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The inclusion of English pronunciation teaching
at the lower secondary level
in the Czech Republic and Ukraine
Bachelor Thesis

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Studentka se ve své bakalářské práci bude zabývat porovnáním výuky angličtiny, konkrétně její výslovnosti, na základě kurikulárních dokladů 2. stupně základní školy v České republice a na Ukrajině. Nejprve vydefiniuje pojem 2. stupeň základní školy a žák 2. stupně základní školy. Potom porovná obecné cíle a obsahy vzdělávání na 2. stupni. Následně se studentka zaměří na cíle a obsah výuky cizího jazyka, se zaměřením na výslovnost, na 2. stupni ZŠ a porovná očekávané výstupy výuky cizího jazyka. Výsledkem bude komparativní studie obou zamyšlených kurikul formálního vzdělávání České republiky a Ukrajiny, se zaměřením na výuku výslovnosti cizího jazyka na 2. stupni ZŠ.

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Annotation

The bachelor thesis aims to compare English pronunciation teaching at the lower secondary level in the Czech Republic and Ukraine.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical and practical part, with a focus on comparative analysis of curricular frameworks for lower secondary education in both countries.

The practical part aims to investigate the general aims of primary education, foreign language objectives, and expected outcomes, with a specific emphasis on pronunciation teaching at the lower secondary level. The research seeks to identify commonalities and disparities within the curricular frameworks of the two countries, without seeking to establish a hierarchical determination of the "superior" educational system.

The study employs a structured comparative research approach, utilizing content analysis to examine the general objectives and contents of lower secondary education, foreign language learning, pronunciation learning, and expected outcomes in the Czech Republic and Ukraine. The thesis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the educational systems in both countries and their approach to English pronunciation instruction, contributing valuable insights to the field of education.

Keywords: Comparative Pedagogy, Czech Republic, Ukraine, foreign language curriculum, English pronunciation instruction, lower secondary education.

Nazev

Zařazení výuky anglické výslovnosti na nižším sekundárním stupni v České republice a na Ukrajině

Anotace

Bakalářská práce si klade za cíl porovnat výuku anglické výslovnosti na druhém stupni základní školy v České republice a na Ukrajině.

Práce je rozdělena na teoretickou praktickou část se zaměřením na komparativní analýzu kurikulárních rámců pro nižší sekundární vzdělávání v obou zemích.

Praktická část si klade za cíl prozkoumat obecné cíle primárního vzdělávání, cíle v oblasti cizích jazyků a očekávané výsledky, se zvláštním důrazem na výuku výslovnosti na úrovni nižšího sekundárního vzdělávání. Výzkum se snaží identifikovat společné rysy a disparity v

rámci kurikulárních rámců obou zemí, aniž by se snažil vytvořit hierarchické určení "nadřazeného" vzdělávacího systému.

Studie využívá strukturovaný komparativní výzkumný přístup, který využívá obsahovou analýzu ke zkoumání obecných cílů a obsahu nižšího sekundárního vzdělávání, výuky cizích jazyků, výuky výslovnosti a očekávaných výsledků v České republice a na Ukrajině. Práce si klade za cíl poskytnout komplexní porozumění vzdělávacím systémům v obou zemích a jejich přístupu k výuce anglické výslovnosti, což přispěje cennými poznatky do oblasti vzdělávání.

Klíčová slova: Srovnávací pedagogika, Česká republika, Ukrajina, kurikulum cizích jazyků, výuka anglické výslovnosti, nižší sekundární vzdělávání.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

IBM - The International Bureau of Education

IEA - International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

ISCED - International Standard Classification of Education

MESU - Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine

MEYS – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

TIMSS - Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

UNESCO UIS - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization University of Statistics

Introduction:

The fact that anyone is reading this bachelor's thesis indicates that they have likely experienced some form of formal education at some point in their lives. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the reader is engaging with this text in English, which may suggest that English is not their native language and that they acquired it through formal education during their school years. This phase of life, marked by regular attendance at a public school, represents a significant, intriguing, and entirely novel chapter.

This educational journey not only imparts essential knowledge about the world but also develops vital skills necessary for effective functioning in modern society. These skills include literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and the ability to tolerate, cooperate, respect, and empathize. Additionally, formal education plays a pivotal role in personal development by fostering self-expression, creativity, and the exploration of one's passions, interests, and strengths.

However, the specific focus of this thesis is the opportunity to systematically learn a new foreign language as part of formal education, including the intricate aspect of acquiring the pronunciation of that language. In our increasingly interconnected world, mastering a foreign language is crucial as it enhances communication, cultural understanding, and global cooperation. The ability to speak a foreign language fluently opens up numerous personal and professional opportunities, making it an indispensable skill in today's globalized society.

This Bachelor's paper will carefully examine the formal education of two countries, namely, lower secondary level in the Czech Republic and Ukraine, with major focus being placed on pronunciation teaching curricula. Although I was only given the opportunity to experience formal education in Ukraine, but not in the Czech Republic, it remains intriguing to at least inspect it, since both educational systems exhibit a combination of shared similarities and distinctions. Therefore, it would be of special interest to study them, with the prospect of assessing and correlating their approaches to teaching English pronunciation at the level of project form of curriculum. With that being stated, the first half of the theoretical part will describe a discipline key to the comparative analysis of global educational systems: comparative pedagogy.

This section will encompass its objectives, subject of research, purposes, and applications. Subsequently, the theoretical part of this thesis will introduce the International Standard for the Classification of Education (ISCED). This framework will help define the structure of both countries' lower secondary education. Additionally, this section will outline the general objectives and aims for the above-mentioned stage of formal education, including the English learning component within the Czech and Ukrainian educational programs. For the comparison to be more objective, a paragraph will also be introduced that defines the lower secondary student, describing the characteristic of this age group and the level of education level in detail.

The following paragraph on curriculum will illustrate what is considered a curriculum, its possible forms, and what language content can it encompass. The final paragraph of the theoretical section will address pronunciation learning, specifically its objectives and content, as well as the factors influencing pronunciation instruction. This discussion is essential for the practical component of this research.

The practical part, in turn, will thoroughly examine the extent of teaching English pronunciation present within countries' educational programmes. This examination will extend to an analysis of the expected learning outcomes of pronunciation teaching while trying to answer problematic questions such as whether the educational institutions require students in the Czech Republic and Ukraine to reach the same level of language proficiency, are the expected outcomes correspond to the level chosen by these institutions and what role does pronunciation has in the learning objectives in language curriculum. The final stages of this research will feature a comparative analysis followed by a discussion of the findings.

Theoretical Part

1 Comparative Pedagogy

Education as such is a fascinating global and sociocultural phenomenon between various cultures and communities. From the dawn of humanity, the tradition of spreading and sharing ideas, and information has blazed a trail for whole educational systems and a tradition of compulsory education to be erected on its foundation. However, as unifying as this phenomenon may seem to humans worldwide, it lacks homogeneity, since each human society has found its own way of approaching education. With time, as diverse as these methods of approaching education of growing generations in global communities were, a point in time emerged for humans when they managed to encounter the ways of teaching and learning in other communal groups; one could not help but contrast the ‘otherness’ not only culture but also the way people get educated there with their own means. The need for a new field of study will emerge as a consequence of that later on bearing the name of Comparative Pedagogy or Comparative Education research.

It took more than a millennium for comparative pedagogy to come into existence as a scientific discipline, namely at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when a publication ‘*Esquisse et Vues préliminaires d'un Ouvrage sur l'Éducation comparée*’ (Outline and the preliminary views on the work of comparative pedagogy) by the French revolutionary Marc-Antoine Jullien de Paris came into existence in 1817. It is considered to be a major milestone in the shaping of comparative pedagogy studies, since it provides a list of principles used in this field such as precise documentation of educational systems in diverse nations, coupled with an objective assessment of dissimilarities (Průcha 2015, 33).

With further investigation in the field, comparative pedagogy sparked more interest to the point that we see a collective effort to make the discipline institutionalized: The International Bureau of Education (IBE) was one of the first associations to be established in 1925, the primary goal of which was to gather data and execute comparative research of global educational systems; the afterwar period was marked by the appearance of the UNESCO Institute for Education in 1955 as the well as IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) in 1958 (Průcha 2015, 33–34).

All of them still function and keep the discipline in motion till today. Other major hubs of comparative research are done by academics in the universities of London, Stockholm, Berlin, New York, and Chicago (Váňová 2009, 13). This shows the potential of the field and the enormous space for its development, applicability, and exploration.

1.1 Definition of Comparative Pedagogy

As comparative pedagogy was receiving more recognition and evolving as an academic discipline, so was its theoretical basis.

Consequently, the need to delineate its character became a great priority. However, the term itself and how to define it have been under debate among experts. One of the possible ways to define comparative pedagogy is provided by Průcha (2015) which, according to him, can be understood as a field that has both a theoretical background as well as research actions aimed at examining, describing, contrasting, and evaluating the inner workings of educational systems globally (21).

What is peculiar to comparative pedagogy is that it is multifaceted. It actively engages with other sociological disciplines and history and is based on the data collected from these areas of research. This characteristic of comparative pedagogy is highlighted in the definitions of the field done by Váňová (2009) and Walterová (2015). Both authors agree that comparative pedagogy examines various manifestations of the educational process within an educational system together with its circumstances and outcomes globally or locally to further compare them, having considered its historical, cultural, ethnic, economic and political aspects (7; 41).

1.2 Objectives of Comparative Pedagogy

Comparative pedagogy serves as an indispensable academic discipline with a diverse set of objectives. At the very rise of comparative pedagogy, the above-mentioned Marc-Antoine Jullien de Paris laid the foundation of the general aims within the field. In his outline that was spoken about previously, he stated that it is the joint interest of every state to collect statistical data about the status quo of education within their country and share it with others for further estimate, and comparison.

The collector and holder of these data would later be the Special Commission of Education (Průcha 2015, 33; Váňová, 1998, 272).

The idea of introducing the educational problems and manifestations of various natures to the public or the world community is also given as part of the comparative pedagogy objectives in the works of Průcha (2015) and Váňová (2009). They claim that comparative pedagogy commits to gaining greater insight into specific pedagogical phenomena and problems with an incentive to analyze, evaluate, and share the findings with the public to improve one's country's educational system (35; 9).

Returning to the French revolutionary, he suggests ensuring that comparative pedagogy receives a place among university-taught subjects; more specifically, he suggests establishing an institute of teacher education in Geneva (Institut Normal d' education).

Its concern would be to train future generations of educators, conduct comparative research and create new schoolbooks, keeping in mind the best outcomes and methods of learning identified by the commission mentioned above. That fact indicates that one of many aims for comparative pedagogy today is to educate rising teachers and prepare them for their profession (Váňová 1998, 273).

1.3 Subject of comparative research in education

The subject matter of research in comparative pedagogy is vastly diversified and includes the study of very specific and situational manifestations of the learning process which contributes to the bigger picture of one or more educational systems. This, in turn, helps to better understand the system's composition and inner functioning from an overall perspective. According to Průcha (2015) and Greger (2015), it was never a benchmark of comparative pedagogy to analyse and contrast two or more educational systems in their entirety. Rather, most of the research in the field done today endeavors to glean valuable insights from their individual components and phenomena (41; 61).

To illustrate what these components are for any educational system and thus what is the domain of comparative research, Váňová (2009), for instance, provides a comprehensive list on this matter.

