European need”. One of the CLIL aims, according to its pioneer, David Marsh, is to develop in learners a positive ‘can do’ attitude towards learning a foreign language (2002). This is especially important in places like Slovakia where English is not spoken in daily lives of (especially young) learners and many of them perceive English as an abstract thing without a practical use. Many other authors whose definitions range from the simplest to the complex and uncover CLIL as an influential device in language teaching have presented broader perspective on CLIL. The term CLIL is a generic term and commonly refers to as to “any educational situation in which not mother tongue, and therefore not the most widely used language of the environment, is used for the teaching and learning subjects other than the language itself” (Marsh and Langé, 2000, Introduction). While a variety of definitions of the term CLIL have been suggested, in this article we agree with Coyle, Holmes and King (2009), who state that “[...] within the CLIL classroom, language and subject area content have complementary value. Learners process and use language to acquire new knowledge and skills and as they do so they make a progress in both language and subject area content “(2009, p.8).

A number of important limitations need to be considered. To achieve
CLIL aims, it is necessary to “create adequate conditions both from the point of view of organisation and teaching” (Pavesi et al., 2001, p. 78). Some rearrangement of teaching approach, content, language or timing is to be expected. Yet, if it seems to be laborious and takes a lot of time, the teacher may be completely discouraged from introducing CLIL. CLIL “changes the working relationships within schools” and requires a lot of support from the officials and employers of concerned educational institutions (Graddol, 2006, p. 86). CLIL teachers spent a lot of time on planning and reviewing their lessons. Language teachers need to work closely with subject teachers to ensure they teach the appropriate content during their lessons. On the other hand, teaching CLIL during content subject lessons is rarely done unless the teacher doing so is bilingual. In that case, no consultation with the subject teacher is necessary. CLIL also poses a threat for the language teachers, who may lose their subject, for it will be taught together with the content subject by a teacher who is qualified to teach both said language and a certain subject. Ravelo (2014) sums up the following five limitations of CLIL as follows: 1. CLIL transmits linguistic and cultural imperialism; 2. no CLIL model is for export; 3. lack of appropriate teacher training and preparation; 4. difficulties in CLIL assessment, and 5. issues about content selection.

1 Background of the study

Teachers are the most important factor of CLIL; therefore, they are the cornerstones of a successful CLIL teaching and learning. However, not every teacher can become a CLIL teacher. Several CLIL experts have tried to address this issue. Regarding the language part of CLIL, Marsh (2000, p.13) considers those “who speak the majority language as their first language and the CLIL language as a second language” to be suitable CLIL teachers. Therefore, a CLIL teacher is not a native speaker of the target language. Language fluency alone does not represent sufficient
qualifications. It is strongly stressed that CLIL teachers have to be capable of handling CLIL “methodologically in terms of language and non-language” (Marsh and Langé, 2002, p. 81). There is no doubt that a CLIL teacher needs a specific training that goes beyond the formation of a foreign language teacher or a subject teacher (Lópex, A.E. n.d.). As for the Slovak educational context, there is an insufficient number of CLIL teachers. The reason for the shortage of CLIL teachers is that since CLIL is not a mainstream teaching method in the Slovakia (even though it has become very popular), universities do not take training of CLIL teachers for granted. As a result, extra resources are being spent on turning regular teachers into CLIL teachers (Pokrivčáková, 2015). In spite of the benefits which CLIL brings, there is still a big problem concerning teachers’ competences. On the one hand, schools show a noticeable interest in CLIL, but on the other hand, there is a lack of teachers with competencies in both the content subject and the language. One of the important features of the CLIL methodology is a usage of cross-curricular relations, which requires teachers competent to teach in a foreign language. As for Slovakia, teachers are professionals mostly in either one area or the other one. An ideal situation will be, if teachers of content subjects have also foreign language competence. Viewing CLIL as a dual focused approach, a number of questions regarding a teacher arises at the same time. Firstly, should a language teacher or a subject teacher teach CLIL? And also, does the subject teacher need a qualification in a target language or does the target language teacher need a qualification in a subject matter? And secondly, what competencies does a CLIL teacher need to have? Although there are certain requirements in existence, no clear distinction is given on who can teach in CLIL. In most cases it highly depends on the individual national legislation (Klečková, 2011). Concerning CLIL teachers, no special education for teaching in CLIL is required in Slovakia.
Pavesi et al. (2001, p. 87) recount several possibilities for teachers to become involved with teaching CLIL: teachers qualified in both the content subject and the foreign language; classroom teachers using an additional language, to a greater or lesser extent, as the medium of instruction; foreign language teachers instructing learners on non-language subject content; a content subject teacher and a foreign language teacher working as a team, and exchange teachers supported by foreign ministries of education, educational authorities or European programmes.

