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Impact of Teachers' Beliefs on Teaching Phonetic Aspects: the Case of Czech as L1

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Abstract: Cultivated speech with correct pronunciation and adequate prosody is important from a social, communicative and also didactic point of view. It can be regarded a “universal quality” of one’s self-presentation. Even though the Czech curriculum sets the development of phonetic aspects as one of the important elements of L1 teaching, various sources show that the educational reality in school differs. Based on a sample of 148 teachers of all educational levels from across the Czech Republic, the study analyses the teachers’ stated beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge of teaching phonetic aspects of Czech, and attempts to give at least an assumption of the actual classroom practices of teaching phonetic aspects in Czech classes and through that the extent of the mismatch between the intended and implemented curriculum. The results show that phonetic aspects are not treated with as much attention as they ought to and that teachers’ beliefs about the actual process of teaching and learning phonetic aspects seem to influence the implemented curriculum more than the intended curriculum and other formal requirements given by the government do.

Key words: teachers’ beliefs; phonetics; phonetic aspects; L1 teaching; Czech

1 Introduction

Quality of teaching and learning has been one of the most important topics of educational research for many years (e.g. Harvey & Green, 1993; Janík et al., 2011, 2013; Slavík et al., 2017; Weinert, Schrader, & Helmke, 1989, etc.). In addition to structural (or systemic) determinants of the quality of education, increasing attention has been paid to the role of the teacher (Janík et al., 2013; Slavík et al., 2017, and others). As Janík, Lokajíčková, & Janko (2012) show, the components and characteristics of instructional quality can be recapped in four areas: (1) classroom organization and management, (2) dealing with goals and the subject matter, (3) design of learning tasks, and (4) supportive learning climate. All these factors are closely connected to the teacher’s teaching style, his/her knowledge and skills, as well as his/her actions and thinking, which are also fundamental features of the culture of teaching and learning and the professional community (Groeben et al., 1988; Švec et al., 2014).

2 Background

2.1 The educational context: the phenomenon of teachers' beliefs

Understanding the teacher's role in learning has been at the heart of educational research for a long time. With the extension of the content-based approach to the quality of education it has become a core topic in Czech educational research as well, with a special focus on quality in specific field didactics (Janík et al., 2013; Slavík et al., 2017; Stuchlíková & Janík et al., 2015). Like many others, these authors also draw on Shulman (1987) and his conception of content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge as one of the most important features in communicating the subject matter to pupils. However, as many researchers have suggested, there are also subjective theories and beliefs (e.g. Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2003, 2006; Freeman, 2002; Mareš et al., 1996) that play a vital role in this process (for summary on how influential teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning are see e.g. Phipps & Borg, 2009).

The aim of our study is not to solve the problem of the rather fuzzy definitions and terminology in the area of teachers' beliefs (comp. Lin, 2013, or Pajares, 1992). We will rather limit ourselves to how we understand the phenomenon and what we find most important when discussing it in connection with the topic of teaching phonetic aspects of L1. Our understanding of teachers' beliefs is that they represent a complex structure integrating teachers' personal characteristics, convictions and attitudes which determine the teachers' decisions and classroom practices. It is more what teachers think they know (what they think is right to do in class) than what they really do know (what is right to do in class). It is teachers' beliefs that shape the teaching process – from the teacher's notion of teaching objectives and the subject matter, i.e. the content of teaching, to the methods, the teaching strategies and the resources he/she uses, the classroom practices he/she applies, how much time he/she devotes to individual parts of the subject matter, i.e., generally, the “form” of teaching (comp. Harcarik, 2009; Williams & Burden, 2002). Research has shown that teachers' beliefs have more impact on teaching than (a) changes to the curriculum and official governmental declarations (comp. Janík et al., 2010, 2011, 2018), or (b) a specific methodology or a coursebook teachers are told to follow (Williams & Burden, 2002, p. 57; for Czech context Šmejkalová, 2010), or (c) even findings of educational research and the development of modern (field) didactics (the chronic gap between educational research and practice – comp. e.g. Vanderlinde & van Braak, 2010). In this respect, teachers' beliefs might represent a constraint on educational practice as they form a system that influences the teachers' understanding, judgement, and behaviour (Johnson, 1992; Kagan, 1992), and might limit the teacher's professional development, his/her classroom practices and openness to new ideas and procedures.

Teachers' beliefs are based on the teachers' experience as learners, their teaching experience so far, their personality and education-based or research-based principles (Johnson, 1994; Li, 2012; Richardson, 1996). A great deal of research has proved that teachers' beliefs are mainly formed on the basis of their experience as objects of teaching (Johnson, 1994). Even though future teachers are later trained in specific methodology, they often return to the practices they had experienced as pupils (Goodman, 1986; Šimoník, 1994; Williams & Burden, 2002). If the beliefs and subjective theories are not subjected to alteration, teachers' beliefs are stable and have the tendency to petrify (Peacock, 2001).

It is clear that the basic premise of our considerations in this study is that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are a vital indicator of the teacher's instructional practices.

2.2 The field context: the relevance of teaching phonetic aspects

In our study we focus on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and beliefs and attitudes in the area of teaching phonetic aspects of Czech as L1. With phonetic aspects (*zvuková stránka jazyka* – *zvuk* translates as *sound*) we understand those attributes of speech that are primarily connected to the phonetic layer of spoken communication. Our views on the issue are grounded in the Czech linguistic tradition, specifically orthoepy (in Czech *ortoepie*). Orthoepy is defined as the study of correct (literal, standard) pronunciation, and comprises both segmental and suprasegmental features of speech. The summary of rules for generating and articulating individual sounds, and how to use them in standard speech, is called the orthoepic norm (*ortoepická* or *výslovnostní norma* – Hůrková, 1995; Palková, 1994; Zeman, 2008, or Pokorná & Vránová, 2007). The orthoepic norm specifies which changes of sounds are or are not acceptable as a consequence of their mutual influence in a continuous utterance. Czech phonetics and phonology regards orthoepy as the normed articulation of vowels and consonants. It also comprises the quality of suprasegmental features (such as stress, intonation or speech rate), which can be evaluated on the basis of their adequacy to the syntactic arrangement and stylistic value in the particular communication situation.