According to the author, such aspects of governmental management of education in the country as school policy, legislation, administration, and its financing, as well as the aspect dealing with the construction of the educational system, are key to observe and consider in the research; it also considers the learning process and its set objectives, learning outcomes, the content of the study, various didactic approaches, methodological manuals, textbooks, and, of course, the main participants of the learning process, such as students, teachers, etc. (8).

On the other hand, Greger (2015) does not just list the possible areas of research taken from an educational system as straightforward examples but attempts to segregate them into separate classifications. The division of the comparative research subjects according to type are the following: subjects of education; education processes; educational outcomes and policy; and constructs of education, which will be the focus of the thesis. Greger briefly defines them as “all theories, models, plans, curricula, educational programs, textbooks, didactic tests, and other artifacts that are specifically conducted to be implemented in the course of education” (47; 49).

Such subjects of study as educational programs, in the context of this thesis, are of great interest and will be examined more thoroughly in the practical part.

1.4 Purpose and Applicability of Comparative Pedagogy

Comparative pedagogy serves as a dynamic and invaluable discipline in the domain of education, whose range of applicability is wide and whose purposes are multifaceted.

Firstly, being the multidisciplinary field as it is, comparative pedagogy happens to be of great use for other disciplines such as sociology, psychology, political and economic studies as well as ethnography (Průcha 2015, 25; Váňová 2009, 9).

Speaking of the academic world, Comparative Pedagogy serves as a tool for the development and improvement of future school personnel at the very stage of acquiring the profession. In the majority of Western universities, it is studied among other necessary subjects of the pedagogical degree, contributing to the overall quality of the educational system in the future (Průcha 2015, 26).

Secondly, the research outcomes in comparative pedagogy can be practical for the government and its various branches whose major subject of expertise and responsibility is education. Specifically, institutions that have a significant role in the management of education and are responsible for conducting strategic plans for its further development, legislative frameworks, and reformation acts (Milošević 2020, 159; Průcha 2015, 24).

Other branches to actively engage with comparative research outcomes for practical purposes are those governmental institutions that are responsible for financing the school system and education in the country as such. Their main way of applying the results of the research is when managing the quality and effectiveness evaluation issues and issues of allocating the capital for operating expenses of education (Průcha 2015, 24).

However, the most frequent and active users of the comparative research results are those who engage with education almost every day of their lives- students, teachers, school management, and researchers in education. The latter few frequently show even more interest in worldwide schooling systems and their functions than others in that group of users since they have an opportunity to participate in internships abroad (Průcha 2015, 26).

Last but not least, those individuals, who participate to an extent or at least keep themselves informed about current educational trends or reforms are the parents and the general public (Průcha 2015, 26).

To summarize, the length of the list of possible ways of applying comparative pedagogy research outcomes does speak for itself. Comparative pedagogy serves as a robust field whose main purpose is to advance the understanding of global education and provides insights on various pedagogical phenomena for everyone from governmental apparatus to common people like parents.

1.5 International Standard for Classification of Education

The spectrum of compulsory education and its structure among the world's cultures and societies is a diverse one. In order to compare them, a certain principle or guideline should be introduced to accomplish that aim objectively and successfully. Moreover, all members of the global community should be accepting of these guidelines. For that reason, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) came into existence.

It was developed and maintained by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization known as UNESCO, namely its branch Institute of Statistics.

Being conducted in the 70's previous century, the framework went through several revisions in 1997 and in 2011. The changes that are presented in the 2011 revised version of the framework not only showcase the alterations of the levels but also presents a long list containing fields of education as well as "three-digit coding schemes for the levels of education programs and educational attainment" (UNESCO UIS 2021, 3; UIS 2011, iii; 6, 21).

The main scope of focus for ISCED is either formal or informal education available for any individual in that specific country. ISCED serves as the tool that provides a systematic and universal taxonomy for the categorization and comparison of education programs. It attempts to classify them based on the principle of levelling while also encapsulating the various sub-stages of formal education. The classification's additional criteria apart from leveling, are the gradational accumulation of the educational experience of an individual, as well as its duration, orientation, and ways of finishing the stage of education with further opportunity to switch to the more advanced, next level. (UNESCO UIS 2011, 6, 11, 13–17).

The duration factor is considered to be one of the key parameters of classification and, in accordance with ISCED, here is a list indicating how many years it takes for an individual to study at every level or stage of their educational path:

-
- ISCED 0: no duration criteria, however, a programme should account for at least the equivalent of 2 hours per day and 100 days a year of educational activities in order to be included;
 - ISCED 1: duration typically varies from 4 to 7 years. The most common duration is 6 years;
 - ISCED 2: duration typically varies from 2 to 5 years. The most common duration is 3 years;
 - ISCED 3: duration typically varies from 2 to 5 years. The most common duration is 3 years;
 - ISCED 4: duration typically varies from 6 months to 2 or 3 years;

- ISCED 5: duration typically varies from 2 to 3 years; and
- ISCED 8: duration is a minimum of 3 years. (UNESCO UIS 2011, 17)

The average duration of ISCED levels 6 and 7 is difficult to define following the leveling principle since ISCED level duration greatly depends on “the sequence of programmes offered at these levels in different countries” (UNESCO UIS 2011, 17).

Having been approved and considered by the majority of governments and pedagogical communities across the globe, the purpose and significance of this framework is its role in facilitating “cross-national comparisons”. By providing a standardized method for categorizing educational systems, ISCED enables researchers, policymakers, and educators to engage in meaningful dialogue and analysis regarding the population's education (UNESCO UIS 2011, 6).

2 Lower Secondary Education

2.1 Defining Lower Secondary Education with ISCED

As already mentioned, school education experience is divided into different phases in order to determine the criteria of age, quantity, characteristics of the subject, and different objectives of each stage. Our main focus is lower secondary education, which is one of the early phases of the student's education path.

According to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) developed by the UNESCO University of Statistics, lower secondary education can be classified as ISCED Level 2, meaning that it bases itself on the results of the learning process from ISCED Level 1 (primary education) and aims at supporting the continuing personal and learning development (2011, 33).

However, what makes the process of defining quite problematic, especially in the comparative research, the education stage ‘lower secondary education’ might possess different denominations in this or that educational system globally. In some cases, namely when the program continues from ISCED Level 1 to Level 2, the terms ‘elementary school’ or ‘basic school’ “appear to denote lower secondary education” (UNESCO UIS 2011, 33).

Some educational programs, when referring to lower secondary education, denote it as ‘junior secondary school’, ‘middle school’, or ‘junior high school’, ‘secondary school’, the latter is used when speaking of “stage one/lower grades if there is one program that spans ISCED levels 2 and 3”. Other prominent features of this educational stage, as ISCED characterizes it, lie in the content of study for this level since most of the time the curriculum in this stage is conducted with a major subject focus, bringing in the novelty of each separate subject being taught by a specially qualified teacher (UNESCO UIS 2011, 33).

With respect to age groups, the key features of lower secondary schools are strictly unique each educational institution and depend on the duration of previous stages of education. The ISCED classification does not provide one universal age of entrance to Level 2 but suggests that, generally, it comes to 10 to 13 years old. When an individual ends their education in ISCED Level 2, the most typical age for finishing the stage, according to the UNESCO University of Statistics, happens to be ages 14 to 16 (2011, 33–34).

With such diversity in the stage’s possible duration, it might also be challenging to delineate its beginning and ending clearly. Some educational programs happen to possess major characteristics of not one but two levels at the same time. For these reasons, the UNESCO University of Statistics recommends considering the criteria for ISCED Level 1 and 2 given in Paragraph 130, namely:

-
- i) for programs spanning ISCED levels 1 and 2 that are organized in stages, the end of the stage closest to six years after the start of ISCED level 1 should be used as the transition point between ISCED levels 1 and 2; and
 - ii) ii) for programs spanning ISCED levels 1 and 2 that are not divided into stages, only the first six years should be classified as ISCED level 1, while the remaining years are classified as ISCED level 2 (see Paragraph 149). (2011, 31).
-

2.2 Defining Student of Lower Secondary Education

To create a ‘portrait’ of lower secondary student that is universal to the majority of European countries, several notions should be introduced and described elaborately in this chapter.

The very basic notion that encapsulates the essence of the lower secondary student is arguably the notion of age in correspondence with the ISCED leveling system. As it has already been mentioned, the transition from ISCED 1 to ISCED 2 happens from ages 10 to 13, the 12th year of a student’s life being the most frequent age for the transition globally. The end of ISCED 2 occurs as soon as the pupil turns 14 or, in some cases, 16 years old (UNESCO UIS 2011, 33).

What happens during these years from the point of developmental psychology is shortly illustrated by Vágnerová (2021, 373), who describes this phase of a child’s life as the ‘transitional period between childhood to adolescence’. She then further divides it into ‘middle school age’ and ‘upper school age’, the former lasting from age 9 to 12, in other words, before the child enters the lower secondary stage, and the latter with the beginning of the lower secondary, until this stage ends when the child is 15 years old (Vágnerová 2021, 267–268).

‘Middle school age’, with its respectively low number of vigorous developmental and behavioral changes, is a preparational stage before the ‘upper school age’, also commonly known as puberty. This stage on the contrary is full of alteration that happens on the psychological and biological level during a child’s development (Vágnerová 2021, 267–268).

These changes in brain chemistry and the development of its particular areas as well as just the overall appearance and behavior of the child during puberty, are adding to the notion list that will help better understand who the lower secondary student is. Apart from a complete change in looks because of gradual sexual maturity, the child or pubescent also experiences shifts on the physiological level and in the way they endure emotions because of hormonal changes. As the child is gradually growing into the pubescent, the nature of its thinking process alters and an ability to think hypothetically about some matter becomes more prominent (Vágnerová 2021, 374).

In addition to that, the overall attitude of the pubescent towards the learning process changes drastically since during this developmental stage the child begins to be more aware of their 'current school performance' and how it can possibly influence their educational, and professional future. The student might also try to reflect on the meaning of the learning for them during this stage (ibid., 2021, 419).

Another aspect of the lower secondary student to be considered is that such students have acquired a set of general skills such as reading, writing and basic knowledge in mathematics required for the successful transition from one level to another.

This fact is supported by the ISCED level main criteria for lower secondary, namely the 'Entry requirements' section, referencing paragraph 145. In this paragraph, UIS clarifies that the opportunity to study ISCED Level 2 is granted when ISCED Level 1 is completed (2011, 33).

To summarize, lower secondary students, typically transitioning from ISCED 1 to ISCED 2 around age 12, undergo a pivotal developmental phase described as the transitional period between childhood to adolescence. This period involves significant psychological and biological changes as well as considered to be one of the most beneficial to teaching foreign languages, English being one of them.

3 Curriculum

Every education system is based on a well-designed plan to educate individuals capable of adapting to changing worlds. An excellent academic team develops this plan, leading to a comprehensive curriculum that guides educators throughout the state. This chapter will investigate the development of the curriculum, examine how experts define it, its diverse forms and the integration of foreign language content.

3.1 The definition of Curriculum

When trying to define a curriculum, one can find it to be not an easy task. Some authors recommend looking at the matter from a broad and narrow perspective, for instance, Wallace

Wallace (2015) denotes that curriculum in the widest sense is “the program of the learning applying to all pupils in the nation” (69).

The Dictionary of British Education conducted by Lawton and Gordon in 1993 (cited in Průcha, 2009, 237) defines curriculum, in the broadest sense, as all learning that takes place in schools or other institutions, both planned and unplanned learning. Another author, Ornstein (2018), gives great attention to focus on the learner’s experience. He states that almost any learner’s experience that happens to a pupil within the school or outside can be considered a part of the curriculum (26).