Nowadays, one of the main problems is that no university programs exist which would intentionally prepare CLIL teachers in Slovakia. Theoretical preparation for its application on lessons depends only on the teacher and their will. Pokrivčáková (2013, pp. 18-19) mentions some of the most crucial weaknesses of applying CLIL in Slovak educational environment. First of all, it appears that there is a problem with “the balance between teaching content and a foreign language” (ibid, p.), for most of the time teachers are not able to prepare lessons in regard to language and content aims, which should be fulfilled at the same time. It can relate with another weakness described as “lack of qualified teachers” (ibid), which indicates that recent teachers do not have enough training within the approach of CLIL. We agree with Pokrivčáková (2013, p.19) who claims that it is mostly issue of “Content subject teachers applying CLIL (who) are not trained in, or even informed about, the basic principles, objectives and teaching techniques of developing foreign language communicative competences”. Nonetheless, innovative teacher training is required, since traditional methodologies applied by teachers need to be modified and adapted to the innovative CLIL conditions and competences.

There have been various ideas to start CLIL programs and provide CLIL training, though many of these projects have been solitary, with no clear connection with other institutions (having observed the current status in
Slovakia). Notwithstanding these initiatives many Slovak in-service teachers are still unaware of the CLIL work. Mehisto et al. (2008) state that the lack of knowledge is one of the main problems that must be addressed in CLIL implementations.

Nowadays new technologies are a real productive tool to spread the knowledge (Bayrak and Bayram, 2010). The integration of new technologies within many human areas shows that ICT technologies should also be implemented in the process of teacher training (Cimermanová, 2016, Straková, 2016). The same relationship has been studied by Kim et al. (2008) for Korea, noting ICT literacy education for both students and teachers. The link between new technologies and training processes seems therefore highly strong. According to Cimermanová (2015) many factors such as characteristics of computer aided teaching material, different approaches, and duration can be effective on student’s achievement in computer aided teaching.

2 Design of the study

This study reports on a pilot implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) course at the Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov, Slovakia. Classroom teaching was accompanied by self-study and group study activities monitored online. In order to find out how students perceived their experience an open-ended questionnaire was passed to students. The MA study programmes available to students who specialize in either teacher training in English language and literature or teacher training in English language and literature and other academic subject at the Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov offer except compulsory Methodology of EFL courses compulsory elective course in CLIL. The course is carried out with a mixed modality approach, partially in the classroom and partially through distance learning, Moodle. This course
aims to: present insights into the current trends in TEFL within bilingual context and provide an insight of the CLIL perspective; envisage the CLIL theoretical framework; foster an initial understanding of the CLIL methodology and its potential; introduce the works of different researchers on CLIL and provide knowledge of the CLIL context in Europe and across the world; understand the meaning of content in CLIL; understand the concept of scaffolding and provide good examples of language scaffolding; understand the meaning of cognition in CLIL; get familiar with Bloom's Taxonomy and the cognition levels; LOT and HOT; understand the nature of culture in CLIL; comprehend the nature of assessment in CLIL settings and provide good examples of assessment activities; raise awareness on the importance of core and subject competences; offer a model for CLIL planning and reflect on the CLIL teacher profile.