Standard Czech carries national, representative and culture forming functions (CzechEncy, 2017). It is used dominantly in written expression, and its usage in oral expression is dependent on the level of formality, officiality and publicity of the communication situation. Research shows that Czech speakers are rather sensitive when professional speakers appearing in public disregard the standard prescription (e.g. Lefenda & Svobodová, 2016/17). In public speech, all professional speakers are expected to use only standard Czech – including pronunciation. This means that media presenters, government authorities and other administration workers, politicians, teachers, etc. must have mastered standard Czech and must fully comply with the orthoepic norm (comp. Daneš,

2009). Regional varieties are accepted in intrapersonal communication, but not in public speech. Complying with the orthoepic norm is considered a basic condition of the culture of speech.

“The culture and cultivation of speech is a precondition of its appeal and effectiveness. The degree of such cultivation might vary, but the unavoidable precondition in the effort for speech culture is the knowledge of normed standard pronunciation – orthoepy” (Hůrková, 1995, p. 8). Even though the pronunciation style might differ according to the type of the speech – distinguished (higher, explicit), neutral (basic) or common (lower, implicit; Krčmová, 2006, p. 212) – the articulation should always be clear and perfectly understandable.

In relation to the reported unsatisfactory quality of speech of L1 public speakers (e.g. Čmejrková & Hoffmannová, 2011; Daneš, 2009; Kuldanová, 2001; Macoun & Dvořáková, 2008; Palková, 2005, 2008/09, 2017/18), the question of L1 pronunciation and prosody of speech has been resonating not only in the Czech Republic, but also elsewhere (e.g. Čechová & Styblík, 1998, p. 217, or the British Library’s *Evolving English* exhibition, etc.). Moreover, the number of school pupils with speech problems is rising (Palková, 1994; ÚZIS, 2014, etc.). As a result, the L1 teacher often remains one of the last people that can contribute to the rise of the culture of speech of their pupils. The language input children are exposed to plays a vital role in their language development (e.g. Clark, 2003; Gathercole & Hoff, 2007; Tomasello, 2003; Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Štěpáník, 2019, and many others).

Oral communication is the primary form of expression and has an important role in any kind of social interaction; speech is “the image of one’s personality” (Krobotová, 2000, p. 5), an important part of self-image (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994). In addition to the argumentative, textual and grammatical qualities of speech, this also includes phonetic aspects such as correct segmental pronunciation, adequate intonation, volume, natural stress distribution and rhythm, suitable speech rate, as well as stress and pause distribution (comp. Minchew, 1983). These features help to fulfil the speaker’s communication intention and have an important social role (Crystal, 2003; pronunciation - and language in general - as a means of establishing a sense of community – comp. Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994, p. 7).

Correct pronunciation does not only have aesthetic value, it also, of course, serves a fundamental role in communication as it is crucial for the correct understanding of speech: for instance, compare the compulsory double pronunciation of two of the same consonant on the boundary of words in *Plzeň – město čtyř řek* vs. *Plzeň – město čtyřek* [ˈplzɛɲ ˈmɛstɔ ˈtʃtɪř ˈřɛk] vs. [ˈplzɛɲ ˈmɛstɔ ˈtʃtɪřɛk], i.e. *Plzeň – city of four rivers* vs. *Plzeň – city of fours* (for other examples see Hůrková, 1995, or Štěpáník & Vlčková-Mejvaldová, 2018). Similarly, in English, the distribution of stress (compare *conflict* [ˈkɒn.flɪkt] vs. [kənˈflɪkt] or *desert* / *dessert*

[ˈdez.ət] vs. [dɪˈzɜ:t]). And, of course, it is also prosody that inevitably affects meaning (e.g. Crystal, 2003).

Moreover, as Babušová (2014) states, faultless pronunciation has an important didactic role, esp. in primary education. The learner needs to connect a specific sound with a specific sign, i.e. a letter, and therefore it is necessary for them to adopt the correct form of the sound. This correspondence of the phonic and graphic plan of the language is a significant one in all stages of education (and in everyday life as well).

As all we have just said applies to any language – not only Czech – we generally regard high quality of speech as a “universal quality” which L1 teaching should aim for. In this respect, school has an important formational role. Unlike in some other curricular documents (e.g. for teaching English in England), the Czech L1 curriculum expresses the necessity to cultivate the phonetic aspects of speech clearly: “A good level of language culture is one of the major indicators of the general maturity of the elementary-school (in this paper lower-secondary school – author’s note) graduate. Language instruction provides the pupil with such knowledge and skills that make it possible for him/her to perceive various kinds of messages, understand them, express himself/herself appropriately as well as utilise the results of his/her learning effectively” (FEP EE, 2007, p. 17). Adopting the orthoepic norm, i.e. Czech standard pronunciation, has been one of the fundamental requirements of the Czech school curriculum for decades for all levels of education: primary, lower- and also upper-secondary; the current curriculum is no exception (comp. FEP EE, 2007, p. 19, 22; FEP SGE, 2007, p. 14, or Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Sojka, 2016).

When starting school education, children readily master the spontaneously acquired sound means of their L1. It is the school’s task to teach them how to cultivate their expression and differentiate the language means according to the communication situation and the communication aim. In comparison with the pupils, the teacher’s code is quantitatively and qualitatively on a higher level. Therefore they should use it to influence and cultivate the code of their pupils. As Browne (2007, p. 34) summarises it, the teacher’s role in developing pupils’ speech is: (1) planning opportunities to talk, (2) providing models of different types of speaking and (3) responding to and developing pupils’ contributions.

As we will see later, with regards to the teachers’ beliefs and their pedagogical content knowledge, it is important to state that the curricular expected outcomes cover both the segmental and prosodic layer, and stress that the standard and non-standard varieties should be used depending on the communication situation and communication aim, i.e. practically.

2.3 The professional context

Despite the curriculum requirements, research up to now shows that phonetic aspects are one of the most underemphasised layers of the language system in Czech language teaching (Balkó, 2005/06, 2012/13; Bořek-Dohalská et al., 2016; Kraus, 1996/97; Málková, 2014/15; Štěpánová, 2013; Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Štěpáník, 2017/18, 2019). Not only Czech research shows that among other factors it is mainly teachers' beliefs that cause the central focus of L1 teaching in many countries to be traditional structural grammar (comp. Locke, 2010; Pieniżek & Štěpáník, 2016; Szymańska, 2016; van Rijt & Coppen, 2017; Watson, 2015a, 2015b, etc.).

Such neglect of phonetics results in a situation when upper-secondary-school graduates do not master the phonetic elements of Czech sufficiently neither theoretically, nor practically (e.g. Balkó, 2005/06; Bořek-Dohalská et al., 2016, p. 157).