Some academics view curriculum as a continuous plan with stated goals, accompanied by a specific arrangement for their achievement (ibid., 2018, 26).

Speaking of the narrower understanding of the term curriculum, it is defined by Wallace (2015) as well as Lawton and Gordon (1993) as the specific content of the study or program (69; 1993, cited in Průcha, 2009, 237). The *specific content* could be understood with the help of the definition provided by Ornstein (2018, 27) and the European Education Thesaurus (1993). They describe curriculum in connection with subject matter like science, mathematics, and English, as well as the organization of information. It also includes the allocation of time for teaching subjects in regular classes at a specific educational institution. This definition emphasizes both the content and the structured distribution of information across grade levels (cited in Průcha 2009, 237).

In contradiction to these definitions, Průcha (2009) states that reducing the understanding of curriculum to the number of specific subjects, or the quantity of time spent learning these subjects is narrow since curriculum as the content of the study also indicates the presence of “planned values, attitudes, and interests to be developed in pupils; forms and means of teaching, planned goals and standards of education, etc.” (245).

The multitude of definitions presented above highlights the complexity of defining curriculum concisely while aiming for a comprehensive understanding. Each definition offers a unique perspective on the same concept, underscoring the curriculum's multifaceted nature. This holistic approach to curriculum encompasses both broad and narrow viewpoints, reflecting its essence through various dimensions.

The curriculum includes all planned and unplanned learning experiences within educational institutions, emphasizing specific content areas and structured organization. However, it extends beyond merely subject matter and time allocation, integrating planned values, attitudes, teaching methods, and educational goals. Fully understanding the curriculum requires acknowledging its holistic nature, which aims at fostering comprehensive learner development.

3.2 Forms of Curriculum

Considering the understanding of curriculum as the specific content of study suggested by Průcha above, it should be explained how it is manifested in the process essential to educational institutions of all types - the process of teaching and learning. More specifically, which shapes it takes during the process of its development from the very beginning till the end.

According to Průcha (2009), the types of curriculum can be divided into five forms which are concerned with phases of its development and direct implementation in practice. It all starts with the very idea and planning of the curriculum till the last stage of education in a student's life (246).

The very first shape, *the concept form*, encapsulates all of the “plans, concepts, and visions of what should be the content of the study”. The execution of this form of the curriculum takes shape as “the educational policies, formulation of the national educational priorities as well as the concepts of various interest groups” (ibid., 2009, 246).

The second is *the project form*, which reflects the planning and development of very particular written strategies of educational content such as the “educational programs, curricula, and syllabuses (Schools' and subjects'), textbooks, educational standards, etc.” (ibid., 2009, 246).

After the project form comes *the implementation form* when the educational content is being “perceived by the subjects of education”. The products of this curriculum form are learner's outcomes or *mastered learning* (ibid., 2009, 246).

The concluding is *the effect form* which entails the long-term aftermath of a student's education on their life: “effects of the educational content in the

people's professional careers, their political and other attitudes, etc.” (ibid., 2009, 246).

Stráková, Tomášek a Palečková in 1996 TIMSS research introduced a quite similar approach to analyzing the content of the study. The authors suggested differentiating 3 separate dimensions for curriculum analysis, namely the intended, implemented, and attained curriculum (cited in Průcha, 2009, 246).

The dimensions analyze the curricular documents, what is planned in the educational system of a certain country, the aims and content of education (intended curriculum); the study content that was “actually delivered to pupils by specific teachers in specific schools and classrooms” (implemented); and the outcomes of the previous stages- what was in fact learned by the pupils”, their knowledge of the relevant subjects, “measured by special tests to measure learning outcomes” (ibid., cited in Průcha, 2009, 246).

In conclusion, the multifaceted nature of curriculum development highlights its essential role in education. From conceptualization to implementation, each form of curriculum significantly impacts the educational process. Differentiating between intended, implemented, and attained curricula underscores the dynamic relationship between educational goals, teaching practices, and learner outcomes. Understanding these phases enables educators and policymakers to design programs that foster comprehensive learner development and long-term societal benefits.

3.3 Foreign Language Content in the Curriculum

The integration of foreign language content into educational curricula is a fundamental component of preparing students for an interconnected world. Its inclusion addresses the imperative need for individuals to effectively communicate and engage across linguistic and cultural boundaries. A well-designed language curriculum serves as a blueprint for educators, guiding the selection of content, instructional strategies, and assessment methods to facilitate effective language acquisition.

In most cases, a universal tool for creating specific guidelines in foreign language learning for public schools was the CEFR or Common European Framework Reference for Languages. The aim and purpose of the CEFR lie in its provision of illustrative descriptors, meticulously organized within descriptor scales. Each descriptor scale showcases examples

of typical language usage across various domains, meticulously calibrated at different proficiency levels. These descriptors are primarily utilized as standalone inputs for curriculum development endeavors. The core function of these descriptors is to facilitate the harmonization of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices. Educators can leverage CEFR descriptors to align their teaching objectives with curriculum goals, selecting and adapting descriptors as per the specific educational context (Council of Europe 2020, 41–42).

Nevertheless, every language curriculum is not designed the same and throughout time the approaches to its design and language teaching have been changing. Following Graves (2016, 79 – 80), who depicts the foreign language content in the curriculum from a historical perspective, there are three major ‘waves’ or trends of curriculum content concerning foreign languages.

The first ‘wave’, being time-honored and long-established, entails designing a language curriculum with a linguistic approach. The language is ‘broken into its components’, for further eventual mastery. The shortcoming of this approach is the full disregard for student’s individual needs. From the point of language teaching, this approach views language as a set of rule-governed systems, with curriculum content organized around ‘grammatical patterns’ and vocabulary.

Language materials frequently include situational dialogues and exercises designed to reinforce grammar and pronunciation skills. For example, a unit may focus on the use of the present tense and adverbs of frequency within the context of discussing daily routines. (Graves 2016, 80 – 81).

Conversely, the second, ‘communicative’ wave, as described by Graves, views language as socially situated communication. In this perspective, the appropriate use of language depends on the ability to speak, write, read, and understand it for various purposes. This approach contrasts with the notion of language as a mere set of components to be combined and mastered. Thus, the key feature in the second wave of curriculum content is “tasks with focus on communicative processes rather than mastery of specific linguistic content”. Tasks, being *a-linguistic*, presume that learners succeed in these tasks based on the set of “available linguistic resources” they use rather than being “constructed or defined by certain language choices” (2016, 80 – 81).

Last but not least, is the third type of curriculum suggested by Graves, which determines language as “a resource for meaning-making contingent on a context of use”. This type of curriculum tends to construct the learning process in such a way that it incorporates certain “genres, texts, content and/or projects” into the lesson for possible contextual use of language by the students. Such an approach to curriculum design is used for courses in language teaching aimed at developing academic writing or *content-based learning*, where the language is integrated to serve as the tool that helps students learn another subject (ibid., 2016, 82–83).

First wave: linguistic

Language as a unified body of interrelated systems of linguistic knowledge, learned as sentence-level patterns which may be topic-based, by all learners irrespective of needs.

Second wave: communicative

Language as communication for various purposes and contexts, learned through interactions or tasks using the four macro-skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Third wave

Language as contingent on particular content, social practices (genre/text) or projects, learned and used as a means to learn content, participate in practices or accomplish projects.

Figure 1. The three waves of language curriculum. (Hall 2016, 85, Table 6.1)

4 Teaching Pronunciation

Despite the undeniable importance of pronunciation in effective communication, it often remains a neglected aspect of English language teaching by educators. While much emphasis is placed on grammar, vocabulary, and other language skills, pronunciation tends to receive less attention in the classroom.

For instance, research conducted by Jezdinská (2021) on the status of teaching English pronunciation at Czech formal education sheds some light on the matter. The questionnaire required the participants (teachers at lower secondary schools or *základní škola* from various parts of the Czech Republic) to provide some details on the in-classroom experience of teaching pronunciation. When it came to the frequency of the pronunciation being taught in the classroom, 19 out of 44 respondents in research compiled by Jezdinská claimed to teach pronunciation every lesson, 20 of 44 educators - at least once a week or in some cases a month. While that could be viewed as a positive result, the author admits that judging from some of the answers of the respondents, the understanding of what is encapsulated under the term *to teach pronunciation* varied greatly from educator to educator. Some state that as long

as they are speaking English during the lesson and all participants interact in the target language, the students are automatically being instructed on the subject matter of pronunciation (Jezdinská 2021, 41).

As for the frequency with which pronunciation as a separate language skill is being taught throughout lessons, only 13 of the educators in that same survey admitted to always providing students with pronunciation instruction, making this result somewhat contradictory to the answers from the previous question (ibid., 2021, 41).

Nevertheless, regular pronunciation instruction is still generally considered to be essential for learners to attain, if not the pronunciation of a proficient speaker that so many strive for, but at least a level of intelligibility, accuracy, and fluency that will help effectively convey their message. By providing instruction and practice in pronunciation, educators can empower their pupils to become confident and proficient speakers of English, thereby enhancing their overall language proficiency and communication skills.

This chapter will describe the objectives for pronunciation teaching, such as developing a comprehensible speech in a student (intelligibility), teaching to accurately articulate sounds, use correct stress patterns and intonation (accuracy and fluency) in a foreign language classroom, that may serve as the benchmarks for teachers and students throughout the course of pronunciation instruction in the classroom. Thus, it will also address the particular aspects of English pronunciation instruction that could be dealt with during the learning process, which often mirrors the stated aims for pronunciation learning in education programs. Lastly, it will investigate the potential factors influencing teaching pronunciation to adolescents.

4.1 Objectives of Pronunciation Teaching

The process of effective communication is usually marked by the degree of mutual understanding between the participants. Simply put, in order for the communication to be efficient and successful, the speakers exchanging the information should be easy to comprehend and understand. This can be attained by being as clear in one's speech articulation as possible.

It has been suggested by various researchers in the field of English Language teaching, especially that of pronunciation teaching, that a primary goal to be set when teaching English

pronunciation is to teach students to be intelligible in the target language.

Intelligibility could be understood in a couple of ways. It could be defined as “being understood by a listener at a given time in a given situation” or from the perspective of the addressee: “The more words a listener is able to identify accurately when said by a particular speaker, the more intelligible that speaker is” which implies that the lower probability of the speaker to mispronounce sounds or “substitute one feature for another” in the speech, the better it is for the addressee to comprehend the message (Kenworthy 1987, 13).

Goodwin (2014) mentions a study conducted by Munro and Derwing in 1995 on a group of non-native and native speakers examined the relation between speech being intelligible and clear communication. They observed instances where native listeners perceived non-native speech as heavily accented yet were able to accurately transcribe it (indicating intelligibility) and found it easy to understand (comprehensibility). This suggests that while a speaker may possess a noticeable accent, they can still effectively convey their message to listeners (cited in Celce-Murcia, 143).

Harmer (2015), as well as Kenworthy (1987), highlight that for a long period of time, the most preferable aim for the students learning English pronunciation was to sound like a proficient speaker, even though the goal in question is not to be achieved by every student (277; 3). However, the average learner of English (meaning who has no special purpose of learning English, such as academic or work-related purposes) should direct the effort at what Kenworthy names “being comfortably intelligible” (1987, 3). Establishing this objective in the English classroom could not only alleviate students' possible frustration stemming from the unattainable pursuit of flawless proficient speaker pronunciation but also demonstrate that striving for a more achievable goal of being as close to a proficient speaker's speech characteristics as possible is indeed sufficient for effective communication in English.