The sample of the study consisted of 69 double major students i.e. studying English language and literature and other major and 27 single honours in English language and literature students, all of them native speakers of Slovak language. The data were collected in the course of the academic years from 2015/16 to 2017/18 by means of a questionnaire administered to the cohort. The questionnaire consisted basically of statements and questions; therefore, closed questions were used (e.g. Would you like to apply CLIL in your future practice? or … to cooperate with other teachers in the implementation of CLIL?). As well as a number of open questions were also included where it was considered that information needed to be more specific. The questionnaire was administered via Moodle. It focused mainly on aspects connected with attitudes towards the understanding and implementation of CLIL. Once the data were gathered, they were analysed by using descriptive statistics. The analysis of the data is mainly quantitative, although, where relevant, a
qualitative analysis of the answers to open questions was also carried out. Most of respondents, 94% reported to be lost in CLIL teaching not having a clear idea what CLIL is about. Their understanding of CLIL is teaching new vocabulary related to the topic of a selected subject. As for time needed to prepare a CLIL lesson, students’ responses varied from as low as 10 minutes up to two days. According to the results, 39% in total, reported 10-20 minutes to be sufficient time for preparation. It could be in some way misleading considering the reality but it has to be clarified to the reader that mentioned students strongly believed in teacher’s book support. A small number, 18% replied it took double the time needed for a traditional lesson and the rest, 43% declared it highly depended upon a topic and might take 2-3 hours or even two days. This finding, while preliminary, suggests that designing a CLIL lesson requires much more attention over thought activities and methodology aspects in order to meet criteria for a full-featured CLIL lesson. Working with the 4Cs model, we were into investigating of which elements were the most difficult to implement when applying CLIL. 18% picked communication saying, “It is not very difficult to make pupils speak”, 52% selected content, only 9% culture, 12% cognition and the rest, 9% respondent believed that “all components are equally difficult to be used.” The issue of scaffolding is quite alarming. Over 78% do not think scaffolding is important for CLIL lessons. A likely cause for this result might be lack of knowledge regarding CLIL as a brief definition of the term was provided and duration of the course.

**Conclusion**

In general, the course trained the pre-service teachers with opportunities to understand CLIL approach through a combination of explorations as learners and through discussion and reflection on CLIL
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Theoretical framework. As to students’ reactions, analysis of their questionnaires revealed that most of them found the experience positive and their understanding of CLIL increased. Their self-reported perceived gains unanimously point to the understanding they have learnt and, in the second place, to an improvement of their practical skills. The findings of this study show that a student who is unfamiliar with CLIL methodology has problems using this approach adequately.

The most outstanding negative aspect they found was lack of time as the course lasted one semester. CLIL training specially adapted to pre-service teachers is necessary so that students would become more qualified and aware of CLIL approach and thereby the potential of CLIL would be appropriately realised. Although the current study is based on a small sample of participants, the findings suggest that the most significant aspects in preparing for the education process are appropriate training in the proposed method along with general methodological training in EFL. Upon these two aspects, which function as pillars, trained pre-service teachers can possibly convey CLIL methodology with all its necessities into practice without any doubts.

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Literature


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Pros and Cons of Using E-learning as a Support for Internationalization of Learning

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Abstract

E-learning in higher education has its well-established position and is frequently used by institutions for a variety of purposes. One of them is also the support of full-time students who intend to study abroad for a short period as a part of their regular study programme. This is a common situation that is being conducted within some grant schemes such as Erasmus+ or other funding institutions. Students who go through this experience often face an extreme load of duties they have to fulfil after they return to their home institution due to the fact that most of the subject matter they have to master is being provided to them after the mobility is over. Therefore e-learning courses could come as a solution, if they are being offered by the home institution, and students can study simultaneously the home courses they need to master at their home institution and the host institution courses at the same time. This case study focuses on the students’ perspectives and aims to answer the questions whether the students consider the use of e-learning while studying abroad beneficial or a burden. The data were collected by questionnaires given to all students who attended the mobility abroad and the results indicate that what might seem at the first sight as an a clear benefit does not always turn out to be like that. The conclusions made based on this case study suggest that e-learning as a part of full-time study can by successful only if certain conditions are met.

Key words: E-learning. International mobility. VLE. Higher education. Learner autonomy.
Introduction

Internationalization of higher education seems to be the issue frequently addressed by the institutions offering higher education. This issue has recently become interesting for both the institutions themselves and at the same time their students. The main drive for this development is probably easily identifiable mobility scheme Erasmus+ programme, which has completed its thirty-year existence this year. Over this period nearly 4,5 mil. students have had a chance to participated in an international mobility of some kind. Higher education scheme allows student to spend up to 12 months abroad within one degree level, however, students spend abroad at least one full semester at a partner university.

Some students take it as a personal challenge and are willing to face even higher load of duties after their arrival form mobility. On the other hand, there are ways how to help this load to be lesser and how to enable the students to catch up with their home institutions duties continuously during the term, not only at the end.

This study looks at virtual learning environment (VLE) as one of possibilities to provide students with the space for staying in touch with their tutors or other students even while they are away at the mobility stay. It considers those aspects that students need for their success at the level of institutional readiness and at the same time at their personal awareness of learning management.