Research suggests that this lack of mastery is also the case for Czech language teachers (e.g. Balkó, 2007/08; Málková, 2014/15; Svobodová, 2003; Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Štěpáník, 2019). The causes are examined in Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Sojka's paper (2016) in which the authors thoroughly analyse teacher training programmes for Czech language teachers at Czech schools. The main points of their study can be summarised as follows:

- (i) The courses on phonetics and phonology are more linguistic-oriented than teaching-oriented, which results in problems with the didactic transposition of the phonetic topics in school.
- (ii) The course on phonetics and phonology is usually placed in the first semester (only) of teacher training programmes and its lesson allocation does not exceed two lessons per week. This appears to be insufficient as students lack any preliminary knowledge (many of the students indicate that the teacher training programme is the first time they have heard about phonetics).

All in all, the authors state that teacher training programmes are unlikely to change the future teachers' knowledge of phonetic aspects of speech or their thinking about this content in their future teaching practice.

This might also be the cause of the fact that L1 teachers in the Czech Republic at all levels of education traditionally focus predominantly on the written mode and that orthography plays a much more important role than orthoepy (Svobodová, 2003, or Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Sojka, 2016). This, however, is in contrast with the status spoken communication has in everyday life (as a primary means of expression), the official requirements given by the curriculum (comp. FEP EE, 2007; FEP SGE, 2007) and the standardised examinations (comp. Cermat, 2016).

3 Methodology

It seems that in the area of teaching L1 phonetic aspects in Czech school we are witnessing a mismatch between the intended and the implemented curriculum (for clarification of the terms see e.g. Maňák, Janík, & Švec, 2008, or van den Akker, 2003). The extent and the causes of this problem have been neither researched, nor reflected in any study so far. Therefore, we have decided to carry out this study with the intention to answer at least some of the questions about how Czech L1 teachers reflect teaching phonetic aspects as part of speaking development.

There are two main aims for this study:

- (1) to analyse the teachers' stated beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge of teaching phonetic aspects;
- (2) to get at least an assumption of the actual classroom practices of teaching phonetic aspects in Czech L1 classes and through that the extent of the mismatch between the intended and implemented curriculum.

3.1 The sample

The research sample includes 148 randomly selected teachers from all over the Czech Republic: 56 primary school teachers, 66 lower-secondary school teachers, and 26 upper-secondary school teachers. The study was carried out in the period from March to June 2017. During this period, six meetings with teachers from all over the Czech Republic were held. Despite different locations of these meetings (Prague for regions in Bohemia, Olomouc and Brno for Moravia and Silesia), we can say the sample is ethnically, culturally and socially very homogenous as the Czech Republic is a typical example of a mono-ethnic Central European country (comp. *Key figures on Europe 2017 edition* or *Migrant integration 2017 edition*). The figures on the respondents' teaching practice are available in Table 1. The numbers show that the sample comprised mostly highly experienced practitioners (comp. Podlahová, 2004; Šimoník, 1994). Since all the respondents came to the meetings as practicing teachers, we regard all of them as qualified, i.e. having a Master's degree (or pursuing a Master's degree programme) because, in the Czech Republic, a Master's degree is the official requirement for full teaching qualification. For concrete data on the respondents see Table 1.

3.2 Data collection

As the main research tool, we used a questionnaire that consisted of 11 questions, out of which 3 questions were multiple-choice questions and 8 questions were open questions offering the respondents enough space for their answers. With the multiple-choice questions, the respondents could choose more than one answer. Questionnaires can be considered one of the basic and most

effective methods for researching teachers' beliefs (comp. Maggioni, Alexander, & VanSledright, 2004, or Mareš et al., 1996).

Tab. 1: Numbers of respondents and their length of teaching practice (in years).

	primary	lower-secondary	upper-secondary	total
Prague, March 27 th 2017	10	12	5	27
Prague, April 3 rd 2017	16	8	5	29
Prague, June 8 th 2017	6	10	1	17
Olomouc, May 11 th 2017	14	12	4	30
Olomouc, June 5 th 2017	7	13	2	22
Brno, April 20 th 2017	3	11	9	23
Total	56	66	26	148

Length of teaching practice (in years)			
average	16.5	17	22.7
minimum	1	1	3
Q1	9	7	20
median	17	17	25
Q3	22.5	26	30
maximum	39	40	33

As a framework for designing the questionnaire and selecting the questions we used Calderhead's categories in which teachers are found to hold significant beliefs (comp. Calderhead, 1996, p. 719). The objective of the questionnaire was to cover all crucial characteristics of teaching the phonetic aspects of L1 in Czech schools.

The individual questions target at:

- 1) the years at which teachers include phonetic aspects in their teaching (question 1, 2, 3);
- 2) the amount of time which teachers devote to teaching phonetic aspects (question 7);
- 3) the methods which teachers use for teaching phonetic aspects (question 6);
- 4) the resources which teachers use for teaching phonetic aspects (question 8);
- 5) the objectives and ideal expected outcomes which teachers hold for teaching phonetic aspects (question 4);
- 6) the concrete subject matter which teachers cover in their lessons when teaching phonetic aspects (question 5);
- 7) the level of importance which teachers attribute phonetic aspects with in comparison with other linguistic disciplines taught (questions 9, 10);

- 8) the place of rhetoric exercises (see further) in the lessons and the form of feedback teachers offer to their pupils (question 11 + subquestions).

After the questionnaire was designed, it was piloted with three experienced teachers outside the final sample, and revised accordingly (comp. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 402).

The process of having the teachers fill out the questionnaire was administered by both researchers personally, the questionnaire was anonymous. First, the respondents were informed about the topic of the research, and then they were given 20–25 minutes to answer the questions.

After that the questionnaire forms were collected and the questions were shown on the screen so that everybody could see them. Through the method of a focus group the main author of this study went through the questions and answers together with the group while the second author of this study took notes. This allowed the participants to interact with each other and the researchers, and it offered an overall frame for the answers in the questionnaires and completed the data with more detail. We used the data from the focus groups to triangulate the data gathered from the questionnaires.

3.3 Data analysis

The study adopted a predominantly qualitative approach using a questionnaire and focus groups as the research tools. All data are categorical in nature and for analysis we used absolute and relative frequencies.

The initial stage of data analysis was carried out by the first author of this paper. The questionnaires were divided into three groups according to the level of education the respondents taught at: (i) primary school teachers, (ii) lower-secondary school teachers and (iii) upper-secondary school teachers. The answers from the closed questions were counted for all the respondents from the individual groups. The answers from the open questions were transcribed and sorted according to the question they were answering.