Last but not least, an equal portion of attention should be given to accuracy and fluency among other goals. Kisoová (2019) admits that well-trained accuracy in pronunciation as well as the ability of a student to access the needed bit of information quickly or “automatically” in long-term memory, also known as fluency, are objectives of equal significance (3).

4.2 Content of Pronunciation Teaching lessons

Considering the aforementioned aim of achieving intelligibility in students' speech, teachers will inevitably face the question of what content to include in the syllabus to effectively enhance students' pronunciation. Since content of these lessons typically depends on the educator, they need to consider not only the requirements for the age group and educational level, but the expected level of language proficiency as well.

However, specialists in the field such as Pennington emphasize the significance of creating lessons on pronunciation teaching with students' issues and their demands in language learning in mind (2014, 218).

When choosing what aspect of pronunciation will hopefully be taught during a lesson, teachers would consistently give preference to teaching the segmental features of the language such as consonant and vowel sounds first, following the mastery of suprasegmental features which include rhythm, stress, intonation. Such approach to pronunciation teaching Goodwin describes as 'building-block', when the student is expected to learn the basic units of speech towards the more complex prosodic features (Celce-Murcia 2014, 136).

Other nuances of teaching pronunciation are provided by Harmer, who recommends giving major focus not only to the existing sounds in English language, but also "showing the students where they are made in mouth". By explaining how the sounds are produced "physically" as well as drawing students' attention to word and phrase stress, intonation is essential when aiming at "improved comprehension and intelligibility" (2015, 277).

All of these pronunciation aspects can be incorporated into lessons either through listening activities or speaking activities aimed at improving this or that aspect. Pennington states that, although the significance of listening tasks in pronunciation teaching cannot be underestimated, she expresses conviction as to whether a whole lesson aimed at only 'listen-and-repeat' performance could drastically enhance students' pronunciation (2014, 218).

On the contrary, she believes that apart from just listening to how sounds, stress, rhythm, or intonation in the language is produced, there should be room for students to actively produce the language and practice it "through the kinds of pair and group activities that are at the

heart of modern, communicative, and learner-centered methodology for language teaching” (ibid., 2014, 219).

4.3 Factors influencing Teaching Pronunciation to teenagers

The process of teaching English pronunciation does not occur in a vacuum, regardless of the circumstances specific to a particular class, subject, teacher, and students. On the contrary, all of these aspects are constantly influenced by each other. However, student’s final performance and achieved outcomes are what matters after all, and it is due to the issue of this thesis to look deeper at the factors of teaching English pronunciation to this group of learners to better understand its intricacies, possible obstacles, or advantages.

The primary factor of this group of learners that has a significant influence on the learning process is the age factor. Although some specialists in the field admit that there is evidence of a *critical period* in a child’s development when “prepubescent children with adequate exposure to a second language can achieve perfect or near-perfect pronunciation with relative ease“, others claim that the evidence base for that is not sufficient enough to rightfully call little children to be the best pronunciation acquirers (Krashen 1973, Scovel 1969, Flege 1981 cited in Celce-Murcia 1996, 15).

On the contrary, further research in the field shows that the ability to learn or to “create perceptual networks” in the brain gradually decreases because of maturing. Thus, instead of suggesting a single *critical period* for language acquisition, the researchers assert that there are multiple *sensitive periods* during which different facets of language acquisition unfold (Celce-Murcia 1996, 16). This *sensitive period* is believed to happen between the ages of 10 to 13, on other words a teenager or lower secondary student (Kenworthy 1987, 6).

To furthermore support the fact that teenage learners are not worse pronunciation learners than children, Liebermann and Blumstein (1998), and Massaro (1987) claim that both children and more mature age groups tend to perceive sounds in a very similar manner and the differences between them occur with the probability of external factors rather than to “any innate differences in ability” (cited in Celce-Murcia 1996, 16).

The next factor to have an impact on the pronunciation learning process with teenagers is the

amount of target language exposure that the students are being submerged into. It is theorized by several researchers that learners primarily acquire language through the input they receive, emphasizing the need for ample comprehensible input before expecting them to speak.

This implies that learners' exposure to the target language plays a crucial role in determining their success. In EFL settings, particularly those where students lack access to native input, the responsibility falls heavily on teachers to provide a sufficient model of the target language. Additionally, following the language learning models of Postovsky 1974, Asher 1977, and Krashen 1982, it should be ensured that students have opportunities outside of class, such as in language labs or learning centers, to experience authentic oral discourse from proficient speakers. Teachers also play a key role in encouraging students to use the target language in conversations outside of class (cited in Celce-Murcia 1996, 16 – 17).

However, Kenworthy emphasizes that pronunciation development is not solely determined by exposure, but also by “how the learner responds to the opportunities to listen to and use English”. She elaborates that research surveys on the matter indicate that “people living in English-speaking countries and those who are not” possess an almost similar pronunciation in terms of accuracy. While the amount of exposure may play a contributing role, it was not an essential element for the advancement of pronunciation abilities (1987, 6).

Furthermore, the impact of the mother tongue cannot be undermined when talking about the factors influencing foreign language pronunciation teaching. Kenworthy elaborates that it is usually very easy to pinpoint the presence of accent since it mostly shares “some of the sound characteristics of the learner’s native language”. She adds that this impact could be identified not only by how the sounds are produced by the learner but also by “combinations of sounds and features such as rhythm and intonation” (1987, 4).

Finally, the aspect of aptitude is worth mentioning here. Even when the same input of the target language has been given to students it does not yet mean that all of them will learn how to pronounce words or phrases in English identically. Some learners might have better performance, some not and it is a normal position of affairs. Carroll's research on language aptitude from 1965 identified four traits that “constitute language aptitude”, among them there are two crucial to pronunciation learning: *phonemic coding ability* and memory. Those students whose coding ability or “the capacity to discriminate and code foreign sounds such

that they can be recalled” is not of substantial level are less likely to achieve “a readily intelligible pronunciation than those with high aptitude in this domain” (cited in Celce-Murcia 1996, 17).

Moreover, Celce-Murcia (1996) adds that among the aforementioned factors that influence pronunciation teaching, “the learner’s attitude, motivation, language ego, and other socio-cultural and sociopsychological factors clearly influence the degree of pronunciation proficiency achieved (or not achieved)” (29).

To summarize this chapter, in considering the overarching aim of achieving accurate, fluent, and comprehensible speech in students, educators must carefully develop syllabi and determine the content of pronunciation lessons.

While obviously considering the general governmental recommendations provided in the educational program on what to teach in a particular stage of a pupil’s education, the educator should also consider factors such as the student’s age, mother tongue’s influence on foreign language pronunciation acquisition, language learning objectives, aptitude, and exposure to the target language.

Experts stress the importance of tailoring lessons to address students' specific needs and challenges in language acquisition. Moreover, when planning pronunciation instruction, the basic notions of pronunciation as well as more complex aspects like rhythm and intonation should be introduced in the lesson. This is achievable through the implementation of both types of activities: aimed at receptive skills and productive skills development.

Practical Part

Introduction:

This part of the thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter of practical part will introduce the methodology required for the purpose of the comparative study of two curricula, one from Czech Republic and one from Ukraine.

The second chapter will mainly focus on the information concerning the lower secondary stage of education in both of countries' educational systems, its entrance age, longevity, curriculum change in terms of subjects, and means of stage's completion.

The third chapter will investigate the general aims of primary education presented in the countries' curricula. In addition to that, the foreign language objectives and expected outcomes are to be thoroughly examined, with great focus on pronunciation teaching at lower secondary level.

After presenting the data for both educational programs, a comparative analysis will be conducted on each of the groups of data concerning one aspect of foreign language teaching at the lower secondary level of Czech and Ukrainian formal education. The major focus will be given to whether the same level of language mastery is required in both educational systems, and whether the expected outcomes correspond to this level. Then, this part will explore the role of pronunciation in foreign language teaching. At the end, a summarizing chapter where the discussion of the findings will be provided.

1 Aim of the practical part

Proper research in any discipline necessitates the identification of a starting point or research problem. The formulation of research problems or questions prior to commencing the research process holds significant importance for various reasons. It aids in delineating the scope and focus of the study, providing researchers with clear guidance on the specific areas to investigate. Moreover, this practice enhances the rigor and efficacy of the research endeavour, ultimately culminating in findings that are more profound and influential.

According to Gavora (2000), there are three established kinds of research problems: descriptive, relational, and causal (26–28). The first, being the most suitable for the purposes of this research, aims at examining and describing how this or that occurrence of phenomenon manifests itself in reality or as the author states, “seeks an answer to the question “how is it?” (ibid., 26).

Henceforth, this bachelor's thesis endeavours to identify, delineate in a comprehensive manner, and analyse commonalities or disparities within Czech and Ukrainian curricular frameworks designed for lower secondary education. Particularly, the investigation aims to scrutinize the approach to English pronunciation instruction within these educational systems at the aforementioned level. However, it is imperative to note that this study does not seek to establish a hierarchical determination of the "superior" or "more effective" educational system. The practical segment of the inquiry will be centred on addressing the following research inquiries:

- Are both countries required to achieve the same level of language at a given level of education?
- Do the expected outcomes correspond to this level?
- What role does pronunciation play in the learning objectives?

1.2 Methodology

The comparative research is essentially an execution of “the analysis and comparison of interrelationships and contexts and the finding of correspondences, similarities and differences” (Maňák et. al. 2005, 53).

To add to that, for any type of research to be more objective and have a structure, the initial stage of such research would rightfully be the process of deciding on the so-called *basis of comparison*, which is the selection of components for further analysis, description, and interpretation (Maňák et. al. 2005, 53).

The selection of the *basis of comparison* will be accomplished by analyzing the educational frameworks for lower secondary education. This type of analysis is also known as content analysis, which is a common method employed in pedagogy to examine written or visual materials such as curriculum documents, educational programs, and textbooks (Maňák et. al. 2005, 10). In the case of this research, the analysis will include information on the general objectives and contents of lower secondary education, foreign language learning, pronunciation learning, and expected outcomes in the Czech Republic and Ukraine. That all will be the *basis of comparison* including the research problems stated above.

It has been previously mentioned in the theoretical part that the possible aspects for comparison in the comparative research and pedagogy are diverse, nevertheless, this research will primarily focus on one of the *constructs of education* provided by Průcha (2015), namely educational programs (49). To be even more specific, the research will investigate and contrast *the project form* of the curriculum in the Czech Republic's and Ukraine's formal education.

This comparative research utilized a problem-oriented approach and was structured in accordance with Bereday's four analytical mechanisms in comparative education from the 1964 study (cited in Vlček 2015, 402). The approach includes four steps:

- Description
- Interpretation
- Juxtaposition
- Comparison

Each of the steps contributes to structured comparative research. The first, descriptive part, is about presenting clear characteristics of the phenomena investigated, which then enables an indefinite explanation of the situation and research results (Vlček 2015, 404). The aim of this phase of comparison, as claimed by Váňová (1998), is to achieve a deep and comprehensive understanding of the comparing phenomena (cited in Vlček 2015, 404).

The second stage, interpretation, stems from the previous step and focuses primarily on the segregation of key features and their understanding from the collected data during the first step of the research (Vlček 2015, 406).

Furthermore, the outcomes of the two previous steps are then being juxtaposed or simple terms, are put side by side. Although resembling what might look like a comparison, since during this stage we are able to confidently identify similarities and differences between the two objects of research, Walterová (2006) states that juxtaposition is not comparison and cannot be viewed as “the essence of knowledge” (cited in Vlček 2015, 407).