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en
1 Internationalization of higher education and the concept of autonomy

International students as described by Blight et al (Keith, 1999, p. 15) are students from one country who are involved in conducting their studies in another country. The idea of internalisation of university study is not a new one and the underlying philosophy of this strategy is to raise the quality of graduates by allowing them to add to their portfolio such areas which could not be developed by their alma mater.

Spending some time abroad at a partner university represents an opportunity to widen the horizons for the students, to attend the courses which would not be accessible for them at their home institution and to dive into a different cultural setting. At the same time it allows them to test their personal skills of surviving in a foreign country. Leaving the home university for one or two semesters is not an easy task and it requires a high level of autonomy.

The concept of learner autonomy came into existence within the foreign language teaching already in the late 1960s. Holec (1981), who is considered to be an originator of this term, established a research centre in France and started to pay more attention to this concept. He defines autonomy as the capacity to take charge of, or responsibility for, one’s own learning and explains that taking charge of one’s own learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e. determining the objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure of acquisition (rhythm, time, place, etc.) and last but not least evaluating what has been acquired (Benson, 2001, p.48). Not all of these capacities are being developed in everyday face-to-face
learning. Students even in the higher education are often passive in many aspects of their learning and resign to the role of accepting someone else’s decisions. It is thus crucial to consider how the success in learning connects to other aspects of internal and external nature within both students and institutional environment. Dörnyei (2001, pp.104-105) considers as crucial for autonomy-supporting teaching practice an increased learner role in the organisation of the learning process. As the main he highlights sharing responsibility between the teacher and the learners when it comes to the learning process so that they can feel in control of what is happening to them. Dörnyei (ibid.) proposes a variety of possibilities teachers have to allow this to happen, for instance, choices that the teacher can allow concerning topics, materials, assignments, their format, etc., or allowing students to function as an authority in an activity, encouraging peer contributions and peer-feedback, or peer evaluation, self-evaluation and last but not least setting for an independent project work which would contribute to the overall group enrichment. All this, especially when talking about virtual learning environment, requires the change of how teachers approach the entire notion of learning outcomes. In order to increase learner independence, there is a need to adopt a somewhat non-traditional teaching style, often described as the 'facilitating style'. The facilitators do not 'teach' in the traditional sense but view themselves as helpers who lead learners to discover and create their own meanings about the world.

2 Challenges of learning in VLE: the case study

The nature of learning in VLE requires the ability to demonstrate different skills than in traditional foreign language learning. For some learners, this might create problems to achieve the aims and to participate in such a course with ease, even though they previously did
not encounter any problems in a regular setting. They will need enough time to get used to a new system and to the idea of handling responsibility. The initial tasks should therefore be simple, clear and easy to achieve with shorter deadlines. Later the tasks may become more ambitious and we can allow longer periods for autonomous projects.

Some learners, for instance, may feel the lack of the face-to-face contact with both tutors as well as their classmates in the course and might feel lost without personal guidance. As Cimermanová (2016, p. 90) suggests it is important that learners should feel secure in their learning environment and then their attitude shifts more to the co-operative position. Another problematic area which seems to hinder the learning process in VLE is that the learners are often not used to apply metacognitive learning strategies such as planning, monitoring, reflection or self-evaluation. In traditional teaching learners do not find much space for their application since the teacher is key person and makes all most crucial decisions.

In general, learners have sometimes problems with their approach towards learning independently of the learning subject. They are often more focused on the end product rather than the process. Moreover, most learners apply to foreign languages what is called a “surface approach”, which corresponds to the features of a longstanding, traditional conception of learning and in which students try to survive the course by memorizing what is necessary, accomplishing the basic requirements for the assignments in order to achieve such evaluation that would grant the credits (Straková, 2016, p. 25)

Students who leave their home institution and spend a semester abroad, however, might face serious problems if they resign to application
of the surface approach since after their arrival back home they need to accomplish all the requirements of the course in a minimum time left. It, therefore, is crucial to study continuously during the semester in VLE and pay attention to organisation of their own study.

In order to find out what kind of approach students naturally opt for ten Erasmus+ students have been approached and interviewed individually with the aim to get the first-hand information from the participants. Ten outgoing Erasmus+ students involved in the study are all students of one faculty, however, their majors differ. The categories identified for this data collection were:

- level of security vs. anxiety
- organisation of the learning process
- decision-making process (possible influence)
- accessibility of learning
- troubleshooting

The individual categories may disclose those aspects of learning in VLE which need to be taken into the consideration by VLE designers as well as course tutors.