The data were analysed inductively with an initial stage of open coding. A frequency tally of the range of responses was generated and used as preliminary information for coding classification. Axial coding, which clustered the data into thematic groups, followed. This was then reviewed by the second author of this study. A further clarification of code labelling was undertaken. As a result, some of the codes, which were proving to overlap, were merged and a coding frame for each question was devised (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 559f.). For example, for question 4 (If you do target phonetic aspects, please specify what final knowledge and skills you expect from your learners.) the coding frame was organised under five axial codes:

- connection to reading or listening
- correct / understandable / clear / elaborated / cultivated communication
- standard Czech
- pronunciation (segmental features of speech)
- prosody of speech

The first author of this study then completed the coding of all the transcripts, and, in a final review by both authors, the codes were checked and agreed on.

These data were then triangulated with the notes we gathered during the focus group interviews.

4 Findings

4.1 When teachers target phonetic aspects

The first set of questions was aimed at finding out when teachers target phonetic aspects, specifically which year(s) of the level of education they teach at.

Figures 1 - 3: The years at which teachers include the topic of phonetic aspects in their teaching (in percentages). Respondents could circle more answers with this question, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100 %.

At the primary level (Figure 1) we see that the distribution of results is quite similar in all years. As a result, we can assume that primary school teachers focus on phonetic aspects continuously during the entire stage of education they teach at. This is rather understandable as at the primary level fundamental speech habits are still being formed (comp. Brabcová et al., 1990, p. 86f.). Moreover, developing fundamental speech habits (correct pronunciation, proper breathing, adequate speech rate, intonation, stress, pause distribution, etc.) is also expected by the curriculum (FEP EE, 2007). Primary school also focuses on the connection between phonics and graphics. As such, proper pronunciation plays an important role in correct spelling.

From Figure 2 we deduce that in lower-secondary school, the approach to phonetics seems to change. There appears to be approximately a third of teachers who think about phonetic aspects as a rather continuous topic in language teaching (like their primary colleagues). Such an approach would reflect the cyclical curriculum design which has been part of the Czech teaching tradition for more than a hundred years (comp. Šmejkalová, 2010, or Šmejkalová & Štěpáník, 2016), and would also suggest that phonetic aspects are given enough attention throughout the whole cycle. However, our data also show that there is a good deal of teachers who treat phonetics more as a single unit, as a separate linguistic discipline, and detach it from the other language layers. The subject matter of phonetics and phonology is generally considered the least complicated and therefore is usually placed at the beginning of the study cycle (this concerns both lower- and upper-secondary school – comp. Kostečka, 1994 – and even philological

branches at university level – comp. Šmejkalová & Štěpáník, 2016). Our results also suggest this as the numbers in Figure 2 show the increase in the initial (6th) and final (9th) years of lower-secondary school (and also in the first year of upper-secondary school – Figure 3). In year 6, basic phonetic concepts are introduced, and in the final year (year 9) our respondents state that they include phonetics as part of final revision.

The alteration of teachers' thinking about phonetic content is even more apparent in Figure 3 which illustrates the situation in upper-secondary school. The subject matter at upper-secondary school is not organised in a cycle, but linearly (comp. Čechová & Styblík, 1998) – and this appears to be the case in upper-secondary school where phonetics is treated as an isolated discipline. This approach does not differ from other linguistic disciplines taught at Czech upper-secondary school (e.g. morphology, lexicology, word formation or syntax) and also rather clearly relates to the theoretical character of teaching which teachers declare they use (see further in chapters 4.5 and 4.6). In Figure 3 we can see that phonetics is placed dominantly at the beginning of the study cycle.

In all categories there is a small number of teachers who state that they do not target phonetic aspects at all – at primary and lower-secondary school this is a very low number, but the proportion among upper-secondary school teachers is worth noticing as it might be indicating a certain tendency. We presume that the cause of this might be that upper-secondary school teachers consider the development of (correct) pronunciation to be finished and focus on written language much more than spoken language. However, the sample is too small to confirm this.

4.2 Allocation of time

The preceding question is closely connected to how much teaching time teachers devote to phonetic aspects. What the data show is a division between the primary and lower- and upper-secondary school teachers. While primary teachers estimate the time continuously (e.g. “5–10 minutes every lesson”, “every lesson”, “a few minutes every lesson” etc.) or in numbers of lessons per week, lower- and upper-secondary school teachers estimate the time devoted to phonetic aspects in a certain period (e.g. a set number of classes) in the school year or even in the whole study cycle, i.e. four years; the last option being most obvious with upper-secondary school teachers.

We have already said that most primary school teachers state that they aim at phonetic aspects continuously / in every lesson. Correspondingly, there is quite a high number of respondents who were not able to make a close estimate and state that it “depends on the matter”.

Lower-secondary school teachers seem to devote time to phonetic aspects mainly in literature classes or during rhetoric exercises in which a pupil speaks

uninterrupted for a certain interval in communication / style classes (for details on rhetoric exercises see subchapter 4.7). Only a few respondents stated that they pay attention to phonetic aspects in all pupils' speech in class. Generally, lower-secondary school teachers say they devote on average 8 45-minute lessons to phonetic aspects of the Czech language in the whole period of lower-secondary school (i.e. four years).

At upper-secondary school, the majority of teachers (20 out of 26) estimate the time in terms of the whole study period, specifically 6 45-minute lessons in the four years.

8 lower-secondary and 4 upper-secondary school teachers said that they do not teach phonetics at all or teach it only very little.

These results suggest that, except for primary school, phonetics lies on the periphery of teachers' interest.

4.3 Methods

Table 2 and Figure 4 show which methods at different education levels teachers use for teaching phonetic aspects.

Tab. 2: Usage of methods at different educational levels (percentages).

	primary	lower-secondary	upper-secondary
whole-class presentation	32 %	44 %	65 %
work with textbooks	38 %	56 %	42 %
directed dialogue	59 %	45 %	58 %
work with authentic materials	30 %	45 %	62 %
rhetoric exercises	73 %	76 %	62 %
pronunciation exercises	75 %	61 %	62 %

Considering whole-class presentation as the basic teacher-centred verbal method, we can notice that, throughout the educational levels, the level of teacher-centeredness increases. This result is closely connected to the expected outcomes and the content taught (theoretical knowledge – see subchapters 4.5 and 4.6). Instead of verbal monologue methods, primary school teachers seem to prefer directed dialogue. This method is also teacher-centred, but involves the pupils more.