The final stage, comparison occurs when we associate the compared phenomenon with superior concepts or values. This is a higher degree of generalization, i.e. the compared phenomena are excluded from all irrelevant phenomena, and the individual, causal, and conditional nature of research results is sought (Vlček 2015, 407).

2 Lower secondary education in the Czech Republic and Ukraine

2.1 Czech Republic

Compulsory school attendance in the Czech Republic starts with attending ‘základní škola’ or, as suggested in ISCED 2 principal characteristics, ‘basic school’ (UNESCO UIS 2011, 33).

To enter the school environment and begin compulsory education student is required to be at the age of 6 years. The finishing point of basic education in the Czech Republic is usually 15 years, which marks a total of 9 years of compulsory basic education (Eurydice 2023).

Basic schools in the Czech Republic can be subdivided into two separate stages of compulsory education, namely primary (ISCED 1) and, more importantly, lower secondary education (ISCED 2) (Průcha 2015, 91; von Kopp 2015, 195). To make this margin clear between the two, the consultation of criteria from ISCED paragraph 130 mentioned above is needed. Before doing so, it should be mentioned that the stage of basic education preceding lower secondary education has consolidated at a total duration of 5 years ever since 1995 (von Kopp 2015, 195). Therefore, it can be stated that Czech basic school, while overreaching two ISCED levels, allocates 5 out of 9 years of basic education to primary education (ISCED 1) and 4 years consequently for lower secondary (ISCED 2) and ends at the age of 15.

Lower secondary education can be provided not only on the basis of basic schools but, also, if viewed by parents as important for their child's development, it could be accomplished in a multi-year gymnasium or 8-year conservatory starting from the 6th or 8th form. The admission to study in these facilities, nonetheless, entails a certain number of procedures to pass by the pupil (Brožová 2006, 20). At the end of this stage, one can initiate an extension of compulsory education to 10 years, usually "in the upper phase of the basic school, in the lower phase of the grammar school, or, in some cases, the lower phase of the conservatory", according to von Kopp (2015, 195).

The successful completion of the basic school as well as gymnasia is then commemorated and signified with "a school-leaving certificate and a school report" (von Kopp 2015, 195).

Starting from 6th to 9th grades of compulsory education in basic schools in the Czech Republic, the overall lesson quantity of studied subjects is decided by the school's headmaster. They guarantee the comprehensive instruction of all prescribed subjects within the academic curriculum during the designated academic year (Brožová 2006, 23).

There is also an opportunity for students of lower secondary education to study specific subjects, such as sports, mathematics, languages, and arts on a more frequent basis since some basic schools in the Czech Republic provide "extended specialist lessons" in the subjects aforementioned (von Kopp 2015, 195). These are especially beneficial for those pupils who are more confident in their future career choice and pursuit.

According to Brožová (2006), there is also a possibility of 'optional subjects' inclusion beginning from year 7 of lower secondary education, however, the obligation to introduce them appears from year 8. The required duration of teaching these optional subjects is "at least one semester". Such subjects as "second foreign language, conversation in a foreign language, computer science, technical education, technical drawing, introduction to economics, accounting, social sciences, natural sciences, administrative services, and home economics" are on the list to choose from (23 –24).

Given the total time students spend learning in the Czech upper secondary school, Eurydice examined the recommended annual teaching time for compulsory full-time education in Europe and estimated the total teaching time for lower secondary school in 2017-2018 at 897 astronomical hours.

This is almost 200 hours longer duration per year than that of Czech primary education. (2018, 11–12).

2.2 Ukraine

In Ukraine, the mandatory education is commonly split into three levels –elementary (Level 1), secondary (Level 2) and upper secondary (Level 3). It happens to be that each of these levels correspond to the levelling system of ISCED, namely the lower secondary stage of the Ukrainian schooling system to ISCED Level 2 (Želudenko et al. 2015, 858).

To begin with, the terminology for denoting this stage of education used by the managing institution of all state education in Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MESU), is the equivalent of what ISCED 2 Level indicates as the “middle school” (serednya shkola) (MESU 2024). However, there is also an alternative to defining the lower secondary stage in the Ukrainian schooling system, particularly, as some academics such as Volkova(2007) delineates it, the general secondary education or “osnovna serednya osvita” (248).

Although both resemble what ISCED 2 Level describes as lower secondary education, it could be seen that the terminology used by the MESU implies the statement of fact that lower secondary education transpires on the basis of the middle’ level of the educational institution while the alternative provides a notion which signifies the overall attained education after completing the aforementioned stage of education.

Compulsory school attendance for Ukrainian students begins at the age of six and lasts four years until the pupil completes the stage to transfer to lower secondary education, whose duration is 5 years in total (Želudenko et al. 859 –860). In other words, primary education happens to include the first four grades from grade 1 to 4, while lower secondary – grades 5 to 9 (Kremen 2020, 31–32). Even though the current duration of the educational curriculum in Ukraine is 11 years, with students graduating at the age of 17, Ministry of Education and Science or MESU has been preparing a reform that implies the transition to a 12-year general secondary education. As of September 1, 2018, the transition began for primary education

(four years), and it continued on September 1, 2022, for general secondary education (five years). Additionally, starting from September 2022, students in the New Ukrainian School, following the 12-year program, will enter the 5th grade, leading to the division of basic secondary education into two cycles: an adaptive cycle (grades 5-6) and a basic subject training cycle (grades 7-9) (Kremen, 2020, 31; MESU 2024).

As for institutions that provide lower secondary education in Ukraine, it is imparted by a variety of them, including gymnasiums, secondary general education schools, and specialized schools. Gymnasiums, as delineated by MESU, function as general education institutions of I-III levels. These institutions can operate independently or as part of primary schools and preschool establishments (MESU 2024).

Furthermore, specialized schools, characterized by their emphasis on in-depth study at I-III levels, particularly in specific subjects, most likely of humanitarian character, contribute to the diverse landscape of institutions offering general secondary education in Ukraine (Volkova 2007, 251–252).

The learning program of average Ukrainian lower secondary students enlarges with subjects such as foreign language, a very great portion of Ukrainian language and literature, Ukrainian history, and World history to be learned amongst algebra, science, and humanitarian subjects (Želudenko et al. 2015, 860).

Ukrainian lower secondary does provide the choice of additional or as MESU suggests, ‘variable’ subjects to study apart from the mandatory or ‘invariant’ ones (MESU 2024). The hours that are spent at the lower secondary education in Ukraine teaching and learning the subsequent program are considered to be shorter than those in other European countries.

Kremen states that, whilst the recommended range of instructional hours each year for lower secondary education (ISCED 2) constitutes, “637 standard (astronomical) hours per year” reaching 1200 hours, the Ukrainian State Standard of Education allows “824 standard (astronomical) hours” per one academic year which is “49 hours less than the average value” (Kremen 2020, 36–37).

The finishing point of lower secondary education happens at the time of the state final examination and their results (Derzhavna pidsumkova atestacija, DPA) and the awarding of a

‘Certificate of basic secondary education’ or ‘Svidotstvo pro zdobuttya bazovoyi seredn’oyi osvity’ (MESU 2024).

2.3 Objects of Comparative Analysis - Czech and Ukrainian Educational Programmes

Since this research aims to investigate and compare two countries’ approaches to teaching foreign languages, particularly English pronunciation, the optimal decision would be to study the Czech and Ukrainian frameworks and intended curricula to answer the problem questions to the full extent. It should be noted that there is only one curriculum document in the Czech Republic, which combines educational framework and guidelines for different fields of basic education, while in Ukraine, there are two separate documents containing that same information, one for guidelines and one for the separate educational field. The analysis of the following documents will be performed:

- The Czech curricular document: Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education -FEP BE (Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání 2023)
- The Ukrainian curricular documents: National Standard for basic and complete general secondary education 2011(Державний стандарт базової і повної загальної середньої освіти 2011);

Foreign language curricula for secondary schools and specialized schools with in-depth study of foreign languages in grades 5-9, 2017 (Навчальні програми з іноземних мов для загальноосвітніх навчальних закладів і спеціалізованих шкіл із поглибленим вивченням іноземних мов 5 – 9 класи, 2017 рік)

Sections concerning objectives of the lower secondary stage as well as foreign language objectives and content will be detected and examined. Then the research will examine and juxtapose the expected outcomes in both educational fields for foreign languages. A more detailed inquiry about expected outcomes for English pronunciation will be subsequently done in order to find an explanation to the problem questions stated previously.

3 General objectives and content of lower secondary education in the Czech Republic and Ukraine – juxtaposition and analysis of the findings

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION- AIMS AND PURPOSE. TABLE 1	
Czech FEP BE	Ukrainian National Standard & Foreign Language Curriculum
<p>Basic education should help pupils to form, shape and gradually develop their key competencies and provide them with the dependable fundamentals of general education mainly aimed at situations that are close to their real life and at practical behaviour. Efforts are therefore made in basic education to meet the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create preconditions for pupils to acquire basic learning strategies and motivate them to life-long learning; • Stimulate and encourage pupils to creative thinking, logical reasoning and problem-solving; • Guide pupils to engage in efficient, effective, open communication on all aspects of their life; • Develop pupils’ abilities to cooperate and to value their own work and achievements as well as the work and achievements of others; • Prepare pupils to express themselves as autonomous, free and responsible individuals, to exercise their rights and fulfil their duties; • Induce in pupils the urge to express positive feelings and emotions in their behaviour, ways of acting and when experiencing important situations in their lives; develop in them sensitivity and responsiveness towards other people, the environment and nature; • Teach pupils to actively develop and protect their physical, mental and social health and to be responsible for it; • To lead pupils to tolerance and respect for other people, their cultures and spiritual values, to teach them to live together with other people; 	<p>The purpose of basic general secondary education is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development and socialization of students' personalities; • formation of their national identity, universal culture, worldview, ecological style of thinking and behavior; • formation of creative abilities, research and life skills, ability to self-development and self-learning in the context of global changes and challenges. <p>A basic school graduate is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a patriot of Ukraine who knows its history; • a carrier of Ukrainian culture, who respects the culture of other nations; • a competent speaker who is fluent in the state language, and also speaks his/her native language (if different) and one or more foreign languages; • has the desire and ability to self-educate; • is active and responsible in public and private life; • is capable of entrepreneurship and initiative; • has an understanding of the universe; • respects nature; • uses the achievements of science and technology safely and appropriately; • adheres to a healthy lifestyle. <p>(MESU 2017, 4)</p>

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION- AIMS AND PURPOSE. TABLE 1(CONTINUED).	
Czech FEP BE	Ukrainian National Standard & Foreign Language Curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help pupils to discover and develop their own abilities and skills in the context of actual opportunities and to use their abilities and skills in the context of actual opportunities and to use their abilities and skills in combination with their acquired knowledge when making decisions regarding the aims of their own life and profession; • Help students navigate the digital environment and lead them to a safe, confident, use digital technologies critically and creatively at work, in learning, in leisure and in engaging in society and civic life (MEYS 2023, 8 – 9). 	<p>-----</p>

EDUCATION CONTENT OF LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION-KEY COMPETENCIES: COMMUNICATION. TABLE 2.	
Czech FEP BE	Ukrainian National Standard & Foreign Language Curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of his or her basic education, the pupil: • ·formulates and expresses his or her ideas and opinions in a logical sequence; his or her oral or written expression is apt, coherent and cultivated; • ·listens to other people’s utterances; understands them and responds to them adequately; participates effectively in debates; defends his or her opinion and uses appropriate arguments; • ·comprehends various types of text, record, visual material, commonly used gestures, sounds and other information and means of communication, considers them, responds to them and makes creative use of them for his or her own development and active engagement in social events; • uses information and means of communication and technologies for high-quality efficient communication with the outside world; uses his or her acquired communication skills to form relations necessary for full-fledged coexistence and quality cooperation with others. (MEYS 2023, 11) 	<p>The competencies are defined and formulated separately in the context of each educational area.</p>

Analysis:

Comparing the educational objectives for lower secondary education in the Czech Republic and Ukraine reveals both commonalities and distinctions in their pedagogical priorities.