The results gained in this study indicate that learners did not consider VLE as a burden rather as a challenge. Therefore, the level of anxiety did not exceed the feeling of novelty, challenge. On the other hand, all responders admitted the lower level of security in comparison with the traditional face-to-face classroom learning. They underlined especially the first weeks of their mobility as specifically stressful since they needed to arrange their life in a new framework and on top of that new learning framework made their situation worse. That is closely related to the second category organisation of their study. It was clear
that above mentioned findings resulted in the initial problems and delayed delivery and submission of assignments which further influenced the raise of anxiety of students and worries whether they accomplish all the requirements.

Interesting findings were discovered in connection to decision-making process. Students identified this area as a novelty in their studies. They admitted that in a traditional context they simply accepted the decisions made by their tutors and they did not feel the need to become actively involved in modifying them whatsoever. The experience of surviving in a new format has activated the need for reconsideration of their decisions and thus brought them to the state where they actively started to create their reality and negotiate the organisation of the study.

The experience of these Erasmus+ participants strongly correlates with the Maslow´s pyramid of needs, where it is claimed that learners can only start the learning process successfully when the conditions suit them best, when they are ready, satiated, simply in good physiological condition. They can create the learning environment according to what they need. The basic physiological needs will probably be satisfied; otherwise they would not be driven to start the activity. Especially the level of safety needs clearly resonates with the data supporting the arguments that learners may face a feeling of threat especially at the initial stages since the learning process does not fit their expectations and beliefs and that only later when they become acquainted with the new system they start to feel more secure. The adaptation clearly takes some time. However, if learners are aware of it, i.e. if they are informed about the adaptation phase, they might understand better the source of their insecurity and overcome it easier.
The category of *accessibility of learning* seems to be important for the course designers and students highlighted such things as types of uploaded documents and their quality since often they download the documents of other technological devices than pc. Technical accessibility seems to be a crucial aspect of a comfortable learning zone. This category relates to *troubleshooting* and students responded to both of these areas hand in hand. Any problem to solve seemed to be doubled especially at the beginning since there was not a bunch of classmates available with a quick answer as it usually happens in a traditional classroom setting. On the other hand students expressed an interesting revelation that they feel they have grown personally since they were forced to solve the problems on their own and that the search for help or information about where the help could be generated a completely new way of looking at things for them.

### 3 Perspectives of using VLE as a support for international mobility

As can be seen from the qualitative data gained from the interviews, students who are distanced from their learning group need not only specific conditions (e.g. see Sepešiová, 2016) in which they can apply a successful learning process but they also need a specific approach towards mastering all requirements.

There are definitely learners who welcome a higher degree of freedom in their learning process. They will be naturally anxious and eager to work in the VLE course, if offered this opportunity. However, even these learners will need the support and care to help them stay motivated till the end of the course. There are a few strategies through which the learners can be supported. Regular feedback, for instance, offers a tool through tutors can respond to what the learners have produced as well as
react to the approach of the student, identify potential problematic areas and suggest correction.

Another possibility is to allow students to design their individual study plan, to select appropriate aims and tools for reaching them. It is very important for them to make these decisions about their own learning even though sometimes (especially at the initial stages) these might be wrong decisions. Reflection and reconsideration of what they have done will help them become more independent.

Last but not least it is crucial to enable learners to share their experience and to interact with other learners even though this interaction might have a different nature that in the traditional face-to-face setting. Building of community seems to be an important factor in overcoming hindrances and focusing clearly on the goal achievement.

**Conclusion**

Supporting mobility of higher education students can seem as a good starting point for introducing e-learning elements into traditional learning settings. An opportunity to continue a course at alma mater while carrying out a mobility stay abroad might be a factor which can influence a higher interest on the students’ side to apply for mobility grants. It would eliminate a barrier which is perceived by many applicants - too much load after mobility in order to catch up with the study requirements at home.

Introducing VLE for mobility students is a great opportunity; however, there are many factors which influence the actual success in this kind of learning environment. It, therefore, matters a lot how the course is designed so that the learner can fulfil the requirements with an appropriate ease.
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Literature


http://eelp.gap.it

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