While at upper-secondary school we can detect the highest tendency to prefer teacher-centred methods, at the same time it seems teachers want to be practical and true to life through work with authentic materials. These are rather contradictory tendencies: on the one hand, the pupils are more cognitively

developed and so usage of authentic materials seems to be perfectly appropriate. On the other hand, teachers reach for teacher-centred verbal monologue methods which might lead to students' being intellectually passive (comp. Čechová & Styblík, 1998, p. 14).

Fig. 4: Usage of methods at different educational levels in contrast.

Teachers at all levels mention that they use methods which enforce correct pronunciation and make their students do rhetoric exercises (one of the basic methods of teaching speaking in Czech schools). At all levels, at least a third of the respondents expressed that they use textbooks – as we will see later (subchapter 4.4), these do not, however, play a main role in the lessons.

Other methods used in teaching phonetic aspects are tongue twisters, riddles, rhymes, rhythmical exercises, recitation and dramatization, the first being used mainly in primary school, the latter at lower-secondary school.

4.4 Resources

Both international and Czech research suggests that the most common resource for teachers for lesson planning is textbooks (e.g. Mikk, 2000; Průcha, 2002, or Sikorová, 2010), and that textbooks or other published texts designed for educational purposes also play an important role during the lessons (e.g. Červenková, 2010, or Sikorová, 2010).

From our data we can deduce that textbooks are used mainly at lower-secondary school (more than half of the respondents – see also Figure 4). However,

from the data we assume that the usage of textbooks remains mainly in the stage of lesson preparation rather than teaching itself. Our respondents indicate that they find the textbooks either limited or impractical, especially when the textbook lacks recordings (and most of them do). That would also explain the increasing tendency of some teachers to use supplementary educational materials or other materials (e.g. audio recordings, videos, films and other authentic materials). Some respondents say that they prepare their own teaching materials, as is the case for about a third of the lower-secondary school teachers.

The most vivid descriptions of methods appear to be found at the primary level, which might be connected to the fact that rhetoric and pronunciation exercises dominate here (Figure 4). Teachers seem to look for various resources; they predominantly use audio or video recordings and educational technology – recorders, interactive boards, mobile phones, the internet, media archives, instructional multimedia programmes, recordings of songs, riddles, poems, fairy tales, recordings of recitation and texts for children. They also make use of the educational portal *rvp.cz* (the leading educational portal for teachers in the Czech Republic; The website offers a place for debates, discussions, exchanging experience and sharing materials, esp. through the so-called *DUM* (digital learning / teaching materials). However, the quality of the materials can be problematic; comp. Šmejkalová & Štěpáník, 2012). Primary teachers very often connect speech with reading aloud; therefore, readers and reading books serve as a very important educational aid. A good deal of our respondents say that they are the most important source because they consider themselves a model (e.g. through reading to the class).

4.5 Expected outcomes

The most important moment in a teacher's thinking is considering the teaching objectives. Teachers' beliefs in this area have a crucial position as they influence understanding of the subject, lesson planning and the overall scheme of work in the subject. The objectives (and teachers' thinking about them) determine the expected outcomes, the content and the methods used (comp. e.g. Skalková, 1999; Slavík et al., 2017).

It is generally accepted that the main aim of modern L1 teaching is one of communication, i.e. developing the pupils' abilities to use language functionally. "However, below the surface of that apparently incontestable and transparent statement lie all sorts of conflicting opinions, ideologies, methodologies and philosophies" (Fleming & Stevens, 2010, p. 1). As a result, even though educational theory and official documents clearly state what L1 education ought to look like, actual implementation can have all sorts of forms (for the Central European context comp. Pieniążek & Štěpáník, 2016).

We asked our respondents what expected outcomes they anticipate in the field of phonetic aspects by the end of the level of education they teach at. The answers can be grouped into six categories: (1) pronunciation, (2) expression and communication qualities and characteristics of speech, (3) complying with standard Czech, (4) prosody of speech, (5) phonetics for other skills, and (6) theoretical knowledge. Table 3 and Figure 5 show the results.

Tab. 3: Expected outcomes (in other words, aims) of teaching phonetic aspects according to the teachers (percentages)

	primary	lower-secondary	upper-secondary
pronunciation	46 %	41 %	23 %
expression, communication qualities and characteristics	20 %	21 %	4 %
complying with standard language	14 %	8 %	0 %
prosody of speech	20 %	26 %	12 %
ties to other skills	13 %	14 %	15 %
theoretical knowledge	0 %	11 %	31 %

Fig. 5: Expected outcomes in contrast

As we can see from Table 3 and Figure 5, the expected outcomes of teaching phonetic aspects alter over time. Primary school teachers tend to put emphasis on correct pronunciation, and the pupils' ability to express themselves "clearly, comprehensibly, concisely, fluently, meaningfully, and in standard Czech". They say that they want their pupils to "speak in (elaborated) sentences", and without various fillers and padding. It is mainly primary teachers who require standard

Czech, esp. in morphology, and who tend to link the spoken and the written through connecting speaking to other skills – reading, listening, “reading with understanding”, “work with text”, the ability to reproduce a written or spoken text and also to “read distinctively” (we assume that means with clear pronunciation and adequate prosody). As there is a strong relation between pronunciation and orthography in Czech, this approach appears to be justifiable.

In lower-secondary school, clear pronunciation is enriched by a slightly higher focus on adequate prosody of speech (esp. intonation, stress, speech rate and pauses). Pupils’ speech is expected to be coherent, understandable, rigorous, fluent, clear, brief, without fillers and stylistic mistakes. The requirement of standard Czech decreases. The connection to other skills is narrower, teachers mostly mention quality of speech for “nice” recitation. There appears to be a small number of lower-secondary school teachers who require their pupils to learn theoretical knowledge (e.g. to be able to distinguish voiced and voiceless consonants, to know something about the sound system, assimilation, etc.).

Finally, we can notice a distinctive shift at upper-secondary school: from practice to theory. About a third of upper-secondary school teachers consider theoretical knowledge of phonetics and phonology to be the most important educational outcome. This knowledge ranges from the system of Czech vowels and consonants over basic terminology of the field to phonetic transcription. The upper-secondary school teachers, of all the respondents, seem most relaxed about the necessity to adhere to standard Czech in all communication situations and seem to put very low emphasis on the communication and textual qualities of their pupils’ speech. (Throughout the paper, by textual qualities we mean formulating thoughts (semantics, syntax), word order, sentence order, meaningfulness, fluency, cogency and coherence.) Some of them state that they connect phonetic aspects mainly to reading (“reading aloud” and “distinctive reading”), while prospering from the theoretical knowledge when expressing oneself is not visibly expected.