Both nations aim to equip students with essential competencies and foundational knowledge tailored to real-life scenarios and practical applications. The Czech Republic as well as Ukraine emphasizes fostering learning autonomy, and responsibility, alongside promoting creativity and critical thinking. In the case of the Ukrainian educational framework, a central significance happens to be the cultivation of national identity and patriotism.

In the Czech framework, this topic is approached from the perspective of human rights and the legal obligations of a citizen.

Furthermore, while the Czech Republic underscores individual well-being and social cohesion, emphasizing physical, mental, and social health, the Ukrainian framework only highlights the overall “healthy” approach to lifestyle, omitting the mental aspect.

On the other hand, proficiency in languages and intercultural communication are more pronounced in Ukrainian objectives, reflecting a broader focus on national and global citizenship. The Czech Republic only emphasizes the aspect of ‘open’ productive conversation as one of the focal points for cultivation.

Despite these differences, both countries recognize the importance of digital literacy and technological fluency in navigating contemporary society as well as ecological consciousness. Moreover, they share a commitment to fostering tolerance, respect for diversity, and harmonious coexistence among individuals.

As for key competencies, for this practical part, only communicative competence is being looked into since it is more crucial to the acquisition of a foreign language within the realm of formal education. However, it is problematic to compare these two variables objectively since the structure and the approach to formulating and defining key competencies are not similar between the two frameworks.

While the Czech FEP BE provides a list of key competencies that is generally valid for all educational areas mentioned in the framework, the Ukrainian documents tend to define and express each key competence within separate educational areas. MESU defines it as ‘Subject (sectoral) competencies’ which “relate to the content of a particular educational field or subject, and the following key concepts are used to describe them: "knows and understands", "is able to and applies", "shows attitude and evaluates", etc.” (2011)

Moreover, according to the state-approved educational program for Ukrainian language and literature, and foreign languages, the aim of this educational area is the development of not just communicative but also sociolinguistic and linguistic competencies (MESU 2017, 15–17). The required knowledge and skills for acquisition by the student are written in language proficiency level descriptors. Since they are inseparable from the expected outcomes of the

learning process, communicative competence in foreign language learning will be examined later in a separate chapter about the expected results.

In summary, both countries' curricula address complex and well-thought aspirational base for basic education, including lower secondary. While the Czech Republic and Ukraine share overarching goals of preparing students for the complexities of the modern world, their educational objectives also reflect distinct cultural values, societal priorities, and visions for student development.

4 Objectives and expected outcomes of foreign language learning in lower secondary education in the Czech Republic and Ukraine – juxtaposition and analysis of the findings

The aims as well as the content and expected results of any specific area of knowledge within the two educational frameworks given are being stated in separate sections or so-called educational areas ('vzdělávací oblast' in Czech and 'osvitnya haluz' in Ukrainian). In FEP BE, the educational area 'Language and Communication through Language' that encapsulates the objectives and expected outcomes for foreign language learning, also includes the same set of parameters for 'Czech Language and Literature' and 'Second Foreign Language' fields. The overall aim of this educational area in basic education is to provide students with 'knowledge and skills that allow them to understand various kinds of messages, to express themselves appropriately and to apply the results of their learning (MEYS 2023, 16).

The educational framework from the side of Ukraine also separates the knowledge to be learned by the basic school pupil into separate educational areas or sectors.

One of these areas includes the sectoral content for foreign language learning, namely the 'Languages and Literature' educational area. The National Standard of Education views this area's purpose in the course of basic education as 'the development of a student's personality, forming his/her speech and reading culture, communicative and literary competence, humanistic worldview, national consciousness, high morality, active citizenship, aesthetic tastes, and value orientations' (MESU 2011).

OBJECTIVES OF LANGUAGE-ORIENTED EDUCATIONAL AREAS FROM THE FRAMEWORKS. TABLE 3.

Czech FEP BE-Language and Communication through Language	Ukrainian National Standard & Foreign Language Curriculum-Languages and Literature
<p>Instruction in this educational area focuses on the formation and development of key competencies by guiding pupils towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding language as an independent historical phenomenon which reflects the historical and cultural development of a nation and thus to see it as a major unifying agent of the national community and an important and indispensable instrument for lifelong learning; • developing a positive attitude to their mother tongue and understanding it as a potential resource for the development of personal and cultural wealth; • perceiving and gradually acquiring language as a rich and multi-faceted tool for obtaining and passing on information and expressing one's needs, experiences and opinions; • mastering common rules of inter-personal communication in the given cultural environment and developing a positive attitude to language as a part of inter-cultural communication; • obtaining information independently from various sources and mastering work with language and literary sources and with the texts from various specialisations; • building the self-confidence for public presentation and learning how to use language as a cultivated means of self-assertion; 	<p>The content of the language and literary components in primary school is aimed at achieving an appropriate level of students' ability to use language in all types of speech activity, to read and understand what they have read, to develop interest in fiction and systematic reading, to reveal national and universal values through the means of language and literature, to form a humanistic outlook of the individual, to expand his or her cultural and cognitive interests, to foster in students love and respect for the traditions of the Ukrainian people and tolerant attitude to the cultural traditions of other nations.</p> <p>The tasks of the Languages and Literature educational area in secondary school are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of a stable motivation to study the Ukrainian language and literature, foreign languages, languages and literatures of national minorities, world literature, love for the Ukrainian language and culture, as well as respect for other languages and cultures; • acquaintance with the language system and the formation of basic lexical, grammatical, stylistic, orthoepic, spelling skills on its basis; • development of skills and abilities in all types of speech (listening, reading, speaking, writing) and reading activities, various spheres of communication (personal, public, educational); • formation of communicative and literary competences;

OBJECTIVES OF LANGUAGE-ORIENTED EDUCATIONAL AREAS FROM THE FRAMEWORKS. TABLE 3 (CONTINUED).	
Czech FEP BE-Language and Communication through Language	Ukrainian National Standard & Foreign Language Curriculum-Languages and Literature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experiencing literary works of art, communicating reading experiences, developing a positive attitude towards literature and other text-based artistic disciplines, and developing emotional and aesthetic perception. (MEYS 2023, 16– 18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acquaintance with the achievements of original and translated fiction; • formation of knowledge about the specifics of fiction as an art form, development of students' skills and abilities to perceive, analyze and interpret literary works • formation of speech and reading culture, creative abilities, culture of dialogue, development of critical thinking and aesthetic tastes of the student; • formation of a humanistic worldview, the student's spiritual world, morality, general culture, personal traits of a citizen of Ukraine who is aware of his/her belonging to the world community. (MESU 2011)

Analysis :

In the Czech educational framework, communication competencies are cultivated with a focus on several key aspects. Firstly, there is an emphasis on understanding language as a historical and cultural phenomenon, serving as a unifying element within the national community. This approach aims to instill in students a sense of appreciation for their mother tongue and its potential role in personal and cultural enrichment. Additionally, students are guided towards viewing language as a versatile tool for information acquisition, expression of needs and opinions, and inter-personal communication within the cultural context. They are also encouraged to develop independent information gathering skills, literary analysis capabilities, and confidence in public presentation.

Conversely, the Ukrainian educational framework places emphasis on fostering language and literary skills to achieve proficiency in various speech activities and reading comprehension. Amongst these language skills, orthoepic or phonological skills are mentioned as key tasks of the educational area concerning language development.

There is also a notable focus on promoting interest in fiction and systematic reading, with the aim of uncovering national and universal values through language and literature.

Furthermore, the objectives include instilling a sense of love and respect for Ukrainian language and culture, as well as an appreciation for other languages and cultures. The curriculum also prioritizes the development of communicative and literary competencies, critical thinking, aesthetic sensibilities, and a humanistic worldview.

While both frameworks share common goals such as fostering language proficiency, promoting literary appreciation, and developing critical thinking skills, there are notable differences in their approaches. The Czech framework places a strong emphasis on language as a historical and cultural artifact, with an emphasis on its role in societal cohesion and individual expression. On the other hand, the Ukrainian framework focuses more explicitly on national identity, cultural values, and moral development, alongside language proficiency. Additionally, while both frameworks aim to cultivate communicative competencies, the Czech approach seems to prioritize individual expression and intellectual autonomy, while the Ukrainian approach emphasizes collective identity and social responsibility.

In terms of language acquisition, particularly in the domain of pronunciation instruction, the Ukrainian educational framework accentuates the cultivation of orthoepic proficiency as an integral component of its educational objectives, whereas the Czech framework does not exhibit a comparable emphasis on this aspect within its stated goals.

4.1 Expected outcomes of foreign language learning within two frameworks

This chapter will delve deeper into the foreign language teaching curriculum in both the Czech Republic and Ukraine, focusing particularly on the expected outcomes for students upon completion of lower secondary education. The analysis aims to address the previously posed research questions by examining the identified issues in detail.

It is noteworthy to specify that the Ukrainian data provided in this chapter pertains exclusively to general middle schools, ensuring parity in comparison. This decision is made because the Ukrainian foreign language curriculum delineates expected learning outcomes for three distinct types of schools: general middle schools, middle schools with a specialized focus on foreign language study, and schools with a specialized focus on foreign language as a second language.