In each category, there is a number of respondents who say they do not teach phonetic aspects at all; the higher the educational level, the higher the number of such respondents. The reasons they state for not teaching phonetics are mainly lack of time, lack of appropriate teaching materials and low ability of acoustic discrimination of spontaneous speech (comp. Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Štěpáník, 2019).

4.6 Subject matter

Teachers’ beliefs and the designated teaching objectives, among other things, determine the content taught. Knowledge of the scientific field (in our case phonetics and phonology as part of the larger discipline of linguistics) is combined with the field of education and is ultimately transformed into the content taught at

school. When considering teachers' thinking about the content, we speak about pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). In this respect, it is interesting to look into the correspondence of the subject matter that teachers teach (Table 4, Figure 6) with the expected outcomes they declare (as described above).

Tab. 4: Subject matter (percentages)

	primary	lower-secondary	upper-secondary
pronunciation	38 %	58 %	42 %
expression, communication qualities and characteristics	5 %	3 %	0 %
complying with standard language	5 %	2 %	0 %
prosody of speech	20 %	50 %	19 %
ties to other skills	9 %	15 %	15 %
theoretical knowledge	5 %	17 %	54 %

Fig. 6: Subject matter in contrast

From our respondents' answers we may conclude that the content of the primary teaching of phonetic aspects is dominated mainly by quality of speech: pronunciation (connecting prepositions with words, correct vowel quantity, voicing or assimilation of voice) and prosody (intonation, rhythm, stress, phrasing, etc.). Especially the focus group interviews showed that what also appears to be important is the relation between the spoken and written form of the word, especially the area of orthographically hard and soft consonants (i.e. those that are followed by *y* as opposed to *i*) as this is crucial for Czech spelling. The other elements do not appear as important in the content as they were considered in the

expected outcomes. This might be caused by the fact that the teachers in our sample confused subject matter with methods or tasks: as subject matter they often stated tongue twisters, poems, riddles, speech exercises, independent work, presentations, narration, listening and retelling the recording or recitation of a poem. As a result, in practice, this might lead to inappropriate or even misleading assignment of tasks and/or objectives as these are only instruments for teaching the subject matter and through that reaching the expected outcomes.

In lower-secondary school, teachers seem to put very strong emphasis on proper pronunciation (however, different features than at primary school – assimilation of voice, vowel quantity, consonant combinations, connection of the word with a preposition, pronunciation of double consonants), and prosody (intonation (melody), stress, rhythm, pauses, loudness, etc.). As we can see, some of them start to include theory: e.g. place and manner of articulation of the individual vowels and consonants, basics of the Czech sound system, dialect variants and deviations from standard Czech, and language stratification with examples. Communication or textual qualities of speech again seem to be rather neglected.

From the answers of the upper-secondary school teachers we can deduce that the content at this level is highly theoretical: the Czech sound system, terminology of phonetics and phonology, phonetic transcription, differences among different layers of Czech. Upper-secondary students seem to be expected to possess quite a broad theoretical knowledge. If pronunciation is included, then it also seems to have the form of theoretical instruction. There were no respondents who would consider communication or textual qualities and complying with standard language at all relevant at this level.

All in all, we can see that teachers' thinking about the expected outcomes and the subject matter does not always correspond, even though the subject matter should be a tool for reaching the expected outcomes. We can see that in pronunciation and prosody of speech at lower- and upper-secondary school and in theoretical knowledge at upper-secondary school, the scores are notably higher in subchapter 4.6 (subject matter) than in subchapter 4.5 (expected outcomes). On the other hand, in expression, communication qualities and characteristics, the scores for primary and lower-secondary school are notably lower for subject matter (4.6) than the expected outcomes (4.5). This might imply that what really gets taught does not necessarily match the knowledge and skills the pupils are expected to have.

4.7 Rhetoric exercises

Rhetoric exercises (*mluvní cvičení*) are considered the basic method of teaching phonetic aspects in the Czech school (comp. Čechová, 1985, 1998; Čechová & Styblík, 1998). The pupil is given a topic or chooses one him/herself and delivers

a speech in front of the class. Our data show that the proportion of teachers who include rhetoric exercises into their lessons is high: 98 % at primary, 97 % at lower-secondary, and 72 % at upper-secondary level. The further we get in the educational system, the more we can detect the decrease, which again corresponds with the alterations in the expected outcomes (described above).

The main issue primary school teachers focus on when assessing rhetoric exercises seems to be correct pronunciation together with prosody of speech (mostly intonation, phrasing and loudness). To a certain extent they also focus on the abilities of expression or textual qualities and pupils' word stock, which, according to the respondents, is rather restricted. A topic for primary teachers also seems to be adhering to standard Czech. In contrast, an absolute minimum of the respondents pay attention to the content of the speech. These results are more or less in compliance with the expected outcomes described above.

Lower-secondary school teachers declare they mostly focus on the pupil's expression abilities or textual qualities of the speech. They expect the speech to be fluent, comprehensible and functional; they check for stylistic qualities, correct syntax, promptness and for the ability to attract the listeners' attention. This, however, is not included in the declared subject matter (comp. subchapter 4.6), and therefore we might infer that teachers may be assessing something that they might not be teaching enough. Lower-secondary school teachers also seem to put quite high emphasis on "standard pronunciation" and "standard Czech"; however, here the results are difficult to distinguish, because the respondents mix them together. The problem is that, for some of the respondents, standard morphology equals standard pronunciation (comp. also Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Štěpáník, 2019; taking other findings into account, we would interpret the respondents' answer "standard pronunciation" more as the morphological standard; comp. e.g. Svobodová, 2003). Also padding, fillers and limited word stock appear to be a significant problem in pupils' speech. In contrast with primary school, lower-secondary school teachers seem to pay more attention to the content of the speech, its idea, and also to nonverbal communication, which none of the respondents at the primary level mentioned. This, however, does not necessarily mean that they teach it.

At the upper-secondary level we received a wide range of answers: the respondents say, in pupils' rhetoric exercises, they mostly concentrate on expression abilities and textual qualities (comprehensibility, coherence, stylistics, meaningfulness, fillers and padding, or adhering to the time limit), pronunciation and prosody and "language correctness" (instead of "standard"). This is in sharp contrast with the subject matter (subchapter 4.6). While the content seems to be dominated by theory and pronunciation, the criteria for pupils' speech are very practice and communication-oriented. In this respect, the complete lack of

communicational content at upper-secondary school (Table 4, Figure 6) appears to be incomprehensible.