CZECH FEP BE- EXPECTED OUTCOMES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN LOWER SECONDARY (A2)-TABLE 4	
RECEPTIVE SKILLS	
<p style="text-align: center;">Listening comprehension-</p> <p>CJ-9-1-01 understand simple and clearly pronounced speech and conversations; CJ-9-1-02 understands the content of simple and clearly spoken speech or conversation relating to the topics to be learned.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reading comprehension -</p> <p>CJ-9-3-01 finds the required information in simple everyday authentic materials; CJ-9-3-02 understand short and simple texts and find the required information in them.</p>
PRODUCTIVE SKILLS	
<p style="text-align: center;">Writing skills-</p> <p>CJ-9-4-01 fills in basic information about himself on the form ; CJ-9-4-02 writes simple texts about himself, family, school, leisure and other topics to be learned; CJ-9-4-03 responds to simple written messages.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Speaking skills -</p> <p>CJ-9-2-01 asks for basic information and responds appropriately in everyday formal and informal situations; CJ-9-2-02 talks about his/her family, friends, school, leisure and other topics; CJ-9-2-03 tells a simple story or event; describes people, places and things in his/her everyday life .</p>
TABLE ON THE BASIS OF MEYS 2023, 28	

Moreover, the Czech framework contains a distinct segment outlining anticipated achievements labeled as "učivo" (subject matter). These segments serve primarily as instrumental aids for acquiring the specialized skills relevant to each educational domain. Particularly noteworthy for this comparative analysis is the initial bullet point within the "Languages and Communication" educational area, focusing on the aspects of language's auditory and visual representation:

CZECH FEP BE- SUBJECT MATTER- SOUND AND GRAPHIC FORM.TABLE 5
<p>Subject matter: sound and graphic form of the language – development of sufficiently intelligible pronunciation and the ability to distinguish by ear the elements of the phonological system of the language, word, and sentence accent, intonation, mastering the spelling of words of the acquired vocabulary (MEYS 2023, 29).</p>

UKRAINIAN NATIONAL STANDARD & FOREIGN LANGUAGES PROGRAMME -
 EXPECTED OUTCOMES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN LOWER SECONDARY (A2+) -
 TABLE 6

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE	
Receptive skills	Productive skills
<p><i>Listening comprehension:</i> Understands enough to meet specific needs if speech is clear and slow;</p> <p><i>Visual perception:</i> Comprehends short, simple texts on familiar topics of a specific type, based on commonly used language material related to everyday life and study.</p>	<p><i>Speaking:</i> Communicates fairly easily in real and simulated communication situations if the interlocutor helps when necessary. Carries on simple everyday conversations without excessive effort; asks and answers questions, exchanges opinions and information on close/familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.;</p> <p>Describes or presents people, daily routines, tastes and preferences in the form of a short coherent statement made up of simple phrases and sentences.</p> <p><i>Writing:</i> Writes personal letters and notes related to the area of urgent needs; Writes a series of simple phrases and sentences connected by simple connectors/conjunctions, e.g., "and", "but", "because".</p>
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	
Linguistic range-general	Linguistic range-phonological
<p>Possesses a basic linguistic range that allows him to practice in everyday predictable situations, although the meaning of the utterance may suffer due to hesitant pauses to search for words.</p>	<p>The pronunciation is generally quite clear, but the interlocutor may ask questions from time to time.</p>
SOCIOLINGUISTIC COMPETENCE	
<p>Performs and responds to basic language functions such as requesting, giving and exchanging information and expressing views and attitudes in simple terms.;</p> <p>Communicates simply but effectively, using commonly used expressions and adhering to generally accepted norms of communication behaviour.</p>	
<p>TABLE CREATED ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION BY MESU 2017, 15–17</p>	

Analysis:

Overall, the foreign language curricula exhibit parallels with Graves' second-wave curriculum (2016, 85), as discussed earlier in the theoretical section. Both curricula endeavor to articulate objectives aimed at fostering the development of language 'macro-skills', including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, with a focus on communication across diverse contexts and purposes.

Are both countries required to achieve the same level of language at a given level of education?

The Ukrainian Foreign Languages Programme in the explanatory note at the beginning of the foreign language curriculum states that by the end of the 9th grade (the end of middle school), the student is expected to 'reach the A2+ level of proficiency in a first foreign language'. The guidelines used for creating the foreign language programme, as mentioned in the same explanatory note, is the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (MESU, 2017, 4).

The Czech FEP BE also states to be conducting its foreign language curriculum for lower secondary education on the basis of the abovementioned CEFR, however with one discrepancy with the Ukrainian framework. In FEP BE, MEYS claims that 'education in the educational field of Foreign Language leads to the acquisition of the A2 level in accordance with the Common European Framework Reference for Languages' (2023, 17).

Thus, it can be concluded that lower secondary students by the end of this stage of education in these countries are expected to achieve different language proficiencies.

Do the expected outcomes correspond to this level?

Since both of the countries' curricula admit to referencing the Common European Framework Reference for Languages for level A2/A2+ of language proficiency, it would be appropriate to consult the illustrative descriptors for levels A2 and A2+ to analyze whether the expected outcomes from the two curricula correspond to the stated descriptor scale.

The results are juxtaposed in Tables 7 and 8 and will be thoroughly analyzed afterward.

CZECH FEP BE- EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND THEIR CORRESPONDANCE TO CEFR- TABLE 7	
Expected outcomes of English learning in curriculum	Corresponding references in CEFR descriptors for A2
Receptive skills	
<p>Listening comprehension- CJ-9-1-01 understand simple and clearly pronounced speech and conversations; CJ-9-1-02 understands the content of simple and clearly spoken speech or conversation relating to the topics to be learned.</p> <p>Reading comprehension - CJ-9-3-01 finds the required information in simple everyday authentic materials; CJ-9-3-02 understand short and simple texts and find the required information in them (MEYS 2023, 28).</p>	<p><i>Overall oral comprehension:</i> Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment), provided people articulate clearly and slowly.</p> <p><i>Overall reading comprehension:</i> Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.</p> <p><i>Reading for orientation:</i> Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables. (Council of Europe 2020,48,54)</p>
Productive skills	
<p>Speaking skills - CJ-9-2-01 asks for basic information and responds appropriately in everyday formal and informal situations; CJ-9-2-02 talks about his/her family, friends, school, leisure and other topics; CJ-9-2-03 tells a simple story or event; describes people, places and things in his/her everyday life .</p> <p>Writing skills- CJ-9-4-01 fills in basic information about himself on the form ; CJ-9-4-02 writes simple texts about himself, family, school, leisure and other topics to be learned; CJ-9-4-03 responds to simple written messages (MEYS 2023, 28).</p>	<p><i>Overall oral interaction:</i> Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of their own accord.</p> <p><i>Sustained monologue: describing experience-</i> Can describe their family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. Can describe people, places and possessions in simple terms; Can briefly describe what they plan to do at the weekend or during the holidays.</p> <p><i>Overall oral production:</i> Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines. likes/ dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list;</p> <p><i>Notes, messages and forms:</i> Can fill in personal and other details on most everyday forms (e.g. to open a bank account, or to send a letter by recorded delivery).</p> <p><i>Creative writing:</i> Can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences about their family, living conditions, educational background, or present or most recent job.</p> <p><u><i>Correspondence:</i> Can exchange information by text message, by e-mail or in short letters, responding to questions from the other person (e.g. about a new product or activity)(Council of Europe 2020,62-63,72,67,82,83)</u></p>

UKRAINIAN NATIONAL STANDARD& FOREIGN LANGUAGES PROGRAMME - EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND THEIR CORRESPONDANCE TO CEFR-TABLE 8	
Expected outcomes of English language learning in Curriculum	Corresponding references from CEFR descriptors for A2+
R e c e p t i v e s k i l l s	
<p><i>Listening comprehension:</i> Understands enough to meet specific needs if speech is clear and slow;</p> <p><i>Visual perception:</i> Comprehends short, simple texts on familiar topics of a specific type, based on commonly used language material related to everyday life and study (MESU 2017, 15).</p>	<p><i>Overall oral comprehension:</i> Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type, provided people articulate clearly and slowly.</p> <p><i>Overall reading comprehension:</i> Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language.(Council of Europe 2020, 48, 54).</p>
P r o d u c t i v e s k i l l s	
<p><i>Speaking:</i> Communicates fairly easily in real and simulated communication situations if the interlocutor helps when necessary. Carries on simple everyday conversations without excessive effort; asks and answers questions, exchanges opinions and information on close/familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.;</p> <p>Describes or presents people, daily routines, tastes and preferences in the form of a short coherent statement made up of simple phrases and sentences.</p> <p><i>Writing:</i> Writes personal letters and notes related to the area of urgent needs; Writes a series of simple phrases and sentences connected by simple connectors/conjunctions, e.g., "and", "but", "because" (MESU 2017, 17).</p>	<p><i>Overall oral production:</i> Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines. likes/ dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.</p> <p><i>Sustained monologue: describing experience-</i> Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. Can describe everyday aspects of their environment, e.g. people, places, a job or study experience. Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities. Can describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal experiences,</p> <p><i>Overall oral interaction:</i> Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.</p> <p><i>Overall written production:</i> Can produce a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like “and”, “but” and “because”.</p> <p><i>Overall written interaction:</i> Can compose short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need.</p> <p><i>Correspondence:</i> Can exchange information by text message, by e-mail or in short letters, responding to questions from the other person (e.g. about a new product or activity). (Council of Europe 2020, 62-63,72,66-67,82,).</p>

To begin with, the CEFR illustrative descriptors do not position themselves as high standards that, if chosen to adhere to, can not be reflected upon and altered according to the needs. They are ‘open-ended and incomplete’ and should not be viewed as mandatory (Council of Europe 2020, 41). Thus, educators who choose to use its guidelines possess the flexibility to interpret them and apply them to the specific educational context, adjusting them as needed during the implementation process.

The results presented in the Tables 7 and 8 above seem to support this fact. That can also explain the fact that not all common instances of language use presented in the descriptors were chosen as references for expected outcomes in the curricula. For instance, such receptive skills as ‘reading instructions’ or productive skills of interactive character such as ‘interviewing and being interviewed’ are being completely omitted in two curricula probably for the same purpose: these skills are not viewed as essential and of high priority by the team of professionals.

As for the correspondence of the expected outcomes and descriptors, it can be observed that the expected outcomes in the Czech curriculum closely correspond to the CEFR descriptors for the A2 proficiency level with minor discrepancies. For instance, in terms of listening comprehension, the Czech curriculum expects learners to understand simple and clearly pronounced speech and conversations, which aligns with the CEFR A2 level descriptor for overall oral comprehension. Similarly, the learners in lower secondary are expected to acquire such reading skills as comprehending simple texts on familiar topics and searching for specific information in different types of sources.

Furthermore, the productive skills section also depicts a close commonality between the curriculum requirements and CEFR descriptors in that the student is expected to perform simple tasks in communication as well as to be able to sustain a monologue describing a personal experience. Writing skills to be acquired by the pupil are also analogous, however, the skill of responding to simple written messages seems to be referencing CEFR A2+ level correspondence descriptor, which is not the level that is required to be achieved by the end of basic school in the Czech Republic.

Speaking of the Ukrainian curriculum, it emphasizes the ability to understand enough to meet specific needs if speech is clear and slow. Similarly, CEFR A2+ indicates the capacity to

understand enough to fulfill concrete needs, provided speech is clear and deliberate. Both frameworks stress comprehension in everyday situations, albeit with slightly varying nuances.

The visual comprehension in Ukrainian's curriculum resembles reading comprehension. Both the curriculum and the CEFR highlight the comprehension of short, simple texts on familiar topics. However, while the Ukrainian curriculum focuses on material related to everyday life and study, CEFR A2+ mentions texts on familiar matters consisting of high-frequency everyday or job-related language. This subtle difference suggests a broader scope in CEFR A2+ regarding the types of texts encountered.

In terms of speaking proficiency, both frameworks emphasize the ability to communicate in real and simulated situations. Both mention the ease of carrying out everyday conversations and exchanging information on familiar topics. The Ukrainian curriculum highlights the ability to write personal letters and notes related to urgent needs, along with the production of simple phrases and sentences. Similarly, CEFR A2+ emphasizes the production of simple phrases and sentences linked by basic connectors. Both frameworks prioritize functional writing skills for everyday communication.

Overall, the expected outcomes outlined in both countries' curricula and CEFR-level descriptors exhibit significant similarities in terms of receptive and productive skills. Both emphasize the comprehension and production of language in everyday contexts, focusing on clear and simple communication. However, nuanced discrepancies exist, such as referencing some writing skills from the A2+ level descriptor instead of A2 and the scope of text type in reading comprehension. These disparities reflect varying priorities and approaches in language education. Nonetheless, both curricula encapsulate valuable guidance for educators and language learners, facilitating the development of communicative competence across diverse contexts.

What role does pronunciation play in the learning objectives?

After a thorough investigation of the two foreign language curricula, the Ukrainian and Czech curricula underscore the importance of pronunciation within their respective foreign language learning objectives, albeit with differing levels of explicitness and emphasis.

In the Ukrainian curriculum (Table 6, p. 49), pronunciation is addressed indirectly within the broader category of linguistic range and specifically mentioned under the phonological aspect. It suggests that learners generally possess clear pronunciation, yet the interlocutor may occasionally seek clarification, indicating a need for further improvement. However, the curriculum lacks detailed guidance or specific objectives related to pronunciation enhancement, leaving room for interpretation and potentially overlooking the significance of pronunciation mastery in language acquisition.

Conversely, the Czech curriculum (Table 5, p. 48) explicitly recognizes the role of pronunciation in language learning objectives. Under the subject of "sound and graphic form," pronunciation is highlighted as a crucial aspect of language proficiency. The curriculum aims to develop sufficiently intelligible pronunciation, emphasizing the ability to discern phonological elements, word and sentence stress, intonation patterns, and spelling accuracy. This comprehensive approach ensures that learners not only produce sounds accurately but also comprehend and reproduce the phonological features of the language effectively.

Pronunciation proficiency contributes significantly to overall language competence by enhancing communication clarity, facilitating comprehension, and fostering cultural integration. In both curricula, clear pronunciation enables learners to engage in meaningful interactions and express themselves accurately, thereby advancing their communicative competence.

While the Ukrainian curriculum acknowledges the importance of 'clear' pronunciation, or in other terms the overall comprehensibility of the speech, it could benefit from more explicit objectives and targeted activities to address pronunciation issues systematically. On the other hand, the Czech curriculum provides a more structured framework for pronunciation development. The 'Subject matter' section on sound and graphic form of the language happens to provide with objectives which contribute not only to the the intelligibility aspect but also accuracy and fluency.

In conclusion, pronunciation, at least at the level of project form of, curricula plays a prominent role in the learning objectives of foreign language curricula in both Czechia and Ukraine. However, when put side by side, these two curricula are far from similar in the sense of pronunciation teaching objectives.

Conclusion:

To summarize, this comparative analysis of the lower secondary education objectives and language curricula in the Czech Republic and Ukraine reveals both similarities and differences in their pedagogical priorities. Both nations prioritize equipping students with essential competencies and foundational knowledge tailored to real-life scenarios, emphasizing learning autonomy, critical thinking, and creativity. However, the Ukrainian curriculum places a stronger emphasis on cultivating national identity and patriotism, while the Czech framework focuses more on human rights and citizenship obligations.

Furthermore, while the Czech curriculum emphasizes individual well-being and social cohesion, the Ukrainian framework omits the mental health aspect. Proficiency in languages and intercultural communication is more pronounced in Ukrainian objectives, reflecting a broader focus on national and global citizenship. Both countries also recognize the importance of digital literacy, ecological consciousness, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

Apart from that, the pupils of lower secondary, both Czech and Ukrainian, are expected to reach different levels of language proficiency. While the Czech student is expected to finish lower secondary school with A2 level, the Ukrainian one is expected to master the plus level- A2+ according to CEFR. In both cases, the frameworks are in close alignment with the CEFR recommendations with slight variance.

Regarding foreign language learning goals, both countries strive to enhance communicative competence, yet they differ in their approach and emphasis on pronunciation. The Ukrainian curriculum addresses pronunciation indirectly through linguistic objectives, whereas the Czech curriculum explicitly prioritizes it under the "sound and graphic form" subject matter, offering a more systematic and comprehensive approach to teaching English pronunciation. Both programs recognize that clear and accurate pronunciation improves communication effectiveness and fosters linguistic competence, albeit with varying degrees of focus and detail.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis reveals that while Czech and Ukrainian curricula share the goal of equipping students with essential life skills, they differ in specific emphases. The Ukrainian curriculum focuses more on national identity and global citizenship, while the Czech framework emphasizes human rights and individual well-being.

Both prioritize communicative competence in foreign languages, but their approaches to pronunciation instruction vary. This analysis highlights how cultural values and societal priorities shape educational frameworks, offering valuable insights for educators and policymakers.

Resumé:

Tato bakalářská práce si klade za cíl provést důkladný průzkum formálních vzdělávacích systémů ve dvou zemích, konkrétně na nižší sekundární úrovni v České republice a na Ukrajině. Primární důraz bude kladen na kurikulum výuky výslovnosti v rámci těchto vzdělávacích rámců. Toto šetření bude zahrnovat posouzení a korelaci jejich přístupů k výuce anglické výslovnosti na úrovni návrhu kurikula.

První část teoretické části se bude zabývat komparativní pedagogikou, disciplínou klíčovou pro komparativní analýzu globálních vzdělávacích systémů. Tato část podrobně popíše cíle, výzkumná témata, účely a aplikace srovnávací pedagogiky. Komparativní pedagogika slouží jako základní nástroj pro pochopení toho, jak fungují a vyvíjejí se různé vzdělávací systémy, a poskytuje rámec pro analýzu a kontrast vzdělávacích praktik České republiky a Ukrajiny. Prostřednictvím této analýzy můžeme získat vhled do základních principů a metodik, které utvářejí výuku výslovnosti v těchto zemích.

Druhá kapitola se zaměřuje na nižší sekundární stupeň vzdělávání v obou zemích, včetně věku pro přijetí, změny kurikula a způsoby jeho ukončování. Zavádí se zde Mezinárodní standardní klasifikace vzdělání (ISCED). Rámec ISCED má zásadní význam pro definování struktury nižšího sekundárního vzdělávání v obou zemích. Vymezením jednotlivých stupňů a složek vzdělávacích systémů poskytuje ISCED standardizovaný základ pro srovnání. V této části budou také nastíněny obecné cíle a záměry pro nižší sekundární vzdělávání se zvláštním zaměřením na složku výuky angličtiny v rámci českých a ukrajinských vzdělávacích programů. Aby bylo zajištěno komplexní srovnání, bude jeden odstavec věnován definici žáka nižšího sekundárního vzdělávání. To bude zahrnovat podrobný popis charakteristik této věkové skupiny a očekávané úrovně vzdělání v této fázi.

Následující část o kurikulu poskytne hloubkový průzkum toho, co tvoří kurikulum, jeho možné formy a jazykový obsah, který může zahrnovat. To bude zahrnovat diskusi o teoretických základech tvorby kurikula, včetně principů a postupů, kterými se řídí vývoj

vzdělávacích programů. Podrobným prozkoumáním kurikula můžeme pochopit, jak je výuka výslovnosti integrována do širšího vzdělávacího rámce a identifikovat konkrétní strategie používané v obou zemích.

Závěrečný odstavec teoretické části se bude zabývat učením výslovnosti se zaměřením na jeho cíle, obsah a faktory ovlivňující výuku výslovnosti. Tato diskuse je zásadní pro praktickou část tohoto výzkumu, protože pokládá základy pro pochopení implementace a efektivity výuky výslovnosti ve třídě. Teoretický průzkum se bude zabývat různými aspekty výuky výslovnosti, jako je důležitost srozumitelnosti, přesnosti a plynulosti. Tyto faktory jsou nezbytné pro rozvoj komplexního porozumění tomu, jak se výslovnost vyučuje a učí v různých vzdělávacích kontextech.

Praktická část práce si klade za cíl identifikovat, vymezit a analyzovat společné rysy či disparity v rámci kurikulárních rámců určených pro nižší sekundární vzdělávání v České republice a na Ukrajině. Výzkum zkoumá přístup k výuce anglické výslovnosti v rámci těchto vzdělávacích systémů na úrovni nižšího sekundárního vzdělávání. Praktická část šetření se zabývá výzkumnými otázkami, jako je například to, zda jsou obě země povinny dosáhnout stejné úrovně jazyka na dané úrovni vzdělání a zda očekávané výsledky odpovídají této úrovni. Praktická část také důkladně zkoumá rozsah výuky anglické výslovnosti přítomné v rámci vzdělávacích programů v dané zemi a analyzuje očekávané výsledky výuky výslovnosti.

Komparativní výzkum využíval problémově orientovaný přístup a byl strukturován v souladu se čtyřmi Beredayovými analytickými mechanismy v komparativním vzdělávání. Tento přístup zahrnuje popis, interpretaci, juxtapozici a srovnání. Výzkum se zaměřuje především na jeden z "konstruktů vzdělávání", který Průcha poskytuje, a to na vzdělávací programy. Analýza zahrnuje obsahovou analýzu obecných cílů a obsahů nižšího sekundárního vzdělávání, výuky cizích jazyků, výuky výslovnosti a očekávaných výsledků v České republice a na Ukrajině.

Závěrečné fáze výzkumu budou zahrnovat komplexní komparativní analýzu, po které bude následovat diskuse o zjištěních. Tato komparativní analýza cílů nižšího sekundárního vzdělávání a jazykových osnov v České republice a na Ukrajině odhaluje významné podobnosti a rozdíly v jejich pedagogických prioritách. Oba národy kladou důraz na vybavení studentů základními kompetencemi a základními znalostmi použitelnými v

reálných scénářích, podporují autonomii učení, kritické myšlení a kreativitu. Ukrajinské kurikulum však klade větší důraz na kultivaci národní identity a vlastenectví, zatímco český rámec upřednostňuje lidská práva a občanské závazky.

České kurikulum dále klade důraz na individuální pohodu a sociální soudržnost, zatímco ukrajinský rámec postrádá zaměření na duševní zdraví. Znalost jazyků a mezikulturní komunikace je výraznější v ukrajinských cílech, což odráží širší zaměření na národní a globální občanství. Obě země si také uvědomují důležitost digitální gramotnosti, ekologického uvědomění, tolerance a respektu k rozmanitosti.

Existují také rozdíly v očekávané úrovni jazykových znalostí u žáků nižšího sekundárního vzdělávání. Očekává se, že čeští studenti dosáhnou úrovně A2, zatímco ukrajínští studenti dosáhnou úrovně A2+ podle Společného evropského referenčního rámce pro jazyky (SEER). Oba rámce jsou úzce sladěny s doporučeními CEFR, i když s mírnými odchylkami.

Pokud jde o cíle výuky cizích jazyků, obě země usilují o rozvoj komunikativní kompetence, liší se však svou explicitností a důrazem na výslovnost. Ukrajinské kurikulum řeší výslovnost nepřímou v rámci svých jazykových cílů, zatímco české kurikulum výslovně zdůrazňuje její význam v rámci části "zvuková a grafická forma", uvedené v očekávaných výstupech na 2. stupni ZŠ. Tento důraz podtrhuje zásadní roli jasné a přesné výslovnosti při zvyšování efektivity komunikace a podpoře jazykových kompetencí, i když s různou úrovní důrazu a specifčnosti v každém programu. To v konečném důsledku ukazuje, že výslovnost zaujímá významné místo ve vzdělávacích cílech kurikula cizích jazyků jak v Česku, tak na Ukrajině, a to přinejmenším na úrovni projektové formy. Při srovnání však cíle výuky výslovnosti v těchto dvou učebních osnovách vykazují značné rozdíly.

Závěrem této bakalářské práce je třeba podrobněji a diferencovaně prozkoumat kurikulum výuky výslovnosti v České republice a na Ukrajině. Prostřednictvím kombinace teoretického průzkumu a praktické analýzy si studie klade za cíl přispět k oblasti srovnávací pedagogiky a nabídnout cenné poznatky pro pedagogy a budoucí učitele. Pochopením silných a slabých stránek současných přístupů k výuce výslovnosti můžeme v obou zemích usilovat o efektivnější a inkluzivnější jazykové vzdělávání žáků na nižším sekundárním stupni, čímž se zajistí jejich lepší připravenost pro budoucí studium a profesní život.

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