From the data we can assume that feedback on rhetoric exercises basically comes in three forms: from the teacher, from the classmates, or the pupil is given space for self-evaluation; the proportion is shown in Figure 7.

Fig. 7: Feedback on rhetoric exercises

As we can see, feedback in primary school is dominantly given by the teacher. The respondents state that they correct the pupil, tell him/her the right version, simulate the mistake and correct it. This is in compliance with the primary teachers' conviction of being important models for their pupils (see above; comp. Browne, 2007, p. 34).

In lower-secondary school there appears to be a shift to a more analytical approach. After the speech, teachers seem to give more space to the pupil's peers, and all together they examine various aspects of the speech. The commentary from the class comes first, followed by the teacher's comments. In about 17 % of the cases, the pupil's self-assessment takes precedence. Unlike primary teachers, some lower-secondary teachers state they use criteria set with the class beforehand (an example can be seen in Štěpáník & Vlčková-Mejvaldová, 2018).

The most widely used form of feedback in upper-secondary school seems to be peer-assessment; the teacher usually adds what has not been mentioned by the pupil's classmates. There is also quite a small number of teachers who give their pupils space for self-assessment.

5 Discussion

Our understanding of the phenomenon of teachers' beliefs is based on the straightforward presupposition that the central point of a teacher's thinking is their considerations about the teaching objectives and expected outcomes. These personal theories and beliefs are later reflected in the methods and forms of work in class, selection of teaching materials, classroom management, time devoted to

certain phenomena, and the content taught, and have the power to overrule the official educational policies and requirements.

Well mastered phonetic aspects of L1 ease communication, learning (other subjects) and understanding how language works because phonetics is linked to syntax, stylistics, pragmatics and many other layers of the language system. They affect everyone's daily communication. Cultivated speech is also necessary in many professions, especially in connection with the accentuation of soft skills on the labour market.

Summarising our data, it seems that Czech primary school teachers treat phonetic aspects as subject matter that runs through the whole educational period and is closely connected to teaching the pupils to speak "properly" (reducing speech problems, mastering proper pronunciation etc.). It seems teachers understand their vital role in forming the fundamental speech habits of their pupils (comp. Brabcová et al., 1990).

In contrast, Czech lower- and upper-secondary school teachers seem to treat the matter rather as an individual linguistic discipline to "teach through". That it is a discipline integrated in all pupils' spoken expression and bound to many other language layers (e.g. syntax, stylistics, semantics or pragmatics) seems to be neglected. As answers to questions 9 and 10 from the questionnaire and the interviews in focus groups showed, this deduction also corresponds with the fact that, unlike primary school teachers who consider all language layers equally important, lower- and upper-secondary school teachers consider phonetic aspects least important for both school and life. This is in sharp contrast with morphology, stylistics, and especially orthography which is paid attention to in all pupils' written expression and which Czech teachers are (traditionally) very much concerned with (e.g. Čechová & Styblík, 1998, or Kraus, 1996/97).

The traditional focus of Czech language teaching on the written mode is also implied by the traditional aim of Czech L1 teaching to master standard Czech (Čechová & Styblík, 1998; Svoboda, 1977; the term for *standard language* in Czech is *spisovný jazyk* – from the German *Schriftsprache*; Havránek, 1969, p. 68). We recognise this aim but, in compliance with the curriculum and modern L1 didactics, stress that the main aim of L1 teaching should be mastering the ability of code switching, i.e. altering the code according to the communication situation, the speaker's communication aim and the communication partner (comp. e.g. Čechová & Styblík, 1998; Štěpáník & Šmejkalová, 2017). Our results suggest that the typical pressure on standard Czech (comp. e.g. Svobodová, 2003) might be weakening. This might mean a certain shift in teachers' beliefs about standard and non-standard varieties of the language, especially in connection with the change of communication patterns in the digital era. Of course, this assumption would need to be verified by further research. On the other hand, our data indicate that teachers might consider the form of speech, i.e. how pupils speak, more important

than the content and ideas the pupils present (see the lower scores for expression and communication qualities and characteristics as opposed to the high scores for pronunciation and prosody in subchapters 4.5 and 4.6).

Throughout the educational levels, the approach to conveying the subject matter alters. The shift from practice to theory is evidenced by the gradual increase in teacher-centred methods (e.g. whole-class presentation), decrease in pupil-centred methods (e.g. rhetoric exercises; subchapter 4.3) and the increased expectation of mastering theoretical knowledge (subchapter 4.5 and 4.6). While the curriculum sets the expected outcomes functionally and communicatively, according to our data, the upper-secondary teachers' main objective is to convey phonetic theory. Figure 4 would suggest that our upper-secondary respondents use a rather vivid inventory of methods and forms of work. Other open questions and the focus group interviews, however, revealed that the repertoire of methods and forms of work at upper-secondary school is rather restricted to serve the objective the teachers have assigned for themselves. (We assume that the discrepancy in the answers might have been caused by the form of the multiple-choice question about the methods, where the respondents chose what they thought was expected.) Thus, we can assume that, except for individual exceptions, the domination of linguistic theory (i.e. traditional knowledge about language) at the upper-secondary level, which has been described many times as a chronic problem in Czech school (comp. Čechová, 2017; Rysová, 2005/06; Zimová, 2005/06, 2015/16, and others) still prevails. This implies that the main method for teaching phonetic aspects in Czech upper-secondary school is teacher's exposition. This would explain why teachers mostly seem to expect their pupils to learn theoretical knowledge rather than the practical skill of clear and correct expression. As a result, especially at upper-secondary school, it seems we are witnessing a situation where the implemented curriculum is more influenced by teachers' beliefs than by the intended curriculum.

While other experts indicate that textbooks are used for both lesson planning and teaching (e.g. Červenková, 2010, or Sikorová, 2010), our data indicate that, in this respect, teaching phonetics might be atypical. The results suggest that, when it comes to teaching phonetics, teachers mostly rely on textbooks in the lesson planning phase and less in the actual lessons. This difference might be caused by several factors. First, teachers might realise that most textbooks are rather theoretical and do not lead to practical mastery of the phenomena taught, and therefore there is no real need to use them in lessons. Second, the case also might be that they recognise that the textbooks do not give phonetics much space or importance. It seems that while teaching phonetic aspects, teachers use textbooks mostly for orientation only. In other phases additional teaching materials play a vital role. This would also explain why teachers feel the need to prepare their own materials and do not rely on textbooks as much as when teaching other disciplines.

However, it is necessary to note that research up to now on textbook usage has focused on school subjects in general; there has not been any special research on teaching only phonetics. It appears that there is a certain group of teachers who have realised the potential of educational technology as a teaching aid, and authentic recordings as illustrations of real communication processes and current language. However, this group still seems to be rather limited.

We can detect the disputableness of the resources that teachers use both for planning and for teaching. Quite a significant number of the respondents' answers reveals the phenomenon of "my own materials" or "what I remember from university". Also textbooks that teachers usually use, esp. in upper-secondary school, might be of insufficient quality (e.g. *Český jazyk v kostce* [Czech in a Nutshell]), which corresponds with the results of earlier research (e.g. Machová, 2003/04).

Moreover, despite the fact that we can expect that most of our respondents possess a Master's degree in teaching Czech, we detected a certain degree of incompetence in some of the respondents' formulations: "pronunciation of all letters", "correct punctuation while reading", "talk in elaborated sentences", "correct reading of sentences (punctuation)", "not to swallow word endings". As we can see, many of these answers (e.g. recitation and reading aloud) show the teachers' perception of a strong link between speaking and reading development, i.e. the development of speaking skills in close relation to written texts. The respondents also tend to mix language layers: despite being asked about phonetics, some of the answers mention e.g. "correct declension and conjugation" or "correct usage of cases", which, however, concern morphology. Most often it is these two disciplines that get confused. Besides other factors, this might be explained by the long-established gap between theory and practice, the consequence of which is the overall undervaluation of both didactic and field metaknowledge in the teaching profession. These results support the critical conclusions made by Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Sojka (2016) concerning the rather insufficient preparation of future teachers in the area of phonetic aspects (see also e.g. Adam, 2018, or Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Štěpáník, 2017/18).

The study has certain limitations, which we offer for discussion:

- 1) The number of the respondents from upper-secondary school is rather small. As we used the method of simple random sampling (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013, p. 153), we did not have direct impact on the selection of the sample. Therefore, we do not attempt to generalise our outcomes – we rather aim at analysing and demonstrating certain tendencies. However, while the sample might not be representative as far as the educational levels are concerned, we consider the sample regionally representative (see subchapter 3.1).

- 2) The respondents filled in the questionnaire while the researchers were present, which could lead to issues of social ability. However, we did not intervene in any way in the process of filling out the questionnaires, even the information about the whole research process was very limited as we did not want to influence the participants at all. As we are also teachers, we represented ourselves as being one of the participants, having similar problems.
- 3) This is also the reason why we only made notes during the focus group interviews instead of recording them. The data from the focus group interviews served only for the triangulation of the data from the questionnaires; we used them only as support of the validity and reliability of the research. This is also the reason why the data from the questionnaires and the focus group interviews are presented together without any indication of what comes from the questionnaires and what comes from the interviews.
- 4) We would like to stress that we do realise the main issue which still remains open: our study has researched teachers' beliefs which form the educational reality. However, these do not have to necessarily match with the actual classroom practices. The reflection of the teaching reality of phonetic aspects remains a topic for further research.

6 Conclusion

Our paper focused on teachers' beliefs in the area of the development of speaking skills in teaching L1 in the Czech Republic with a special focus on phonetic aspects. We consider this topic highly relevant as the development of speaking skills is one of the basic requirements of communicatively oriented L1 teaching. Orthoepy and other speech qualities can be viewed as "universal values" that pupils develop in school and transfer to their everyday lives. Our research has found that teaching phonetic aspects in Czech schools seems rather neglected, and faces certain problems, in close connection to the beliefs teachers hold about the field.

The main outcomes of our study can be summarised by the following points:

- 1) Czech language teachers seem not to treat phonetics with as much importance as other language layers, especially morphology and syntax. This applies to the spoken versus written word as well. As a result, phonetics appears to be given minimal time or sometimes might even be omitted altogether, and the focus on speaking development is rather peripheral.
- 2) At primary school, phonetic aspects seem to be treated continuously throughout the whole cycle. In contrast, at lower- and upper-secondary level phonetics seems to be treated as a separate unit. Teachers seem to fail to notice the complexity of the language system and the linkage between the individual

language layers – specifically the relation of phonetics to syntax, semantics, stylistics and pragmatics.

- 3) At primary school, phonetics seems to be constantly present. In contrast, at lower- and upper-secondary school after the phonetic subject matter is covered (presented first of all linguistic disciplines at the given educational level), it seems rarely to appear again. Taking into account the importance of speech skills in real-life communication and also the requirements of the final upper-secondary leaving examination (maturita), the upper-secondary approach to the subject matter is didactically indefensible.
- 4) Despite the official requirements given by the *Framework Education Programme* (the intended curriculum), especially upper-secondary school phonetics teaching seems to be more theoretical than practical. Overemphasising linguistic theory is a lingering problem in Czech L1 teaching, and teaching phonetics appears not to be an exception.
- 5) The results of our research show that teachers' content knowledge of the field might be insufficient despite the undergraduate training they had. This confirms the results of earlier studies (e.g. Málková, 2012, 2014/15; Svobodová, 2003; Vlčková-Mejvaldová & Sojka, 2016). There are two aspects this can result in:
 - a) Teachers might arrive at the conclusion that phonetics does not contribute much to enhance the expressive and communicative abilities of their pupils. However, this is in contrast with the position phonetic aspects have in everyday communication, the position of the teacher as the role model for their pupils and the expectations of L1 speakers in terms of standard Czech, which also comprises standard realisation of phonetic aspects (comp. Lefenda & Svobodová, 2016/17; Palková, 2008/09, 2017/18).
 - b) The limits in teachers' content knowledge might have a negative impact on their pedagogical content knowledge and can lead to inadequate didactic transformation of the phonetic content or even complete resignation to it.
- 6) Most importantly, teachers' beliefs about the actual process of teaching and learning phonetic aspects seem to influence the implemented curriculum more than the intended curriculum given by the government does.

To sum up, there are two primary recommendations based on our research – one matches the field context and one the professional context:

- 1) Phonetics should be considered a vital part of all L1 teaching, and should be bound to all other disciplines and communication activities in the class. Speaking development should advance the pupils' ability to use knowledge about the language system so that they express themselves more clearly, understandably and precisely; their ability to make deliberate choices about

which language elements best serve their communication purposes and so which they choose from the language system when expressing themselves.

- 2) The basic precondition for this shift is the thorough and functional training of teachers as they are the ones who actually change the educational reality. However, if we want to change teachers' beliefs and thinking, we need to (a) systemically research their subjective theories, opinions and the connection of these theories to their instructional practices, (b) based on these findings alter and individualise the teacher training programmes.

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